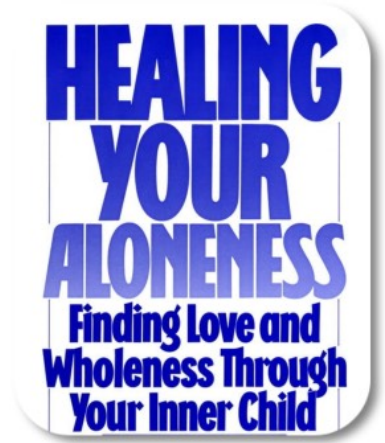


Healing Your Aloneness

Finding love and wholeness... (a summary by Pat Evert)

Why are there so many unhappy people, people in pain, people with low self-esteem, people who feel alone and empty? When we don't know how to fill them from the inside, then we are left trying to fill them from the outside. That's what addiction and codependence is all about. Our sense of isolation and loneliness can only be transcended through experiencing inner wholeness and connection. **It is when we love ourselves that our hearts fill up and the love overflows to others.** We cannot love others any more than we love ourselves, and we cannot receive others' love until we receive our own.



• Introduction

I have always had loving inner dialogues between my Adult and my Child. What if, **there are only two basic intentions in life—the intent to protect and the intent to learn.** The intent to protect keeps us locked into behaving in ways that perpetuate the very fear and pain we are trying to avoid. When I discovered some years ago that we have another choice, that is, the choice to learn from our pain and fear and thus find ways out of these feelings. We have an inner loving relationship between our Inner Adult and Inner Child. Until we intend to learn with and from our Inner Child, we will not heal our inner isolation nor become whole.

Part I, Understanding the Inner Child and Adult

• You Have an Inner Child

All of us have two distinct aspects of our personality: the Adult and the Child. When these two parts are connected and working together, there is a sense of wholeness within. Because we were not truly valued as children, it may be hard to value the Child within us. We may discount its importance. **The Child dwells in the right hemisphere of the brain and sees the fun in life.** The Child is the instinctual part of us, our “gut” feelings. It has sometimes been referred to as the unconscious, but it is unconscious only because we have paid so little attention to it. At any given moment that Child is either being loved or unloved by the Inner Adult.

The Unloved Child - **The feeling of aloneness is the hardest feeling for all of us to feel.** It causes such deep pain that we all work hard to protect ourselves from feeling it. The abandoned Inner Child, feeling desperately empty, alone, and lonely, with no Inner Adult to help handle the loneliness of external abandonment, turns to various addictions to fill itself up. Process addictions fall into two different categories: addiction to people (codependence) and addiction to things and activities. The Child can become addicted to a relationship, to sex, romance, love, and approval. The individual's sense of adequacy and lovability become attached to the approval of others when its Inner Adult is unloving. This is **neediness**. **It's very important to realize that this is not who your Inner Child really is, but who it is when it has been abandoned externally and internally.** The fear of being dominated and engulfed is just as powerful as the fear of being rejected and abandoned. The abandoned Inner Child is doing the best it can to protect itself, but all these protections end up creating even more external and internal aloneness.

The Loved Child - When the Inner Child was loved as a child by its caretakers, or has been **lovingly re-parented by the Inner Adult for a long time, it is soft, sensitive, flowing, and very loving.** Within the loved Child lies our understanding of the inherent equality of all people and the unity of all being. Our society has long diminished the importance of feelings. The loved Child is empathic—feeling deeply into the feelings of others. When was the last time you really let go and had fun? Very often the only time we allow this in ourselves is when we first fall in love. Perhaps it is this very aspect of being in love that we all find so attractive and enlivening. Couples complain that the life seems to have gone out of their relationship and they just don't know how to connect anymore! The ability to find the brighter side of things, to embrace the happy moments while healing the pain—these were choices that enabled me to hold on to the loving Child in my heart. **That loving little Child is in all of us.**

• You Are an Adult/Parent

The Adult is the logical, thinking part of us. The feelings of the Adult come from thought, as opposed to the Child, whose thoughts come from its feelings. The Adult is concerned with doing rather than being, with acting rather than experiencing. It is up to the Adult to initiate the task of loving re-parenting—of healing the old wounds and replacing false beliefs with the truth—and to refuse to condone the self-destructive patterns of the abandoned Child. Our Inner Adult may be a loving Adult or an unloving Adult— we are being loving when **we choose to nurture and support** our own and others' emotional/spiritual growth and when we take personal responsibility for our feelings—that is, **we do not act as victims**. Loving behavior with your Inner Child means that you take responsibility for your own feelings by learning with your Child about the false beliefs that are causing your pain.

