21 Days of Letting Go
Finding normal in an ever-shifting world

An exploration of letting go through daily prompts and questions

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Introduction

To move forward, physically or spiritually, you must let go of where you are now.

Physically, you take a step that moves you from one location to another. It may seem easy to let go of where you were in this case because most often you’re heading towards somewhere you intend to go.

Spiritually, letting go of where you are can seem much more difficult. It can mean walking away from something in which you’ve invested time, energy and love. It can mean heading towards somewhere you’ve never envisioned for yourself, a place without someone or something you’ve attached yourself to. It means heading into the great unknown, a place filled with possibility, yet a place so many of us dread.

Walking away, letting go, is totality.

There is no room to hold on to the ‘what-if’s or ‘what-could-have-been’s. There is no room to look back and ask yourself how things might have been had they turned out differently. In making that choice to let go, you take a leap into potential futures not yet imagined, and feel shaky because the familiarity of what was, is no longer. Even if things haven’t felt exactly good, the familiarity of them has made it feel safe to be where you are. But something in you wants to make changes, and the more you resist, the harder it gets.

Are letting go and quitting one and the same?

They are two sides of the same coin, two parts of the same story, but not entirely alike.

Quitting retains a sense of guilt, shame and/or failure while letting go is a surrender - complete and uncomplicated (ideally).

Letting go can be easier than quitting, because without the feelings of guilt or shame associated, the process is empowering and life-enhancing.

Letting go, surrendering, opens up space for the unknown possibilities to flood in and fill you up with creative potential. Quitting will linger, because while you may have left the situation, you are still carrying the guilt and shame of the experience.

You can’t partially surrender – you have to dive in head first and be prepared to sacrifice, even something that you love deeply, in the knowledge that this is the only way things can truly change.

And there are always gifts that come with the act of letting go.
Sometimes the gifts aren’t revealed until much later; sometimes they’re hidden so deep that you have to wade through some serious crap to get to them; sometimes they’re unrecognisable as gifts when you first find them.

They are, however, always there, and they come in so many forms.

The amazing thing about these gifts is that they extend so far beyond our conscious awareness that it’s mind-boggling to contemplate.

In this eBook, I provide examples of letting go from diverse angles, to give you a sense of the natural and life-enhancing potential it can provide. These are taken from nature, from people’s experiences, and even from inanimate objects.

You are not alone. Surrender to the energy of change and allow yourself to soar to new and unimagined heights. Give yourself 21 days to explore the beauty in letting go, and see if you feel any differently at the end. Give yourself the chance to uncover the gifts in the experience.

Each day’s prompt is followed by questions for your consideration. Keeping track of your answers will help as you go through, so that you can return at the end and see if you feel any differently.

Questions to consider before you begin:

? Is there something specific you’d like to let go of right now?

? If so, what do you believe is holding you back?

(Perhaps you had expectations about the outcome? Do you believe you are disappointing someone? Have you invested so much of yourself in the process or in the back-story that you feel the thing you are holding onto in some way defines you? Do you feel your contribution is irreplaceable and without it people will be missing out?)

Make a list, including even the things that seem unchangeable:

? How does the idea of letting go of this make you feel?
Without this, who will you be?

How will you feel?

How will others see you? (And is this important to you?)

If you knew that letting go of this was one of the most beautiful gifts of self-love and self-care you could give yourself, would that make it easier?

If not, why not?

Initiating large changes can feel impossible when all factors are seemingly stacked against you, but there is no better place to start than where you are. Let go of small things that you have no attachment to, one baby step at a time. As you get accustomed to enjoying the space that opens up and being open to see what new creations might arrive to fill it, take time to reflect on slightly larger things that you might do without.

I would suggest (if you don’t already) that you keep track of dreams and signs you see along the way that might provide more clarity for you. And always feel free to contact me at jennygriffin@thepowerofchange.me

If you’re ready to commit to yourself for this journey, please continue to Day 1.
Day 1

Birth

The beginning is always the birth of something, in this case, the birth of a new opportunity to let go of something old to make way for something new.

It may seem counterintuitive to suggest that the birth of something (whether it is a new life, a new project or a new way of thinking) is also the letting go of something, but as the Lion King made clear, life is circular.

_Birth always requires a certain amount of letting go, a releasing of what already exists to make room for what is arriving._

Consider the birth of a child. It involves several layers of letting go, if we examine it closely.

First of all, there’s the need for the newborn baby to let go of its safe haven in the womb and make its way through a tight passage to the unknown that awaits.

The baby finds itself in a strange new world, with sights, sounds, smells and tactile experiences it never imagined in its former home. It learns to navigate this new world by watching and learning from those around it, and each day brings further opportunities to explore and examine what it means to be ‘outside.’

Secondly, there is a letting go on the mother’s part that has to happen in order for the birth to take place. According to Fiona Mayhill, owner of Innerlife Health Services in British Columbia, Canada, the birth process offers us an excellent example of how letting go can change the experience dramatically. (Visit [http://innerlife.ca](http://innerlife.ca) for more about Fiona and her work). Fiona says, ‘If there’s extreme fear on the part of the woman giving birth, it can be a traumatic process, as she tries to literally push life through the very constricting energy of fear. If there’s acceptance and ease, it can be an ecstatic, sometimes even orgasmic experience.’ The latter certainly makes a stronger argument.

Finally, there is a letting go in the family, as roles shift from one understanding to another: one moment you are an only child, but after the birth of the new baby, you are a big sister; yesterday you were a father-to-be, today you’re a father; last week you were my sister, this week you’re an aunt.

_All of these subtle shifts require letting go of one way of seeing yourself and moving into a new role._

For instance, do you change the way you act in your role as aunt from the way you act(ed) as daughter or sister?

Does seeing your parents as grandparents change the way that you act towards them, or they towards you?

In the case of birth, the letting go may seem easy and natural, as the roles you take on are most often by choice and part of a beautiful new chapter. There’s no reason that all letting go can’t be seen in the same
way. It’s all a matter of perspective.

And remember, birth is not confined to the birth of a child; *each new dream you want to create, each new belief you yearn to embrace, each new day, offers you the opportunity to let go of the old to make way for the birth of something new.*

**Questions for your consideration:**

1. What beautiful things have you created lately?

2. Is there something in your life you’ve wanted to create but have put on hold?

3. How does the creation of it feel to you? Does it make you feel excited, happy and joyful? Does it frighten you?

4. What, if anything, do you believe is holding you back from creating this?

5. What would you be willing to let go of, in order to move the creation process forward?

6. What would you *not* be willing to let go of?

7. If you knew that your creation would be something entirely beautiful that would be a huge gift to the world, what would you be willing to let go of to make it happen?

8. How would the creation of this shift your perspective of who you are? What about those around you? Does this scare you?
Day 2

What Happens in a Dream...

... can help resolve important issues in your waking life.

Have you ever experienced a dream in which you sobbed, or raged, or expressed yourself joyfully and woke up feeling like something tangible has been released? Well, it has, say numerous experts on the subject of dreams. In fact, the ability to dream is in itself an important and cathartic element of human life. Some even suggest that if we didn’t dream, we would suffer delusional and psychotic episodes. It’s like a vent for the subconscious mind.

Kelly Sullivan-Walden has written a great deal on the subject of dreams and their importance in the role of an awakening planet. In her book, ‘I Had the Strangest Dream: the Dreamer’s Dictionary for the 21st Century,’ she outlines eight different dream categories and walks you through the role that each type plays in your waking life. Several of them involve letting go in a very tangible way:

1) ‘The Processing Dream,’ in which you find solutions to unresolved situations in your waking life;
2) ‘The Venting Dream,’ which often feels like a nightmare in its intensity, and in which you vent some of your biggest fears and concerns from your waking life; and
3) ‘The Breakdown/Breakthrough Dream,’ during which you might come face to face with natural disasters and other destructive forces.

(for more on Kelly, visit her website at http://www.kellysullivanwalden.com)

The very act of dreaming involves letting go on a number of levels.

There’s the initial letting go that allows you to fall asleep, releasing the conscious mind’s tendency to try to control and drive events, and trusting that your dreams will take you somewhere new and magical.

With this initial letting go, you’re giving your subconscious mind permission to step forward and take over. ‘I’ll sleep on it…’ really means, ‘I’ll create a dream solution by tomorrow.’

You let go of the rational, ego-driven part that wants to believe you can think your way through anything, and connect to a sphere of potential so vast you can’t even perceive of it in your conscious mind. You let go of impossibles, improbables and unlikelies, and make way for things to become their highest versions of themselves.

There’s also a letting go on waking, when you realise that the dreams you’ve had offer valuable information, even if it was delivered in a cryptic way. You are asked to let go of the attachment to seeing things as they were (in the dream) and instead consider them as symbolic of events or people in your life.

If you’ve asked for something to be shown to you in a dream, it’s important to let go of thinking it will be shown to you in the way that you might have expected. Let go of the dream and re-enter waking life, letting the night-time lessons sink in as you go about your day. Let go of the idea that the possibility that exists there, in the dream state, doesn’t exist in your waking life. It does.
Without attachments to the apparent reality of your situations, you can create from the same place of potential in which your dreams begin.

*Nothing is impossible in the dreamtime.*

Mary Shelley dreamed up Frankenstein before he was made immortal in the pages of her book; Elias Howe, the inventor of the sewing machine, was inspired by a dream that showed him a solution to his needle dilemma; scientists, entrepreneurs, musicians, artists – so many have been inspired by dreams to try something they hadn’t previously considered, and ended up changing the way others saw the world as a result.

