

**KAREN HOOD-CADDY**

**FIND  
YOUR  
INNER  
GOLD**

**21 POWERFUL  
TOOLS TO BRING  
BACK YOUR SHINE**

# FIND YOUR INNER GOLD

21 POWERFUL TOOLS TO BRING BACK YOUR SHINE

KAREN HOOD-CADDY

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For Helen, Christine and T, my writerly soul sisters—

*The Soul's task is only this:*

*to shine brightly.*

# INTRODUCTION

Many years ago, in Thailand, there was a nine-foot, clay statue of Buddha. It weighed over five tonnes and wasn't particularly attractive, but it had survived for hundreds of years, withstanding wars, hurricanes, and all kinds of natural disasters. It was a local landmark.

One year, cracks began to appear on the surface of the statue. Wanting to assess how extensive a repair might be, a curious monk peered closely into the fissures with a flashlight. As he was doing his examination, he noticed something bright underneath the clay. It was yellow and shiny. Could it actually *be* gold? As he chipped away at the encrusted covering, he realized that it was! The entire statue *was* made of gold. Solid gold. The statue, now called the Golden Buddha, has become world-famous, and is renowned as one of the most beautiful images of Buddha on the planet. It draws thousands of visitors every year.

Why had the gold been covered over? Although no one knows for sure, it's believed that the golden statue had been covered with muddy clay and other materials to protect and preserve it and perhaps, most importantly, to keep its value from being known. So, it would be safe.

Don't most of us cover up what shines inside us in the same way?

To be safe?

When we're born, we are unique and pure and radiate our own golden perfection. But as we move through life, we get splattered and muddied and before we know it, we start feeling dull and ordinary. Although we might be sad about losing what's bright about us, we all have experienced the safety of not shining. The safety of not standing out. The security of not being too noticeable.

If we hide our light for long enough, or continually tune our brightness down, we start to lose touch with our brilliance. We might even start denying that there is anything bright and beautiful about us at all and say things like, "There's nothing special about me. What was I thinking?"

The premise of this book is that each of us, in our own ways, are amazing. That doesn't make us better than others. It simply acknowledges that at our core, each of us is made of gold.

I know this is contrary to what most religions say. As a child I remember sitting stiffly through a Sunday sermon when I was about ten, listening to the minister tell the congregation that we were all

miserable sinners. I remember scouring my mind looking for things I'd done wrong, but I sensed the badness the minister was talking about didn't come from a misdemeanor, but arose from some quintessential fault in my very being. In other words, I hadn't done something bad, I *WAS* bad. It was hard to accept.

Years later, when I started to meditate and was exploring other religions, I learned that in Buddhism, people are considered to be basically good. It was a relief to hear that. It got me thinking that maybe we aren't born sinners at all, but are simply saints who, like the golden Buddha, just got muddied up over the years. Saints that simply needed a power wash. That's the intention of this book: to be a power wash.

For decades now, I've worked as a personal development coach. The way I see it, my job is to help people rediscover the gold inside themselves. In order to do this, I provide them with the power tools to clear away all the detritus that's covering up the gold so they can shine fully once again. Now I want to give those tools to you.

Unfortunately, it's always easier for us to see our flaws. Although it's common for us to listen to ourselves and our friends talk about our imperfections, how often do we hear others talk about what's great

about us? If a friend started talking about their wonderful attributes, most of us would be uncomfortable listening. Why? Because praising ourselves or commenting on our own amazingness is taboo in our culture and many of us would judge the people who tout their assets as being arrogant or being “full of themselves.”

I’m not advocating that we all spout diatribes of self-admiration. But we have become a culture of people who have lost our excitement about ourselves and I want to change that.

### **Finding What’s Extraordinary**

Just like Michelangelo, we must begin by trusting that what appears to look like a nondescript block of stone has a divine being inside it trying to get out. As Michelangelo said, “I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free.”

This book will give you the carving tools to shave away all that you are not until you reach what shines again.