The Unloving Adult - Selfishness is expecting others to take responsibility for your feelings. **The unloving Adult resists responsibility for meeting the needs of the Inner Child, leaving the Child to get its needs met through others.** The Child

concludes that it is bad, wrong, unlovable, defective, unimportant, insignificant, and inadequate, and **these false beliefs create feelings of fear, shame, and guilt**. A few of the false beliefs that you may have absorbed from watching and experiencing your parents: Don't be who you are because that's not good enough. I can't make myself happy; I can't take care of myself. I can't handle pain, especially the pain of rejection and abandonment. My core self is bad, wrong, unlovable, or in some way defective. You will instead attempt to control your Inner Child.

The Loving Adult— has chosen to learn from and with the Inner Child—it is committed, courageous aspect of ourselves. **It is deeply committed to knowing, loving, nurturing, supporting, and connecting with the Inner Child, and replace false beliefs with the truth.** The Adult does not impose its will on the Child and force the Child to do things its way, nor is the loving Adult indulgent towards the Child. The loving Adult does not shame the Child for what it wants and feels, does not tell the Child it is wrong or bad. The loving Adult does not abandon the Child when the Child is angry, hurt, or sad, nor does it tell the Child that others are responsible for these feelings. The Adult knows that these feelings come from within, from the internal fears and beliefs, rather than being caused by someone else. **The loving Adult is a teacher and heals the Child's false belief system by telling the Child the truth.** Becoming aware of the unloving way in which we are parenting ourselves and what it means to be a loving Adult to our Inner Child is the most important thing we can each do for ourselves. Treating our Inner Child unlovingly results in substance and process addictions, and an unbearable sense of aloneness. Crazy results when we avoid facing and feeling the deep aloneness and pain of the Inner Child. **Treating our Inner Child lovingly creates the inner connection that fills the emptiness from within** rather than needing to fill it externally with addictions. The more we learn to treat our Inner Child lovingly, the more solid and full the internal connection becomes, leading to peace, joy, power, and wholeness, erasing the need to give ourselves up to be loved by others.

• The Ego and the Higher Self

We believe that it is the connection between the loving Adult and the loved Inner Child that is the Higher Self. The Higher Self state is the powerful healing state. The Higher Self does not judge, fear, worry, or deny; it is totally "in the moment." It is the internal disconnection between the Adult and the Child that creates the ego. We use ego to mean **the false self that emerges whenever we choose to protect instead of to learn**. We each concluded that we were being rejected or abandoned because there was something wrong with us—we were inadequate or bad and unlovable. At that moment the ego was born. So we attempted to protect ourselves by disconnecting from the Child that felt so alone, and constructed a false self—the ego—in the hope that it would protect us from the pain of loneliness. The purpose of the ego is to protect ourselves against aloneness and to get love, rather than to give love. The ego manifests itself as the unloving Adult and the unloved abandoned Child. The ego's job is to fix you or others in the hopes of avoiding abandonment and rejection. But

paradoxically it is the internal disconnection that creates the ego and brings about the inner experience of separation, abandonment, and aloneness. Illness is the body's reflection of the ego's beliefs.