Dreams are the playground for the subconscious mind to meet the infinity that exists beyond. Let go and allow them to fill you with their wisdom.

**Questions for your consideration:**

1. Are your night-time dreams something you’ve been conscious of? Have you ever kept track of them?

2. Have you examined the meanings behind your dreams? What resources did you find useful (if any)?

3. Do you believe, or can you accept that dreams offer insights into your state of mind?

4. Have your dreams been trying to give you any suggestions as to letting go that you may have been avoiding or ignoring?

5. Have you ever tried to consciously work something out in your dreams by setting yourself a ‘problem’ before you go to sleep?

6. If so, what were the results?

7. If not, why not give it a try? Set the intention for your dreams to help you resolve an issue or challenge in your life and as you drift off to sleep, ask yourself ‘what would the solution to ___X__ problem look like?’ Let go of trying to figure it all out, and put your dream guides to work!

Keep track of your insights, and trust that they truly do have the ‘inside scoop.’
Day 3

Kintsukuroi

*Like recycling, but with a twist, this is considered an art form in Japan.*

If a piece of pottery is smashed, it is repaired with gold or silver lacquer and given new life. The key to the equation is that it is considered even more beautiful and valuable since its breakage, even *because* of its breakage.

If you could let go of your ideas that breakage and damage make you less beautiful, you could embrace the spirit of kintsukuroi and understand that the things that have scarred you make you more compassionate, more vulnerable, more *human*.

You could let go of the belief that your veins are filled with anything other than pure love, making you the most valuable commodity on the planet.

Your difficulties show you the potential to see beauty beyond your immediate surroundings.

They show you that the unknown, unforeseen future holds innumerable possibilities. Your damage will no longer hold power over you, letting you believe that it defines you; it is part of an integrated and beautiful whole.

*Let go of the idea that whole is perfect and let your cracks show.*

**Questions for your consideration:**

? In what way(s) do you feel ‘damaged?’ Do you feel this diminishes your beauty or value in some way?

? Is there a way that you could envision this damage being repaired with pure Love energy, and becoming one of your greatest assets?

? What do you feel you’d need to let go of to see this damage as an asset? Make a list, including *even the things that seem unchangeable.* As you write them down, don’t attach any judgment or emotion to them, simply observe them and allow them to *be.*
Day 4

The Journey of the Butterfly

I’m sure you’ve seen the glorious colours of butterflies as they flit from flower to flower and play on the currents of breezes. And no doubt you know something of how they came into being.

The process is one of letting go of an old identity, completely surrendering the experience of grounded caterpillar to embrace a new, airborne definition of self. As the caterpillar passes through this time of stasis, it reaches a state akin to death, where the old cellular memory of the clumsy larva that was, is like a sketch for the new and divine masterpiece that emerges.

*Letting go happens a number of times.*

Firstly, the caterpillar completely sheds its skin four times before one final shed that reveals the crysalis. (There’s a short and quite fascinating time-lapse video available here: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-gsm_ZyJz_s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-gsm_ZyJz_s)) Think about the level of trust involved in this process, and the instinctive need to shed this skin to become something different, something unknown.

Secondly, the caterpillar literally digests itself inside the chrysalis, all of its tissues dissolving into a soupy mess of protein rich food. The main purpose of the larva is to eat in order to have the energy to undertake this metamorphosis into its eventual incarnation as butterfly. The larva is born with cellular structures that hold the blueprint for the final design, so to speak. These structures are fed by this protein rich, ‘caterpillar soup’ for as long as it takes for the metamorphosis to occur.

The caterpillar lets go of its old identity as it allows itself to be swallowed up in the biological process that will result in an almost entirely new creature.

Finally, the butterfly slowly makes its way from the chrysalis, letting go of anything associated with the memory of life as a caterpillar. It is born anew as it tests out its wings and learns about the world from a completely different perspective.

> *From land-locked, ravenous larva through the transformative process of letting go, to a winged work of art; the journey from caterpillar to butterfly shows you the beauty that can come of releasing old understandings of who or what you are, and trusting that life will deliver something beautiful in its stead.*

So what else does this teach you about letting go?

That sometimes it’s messy in the interim, but if you’re patient you can emerge new and strong and beautiful; that trust is a key element in the process, even if you don’t know who or what you’ll be without the current definition you’ve chosen for yourself; and that without letting go of the belief that the experiences you’ve known to date define you, metamorphoses would not be possible.

> *The world can never have too many butterflies.*
Questions for your consideration:

? If you were to wrap yourself in a chrysalis today, and emerge in three months, what things would you like to leave behind in the process? What aspects of you and your life would you like to keep? Be honest, and be creative.

? Describe yourself as the butterfly that emerges at the other side of metamorphosis. Use whatever medium you like; draw it, paint it, describe it in words or make a collage...

? What is stopping you from being that butterfly today? Again, make a list, including even the things that seem unchangeable.

These lists are for your self-reflection. As you go through the process of putting these perceived blocks outside of yourself, you allow yourself to detach from their energetic hold. When you make them something external and neutral, you cut emotional ties to them and empower yourself to make shifts.
Indigenous Dreaming

Time does not exist in The Dreaming of indigenous Australian peoples. What happens while you’re awake has huge effects on your dreams and vice versa. You can create miracles and wonders in dreams and, it’s up to you to find them and connect with them in your life. The Dreaming is a state somewhere between waking and sleeping, and in it are found the stories, songs and dances of the ancestor spirits.

According to the legends of indigenous Australian people, the land used to be flat, and their ancestors in the form of snakes, birds, kangaroos and other beings, moved across the Earth and shaped it as they went. When they died, they became a part of the land, and still exist to this day.

The Dreaming connects each individual to the ancestors and the land, giving them a sense of who they are and where they belong. It’s a continuum of existence, and an understanding that we all return to the Dreaming from whence we came. We are all one, the rocks, the trees, the animals, the sky...

Among indigenous North American people, there are also Dreamers. The main purpose of the Dreamers is to bring to the conscious world all the power of the dreamtime, and to bring conscious knowledge into the dreamtime. It is a way to bridge a gap between this waking ‘reality’ and the spiritual power and wisdom that lies beyond. A Dreamer may undertake a journey on the behalf of others, and the idea is that they access the many realms of possibility in order to meet with the spirits that reside in each, bringing back knowledge that will help the individual (or tribe).

In both cases, the dreaming is not a place separate from you, but a part of you, intrinsic to existence and the knowledge of who you are in the world. It connects you to the energies you share this planet with, be they in the form of humans, rocks or spirits. It requires for many people a setting aside of ‘reality,’ to allow for the possibility of such things to exist, yet in indigenous understandings of life, it simply is. The things that you call reality may seem far less real to one raised with such beliefs.

What does this teach you about letting go?

It demonstrates that ‘reality’ as you see it, is neither universal nor is it static. It is a constant process of letting go of what you perceive to be real, in this 3-D reality, and allowing for other ways of seeing the world around you. It shows that by letting go of the belief that you can control everything and everyone within your sphere, you can instead turn to the energies around to assist you in finding the path that’s right for you.

It speaks to the potential of letting go of separation, and embracing the idea that we are all One, and each step you take on this Earth leaves some kind of footprint. It opens you up to the possibility that by letting go of that separateness, you can see the variety around you as a beautiful and natural part of life, embracing others’ successes and joys as you would your own, and mourning along with them in their grief.
As you keep track of your nightly dreams, be conscious of ways to bring the wisdom found there into your waking reality. Let go of the idea that the two worlds are separate, and instead live each day as if all of life is a beautiful dream, created from the infinite potential that lives beyond our limits.

Questions for your consideration:

? What beautiful dreams would you like to bring from The Dreamtime into this reality? What would you have to let go of in order to do this (tangible or intangible)?

? If you knew that the rocks, trees, animals and your fellow humans were all a part of you, would you do anything differently? What would you be willing let go of in order to live in alignment with this knowledge?

? If you knew that anything was possible, what would you bring into being right now?

? What would you need to let go of to believe that anything is possible (if anything)?

? Knowing that reality is not static, nor universal, what aspects of your reality have you seen shift in the past year? In the past five years? Ten years? If you were to go forward a year, how would your life look? Knowing that your version of reality can change dramatically from one day to the next allows you to put your current situation in perspective.
Surfing Life’s Waves

‘You cannot stop the waves, but you can learn to surf.’ - Jon Kabat-Zinn (professor, writer)

‘There are no more committed people on the planet than surfers. We fall down a lot. We turn around, paddle back out, and do it over and over again. Unlike anything else in life, the stoke of surfing is so high that the failures quickly fade from memory.’ - Gary Sirota (surfer)

Surfing is quite a joy to watch. It’s different from other sports in that the ‘competition’ is as much the delirious power of Mother Nature as it is the other surfers. The two quotes above were chosen to demonstrate where the metaphorical idea of surfing as a concept (surfing emotional waves) meets surfing as a physical act.

If you’ve ever sat beside a storm-tossed ocean you can attest to the awesome power of the waves.

The thundering sound you can both hear and somehow feel through your feet, the smell of the angry ocean, and the feel of the salt-spray on your face are tangible reminders of one’s vulnerability as a human.

To face the majesty of those waves head on, and do it repeatedly, says something of the human need to taste a small part of that power. It’s not about taming the power, but about finding a way to work with it, to propel you to heights you’ve never before reached, to places you never imagined.