Although our parents may have done a great job helping us navigate the world and develop our personalities, they may not have known how to help us become our fullest soulful selves. Many parents are highly

invested in helping their children fit into the current culture. As a result, by the time we reach adulthood, we may be aware of how to live in the world, but we still might not have any idea of our own truth and what makes us glow. Our job is to find what makes us glow.

### **A Cautionary Note**

Just so you know what to expect, as you begin to rediscover your own inner gold and start to shine, you may find yourself feeling more self-conscious and vulnerable. Others may notice you more, as if you're walking around wearing jewels. You may even feel like a fraud or an imposter for a while, but that's all right. It's part of the process. Even though you might feel a little overwhelmed by the attention and be tempted to dim yourself down again, resist that temptation and trust the truth and power of the gold inside you. You will begin to understand that your greatest gift is merely this: to shine. You will become a lighthouse, showing the way forward. Martha Beck, in her wonderful book, *Finding Your Way in a Wild New World*, calls this being a Wayfarer. Someone who shows others the way home.

## THE TOOLS

There are thousands of self-development tools, and more of them are being developed. This is happening because people want to change, and they want to be in charge of making that change. Most people don't have the time or the money to go into a few years of psychoanalysis to figure themselves out. The validity of talk therapies is being challenged and people are less interested in having to go to therapists for answers. They want tools they can use to modulate themselves and tweak their own energy fields. This is the ultimate form of self-empowerment.

The tools in this book will allow you to make significant changes in yourself. Some of them will work better for you than others. We are all at different stages of development, so what is going to fit one person perfectly, may not fit another. You may find that some tools work with one type of issue and yet not work for another. Experiment. Use the ones that work and discard the ones that aren't a good fit for you.

All the tools I've listed in this book are ones I use both personally and professionally. They are trustworthy and will all yield good effects in the various aspects of your life. Some will yield spectacular effects. Some of the tools are more mainstream, others are more on the

fringe. Avoid the temptation to judge any specific tool as weird or woo-woo. Many of the things we trust now were once considered radical and strange. When you were a child, did you ever imagine you could hold something the size of a playing card in your hand that would connect you with the entire world? Yet nowadays, such devices as the cell phone are common. So, try each tool and let your body and mind tell you if it's valuable for you at this time. There are tools that will help you communicate better, modulate your mood, create a more rewarding future and heal yourself of old traumas and wounds. Each tool is designed to help you find what shines inside you. With each tool, I describe the tasks the tool is best suited for and explain any extended applications you might want to explore. I also give examples of how various clients have used particular tools and the outcomes that resulted.

At the end of each tool description, where possible, I've provided links for future inquiry so you can explore each tool more fully and learn how other practitioners are applying it.

Also, when I illustrate a tool with an example from one of my clients, to protect their privacy, I've changed the names and identifying details. Furthermore, for the sake of readability, I've used singular

pronouns, when needed and alternate between using he and she.

As most of us are aware, we're living in challenging times. Each of us is being asked to evolve and become a more loving and viable human being. Our survival as a species may depend on us doing just that. As one bumper sticker I saw recently said: *Evolve or Die*.

For us to survive, we need to change. And most of us are eager to change. We have all experienced the suffering that results from old thinking and behaviour patterns. We yearn to become free of unhealthy ways of being. We want healthier bodies, happier relationships, more satisfying jobs. We want to feel connected to ourselves and be at peace. We want lives that fill us with joy and satisfaction.

The only question is how. This book is all about that how.

### **The "How" of Making Change**

Mike Dooley, the author of *Notes from the Universe*, tells his readers to avoid thinking about the "cursed how's." Yes, I think it's important to hold a vision and ask the Universe to deliver what we want as if it were an ordered-in pizza. However, if someone is tied up in knots inside and unable to love, it's going to be difficult to attract a loving relationship

no matter how much the person visualizes it. And it could take a long time. The tools in this book will help you modulate your energy so there will be a deep alignment between you and your desire. This will increase the likelihood of manifesting what you want and also speed up delivery time.