Any belief that causes us anxiety, hurt, or fear is a false belief, and anytime we are anxious or hurt, we are operating from a false belief. Our sadness and grief come from seeing and experiencing the truth about a situation, but our hurt, anxiety, and fear come from our false beliefs. It is an ego belief and therefore erroneous, since **all of the ego's beliefs are erroneous**. The Higher Self does not have beliefs, it is only aware of the truth, and so what we know from our Higher Self never causes us to hurt. To really grow up means **to move from always needing to get love into giving love to ourselves and others**. The false beliefs of the ego keep us limited and in pain most of our lives. Out of these feelings come all of our many addictions, which create more painful feelings, locking us into a vicious circle of pain. The ego says, 'I cannot make myself happy from within. Other people, activities, and substances are responsible for making me happy or unhappy. I am powerless over how I feel and what happens to me. I am a victim.' The Higher Self replies, 'I have choice over my responses to any situation, and my own choices and responses create my happiness or unhappiness, not other people, activities, or substances.' It is the job of the loving Adult to tell the truth to your ego, as well as to learn why you believe and feel as you do. **When the loving Adult demonstrates his/her love by telling the truth, the ego, as manifested by the unloving Adult and the unloved Child, is gradually transformed into the Higher Self**. As we become more aware of the loving and nurturing power of the loving Adult, we can use this power within ourselves to transform the fears of the ego into the truth, the love that is within us.

• **Codependency: A Major Consequence of Disconnection**

We go through life feeling guilt and shame—guilt because we believe that we are doing something wrong and shame because we believe that there is something wrong with us as human beings. A codependent is a person who is defined and controlled by other people, situations, and by the ego's "shoulds." They are defined by anything but their Higher Self, rather a person who gives power to others to define himself or herself. **The truth of the Higher Self is that our sense of worth and self-esteem come from the Inner Adult loving the Inner Child. The lie of the ego is that our worth and self-esteem come from other people**. We adopted the erroneous belief that other people make us happy or unhappy. Caretakers disconnect from themselves around others not only because they want approval from others, but because they believe they are responsible for others' feelings. They may fear that if they didn't give themselves up no one would love them and they would be alone. **They each try to control the other in overt and covert ways to get the love and approval they want**. He has no idea how to make himself happy by himself and so expects Gretchen to be available whenever he is home. He doesn't have any friends and relies on her for all his emotional needs. In addition, he is very sexually demanding, believing that he deserves to have sex whenever he wants it because he supports the family. Gretchen attempts to control in

covert ways, through sex, flattery, gifts, and by spending all spare time with Joel, as well as by giving up her other interests and friends. People are always matched perfectly at the level of their common woundedness. **They have each given up responsibility for their own happiness and handed it over to the other**, and they each blame the other for their own unhappiness. It is only when we already love ourselves through loving connection with our Inner Child that we can truly love another by wanting to know that person and by supporting his or her growth and happiness. Until we know that we are lovable, we will be dependent on others to make us feel good about ourselves. **The ego is always addicted to approval**, which is what creates codependence, **because it firmly believes that self-esteem and happiness come from others' approval**. As long as we operate from this false belief, then we will continue to behave in ways that diminish our self-esteem. Both partners suffer greatly in codependent relationships, yet this is how most relationships function in our society. Our dysfunctional society, filled with war, crime, violence, hunger, and the violation of the planet, evolves from our dysfunctional families. The cycle will not end until each of us individually decides to learn with our own Inner Child what it means to love ourselves.

- **Connection**

In order to be intimate with another person, we have to know who we are, what we feel, what we think, etc. ~ Anne Wilson Schaef

The Child, the instinctual aspect, **lives in** the center of the body, in the solar plexus, **the gut**, or what is often referred to as the third chakra. Many never really pay attention to what these gut feelings are saying, because they have been taught to mistrust their feelings or gut reactions. The thought processes of the Adult reside in the head. **The loving Adult, the Adult who has chosen to learn, is an energy circle that moves between the head and the heart**, the fourth chakra. With the heart closed down, there is no access to the Child, and the Child is abandoned. Universal connection is attained only through the Higher Self, the inner connection between the Adult and the Child. Often men find this sense of connection only with women. We first have to connect to our own Child before the door will open. Once the door opens, then we feel loving, and our behavior is an honest reflection of our feelings. Inner connection, the experience of wholeness and oneness of the Higher Self, occurs whenever our Adult is in loving dialogue with our Child. We cannot connect with others from our egos because when we are in our egos we are disconnected from ourselves. We cannot connect when we are frightened or anxious, because we cannot connect unless we are completely in the moment. If a goal or an expectation exists between two people, there can be no true connection, just manipulations. True connection with another occurs only when both people are completely in the moment with their feelings and with each other. It's always easier to be open to the moment and to connect in a love affair than it is to connect in a committed relationship. **Once people move into a committed relationship or get married their fears of disapproval, rejection, and domination become activated.**