It requires patience, perseverance, and the ability to learn from your mistakes. It requires flexibility and the ability to let go of the waves that don’t quite make the grade, sometimes before they happen, sometimes halfway through.

There will always be another one.

There are troughs and there are crests: that is the nature of life, and of surfing. Letting the waves roll past you while you’re finding the perfect spot, blasting through the big ones that break too soon, and finally, being rewarded with the one that carries you for a while, to wherever you may end up.
Letting go of any particular destination, any particular way of getting there and any time limit are pretty important in surfing. You can’t predict the next big wave; you just have to sit for a while and learn to read the signs.

Let go of defining your falls as failures and instead think about how it has taught you a different way to balance, or move, or stand.

Let go of trying to ‘steer’ your board to a certain spot, and instead let your instincts and the wave itself guide you.

Let go of needing to be anywhere, and enjoy playing in the magnificence of that powerful force of nature.

And remember, you are a part of that powerful force. The same energy that flows through the waves, flows through each of us. Find a way to harness it for forward momentum and let go of the need to control its flow.

*It’s time to learn to surf.*

**Questions for your consideration:**

? Is there anything you’d currently like to release control over?

? How can you take steps towards letting go of that control?

? If you could see the changes in your life as waves, ready to surf, which one would you jump on today?

? What would it mean to your life to jump on this wave? How would it look different? Be creative, and be honest. All your feelings are legitimate.
Day 7

Books

*A book is a marvellous thing, allowing you to travel to unknown worlds and previously unimagined dimensions.*

Each time you open the pages, you’re asked to let go of your reality and open up to a new perspective. It’s a magical journey through the mind and heart of the author and their creative genius. Whether fiction or non-fiction, the opportunity exists to open your mind to perspectives you’ve never explored.

Many of us are first exposed to books as children; books filled with adventures, mythical beasts, possibility, magic and travels. We visit worlds that are brought to life by the words and pictures on the page, and our dreams take us back there in our sleep.

Words have the power to elicit memories, emotions and states of consciousness you may have locked away, and when crafted just so, are like a beautiful symphony. Books connect with something deep inside you, asking you to let go of what *is*, and follow them down the path to *what could be*.

Books are the doorway to the imagination, and what lies beyond. In the same way that an artist looks at a blank screen, a blank page can be the point of surrender to an author, the point at which they unleash the bonds on their creativity and let it flow. Even if you’ve read the synopsis on the back cover, the way you reach the final destination is always a delicious surprise.

*You have to let go and leap in, allowing the words to wash over and guide you.*

Books have the power to leave you in tears, in laughter, feeling despair or confusion, or feeling delighted and filled with childish glee. They can leave you wanting to throw them at the wall or desperate for the ending to be in some way different.

They are an opportunity for the authors to express their most heart-felt emotions through their creativity. As you connect with that current flowing out of the pages and through you, you allow yourself the same permission to express what you feel, responding naturally to the words.

Another advantage to books is that as people share their stories, you no longer feel so alone in the world. Someone, somewhere has had an experience like yours.
You can let go of the feelings of disconnectedness and desolation and celebrate the fact that you are understood, on some level.

Joan Didion wrote through her grief after the death of her husband, in ‘A Year of Magical Thinking,’ and the reader travels with her to some of the unspoken places grief goes, like near insanity and fury. It is through others’ journeys that you learn much about yourself and the capacity for love and compassion. You can let go of your definition of insanity and realise that grief can be expressed in many ways. You can let go of feeling that your own experience with grief was warped or unacceptable, as you follow others as they explore their own versions of hell.

So, open a book and let go. Dive into the world of someone else’s imagination.

Questions for your consideration:

? When you read, do you allow yourself to get lost in the world the author creates? Have you ever found yourself believing it as completely possible?

? What is your favourite book you return to over and over again to experience that feeling of enchantment and wonder?

? What books have you read that changed the way you thought about the world? Have you been able to implement changes in your life because of them?

? What story does the book of YOU tell? What story do you want it to tell?
Day 8

Crisis: Rock Bottom

One common element of more traumatic releases is the idea of a rock bottom.

Call it what you will: breakup, breakdown, breakthrough, dark night of the soul, rock bottom, turning point, tipping point, crisis point, psycho-spiritual crisis; it’s the same thing, that point at which something in you decides the way you’ve been going is no longer going to work.

Everyone reaches their rock bottom at a different point: what can seem like one person’s hell may be for someone else like dipping their toe in the pool. These things can’t be forced or hurried, it’s really a matter of repeatedly being (gently?) bashed over the head by the Universe trying to draw your attention to something that needs to be shifted, until you see it, and take notice.

Life throws those familiar patterns in your face repeatedly and says, ‘Look at this! Do you see what you’re doing/saying/thinking? Doesn’t it seem familiar? Wouldn’t you like to try something new?’

At first, you might start to notice that there’s a repetitive pattern in your behaviour, but if you are deeply entrenched in the beliefs that got you to that point, you will likely feel that it just IS, there’s no way to change it, that’s just your lot in life. So, the quality or quantity of the lessons is upped, bit by bit, becoming more and more extreme, obvious versions of what they are there to teach you so that they become harder and harder to ignore.

At some point, one of the examples will drive you to the edge of your conscious understanding of the world and force you to look over it. At this point you have the choice to surrender to the energy that takes you through the darkness and into the parts of you you’d hidden away underneath all the distortions and untruths from outside yourself. If you do, the unfolding that takes place is enlightening and beautiful.

Not all letting go has to involve deep dives into the rock bottom stuff.

As we discovered at the beginning, Birth, life is a circle. Change is a part of that, and change always involves letting go.

The cyclical nature of the process means that in going through a new experience of change or letting go, you can gain insight into what that powerful moment of transformation is teaching you, and move forward to the next lesson knowing that you are never perfect, never finished, but instead a work in progress.

You can allow yourself the freedom to make subsequent mistakes and gain a sense of presence in each encounter to identify how you might respond to it differently from the last time. And next time, you can respond differently again.

If each time, you let go of one small block, or old thought pattern or belief, you enter the next cycle lighter, freer and more conscious of the world around you and the connections that exist between you and the other beings that share our planet.
There are so many ways for people to escape the things they fear the most, drugs, alcohol, sex/relationships, work, just to name a few. The things people fear the most are many and varied, and each person will find their own, but no matter how scary you think it is, when you get there and face it, it is not nearly as bad as you thought it would be. The fear of what you fear is there, is far worse than the thing itself.

_In fact, most people find that the things they had believed to be true about themselves are not, and in that quiet space below the fear and darkness is the truth, as only they know it._

If you can shift your perspective to one of gratitude and wonder, and be prepared to release anything that no longer serves you, you’ll find something wonderful on the other side of challenge.

**Questions for your consideration:**

? Have you ever reached a rock bottom in your life?

? If so, how did you find your way through/out of it?

? What amazing lessons did it teach you?

? How have these lessons changed the way you see the world? Yourself? Your relationships?

? What did you let go of, going through it?

? What were the biggest gifts from that experience?
Day 9

Orgasm

Today we’re talking about the big ‘O,’ orgasm.

What exercise in letting go would be complete without the mention of this perfectly delightful example? I thought you might need a reminder that letting go doesn’t have to hurt, it doesn’t have to involve painful emotional releases; it can be joyful.

Your body is a fantastic thing, with the capacity for so many avenues of expression!

Orgasm is a letting go of rather extreme proportions, when you examine the physiology of it. Not just your genitals are involved, but your brain, heart, respiratory and nervous systems. Your vocal chords get a workout, your muscles tense and relax; it’s truly a full-body experience.

Parts of the brain responsible for control, self-evaluation and reasoning are shut down during the experience, meaning that once you let go enough to begin feeling pleasure, you relinquish the reins. Nature takes over. Fear and anxiety are shut down; aggressiveness in males is diminished, and in females emotions operate at a reduced capacity.

French literature provides a descriptive euphemism for orgasm that goes some way towards describing the feeling of the experience: la petite morte (little death). The loss of control likely explains the origin of this definition; a sensation of intense physical release, the inability to think or make decisions, and a sort of disconnectedness from everything.

There are other factors involved, though, as far as letting go goes.

There is a vulnerability and trust needed to achieve the state of orgasm in the first place. You need to let go of negative beliefs about body image, sex and any other attachments that would keep you from enjoying the process.

You need to allow your body the freedom to respond without the mental images or beliefs regarding what’s right and wrong, what’s good and bad.

You need to let go of keeping quiet about your wants and needs and explore the connectedness that comes of physical relationships.

You need to let go of assumptions about what other people might or might not be doing, or how they’re doing it, and instead be open to finding whatever works best for you.

As we saw on Day 2, if you can dream it, you can do it.
Questions for your consideration:

? Imagine a change you’re having difficulty making as an orgasmic experience instead. How could you rewrite it as an erotic short-story, describing the process you go through to release the situation?

Play with the idea of turning things on their heads, making the unreal, real. It’s through creating new avenues to solutions that challenges are truly overcome. Be completely ridiculous, if you have to – it gets the energy shifting even faster.

? Who are your main characters? Describe them in detail, in all their glorious im/perfection. Is there a villain? What are they like?

? What is the main challenge? How do the characters find a way to overcome this together (or separately)?

? What are the gifts that come when the challenge has been overcome – be creative – what would the main characters want most in life? Write a juicy sex scene between the characters, even if they’re inanimate objects (like a job or debt). How would you ‘make love to’ a job you hate? How can debt become a brilliant lover?