Which is exactly what Esther Hicks, who transmits *Abraham*, confirms. Esther has lectured extensively on the fact that our energy, or vibration, is a much stronger predictor for us getting what we want than anything we might say or do. I think she's right.

### **The Power of Alignment**

Early in my coaching career, I had a client named Annie who taught me a great deal about the power of alignment. When Annie first called me, her life had fallen apart. The mother of three children, she had been married to an accountant but had found him so emotionally abusive, she'd finally left him. She had hoped that once she was apart from him, the abuse would end, but during the divorce proceedings, her husband battled her on every front and she was finding the divorce negotiations brutal and exhausting.

Although she had been trained as a massage therapist, she only had a few clients a week, so funds were extremely tight, and she could barely afford my coaching. She felt hopeless about her ability to rebuild her life and didn't have a clue how to get started. She had no money and no energy. Although she told me she'd been visualizing her new life every day, nothing was changing. So, after a close friend had raved to her about my coaching, Annie called me, hoping I could be the tow-truck she needed to pull her life out of the ditch.

As Annie told me her long list of woes, I remember thinking that not only did she need to get herself back on the road again, she needed a complete overhaul. I admit, I found the prospect of helping her both daunting and exciting. I started by asking her to tell me what she thought was intrinsically wonderful about herself. She was surprised by this question but seemed intrigued by it as well and began to look hard for the things that made her shine. Doing this gave her a spark of energy—a spark that I worked hard at building into a blazing fire. Because Annie's funds limited the amount of time we could spend on coaching, I started giving her tools and let her do as much as she could with them on her own. As she tried them out, she started feeling

more of her internal brightness. I knew this was a good sign and kept giving her more tools. She started to live more congruently with what made her smile. It sounds so simple as I write it, but it's amazingly difficult for some people to do what makes them feel good. I'm not talking about the kind of feeling good you get from eating a huge bowl of ice cream or being promoted at work. I'm talking about the good feeling that comes when you clean yourself up emotionally and begin to shine. That shine can only come from one place: our souls. Our souls are the GPS for getting to the bell-ringing, shooting star satisfactions in life.

For months, Annie and I only talked every few weeks, but each time we had a session, I gave her another tool to work with. She used each tool to scrub away all that was blocking her inner gold. Within a year she was vibrating with a strong internal glow, had revived her business and was developing a close relationship with a lovely person who treated her well.

At the beginning of my work with Annie, I asked her to rate how much she felt herself shining. I gave her a scale of zero to ten, with zero representing not shining at all, and ten being radiating fully. She put

herself at 1.5.

I'd like you to rate yourself now as well. Close your eyes and tune into what number would best describe your own level of shine.

Write that number here: My Score is: \_\_\_\_\_

I will ask you at the end of this book to rate yourself again.

Meanwhile, let's start learning about the tools.

# TOOL #1 BREATHING

Breathing is the first tool we use when we are born, and it will be the last tool we'll release when we leave it. Although breathing is fundamental to our moment to moment survival, it's also a powerful tool for self-modulation. For centuries yogis have been using a variety of breathing practices to change their physical and mental terrain, even creating altered states of consciousness. I'm not talking about just deep breathing here, but specific protocols that can powerfully alter a person, both emotionally and physically.

Specific breathing practices can significantly diminish anxiety and pain (as any woman who has given birth knows) as well as generate deep states of relaxation and bliss. Of all the tools that are outlined in this book, breathing tends to be the most underrated in our culture. Yet no other tool can match the ability of breath modulation to change us quickly and thoroughly.

If you put "breathing techniques" into your browser, you will get thousands of hits. Breathing practices are one of the oldest and most trustworthy techniques for bringing us into pure state of calm and ease.

There are many to explore. I've chosen three breathing techniques that

are all very different from each other, but these will give you some understanding of the power of the breath to change how you feel. I think you will find them helpful.

## **Mindful Breathing**

Mindful Breathing can be done anywhere, anytime and although it seems simple, just a few minutes of it can bring deep equanimity and calm. You can use it like a reset button whenever you feel yourself getting agitated or out of sorts.