Many men, though certainly not all, use sex as a way to connect, yet most women do not feel sexual until there is a connection. The person at the other end of an addiction often feels pressured to make his or her partner happy. Sex from the ego always takes place with the intent to get something—to get love, connection, affirmation, release from tension, orgasm. Sex from the Higher Self is always an expression of love and is therefore a giving response. Whenever a man tries to talk a woman into making love, he is in his ego and is trying to get something, even if he says it's because he loves her. **People have sexual problems when the fears of the ego enter the relationship and they make love from their abandoned Child. It is only when the intent changes from getting to giving and a true connection occurs that sexual problems are truly resolved.** Learning to love the Inner Child is the key to resolving relationship problems.

"I now realize that with both of my husbands I didn't feel turned on because there was no real connection. They never really opened themselves to me, so I couldn't really feel them, and they never extended their energy into me. Even their giving felt like taking because there were always strings attached. Wayne never gets mad if I don't want to do something, even if I don't want to make love. He just stays open to knowing me."

• The Results of Connection

When we choose to live in a connected way with our Inner Child, transforming the ego into the Higher Self, life becomes a wonderful experience. While our ego tells us that self-esteem comes from others' approval, the truth is that self-esteem comes from inner approval, from what the Inner Adult thinks about the Inner Child, and how the Adult treats the Child. The Child comes to know that it is lovable and worthwhile. **When you find that you like being with yourself more than with anyone else, then you are no longer addicted to anyone.** A connected person does not seek a relationship in order to get something, but rather to give love to others as they've given love to themselves. High self-esteem is a choice, whether we choose to believe we are lovable or unlovable.

Softness is the energy of warmth, tenderness, love, and power that emanates from people when they are in their Higher Selves. **When people know who they are, what they want, they cannot be dominated, controlled, or emotionally hurt by others.** The ego tells us, therefore, that we cannot be soft and powerful at the same time. But to give and receive love we must be soft. Softness is the way we are when we are connected and unafraid, which is the most powerful way to be. True power, which is the power to nurture and give, rather than dominate and take, is soft.

*I have spent nearly ten years in my marriage trying to pry my husband open with force. It has never worked. Hardness and force have been met only with resistance, anger, and alienation. I find it all too easy to shift from giving to being judgmental and demanding, from being soft and open to being hard and closed. Genuine softness is powerful because it expects nothing in return. It is self-empowering, so I am not at those moments tied to the concern about what I'm going to get in return, which limits giving and makes it conditional. **Once you***

discover how it feels to be soft, once you see the powerful effect it can have on your relationship with yourself and others, you don't mind doing whatever it takes to be that way all the time.

Hardness does not bring anyone joy. You can be hard and unloving, or you can be joyous. **If it is true that there is no power greater than love, then the most powerful way we can respond is with softness.** How gratifying our interactions can be when the intent is to love and learn rather than to protect oneself with her anger, criticism or threats.

*Whoever has the mind to fight has broken his connection with the universe. **If you try to dominate people, you're already defeated.** What I had wanted to do with muscle had been accomplished with love.*

Discovering your passion(s) leads you toward feelings of self-worth and away from addictions. It is not a luxury to pursue this experience, but a necessity, for without that special experience that gives meaning to our lives, we tend to wander about aimlessly looking for someone, something, or some substance to fill the void within us. Your Inner Child is the passionate aspect of you. It is the Child within that can tell you what your true interests are. Once you become aware of your Child's passions, it is up to you as a loving Adult to act on them, and not to let your fears of failure get in the way. If you have not yet discovered your passion, have patience. As the woundedness of your unloved Child gets healed through your loving re-parenting, your passion will emerge.

Loving our Inner Child leads to loving others, which leads to loving relationships. When you make another responsible for your happiness, you also tend to blame that person for your unhappiness. Once we take responsibility for our own happiness and behave in loving ways toward ourselves, then we are able to love others. Love is purely a function of the Higher Self. The ego is only concerned with getting love and avoiding pain. **We make the choice to love or not, to be disconnected and in our ego, or to be connected and in our Higher Self, every second that we live.** When you have done your inner work and have learned to love the Child within you, you will naturally respond to others in loving ways no matter what the problem.