This is what I mean about getting ridiculous – this is not about reality as you know it, but about embracing the potential of absolutely anything. Let go of the situation as it is, and make it into whatever you want it to be. Sex it up! 😊
Day 10

Thunderstorms

August growing up in Southern Ontario always brought spectacular thunderstorms. I remember the humidity (oh lord, the humidity!) that gave way to the storms. As if the heavens themselves had opened, the rain came barrelling down, thunder shook the sky, and lightning could be seen for miles. It was sweet relief from the heat and mugginess that had made us all tired and irritable. As a child, I never considered the process involved, but appreciated nonetheless the coolness of the rain, the power contained within the storms, and the sweet, fresh scent of warm earth afterwards.

Today, I’m going to examine the processes involved in thunderstorms and how they relate to letting go.

Very basically, thunderstorms are formed by hot, moist air rising from the earth and meeting a colder layer of air somewhere in the stratosphere. The moisture forms ice crystals, some of which fall to the earth, as (in this case, they melt in the heat) rain. On the way down, they pass other ice chunks which are being pushed up by the updrafts of hot air, and are stripped of their negative electrons.

The result is an ever-building supply of static electricity. At some point, the energy builds to such a point that it lets go, finding a positive charge on the earth to ground itself. The thunder is how we hear the result of a supersonic shockwave caused by the lightning.

So let’s break this down into letting go.

The clouds, formed initially by moisture and uplift, release the heavier droplets (ice) because of the laws of gravity. Put simply, drop anything that feels heavy. Imagine if the atmosphere became clogged with ice clouds (as scientifically improbable as that is), the Earth would not survive for long. Imagine if the lightning had nowhere to find ground, and the static electricity built up until the stratosphere imploded in a fiery blast of heat and light.

Extreme, yes, improbable, absolutely, but when you take this analogy down to a human level, it doesn’t sound quite so ridiculous. Why would you expect yourself to carry around old hurts, old patterns or old beliefs that are causing a build-up of pressure, discomfort or uncertainty any more than you’d expect it of a storm cloud?

The energy that flows through nature is the same energy that flows through our bodies, in many forms.

Emotions are only one of the ways that we as humans express our responses to the world around us. If we don’t express them, what happens to them?

Have you ever lashed out in anger and felt afterwards that you didn’t know where it came from?

Have you ever broken down in sobs after a particularly stressful or uncomfortable time in your life?
Something has to give. Just like the lightning finds ground, you need to let go of the things that no longer serve you, lest you become a wayward blast of static electricity just waiting to happen.

*Perhaps you can appreciate the power contained within the storms, but not within your own self?*

This is not power in the form of domination or control, but life-force, the pure energy of true power. It connects you deeply with the Earth and the beings you share her with. This power is contained within your heart and is accessed through the emotions. If you never allow it to be released, you will miss the sweetness and stillness that follows.

Next time you feel a storm coming, find a safe place and let it unfold. It sure beats trying to rein in lightning.

**Questions for your consideration:**

? How are you at letting the thunderstorms rage in your life?

? Do you fear your emotions? How does your family feel about expressing emotions? Have you had negative reactions/responses to past ‘outbursts’?

? What do you believe would happen if you let loose with a thunderstorm next time the urge hit?

? Have you ever stood watching a thunderstorm? Try observing a human storm in the same way – as an act of nature - no attachment, no fear, simple observation.

   What happens afterwards? How do you feel? What about the other(s) involved?
Day 11

Recycling

Most people are familiar with the concept of recycling in their households. *But how is it connected to letting go?*

The first and most obvious way is that when you put an object in the recycling bin, you let go of it, physically and mentally. You’ve had from the object what you need/want and it’s now time to clear it from your mind and home. You likely don’t lament the loss of a plastic bottle you recycled last week, or the tin can that you crushed. In fact, you let go of it ever having been a part of your life, in a moment.

*There’s amazing stuff that happens when your discarded items get to the recycling plant.*

Plastic bottles can be melted down and turned into polar fleece, which then comes back to you as something entirely new. You’ve let go of the need to define that bottle as simply a bottle, and have allowed for it to become something else. The bottle itself has been transformed.

As it is an inanimate object, I won’t presume that it had any attachment to its former incarnation, but you have allowed it to let go of its already useful form to become something equally useful, and very different. When you then encounter it in its new form, as polar fleece, you probably won’t feel melancholy that it has lost its ‘bottleness,’ but may marvel at the amazing technology that makes such a transformation possible.

Glass is crushed and recycled into new glass by adding some raw materials and heat. The bottles and jars that are formed are as strong and useful as before; they may take on new shapes or have different ingredients in them, but they have been refreshed by the process. You let them go as soon as they leave your home, and likely find yourself buying new ones, different shapes and sizes, with new contents, not thinking about the old jars you used to have.

When you look at letting go in this way, it offers you an opportunity to step back from the attachment to things as they were and allow for the beauty of new experiences.

*Why is it so much easier to let go of objects that you feel have outlived their purpose than, say, a relationship or job?*

If you bring the recycling analogy to a more human level, anyone who has had a relationship in their lives that has ended, has the potential to be ‘recycled.’ Just because one situation wasn’t right doesn’t mean that person is flawed; it simply means there’s a situation out there that’s a better fit. It may be time to shift the energy and move on.

The position of president is ‘recycled’ with each new person elected – the position itself may hold the same meaning, but each new electee brings to it a fresh perspective and their unique stamp.

*There’s beauty to be found in things that have been let go.*

Found object art has its own appeal, as does the incorporation of recycled clothing into new and vibrant pieces. If you had attachments to what these things used to be, such beauty would not be possible.
The same is true in your life’s experiences: let go of attachments to how, who or what someone or something is ‘supposed’ to be, and see what beauty emerges.

Questions for your consideration:

? Here’s another opportunity for creative imagination: Think about a challenge in your life. What does it feel like at the moment?

? Imagine you could recycle it into absolutely anything. What would you want it to become?

Would it benefit you? Your family? The world?

Would it be something useful? Powerful? Joyful?

Get creative with your descriptions – like the exercise with the erotic short story. Don’t think in the realm of what you ‘know’, think about what might be possible. Be like a child when asked to draw something from their imagination – there are no limits to colours, textures, etc. Let go of your attachments to this reality, even momentarily, and allow yourself to explore infinite potential.

? What if you could turn your challenge into piles of compost for the Earth to use – what would you grow? Where would you grow them? Describe them, and what you’d do with what grows.
Day 12

Art

‘What is art? Art grows from joy and sorrow, but mostly from sorrow.
It grows from human lives.’ - Edvard Munch

As we saw with music, the creation of beautiful and powerful art can grow from an artist’s painful past. As we stand in the galleries of the world, viewing the masterpieces, we feel moved to tears, laughter, anger and discomfort.

Art has a way of reaching out to the most primal parts of ourselves and stirring our souls. Each of us connects differently with each piece, and has our own preference for styles, colours and emotive responses.

As we enter the artist’s world, we let go of our idea of what is and isn’t possible, like the world of dreams, and follow them on their unique journey through their creation. Some paint in a way that is representative, while others use symbolism and abstractions to express their inspiration.

The artist might also approach the blank canvas with an open mind, letting go of ideas of what they are going to create, instead allowing for the work to lead them. To paraphrase Michelangelo, the creations already exist within the stone, it is simply the artist’s job to free them.

Frida Kahlo is a good example of an artist who worked consciously through her pain, expressing her journey at different stages. She had polio as a child, and at 18, was involved in a near-fatal bus crash that caused her crippling pain for the remainder of her life. Many of her works are self-portraits, and show the viewer how she felt and who she was at different stages of her life. There is a rawness and vulnerability that she expresses which allows the viewer to connect with that part of them.

When we are faced with such freedom of expression, we understand on some level that we are also ‘allowed’ to express such things. It’s human nature to connect with others on an emotional level, and art can be a catalyst in that experience.

Find an outlet for your own letting go, and put it out there for others to connect to. You might find it’s just the therapy you need.
Questions for your consideration:

? How can you find a way to express your feelings in a colourful and creative way? Play with the idea of giving life to the things you want to let go – give them a shape, a colour, a name – and shift how you feel about them.

? Think about specific pieces or styles of art that have moved you in different ways throughout your life. Was there a common theme or look to them? Do you return to them to help shift your feelings now?

? Thinking about art and artwork that has moved you, imagine sitting with the artist of those pieces and telling them a bit of your story. Envision how they might depict your feelings as they engage with the story you tell. Can you envision the finished product? How does it make you feel?

? Find a few pieces of art you’ve never seen before that move you in some way (either online, in a magazine or in person). Write the story about each of them using just your feelings. Really engage with what it brings up and give as much detail as possible about the story behind the piece.
Day 13

The End of a Relationship

This is another one of those events that can trigger huge changes in your perspective and your life. The longer a relationship has been a part of how you define yourself, the harder it can be. If there are children involved, and/or shared property and resources, these just keep adding to the difficulty of moving on.

*Anything you let go of leaves a space, and sometimes it is so wrapped up in other things that you feel more of a bomb crater than a space.*

As you set out on the road to coupledom, you start to leave parts of yourself behind, putting them aside perhaps in favour of shared dreams and shared understandings of who ‘You/We’ are as a unit, not who each of you is as an individual. Resources become entangled as you invest in homes, businesses, cars and lives together. Children, or pets, come along and wangle their way into your hearts as part of that definition of ‘You/We.’ So when it happens that a relationship has run its course, or partners are separated through crisis, letting go feels like more of a complicated, painful untangling than a simple surrender.