We live in a circus of stimulation these days with our minds running from one rollercoaster of thought to another. There's no way we can stop thoughts, but we can direct them into greater equanimity by breathing in specific ways. Breathwork can be a true lion tamer when it comes to the mind. One of the simplest yet most effective practices I know is the following protocol. Focus your attention on the rim of your nostrils and notice the sensations there as you breathe in and breathe out. The nostrils are extremely sensitive and focussing on the rims will increase your ability to concentrate significantly. Your mind may still wander, but you can give it more to do by moving your breath through three distinct

sections. The first section is following your breath as it travels along the walls of your nostrils, the second section is following your breath as it moves down your throat and the third is following your breath as it enters your lungs. Reverse the process as you exhale.

If you need even more focus, you can add in breath counting. Start at breath one and move up to breath ten. If you find yourself thinking about anything other than your breath, start again at breath one. If you have a really busy mind, you may find it challenging to get past breath three before having to start again.

Breath counting can act like a barometer for showing the agitation of your mind at any given time. For Type A people, having the goal of getting to a higher number will help with concentration.

### **For Further Exploration**

You can find many resources at [www.mindful.org](http://www.mindful.org). Or visit the sites of Tara Brach ([www.tarabrach.com](http://www.tarabrach.com)) or Jack Kornfield ([www.jackkornfield.com](http://www.jackkornfield.com)). Tara Brach and Jack Kornfield are two of the most popular mindfulness teachers in the west today and both offer easy to follow courses on meditation.

## **Dr. Andrew Weil's Breathing Protocol for Health**

Dr. Andrew Weil, an author and physician, believes that specific breathing protocols can significantly contribute to good health. As a result, he teaches all of his patients a technique he says will increase the functioning of the involuntary nervous system, where he believes many diseases are rooted.

This breathing protocol can be done anywhere, anytime, but Dr. Weil stresses that even though you might feel some benefits from doing it right away (like greater relaxation), the power of it lies in doing it every day for a longer period of time. The practice only takes about a minute, so, it's something most of us can do daily. And it's simple—you can do it sitting up or lying down. I often do it at the beginning of my morning meditation because it grounds me very quickly. I sometimes use it when I'm stuck in traffic. Because it involves counting, the protocol brings my mind into a concentrated focus, but relaxes me at the same time, putting me into a calm, receptive state. It's a great tool for helping people drift off into sleep.

## **Dr. Weil's 4-7-8 Breathing Protocol**

Step 1: Begin by inhaling through your nose as you count to four.

Step 2: Hold the breath and count to seven.

Step 3: Blow the air out your mouth and count to eight.

Step 4: Repeat the three steps above four more times.

Dr. Weil recommends you do only four rounds of this breathing exercise at one sitting, but that you do it twice a day. After one month you can increase to eight breath cycles. You can also start slowing the pace of your breathing, so each round takes longer to complete.

Benefits of this breathing practice are many. It's calming and can be very effective for anxiety and stress. (You can't be anxious and do this breathing at the same time.) If you do this breathing every day for longer periods, Dr. Weill says you will notice many health benefits.

### **For Further Exploration**

Visit Dr. Weil's website at [www.drweil.com](http://www.drweil.com).

## Alternate Nostril Breathing

I first learned Alternate Nostril Breathing in a yoga class where it was taught as a relaxation technique. It's based on the premise that the nostrils stimulate the brain, so breathing intensely into the nostrils, one at a time, will increase that stimulation.

Here is the step-by-step protocol:

Step 1: Use your right thumb to close off your right nostril.

Step 2: Inhale slowly through your left nostril.

Step 3: Pause for a second.

Step 4: Now close your left nostril with your ring finger and take your thumb off your right nostril.

Step 5: Exhale through your right nostril.

Step 6: Now inhale through your right nostril.

Step 7: Pause.

Step 8: Use your thumb to close off your right nostril and take your ring finger off your left nostril.

Step 9: Breathe out through your left nostril.