• **Discovering the Loving Inner Adult**

The ideal role of the Inner Parent is to love, support, and nurture the Inner Child. ~ Self-Parenting, DR. JOHN K. POLLARD, III

The Compliant Model

Compliers and people-pleasers believe that giving up their own needs and adapting to the needs of others is the loving way to be, and that they do not have the right to make themselves happy, that making themselves happy, is selfish. They may also be characterized as martyrs. These women often get sick as the only way they know to take time for themselves and to say no to the demands of others. Your internal dialogue may go something like this: "Don't make trouble. Don't rock the boat."

Just go along.” “Just give in. It’s easier than getting into an argument.” “You can’t have what you want, so just go along.” “You didn’t do it right, again.” “You’re selfish.”

The Controlling Model

This woman is generally very righteous, **believing that her way of doing things is the right way**. She tries to control through intimidation. She is a master at creating fear and guilt in those around her and convincing them that **her unhappiness is their fault**. If you chose a controlling person as your primary role model, your inner dialogue may say things like: “You’ll never be good enough. You’ll never do it right.” “You’re ugly.”

The Resistant Model

There is always some reason why he isn’t succeeding, some reason why he always has to rely on his wife to take care of him. When she gets exasperated with his laziness, he gets hurt and angry, accusing her of not trusting him. The inner dialogue might sound like this: “Why bother?” “Who cares?” “If you wait long enough, someone else will do it for you.” **They do not know how to love themselves. They have all chosen to protect themselves** and are operating as an unloving Adult and an abandoned Child.

The Loving Inner Adult

If your Inner Child felt free to tell you, “I want you to pay attention to me and to spend time with me. I want you to listen to me and really hear me when I’m trying to tell you something. **I want you to know me, to know who I really am, not who you think I am.** I don’t want you to control me with ‘shoulds’ and rules, but I don’t want you to indulge me either. Whenever I’m upset, hurt, angry, or lonely I want you to spend time with me, learning about what I feel and why I feel that way. I want you to be nurturing, compassionate, soft, and gentle with me and to see all that I am.

It means that our love is dependable and consistent, regardless of how our Inner Child feels or behaves. Our Child can count on us to stay open to learning and acting on its behalf, or when the Child wants something that is in conflict with what the Adult wants. Anyone who has experience with animals, especially dogs, has experienced unconditional love. It is easier for animals to love unconditionally because they lack defined egos. When you scold dogs for some transgression, they usually respond with sad eyes and total vulnerability. They allow you to see their pain and are totally open. Their energy and eyes seem to say, “I know you are angry, but I love you, and I’m sorry you are unhappy.” **We all have the power to choose loving behavior** with our Inner Child whenever we want. In order to behave lovingly, we have to feel loving, which means that we are not judging or shaming our Child. A person can like their Inner Child but still not be devoted to it, and until they are devoted, they are not being unconditionally loving. You must take responsibility for acting in a way that protects and meets the needs of your Inner Child. It will feel loved only if you learn about it and understand its problems and then act to relieve its pain. It is actually easier to learn and to love than to judge, and far less painful, but in our left-brain society, we tend to see everything in terms of right and wrong. **Once you judge something as wrong, you won’t be open to learning about it**, and that’s the problem. You are all that you feel,

and all that you feel is acceptable. **To love your Child unconditionally means that you accept your ego**—your unloving Adult and your unloved Child. It is only your ego that shames itself. Your Higher Self never shames. Now you have a choice. Do you disconnect from your Child, or do you choose to learn with and from your Child's feelings? This means that we learn how to truly nurture our Child, by telling the Child the truth. The hardest feeling to bear is aloneness. All of us felt this to one degree or another when we were children, and it is the feeling we most strongly protect ourselves against. **The loving Adult reflects to the Inner Child the Child's true identity, so the Child can replace his or her false beliefs with the truth.** Any action, even a wrong action, still has more progress and meaning in it than no action. One of the best things is to read good books on child rearing.