How do you let go of a partner when for five, fifteen or thirty years you’ve called yourself ‘wife,’ ‘partner,’ or ‘husband,’ the words becoming as much a part of your self-definition as others’ definitions of you? It’s a long, slow process, and can be especially painful as you work back through the threads and find ways that your own patterns and behaviours contributed to the unfolding. Accepting responsibility is a way to let go without all the ties that keep you in repetitive patterns of relating, and it’s key in bringing in new perspectives.

So much gets tied up in relationships, and you base so much of your happiness, self-worth and understanding of who you are in the world, on them.

Many patterns and beliefs spring from your own experiences in your Family of Origin. You take these perspectives of yourself and who you are into the world and reflect them out, unconsciously sending out the message that what you seek is something that mirrors those beliefs. So then when you find a relationship, and through it see your deepest fears and secrets reflected back at you, it’s either shift the energy and make changes, or play into it and perpetuate the cyclical patterns. If you do this, then you may have more than one relationship that tries to help you grow through these same sticking points.

Relating with others around you is always about your growth, and finding ways to navigate whatever you reflect in each other. Letting go of the ties you’ve built sometimes brings up the old unfinished business, or pinpoints ways in which you’ve allowed your own wants and needs to be swallowed up in the ‘whole’ of the partnership.

Letting go reminds you that you cannot be everything to everyone and it may be time to find the parts of yourself you’ve lost to be a fully incorporated individual again.

Wholeness, happiness, self-worth; none of these can be found outside of yourself, and when relationships end, it is because you are being asked to let go of the belief that without the other you are in some way not enough. As you shift your perspective, it opens up the possibility for something even better to enter.
Letting go begins with remembering that you were once an individual and that by staying tied to your partner, emotionally, mentally or spiritually, you are blocking your own journey back to wholeness.

The material part of existence that is inevitably tied in with partnership is a mere complication in the grand scheme of things. Step back from the need to hold on to external ideas of who and what you are in the world. Allow for your true power and innate knowing to step up and show you the way back to centre. Allow for new perspectives to flood in as you shed outworn ideas of what is and what used to be.

Celebrate in gratitude for the fact that you have the capacity to feel such depths of love, for yourself and for others, and let go.

Questions for your consideration:

? Yesterday we explored the idea of things dying in their current form. That’s the key to shifting energy for all things. A relationship is a living entity that is being expressed in a certain form at any given time. Sometimes it’s easy to get caught up in patterns of behaviour based on past understandings of who and how we are in the world. In relationships, these patterns are reflected to the other(s) involved.

So again, the idea is to be able to see the relationship as a thing outside of yourself, and observe the form it currently takes. How would you describe it to someone who has never met you?

? How would you describe your ideal relationship?

? Do the two descriptions match?

? If not, what would you need to let go of in order for the two descriptions to align? Make a list, including even the things that seem unchangeable.
Day 14

Ecological Succession

_Just as seasons come and go, and the plants and flowers blossom and die with the changing seasons, so too do ecosystems and species transform over time._

Ecological succession is the process by which species within an environment change over time, in concert with the climatic and ambient conditions in the region. Some species rely on what you might call ‘acts of God’ to cleanse the region of the old detritus and make way for new growth.

Forest fires, volcanoes, brush fires, lightning strikes, floods; all of these can be the cause of the devastation and bring similar results: complete destruction of the existing structure. Yet the land recovers, offering new species where before there wasn’t room or the conditions weren’t right. New creatures might move in to take advantage of the different stages of growth, some feeding on the tender shoots and others preferring the more mature growth in a few years’ time.

This kind of change can take place gradually, over years or decades, such as a farm or garden that has been neglected and taken over by new varieties of plants and weeds, brought in by the wind or by a variety of creatures. It can also happen overnight, the result of a flash flood or a lightning strike that starts dry grass or tinder alight and leads to an inferno.

_Either way, the land adapts gracefully, accepting that its definition as one way of being has been erased, and will be replaced with a new version._

The creatures that are a vital part of the ecosystem also change their relationship with the land as a result, and adapt their own definitions of what it is, or was.

Amazingly, some plants’ seeds will only be viable for germination after certain conditions are met. Jack Pines need the intense heat of fire in order to release their seeds.

Longleaf Pine seeds won’t germinate until they’ve been exposed to very high temperatures. If fires were put out immediately, never allowed to burn down some of the older growth and dead wood, some species would suffer greatly, potentially even disappear. In human terms, we prefer to ‘put out fires’ before they lead to devastation, potentially robbing ourselves of valuable opportunities to let go of our own dead wood.

Another way that ecological succession can teach you about letting go is through demonstrating that there are many phases to change. After complete devastation, for example the eruption of Mount St. Helen’s, the ground is bare, only a shadow of its former self.
From another perspective, it's ripe with abundant potential. Some species of fungi thrive in such conditions, and begin to appear quite quickly after such devastation. They may not last forever, but are there to prepare the soil for the other species which will come and take root, to repopulate and reform the forest in a new and beautiful way.

Sometimes the new growth (seeds germinated as a result of the fire, for instance) is plagued by weather anomalies in its early years and doesn’t survive. This makes way for entirely different species to emerge, ones that weren’t compatible with the others. And the ash or detritus left by the destructive force may in fact provide excellent nutrients for new species and new growth to thrive. The gifts just keep on coming!

*The relative ease with which ecosystems adapt to the new conditions reflects for you the potential for ease in your own transitions.*

If you can let go and allow the fires and floods of transformation to sweep through your life, you can embrace your very own version of ecological succession. It’s only when you look at the world through eyes clouded by fear, seeing only damage, destruction and worry for man-made constructs that this cathartic and powerful process becomes one to avoid.

If you release attachments to the way things are and let go of the perceived control you have over outcomes, your personal ecosystem(s) can thrive with new growth and potential.

**Questions for your consideration:**

? Think about a time in your life when you’ve made big changes – moving to a new home, school, job or city. These kinds of changes are akin to ecological succession – you were like a seed blown from its place of origin elsewhere to plant itself and survive, or thrive.

? How did you adjust to the new environment? Were there specific ways in which you made yourself feel ‘at home’?

? In what ways did the external shift reflect inner changes? Did you reinvent yourself completely, or simply adapt to the changes around you?

? Was it easier to make these changes, knowing that the new environment was going to be different from the old?

Try to envision shifting your current challenge to a new environment, to see if it feels any different.
Day 15

Songs of Heartache

No doubt you have a song or two that’s guaranteed to bring a tear to your eye, whether it’s connected to a certain person or it reminds you of a difficult time in your life. Most of the songs you feel such connections to in some way help you to believe the artist is singing right to you. They get inside your heart with their sincerity and vulnerability, and you just know they have felt how you do, once upon a time.

_How brilliant is it that an artist can express their heartache and through that encourage others to feel pieces of their own?_

Artists have a beautiful opportunity to let go of their pain through the act of creating their work, and in doing so, others connect with the art on a deep, emotional level. No wonder it’s called a gift! Perhaps you sometimes forget that they, too are human and susceptible to the same ups and downs you have in your own life. It shows tremendous strength to let go so publicly; to be exposed to potential criticism on top of the depth of their pain but to go on creating for the sake of their love of the process.

Following is a list of songs to consider, demonstrating the variety of trials that musicians have used as catalysts for their creativity. You feel the letting go as a primal reflection of their pain and as a kind of tacit permission to express your own.

This can serve to remind you that letting go can be a healthy and normal outlet, and can bring about great beauty when channelled into creativity or passion.

_It can also remind you that at the heart of it all is Love; letting go is made more difficult when you’ve loved what is being lost, but sometimes the most loving thing you can do is to let go._

This list barely touches on the one that could be made, but they’re some that have at times helped me to express and examine my own feelings. I’d love to hear some of yours, too.

‘Tears in Heaven,’ by Eric Clapton was written after his four-year old son, Conor, died after falling from the window of a tall building.

‘Jagged Little Pill’ and ‘Flavors of Entanglement’ are both albums by Alanis Morisette, written after very different breakups. The former is an album expressing a young woman’s anger over feeling taken advantage of by an older man; the latter is an album that came out of her grief over a broken engagement.

‘(Fuckin’) Perfect,’ by Pink is dedicated to her husband and touches on depression, suicide, and self-hatred.
‘Brick,’ by Ben Folds Five is about Ben’s high school girlfriend who had an abortion, and the difficulty of dealing with the situation.

Led Zeppelin’s ‘All of my Love’ is dedicated to Robert Plant’s five-year old son who died in 1977.

Sarah McLachlan wrote two songs after her eleven-year marriage broke up; ‘Don’t Give up on Us,’ and ‘U Want Me 2.’ She then went on to release an album entitled ‘Laws of Illusion,’ which includes more songs of heartache.

Sheryl Crow, after her very public break-up with Lance Armstrong, wrote ‘Now that you’re Gone.’

Justin Furstenburg, lead singer of Blue October writes a variety of songs dealing with schizophrenia, suicidal thoughts, depression and the pain that these cause. It’s incredibly raw and intense to hear the dark stuff brought to the surface, but offers a perspective into the journey of someone living with mental illness.

Adele’s second album, ‘21,’ takes the listener on a heart-felt journey through loss and moving on, and is delivered in a way that seems to tug at heart-strings worldwide. She has become an almost household name since the album’s release, which indicates to me that she’s touched many people’s hearts.