Step 10: This is one round. Continue for several minutes and notice what is happening in your mind and body.

Start slowly with a few rounds and pay attention to how you feel. You may notice yourself becoming calmer and more centred right away. If so, you can do a few more rounds. Your body will give you all the feedback you need to decide how much to do. When you feel like you have done enough, sit quietly for a few moments and notice the effects.

To increase the effectiveness of this technique, lengthen your breath and slow it down. Some people find it healthful to use a rhythm of inhaling for four beats, holding for seven beats, then exhaling for eight beats as in the Dr. Weil protocol above.

This exercise will deliver a steady flow of oxygen to both sides of your brain and will improve your mental function as well as calm you. Having said that, according to nostril breathing theory, each nostril stimulates a different part of the brain, so you can get more specific results by choosing to breathe in through just one nostril alone. For example, to subdue your mind and perhaps counteract a mild case of insomnia, try lying on your right side, closing your right nostril, and breathing in and out through your left nostril alone. This will help calm your mind so you can fall asleep more easily. However, if you want to

energize yourself and get a boost, close off your left nostril and breathe through your right nostril for several minutes.

### **For Further Exploration**

Here are two websites to get you started:

<https://chopra.com/articles/nadi-shodhana-how-to-practice-alternatenostril-breathing> and <https://www.healthline.com/health/alternate-nostril-breathing>

### **Hof Breathing Technique**

Wim Hof, also known as the Ice Man, is a Dutch athlete noted for his extraordinary ability to withstand extreme cold. He has set Guinness World Records for swimming under ice and for completing a barefoot half-marathon on ice and snow. He's also climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in shorts. He attributes these feats to a combination of breathing techniques, exposure to severe cold, and meditation.

Although the breathing techniques he outlines can be used for extreme physical challenges, he contends they can be used to simply improve energy levels, detox the body, relieve stress and tension, and strengthen the immune system. I have experimented with them myself

and found them to be very enlivening. Here is the basic breathing technique:

Step 1: Get comfortable in a lying down position.

Step 2: Breathe strongly in and out continuously thirty to forty times.

At the start of each breath, expand your belly, then expand your chest, then imagine you can expand your upper shoulders and head area. You may feel some tingling or light-headedness as you do this.

Step 3: After thirty or forty breaths, breathe out as much air as you can and let your lungs stay empty for as long as is comfortable. Don't use force.

Step 4: Take a deep breath in and hold it for a further ten to fifteen seconds.

Step 5: Repeat the entire process for another three rounds.

When I practiced this breathing technique, I was surprised that almost right away, I was able to stay with my lungs empty for almost a full minute. I have always considered myself to be rather short-winded and was pleased that, with a small amount of practice, I was able to significantly increase the time my lungs could stay empty. After a few

days, I was able to be without air for well over a minute. Not that I'm planning to swim under the ice from one ice hole to another like Wim does! In fact, I did not experiment with using the breathing techniques to master any physical challenges or to prepare myself for any cold immersion adventures, but I did find this type of breathing brought my body into a deeply relaxed state. I plan to experiment with the Hof breathing techniques more.

### **For Further Exploration**

You can investigate Wim Hof by going to his website at [www.wimhofmethod.com](http://www.wimhofmethod.com).

## TOOL #2 SENTENCE COMPLETIONS

Sentence Completions may seem like a lightweight tool, but it's a deceptively powerful one. Each unfinished sentence acts like a crowbar unearthing our inner knowing before our censors can get in there and pretty things up. The trick to the effectiveness of this tool is to respond quickly, saying whatever comes into your mind at the end of the unfinished sentence. Don't think about your answer, just let the words skydive into the world.

When I first came across Sentence Completions, it was in the book, *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron. She used Sentence Completions frequently in the book and I was impressed by the way they tapped into thoughts and feelings that were new and refreshing.

As I researched the history of them, I discovered that Sentence Completions have been around for a long time. Apparently, a man named Hermann Ebbinghaus developed the tool in 1897. A German psychologist who studied learning and memory, he used Sentence Completions in intelligence testing. Carl Jung explored them as well when he worked with word associations.