She was in pain from being blamed and decided to love anyway. She made the decision to see me as a person in pain rather than taking my attack personally. She was very aware of her own pain and felt it deeply, but chose to love me anyway, and so she was open and soft and stayed in her Higher Self. Even now, when I encounter someone in pain and they attack me personally, I remember Margie's softness and the lesson I learned about choice.

Part 2 - Processes

• Processes for Yourself

When you are first learning to connect to your Inner Child, the practice must be done in writing or out loud. You must be willing to set aside definite times to do it. Find time during the day to talk with your Child when it feels tense, anxious, scared, sad, or angry. Your first challenge, then, in the process of healing and creating inner connection is to learn to be a loving Adult to your Inner Child. It is very important to realize that this is not who your Child really is. This is your Child filled with painful experiences and false beliefs, with fear and anger. You will find that when your Child truly trusts you, clear memories from childhood will begin to emerge. When you are asking questions or speaking from your Adult, tune into your thoughts and your caring feelings by focusing your attention in your head and heart. When you are speaking from your Child, tune into your feelings by focusing in the area above your navel and below your rib cage. Ask yourself how old your Inner Child is. Your Child will feel loved and safe only when you believe it has good reasons for whatever it wants, needs, and feels. Second, you must be open to experiencing your Child's pain. Your memories are very important to me and I want to help you heal old fears and pain." "I'm here for you. I'm not going away again." "I love you and your happiness is the most important thing in the world to me." Sometimes your Adult and your Child have different tastes in movies, music, books, or vacations. When this is the case, it's important to find a way to meet the needs of both aspects of your personality. **Active listening is a skill that has to be practiced.** This means not only practicing the written and oral dialogue, but **consciously shifting the tone of our dialogue throughout the day from unloving to loving.** Re-parenting ourselves means giving ourselves the love and approval we never received from others.

Writing is a powerful way to connect with your Inner Child. Because the dialogue is down on paper, you can easily go back and learn about the different voices that may have participated.

Some people find access to their Inner Child more easily when they talk out loud. For them, writing is too intellectual. The goal is to have a constant loving flow between your Adult and your Child, between your thoughts and your feelings. The only way for your internal dialogue to become loving instead of unloving is for you to practice every day. You will find yourself responding to situations in the moment, instead of an hour later or a day later. Once your Child has learned to trust you, you can ask it then and there what is wrong, and you will immediately get an answer. Your Child may say to you, “This person is lying to you. I can feel it,” or “This person is manipulating you,” or “This person is closed, not open to learning,” or “This doesn’t feel good. Take me away.”

Our beliefs about being unable to make ourselves happy, about being responsible for another’s feelings—these all come from childhood experiences. **When your Adult learns with your Inner Child, then the false beliefs of the ego can be uncovered and you can move toward living in truth.** Many do not realize that the Child they remember is the abandoned Child, and that they have no idea who their Child is when it is being loved. **Your Inner Child**, perhaps angry, hard, tough, closed off, but inside he or she **just wants to be loved by you.**

• **Getting Stuck — Getting Unstuck**

Only when we recommit our energies to accepting, and experiencing the buried pain will all that power be available again to help us creating joy and fun. This recommitment must come from your Adult, since the Adult is the choicemaker regarding intent. The loving Adult listens and provides support for the Child’s feelings of rage. This is the anger that opens and teaches and helps to heal old wounds.

You will get stuck in a protective mode until knowing the truth is more important than hiding and living in denial. We have to go through these feelings to heal. Your Child will not let you feel this pain until it trusts that you will not run away from the pain. Finally you hit bottom and look around and see what it is you’ve been afraid of feeling and knowing your whole life. It will not last and you will never again be afraid of it. We cannot move into our Higher Selves without opening to knowing the Inner Child. You have to be willing to surrender to the universal love and guidance which comes through the Child. And what will really bring you joy in life might surprise you. And you’re not going to know what it is until you’re willing to be guided and let go of control.