Questions for your consideration:

? What are your favourite heartbreak songs?

? What is it about them that you find you most connect with – the lyrics, the emotions expressed through the music, a memory?

? Do you ever listen to these songs purposely, in order to release sadness or grief, as a catalyst to help you shift ‘stuck’ energies? How do you feel afterwards?

? Do these songs affect you no matter how you’re feeling when you hear them?

? Do you also have a list of ‘happy’ songs? What are some that are guaranteed to get you moving, no matter what else is happening in your life?
Day 16

Ayahuasca and guided releases

‘Ayahuasca ceremonies are usually very structured rituals where the shaman or shamana holds the space and guides the drinkers on their journeys of discovery. The shaman is not just administering the hallucinogenic brew; he or she is also calling in their allies, banishing evil spirits, and safeguarding their immediate physical environment—playing the role of psychic bouncer. And while personalities vary, the role of the shaman in anchoring the physical and spiritual worlds is inviolate, and should be treated with respect.’ — Rak Razam (from Aya: A Shamanic Odyssey)

The ritual use of Ayahuasca is intended to be very sacred, and very powerful. It is a ceremony involving the brewing and drinking of a concoction of plants found in the Amazon jungles, and the chanting and singing of an ayahuasquero, a shaman specially trained in the ritual.

Its intention is to help you to purge your body of any beliefs, entities and behaviours that are not in your highest good, and it’s not called the Vine of the Dead for nothing.

Some participants in Ayahuasca ceremonies have described seeing demons and felt as if they were being ripped apart from the inside. It may not sound like an easy one, but it’s a letting go, and a good one, if you follow the advice of the plants and shamans involved.

Some medical doctors, in Peru and in Canada (Dr. Jacques Mabit and Dr. Gabor Maté), have even tried Ayahuasca rituals as a catalyst for healing severely addicted people with startling results. It is designed to unlock emotional memories and purge them so that healing can occur. Considering that addiction largely stems from the fear of facing whatever haunts you, and turning to substances or behaviours to mask that fear, the concept of using Ayahuasca as a catalyst makes sense.

Both doctors agree that the ritualistic use of Ayahuasca is important – the ayahuasquero hears the spirits of the plants, and chants throughout the ceremony. The chants can bring up different reactions in each person, depending on what is being released.

Throughout the world, and history, there have been plants designed to aid in the healing process.

The Bwiti tribe of Cameroon and Gabon use the powdered root bark of the Tabernanthie Iboga tree to induce powerful visions and journey to the worlds beyond to communicate with ancestors. It also has connections to Ayahuasca, in that it has been found to be a quick and withdrawal-free cure for substance addictions. Magic mushrooms, peyote, and datura have all been used in ritual settings throughout history.

These powerful releasing tools were recognised by shamans and healers around the world before they became popular as recreational experiences. The idea is to let go of ego and allow the spirit of the plant to lead you. In most cases, the chemical components of the substance have effects on parts of your brain, meaning the letting go is complete, and beyond conscious decisions. In a ritualistic setting, the patient surrenders to the shaman’s wisdom and allows them to lead the journey.
Of course, there are even more tangible examples of letting go when you consider what is released during the healing process: emotional memories, entities, beliefs, patterns, etc. People crash through barriers of belief systems about whether or not anything exists beyond what they perceive as reality.

*This is letting go on a grand scale.*

And it is thanks to the shamans and healers who have lived among the plants for generations and heard their whispers in the forest that we have the capacity to benefit from this incredible power.

**Questions for your consideration:**

- Have you ever had an experience with a ritual form of release like this?

- If so, how did it feel? Did the benefits last beyond the experience itself?

- How can you create a ritual in your own life that reflects the energy of these guided releases? Is there a way you could create your own ceremony to release all the things that you feel are holding you back?

  Be creative, and use whatever you have at hand. You can achieve the same *ritual* effect using herbal tea or water. You can say prayers or blessings and ask that the liquid clear your system of negativity and blocks. If you begin with intention and have faith in that, the ritual act of cleansing is very powerful.

  You could make a list of things that frighten you, or that you feel are in some way stopping your progress, and burn them, one by one. You could draw them, and by doing so, know that you’ve put them outside of yourself.

  The act of creating ceremony is the key – and trusting that whichever way you choose to release the energy is exactly right for you.

- What does your ritual look like? Is anyone else involved? Do you play music or use chanting/toning as a way to release? Can you dance your demons away?
Day 17

Colleen and Adrian

Today I have an interview with a couple who had a difficult and stressful experience with financial rock bottom. I love their openness and willingness to share their story, and I think it’s a great example of how holding on to things keeps you tied to the energy they carry.

Colleen and Adrian are a married couple from Australia with 2 teenaged children. She is a teacher and he is a fire fighter, and a few years ago they let go of a furniture business they’d had together for 10 years. They had owned and run their business for a while when they were approached by another couple who had an import business and wanted to combine forces. Things checked out with the solicitors and accountants, so they agreed, but after several years they discovered inconsistencies in the bookkeeping, complaints of abuse by the staff, and even drug problems. By then, the business partnership had fallen apart. In order to get out, Colleen and Adrian had to leave behind a huge part of the business they’d spent ten years building, and walk away without any money.

JG: After you left the partnership, what happened?

C: We went through solicitors – they tried to get more out of the business... the mediation process went quickly because we were willing to just walk away – we didn’t want the abuse at the end of the day – they always abused each other so they were used to dealing with tricky methods.

JG: When you walked away, was it an instant feeling of relief?

C: I had lost so much weight; I couldn’t eat because of the stress. For me, that was pretty telling – I physically couldn’t eat – friends were saying you’re looking too thin.

A: There was relief when we came to the final outcome, knowing what we were going to retain. We weren’t entirely happy with it, but it meant we’d never have to see, speak to or deal with these people again.

JG: Having been through it together, has it changed your relationship?

C: Yeah, I think so. For us, it’s an economic crunch – there’s a financial cost to this disaster – I’ve seen other couples fall apart during similar situations, so it made a difference that we had each other to bolster up.
A: We’re pretty lucky because when Colleen is down and out, I seem to be on a high, and when I’m down and out, Colleen is on a high – we seem to balance each other out and balance the circumstance out – I think that’s part of the reason we made it through.

C: We were talking about it, too – for richer or for poorer – we’ve seen other crunches happen, other businesses fold. Investors swindled a bunch of people; a prominent couple, who were always in the papers, were affected by the swindles, and fell apart when they lost a whole bunch of money, their relationship couldn’t sustain that. For richer for poorer sounds good when you say it, but when you’re actually faced with it, it’s not so easy.

We also had really good friends who had a business, and were going through a similar thing at the same time and we’d commiserate. One time N. said to me, ‘I was thinking of suicide,’ and I said, ‘yeah I know what you’re saying.’ The thing that we decided was that it’s an option, but it’s not an option, because we’ve got families. What are the kids going to do if we take ourselves out of the equation?

It’s telling to have a conversation like that; you can’t just opt out, as easy as it might seem, or as preferable as it might seem at that time, it might remove pain but it’s not going to remove the pain for the rest of your family. What are your kids going to do? It’s a really interesting and strong push to keep getting through whatever you’re trying to get through.

Adrian had that conversation as well. Not that you’re going to suicide, but it does come up as an option. You go, I’ve had enough. You start to plan; what are the logistics? And then you go, well my family, it’s not really going to be a viable option for them.

JG: What do you think you let go through the experience?

C: [let go of material stuff] … being able to let go, this is going to be one of the poorer times – we could let go of that and get back on with other stuff … And you know their hell is that they’re stuck with each other. Okay, they have a lot of money, and they’re living in a big house with a marina; at the end of the day, they go home to each other, and that’s pretty nasty.

A: I guess we let go of the immediate hate. There’s some residual hate there, but it’s only brought to the fore when you drive past their store. Time heals stuff … it has tapered off dramatically.

JG: Do you feel stronger?

A: We’ve come through enlightened.

C: I guess knowing you’ve got that resilience – if you can deal with that, there’s not been anything else like that … At the end of the day, the important thing is the family, keeping that together, the business is just a thing.

In the follow-up after the interview, Colleen said, ‘Sometimes too, if you’re not tested then you won’t really know how far you can stretch, so although these situations aren’t welcome, they do have their uses and we certainly can have an empathetic viewpoint for others.’
And in her final note to me after the interview, Colleen said, ‘We felt fine after reliving the past (’cause it is in the past and we have better things to look forward to).’

Make way for the bright new future by letting go of the past. Great advice.

This interview was chosen to pinpoint the idea that letting go of physical, material things can lead you to discover that the things you own don’t define you, and to find what’s truly important to you and your well-being. Sometimes walking away can resolve a situation far more easily than fighting, and lead to even more growth through the experience.

*Many thanks to Colleen and Adrian for their time and their brilliant insights.*

**Questions for your consideration:**

> ? It’s always more difficult to know when to walk away when you’re embroiled in the immediate ‘reality’ of the situation. That’s why it often feels easier to give advice to others in times of difficulty than to solve your own problems.

Once again, I’m going to ask you to engage in some creative imagination. I’d like you to play the part of interviewer, asking questions about the challenge and how you came to a resolution.

> ? Think about what publication you’d like your interview to be featured in. Would it be part of a series? What is the main theme? Who is the audience?

> ? What is the purpose of the interview – is it purely informative, or is it to uplift and inspire people? Is it to prove a point or offer help to other in a similar situation? There is no right or wrong answer; these questions are simply designed to provide a detailed description for your own story.