Many people mistakenly believe that their best feeling comes from getting something from someone else—connection, attention, sex, approval, understanding, acceptance,

love—rather than **realizing that their best feeling comes from giving love and understanding to themselves and others**. When you believe this, you find yourself always wanting more and more from someone or something. This false belief is at the heart of addiction and codependence. They may believe that it's not their job to take care of themselves emotionally, that this other person is supposed to do it. Only then can you experience the truly wonderful feelings that come from sharing your love with another person, rather than just getting love from another person. They act loving to get love. The primary intent is still to get love from others rather than give it to themselves and others, and the more miserable they become, the greater their demand for love. The Adult has so completely abdicated responsibility that the Child is abandoned, believing that no Adult exists. Until the Adult recognizes its power to make a different choice, then that individual is stuck. It's just a matter of choice. She is afraid to face her fear, choosing to try to control the other. **She will not get unstuck until she recommits to becoming fully responsible for herself and acting in her own behalf in spite of her fears and beliefs.**

This may be who you are when you feel unloved and abandoned, but it is not who you really are. **The core of us is never bad**, but you will not know this until you risk opening to learning. Many of us grow up believing that who we are is not worth knowing. Your belief that you are not worth knowing is indeed a false one, **discover how truly lovable we really are**. She got unstuck only when she was willing to know the truth and face her fears. **If you intend to learn with your Inner Child, you will grow**. You will become more powerful, secure, joyful, and loving. If you are in a relationship and your partner chooses not to do his or her inner work, there is a very good possibility that you will outgrow the relationship and eventually feel very dissatisfied with it. You must be willing to lose everything before you will gain everything. There is always the possibility that if you decide to grow, your mate will feel enough pain over being left behind that he or she will open up, but there is no guarantee of this. If you find yourself stuck, you may need to ask yourself, "Am I willing to sacrifice myself to preserve the relationship, or is it time to reach for my wholeness and risk losing the relationship?"

There are people who are committed to learning and being personally responsible, and people who are committed to protecting themselves against personal responsibility. When your highest priority is to be loving, when your deepest desire is to be a loving human being to yourself and others, and when you believe that it is possible to get there, then you are on that path. **Each of us has the will to choose what is most important to us**—to avoid pain and failure or to heal and grow and be loving.

• **Processing with Help: Mothering**

Contrary to popular belief that we should be able to recover alone, we cannot do it by ourselves. We need the feedback of others to see ourselves clearly, and we need other people to help us through our fear and pain. It's important to understand the difference between need and neediness. **Need, then, means getting help from others, while**

needy means expecting others to do it for us. No matter how much others may love us and help us, they cannot heal our old wounds. These can be healed only by learning to love ourselves and moving through our fear, grief, and pain. It is healing to be held, touched, and stroked. She no longer feared that she was being childish or immature if she needed to be held. I realized I needed to be held...a lot. It was hard for me to ask, but it made it so much easier for me to open to the feelings of my Inner Child when Kathy was holding me, to be held by someone who is not uncomfortable with my pain. I realized that all the things I was pressuring him for—connection, mutual growth, and fun—didn't have to all come from my husband. Charles came to therapy for help with his addiction to sex. **Charles and Abby recognized their need for mothering and began to spend more time just holding each other and talking, instead of always having sex, Charles's sexual obsession slowly melted away.** Few men were held enough by their fathers, so most men need affection and support from other men. Yet there are even more taboos on men holding men than there are on women holding women. It is so sad that our culture so often sexualizes a need for holding, touching, and support.

If touching is offered with the intention to give love, then it is easy to accept and it feels healing. If the touch is seductive and sexual, it may not be welcome. You can touch someone from your Higher Self, intending to give something, or you can touch someone from your ego, intending to get something.

The seductive touch - **Adults generally feel violated when the intention of the touch is to seek sex rather than give love.** Many complain that the only time their husbands or wives are affectionate is when they want sex. That kind of affection doesn't feel good; it feels manipulative.

The smothering touch - says, "You are not a free individual. Your body is my property. Therefore, I have the right to hold you, touch you, etc.

The placating touch - says, "There, there, don't feel bad. Stop hurting, because I can't handle your pain." The placating touch feels patronizing rather than comforting.

The non-demanding touch is the essence of true mothering. It is an unconditionally loving touch that **says, I have no expectations that you need to meet. I love you just as you are, and I am here for you however you choose to be.**" It is a healing touch.

There are two kinds of pain: open pain and closed pain. Open pain is the pain of loss and mourning and the acceptance of wounds. **Closed pain** is the "poor me," "I am a victim" pain that people use **to manipulate others into taking care of them when they have chosen not to take care of themselves.** We feel manipulated by them. They don't wish to learn; they want to be rescued. You will never fulfill your life and your needs without taking the risk to ask for and give what you want. We hope you will give yourself permission to hug, hold, and love, for this is what your Inner Child wants and deserves.

• Twelve-Step Programs

People often feel completely alone with their struggles, but with Twelve-Step programs one never needs to be alone. It's incredibly helpful to hear other people talk openly about things that you may have kept secret your whole life. In our experience, **codependency is the underlying issue in all addictive behavior.** As people become aware of and develop their own Higher Self, they naturally move into experiencing the universal love that is the true source of healing, particularly in healing their aloneness. The more we face the aloneness of our Inner Child with our own loving Adult, the more we experience that we are truly not alone. It is impossible to even begin to connect with your Inner Child if you are a practicing alcoholic or a drug addict. We do not accept for therapy practicing alcoholics or drug addicts until they commit to a Twelve-Step program. Unless they are in a Twelve-Step program, therapy is a waste of time.

• Processes in Therapy

No therapist, no matter how skilled, can do the work for you, but a competent therapist can be invaluable in helping you learn how to heal your own pain. A therapist's job is to help a client understand how to take personal responsibility for his or her own pain and joy. You must be willing to continue to work with your Inner Child every day on your own. Long-term therapy may actually become another addiction. Your truth would have made a difference internally to your Inner Child to have a voice. But it wouldn't have made any difference in what he did. It's only their truth that changes them. We just need to know that we did our very best. We have no magic power to change people.

The only magical power we have is to change ourselves. That's our magic power!

Healing can occur through Inner Bonding Therapy. We wish to state again that **no disorder can be healed unless the client is willing to do the inner work.**

Personality Disorders - are difficult to treat because it is hard to contact the Adult at all, and the Adult must be willing to learn. But we have found that if a client will commit to oral and written dialogue for at least a half hour daily, progress can be made.

Eating disorders - Tamira found her bingeing and purging episodes becoming less and less frequent as she stayed more and more connected to her Inner Child. As with all difficulties, the bulimia was but a symptom of the inner disconnection. They generally gain it back and continue to struggle with their weight until their Adult begins to nurture their Inner Child.

Anxiety and depression - When the person's loving Adult learns to comfort the Inner Child, it will no longer fear. It's amazing how fast depression goes away when the Adult is willing to hear the Child and act in its behalf.

In order for such a relationship to grow and become loving, each partner must be willing to do his or her own inner work.

• Making the Commitment

We go back...and back...and back...through the layers of fear, shame, rage, hurt, and negative incantations until we discover the exuberant, unencumbered, delightful, and lovable child that was, and still is, in us. And once we find it, we love

and cherish it, and never, never let it go. Beyond Codependence MELODY BEATTIE

Being a loving Adult for your Inner Child when it is afraid takes a lot of practice.

We know from our own experiences and the experiences of our clients that the dialoguing creates loving inner connection, but it works only if you do it. Change will take place **only if you make the commitment to practice daily**. Staying lovingly connected in the face of fear is the challenge. This is when your Inner Child most needs you as a loving Adult. **You will not discover your joy until you are willing to choose risks over safety**, to learn from your pain rather than avoid it, and you want to be loving more than you want to be loved. A “together” person is an integrated person, a person with a sense of inner harmony. As in the Bible we can see paradise as the connection between the Inner Adult and the Inner Child, which leads to wholeness. When we disconnect from ourselves and look for comfort and approval from outside of ourselves (the apple) rather than seeking them within, we move into a state of denial. We each have the power to heal by making a commitment to learn. Our immediate purpose is to be loving to our Inner Child, for then we will automatically be loving to others. By becoming fully loving human beings, by that and nothing else, we will help to heal the planet. Our consciousness affects the consciousness of others and affects the collective consciousness. We’re adding to the world, but only if the process itself brings us joy. **The love we express affects the world. As each person expresses more love the world is affected profoundly**. If a relationship, or a job, or a behavior is not loving to yourself, does not bring you peace or joy, then it is not loving to the planet.