> ? When and where does the interview take place? Is it five years from now? Was it last year? Is it in your current home, or somewhere you’ve always wanted to live?

If you think back to the idea that time doesn’t exist in The Dreaming, your problem has already been solved in some time/space reality. Amazing, eh? Trust that by letting go of the perception of reality that exists, you can bring in the truth of myriad other realities. And one way to start is to imagine what your beautiful new reality looks like.
Day 18

The Tarot

The ancient art of the tarot tells a story of a journey from Fool to Universe, passing through trials and lessons along the way that lead to the graduation to another level of consciousness.

The traditional deck consists of 74 cards, which is filled with allusions to letting go, moving on, turning your back on circumstances, and dying to the old. The story is not a new one – across time and around the world there are parables, stories and fables that offer advice and guidance on living a ‘good’ life.

I see the tarot as the same thing – a guide, a tool to assess the potential opportunities or actions that could be taken in any given situation. A reading asks the client to let go of preconceived ideas about what the cards might mean, and asks the reader to let go of their own perceptions of what the client might ‘want’ of them.

Here are a few cards from the tarot and their very distinct messages about letting go.

**The Fool (0)** – the first card in the deck, and the beginning of the journey. It represents the letting go that you feel at the beginning of a journey: letting go of expectations, letting go of fears, letting go of potential problems that could arise. It asks the traveller to trust that the path will show up, and that their heart will lead the way. It’s akin to Birth, which we explored at the beginning of the book, as a way of letting go of who we perceive ourselves to be, what we believe we know, and how to control the outcome.

**Death (13)** – the ultimate in letting go, really. It is why letting go feels so difficult, because it feels like something is dying, and in a way, it is. It means our perception of what is, in this moment, has to die in order to make room for the new. Again it links back to Birth, and the idea that all of life is circular. It speaks of letting go in order for the death to come (not fighting or resisting it), and letting go of the fear of the unknown that lies beyond.

**The Tower (16)** – not just letting go, but busting down the foundations of what has supported you to this point. This one is a destructive force that comes to tear down old structures, leaving behind fertile soil on which to build something new, something stronger than ever before. It’s a brilliant card, but it can be frightening because it appears as a force that seems out of our control. It can be something that happens in your life if you’ve been ignoring or resisting the signs about letting go, and it can feel pretty traumatic. These are the things that come into your life and through them you discover that something underneath needed to be shifted. They are the Universe’s tools for providing an opening to let go on a large scale.

There are others, scattered throughout the Minor Arcana: 8 of Cups, 6 of Swords, 5 of Pentacles, Knight of Wands; which also touch on the theme of letting go from different perspectives. Each suit represents a different aspect of our lives, and each number represents a stage we have reached.
As in life, these opportunities appear through the story of the tarot, woven in with other experiences telling of abundance, grief, joy or turmoil.

As you let go and allow for the cards to fall where they may, you end up with those you need the most, for your soul’s growth.

Questions for your consideration:

? Today I’d like you to design at least one tarot card that you feel describes you and your challenge. You don’t have to know anything about the tarot, it’s just an exercise to get you thinking about what else in the world might reflect how you feel at the moment.

It would be helpful to start with how you feel. Write it down and see if it brings up any sense of familiarity, as to what archetype or image you want to use in your card.

For instance, if you feel stuck, you could use quicksand or a brick wall to visually represent that energy. Build a story around the card, using symbols to indicate the underlying feelings and patterns that may be adding depth to the situation.

How will you express this as an image? Will you draw it, paint it, use digital imagery, make a collage? How could this card help someone else out of a similar situation (ie what are the lessons you can take away)?

It may be that there is more than one image or theme that needs to be expressed – design cards for each of them and see what story they tell together.
Day 19

The Plant World

No matter where we are in the world, plants can teach us incredible lessons about the nature of letting go.

In the harshest of conditions, they eke out an existence and send their seeds out before they die. They don’t plan where the seeds will fall, or how they will be distributed evenly among the many potential fertile spots. They produce them, let them go and continue living (or dying). Some seeds will take root, others won’t. Some will be carried by nature’s forces to new environments, perhaps starting the process of ecological succession elsewhere.

They don’t cling to their seeds fiercely, batting off those who wish to steal them for themselves. For the most part, they offer them up freely, to birds, bees, wind and rain, for redistribution and possibly even cross-pollination.

They don’t ask to be referenced as the original contributor of that particular seed, so that all may know who was responsible for that small part of creation.

When you try to attribute these human tendencies to apparently non-sentient beings, it comes out sounding almost ridiculous.

Yet how does it not sound ridiculous when you attribute them to yourself? Why are you so attached to the things you believe you have created? Why do you cling fiercely to external or material expressions of wealth, status or value? You are a part of the same system that nature is, a part of the whole, incredible organism that is Creation.

Consider another way that trees can teach you about letting go.

Every year they go through changes as the seasons come and go. They don’t fight against losing their leaves in the autumn, or consciously compete with other trees to see whose blossoms are the prettiest, biggest, or most abundant. They stand naked and vulnerable for months of the year, trusting that this lean time will end and make way for something new and abundant. Even when you put your own mark on them, pruning them to a more pleasing shape or in a way that will provide a more abundant crop, they adapt. They don’t mourn for the branches that were taken or define themselves as any less than what they are without them.

Plants in their fabulous complexity are simple in that they just are.

They don’t know how to be anything else. It’s only humans who try to change who we are to fit into the role that others (or ourselves) deem most suitable and appropriate. You may fear letting go of things because you will be seen as a failure or lacking in ambition. Imagine telling a tree that it had no ambition, or a rosebush that its perfect, solitary bloom meant utter failure. These understandings of supposedly human tendencies are no less ridiculous when applied to ourselves.

This is a reminder to look for the teacher in everything you see, every person you meet, and every experience you have. Let go of the human assumption that you are in some way better informed about how life is to be lived, or better equipped to make decisions about the shape of your reality than all the beings that surround you.
Take note of the variety of beautiful forms that letting go takes, gently and easily, all around you. And stop thinking for a moment.

*Let yourself just be, like a plant.*

**Questions for your consideration:**

Okay, we’re entering the realm of the imagination again... I’d like you to consider how a tree would handle your current challenge.

Given that trees don’t solve problems in a rational, egocentric way like human beings, but that they do come across certain challenges (drought some years, things being tied around their trunks, etc), see if you can de-humanise your problem to a level that could be solved through instinct or the desire to grow.

Let go of the idea that only human brain power can solve this and see what might already exist in nature as a way of perceiving and overcoming challenges.

How can your problem be de-humanised into a more universal challenge that may be experienced across time, space and nature?

None of us exist in a vacuum, and the challenge which feels to us so huge and impossible has been experienced in multitudes of forms before. Knowing this might help to break it down into smaller pieces that can be solved using different perspectives.

Describe your problem-solving tree and outline the solutions it presents.
Day 20

Interview with a healing practitioner

Fiona Mayhill is a Certified Body Talk practitioner and owner of Innerlife Health Services in Victoria, British Columbia. We spent time discussing the role of catharsis/letting go in the process of healing, and the transformative power that’s found in going through change consciously. The following are some key excerpts from the interview with Fiona.

JG: Could you start with defining the concept of self?

FM: I believe that our experience of our selves is a collection of concepts, a collection of beliefs, a collection of patterns of energy, ways of being, behaviours; and the experience of I or I-ness, me, self, comes from an entrainment, coherence, a clarification of or a cohesive collection of all these things. It’s cultural, it’s social, it’s genetic, it’s historical, it’s ancestral, it’s continually learning and growing, continually moving, continually changing. There’s no such thing as a static experience of self.

JG: How is it that people get to the point that a breaking down of self happens?

FM: When there’s a lot of stagnation in those concepts, a lot of holding on, a lot of coping, basically, a lot of fear energy being experienced, the concepts of self become static, and as everything in life does change and evolve, in our experience of life, subconsciously we are drawn into life experiences that will help us move through that fear. And sometimes that looks like a massive motor vehicle accident, it sometimes looks like the ending of a relationship, it sometimes looks like a major health crisis, it sometimes looks like a major psychotic break, it can look any number of ways, but it has the same intention, which is to break down the stuckness and the rigidity of that fear energy.

JG: After that has broken down, how does that change a person’s life or health?

FM: It changes a person’s life entirely; you never look at life the same. I think that it depends on the strength of personality, strength of constitution, how much consciousness or coherence that person has in their body-mind – in order to integrate that. So for some people, the healing process (basically I think of healing as accepting that new authentic sense of self that has emerged through this process) and our ability to accept who we are, who we really, truly are, is going to depend on how much conscious energy that person is going to be able to draw in.

JG: Have you seen people go through a number of catharses before healing, or do they sometimes never get there?

FM: Catharsis has a big energy behind it. There’s no such thing as an external definition for one person, so it’s entirely self-relevant, self-experiential process.
I see catharsis all the time in my practice, because somebody has a massive shift and for them, that experience of moving into a more accepting, open, authentic place is so enormous that you could never describe it to someone else because it’s purely experiential.

Somebody else may have the experience of what we would consider a really traumatic crisis, a big loss of a whole lot of concepts of self, so when someone experiences the loss of the physical self, so they go from being an active, mobile person in their youth to being a quadriplegic, that feels very traumatic, for all of us, culturally, because it really reflects our own fear of restriction of life energy. This would probably be culturally defined as big catharsis, or big loss of concepts of self but it’s relevant, it’s experiential. For that person, they may now feel more in line with their authentic self. ... We can’t point out other people’s catharsis, other peoples’ experience of the revealing of authentic selves. That’s something we can only know in ourselves.

JG: Can you talk about fear? I think people are more afraid of the fear of what they’re going to find – getting to their worst nightmare it’s not as bad as you think, it’s the fear that’s worse.

FM: That’s right – so what you’re talking about is the shift of bringing consciousness to subconscious fear. A lot of times we’re not even aware of what it is that we’re afraid of. People just fear the fear. ... The thing is, that it’s operating, it’s in there, it’s below our level of conscious awareness. If we knew what to do with it, we probably would, but we just don’t know it’s there, it’s just become a reality, it’s become our experience of self. It’s become who we think we are. And, a paranoid schizophrenic is now given a label that defines this intense fear that is fragmenting the self. The layers and layers and layers of kind of coping with this are really deeply enmeshed in our experience of our world, our experience culturally, socially, environmentally. Yes we create, we perceive the outside world, but it’s this self-reinforcing experience. It proves it to us all the time. I’m afraid, and you see, there’s lots to be afraid of, therefore I’m afraid.

JG: Can you talk about addictions; do they stem from fear? Is it a way to escape yourself or the fear? And is hitting rock bottom about coming to the consciousness of that fear as well?

FM: A lot of people have to keep redefining deeper rock bottom, and sometimes it just kills them, but that’s the experience, the kind of expansion of self, the kind of testing out of self; how deep, how low, how bad can it get? And who am I going to be, who am I going to find in that place, when I’m staring myself in the eyes, who is that going to be? And I think that addiction (whether substance, emotional addiction, relational addiction, thought addiction) is any kind of repetitive pattern in which we have a tie in. Addiction is actually feeding us in some way, its satiating us, it’s giving us a little taste of relief from our fear, even though it propels us back into the whole cycle of it, it’s this little hit of momentary release from our fear, and that’s our tie in. ... It feels more comfortable, even though our life can be in shambles because of it, it’s still more comfortable than addressing the fear, than actually facing the fear.

JG: How do people rebuild after such a break-down in concept of self?

FM: The hope is that they wouldn’t. Enlightenment is truly not replacing anything with anything. It’s lightening the load, it’s moving into a more authentic, experiential self. It’s only through that experience that we can begin to have a sense of our own integrity. Instead of living life according to what we consider
to be other peoples’ values, expectations about who we should be, we can connect with a more authentic self that doesn’t have anything to do with that. It means that there’s a greater capacity for acceptance and compassion and understanding, and space for other people to show up exactly as they are. ...

*Huge thanks to Fiona for sharing her wisdom with us today.*

**Questions for your consideration:**

? How would you describe your Self today? What defines you as YOU? Has it changed in the past year? In the past five years?

? What experiences have changed the way you see/define your Self?

? What have you had to let go in the process of shifting your definitions of Self?

? How would another ‘version’ of yourself have dealt with your current challenge(s)? What advice would they give you in dealing with it? What advice would you now give them?

? What, if anything, is stopping you from being the highest and best version of you Self that you could be? Make a list, including even the things that seem unchangeable.
Day 21

Death

*Death is the ultimate letting go.* It is also a universal, something we will all eventually share, and as we go through our lives, we experience it in its many forms around us.

All things die, that is a certainty. Not just living beings, but hopes, dreams, relationships - all things have the potential to end, which to your emotional self is the same as death. It is the finality of it that you strive to resist, the unknown quantity that exists post-death, without the thing that is dying.

All the ‘what-ifs’, ‘could-have-beens’ and ‘what-might-have-beens’ float around, nagging at you to revisit them, keeping you tied to the non-existent potential that died with the being or dream. Does the thing that has died have the same attachment? No. Their journey is complete. The soul of the creation that has died has done its job and it has gone on to whatever comes next.

*What it leaves behind are huge gifts, which are different for each person involved, but they are there for you to find and to celebrate.*

Each and every living being leaves a legacy by virtue of the fact that they spent time on this planet. You might feel like some legacies have more validity than others, but who’s to say that the homeless guy on the corner that you see every day as you walk home is not there to spare someone else from being there. The space he takes up by being where he is means there’s that much less physical and energetic space for someone else to be there. What a gift. In death, he opens up a space that none of us would consciously want to fill, yet when he stood there in life, we might not have appreciated that gift.

That’s why stepping back and looking at death from a slightly different perspective can be so powerful. That’s not to say it doesn’t hurt -- death and endings hurt -- a lot. It’s more to say that if you can grieve and be open to the possibility that within the separation from your loved one or long-cherished dream lies new perceptions, you will more easily accept death. It is when you fight to let go of your loved ones that you prolong the process of grieving and don’t get the gifts as quickly.

*So how do you do this thing, this letting go of the things that you hold dear?*

You do it through your heart, and your emotions. Grieving is the way to release the hurt you feel, and the quickest way to the gifts. No one wants to feel the depths of despair that grief brings, so sometimes we run to something new that will take away the pain. The pain doesn’t go anywhere, it simply gets buried beneath a layer of not-quite-happiness-but-not-sadness-either which keeps us able to exist without too much trouble.

Sometimes, without accessing those depths of grief and pain, you cannot fully understand happiness. What you take to be happiness is more like a state of contentment with no extremes, no mornings where you
wake up so filled with love and gratitude for all of existence that you could just burst. Emotions are your
gauge to navigate your way through the world.

_Sometimes death can seem so unnecessary and so damned unfair._ If a child dies before it even has the
chance to know the world, or if thousands of people are lost all at once in some horrific way, most of us
want to scream at the sky and shout, ‘why? why?’

But if you can let go of the egoic attachment to the idea that these beings have missed out on achieving
whatever existed in their potential, you can take a step back and thank them for the gift of opening you up
to your own potential. You are invited to feel deeply, to experience the world and all it has to offer through
every fibre of your being, something which might only come available to you through the process of
grieving and the prospect of living when everything dear to you has gone.

Take heart in the fact that these souls agreed to every step of their journey, that they have progressed, and
that they watch you through your journey with only love in their hearts. They feel every tear you shed and
they celebrate with you your victories. Find the gift, because it IS there, and it is waiting for you to accept it.

How many people leave the theatre mourning the end of the play? Or believing that the actor who has just
portrayed a spectacular death scene has actually died?

More than likely, you leave the theatre moved by the performance and talking about the skill of the actor
at taking on such a role. You applaud the talent involved, the casting, the script and the overall
performance. This is what you are asked to do in life, as well. Applaud the life that was, celebrate the gifts it
brought, and release yourself from any attachments to the soul. You are asked not to hold on to the
circumstances around the death, which attach you to the sadness (not grief) and the ‘what-might-have-
beens.’

_In the end, all death is the same, final act of surrender, despite the fact that the circumstances appear
different on the outside._ Honour that surrender and respect the soul for its courage in choosing whatever
method it did for its exit.

Embrace it all and love it, and when it is your time to die, know that you have tasted life fully and leave with
no regrets.
Letting go of letting go

Since we’ve already discussed death and dying to the old in a number of ways throughout the 21 Days, I’d like you to use today to review the journey.

First of all, give yourself a pat on the back for making it this far. Letting go is a challenge for so many people, and the fact that you were willing to take it on, and that you got this far is an accomplishment in itself.

There is no one method for letting go, that’s one of the difficulties. It’s an internally-driven process, each of us finding the courage and strength to do it when and how we’re ready. My hope is that this book has at least offered you the opportunity to examine things from different perspectives and see the potential that exists when you step back from the perceived limitations in your life.

Take a few moments to consider these questions:

? Do you feel any closer to letting go of the thing you wrote down at the start? Do you feel any differently about the overall situation?

? Gather up the lists you’ve made, of things that are holding you back, or things you’d have to let go of, and see if the unchangeable items feel any different.

Sometimes things appear unchangeable one day, and the following day or week reveals an amazing solution that shows you they’re not as rigid as you believed.

Make a new list, of things that have changed since you wrote the initial lists.

I trust that this book has given you an opportunity to reflect on the value that letting go plays in your life, and an understanding that it is a part of your everyday world. I hope you’re able to continue to look around for inspiration from people, nature and life in general to show you how easy and beautiful it can be.

And know that you are never, ever alone through the process.

Thank you so much for joining me, and for your courage and commitment in making changes in your life.

Big Love,

~ Jenny
About Jenny and The Power of Change

Hi, I’m Jenny!

I call myself The Catharsis Coach because it’s easier to remember than ‘intuitive mentor/holder-of-space with a special passion for post-transformation rebuilding.’

What I’m really good at is uncovering the blocks you’ve hidden from yourself, and helping you to find new perspectives and solutions. I love to help others discover possibility and potential where they hadn’t thought to look.

My mission is to normalise the process of change, a huge part of which is letting go, as I’ve tried to demonstrate with this eBook. Without change, we individually stagnate, and as a collective, we won’t progress.

My purpose is to transmute heavier energies such as fear and sadness into joy, so that we can all shift together into higher dimensions of consciousness.

I’d love to connect with you further – here are a few ways you can make that happen:

Say hi on Twitter: https://twitter.com/catharsiscoach

or on Facebook: https://facebook.com/thepowerofchange.me

or email me at jennygriffin@thepowerofchange.me

You’re always welcome to contact me for a complimentary Insight session to see how I can serve you better.