For the purposes of our topic in this book, finding your inner gold, I have created some Sentence Completions to target that subject. As you do them, remember, don't think about your answers, just let things pop out of your mind like frogs from a pond.

### **Sentence Completions for Feeling Amazing**

The last time I remember feeling absolutely wonderful was when I

---

What really makes me shine is when I

---

The food that makes me feel the most awesome is

---

When I was little, I was happiest when I

---

What makes me feel extraordinary is

---

I sometimes feel guilty, but I feel really great when

---

To truly shine, I need to let myself

---

What really lights me up is

---

What makes me feel dull is

---

What gets me most excited about being alive is

---

Once you've filled in your answers to this exercise, become aware of any feelings in your body. Recalling times when you felt wonderful will give you a glimmer of the gold inside you.

Sentences Completions are a great tool to access parts of yourself you might not be aware of. They encourage you to say things that might unnerve you, but if so, they are usually things that are good to know about, even if they rattle or frighten you. Sentence Completions can be a dowsing tool to find deep streams of wisdom inside you.

To help you explore Sentence Completions further, I have written ten general ones below. Feel free to adapt them to a particular situation you want to explore. This should be easy to do. If there are sentences in

the template that don't apply to the topic you're exploring, edit them to fit. You can also add in some of your own. This is just a start.

If I weren't worried about what anyone else thought regarding this situation, I would

---

The unexpected positive about this matter might be

---

If I let myself think outside the box about this, I'd

---

Something I've never considered about this is

---

If I were going to feel great about this, I would have to

---

I would be able to laugh about this matter if I

---

If I allowed myself to do whatever I wanted regarding this situation, I'd

---

Something I loved to do as a child that relates to this was

---

If I had one year to live and thought about this matter, I'd

---

If I listened to my gut about this matter, I would

---

### **For Further Exploration**

There is a lot of information about Sentence Completions on the Internet. One of the sites I found most helpful was Nathaniel Branden's. You can check it out at <http://www.nathanielbranden.com/sentence-completion-i>.

## TOOL #3 SPEAKING YOUR TRUTH

As you experiment with the tools of this book, like the Sentence Completions exercise above, you will be getting more in touch with your own truth. As you do, the challenge will be to bring your truth out into the world. That can feel scary, like shoving a toddler into a war zone. Wouldn't most toddlers run back to safety?

Most of us are ill-equipped to speak our truth. But there is a skill set you can learn that will make it easier. The late Thomas Leonard, who was a key figure in the founding of the life coaching movement, used to say a person could say anything to anyone if that person knew how. You can learn how. It's important to learn how because being able to fully express yourself is part of letting your inner gold shine.

When I first became a personal development coach, it surprised me how often I worked on language with my clients. One client would need to tell her boss to get off her back, another might need to ask his mate for more understanding, others needed to set boundaries with children. These situations can be nerve-wracking. And rightly so. Without skill, such conversations can turn out badly and make us wish we'd

never spoken. And once a conversation goes awry, we become warier about speaking our truth the next time we have an opportunity. And the problems continue.

Once you learn to speak in a clear, neutral way, your ability to navigate even difficult conversations will change. You'll be able to say the things that were previously unsayable. This honours you and your energy field. It can also breathe new life into your relationships. I once knew a marriage counsellor who said, "If you want to heat things up in a marriage, just get people to tell the truth."

I thought this was very wise. The truth is hot, challenging, sometimes sexy, but it's always enlivening—both to the person sharing the truth and to the receiver. But truth-telling is a lot like fire. It can warm people or it can burn. It's all in the application. So, here are some guidelines to help keep the fire in the fireplace.

### **Set Up a Truthful Conversation**

Speaking our truth can be difficult, so preparing the environment for such a conversation is important. Think of it as making a fire pit for a fire. You want safety and containment. I suggest you set it up by asking

the other person for a specific time to have a conversation. This prompt can be as light as, “Hey, I have a few thoughts and feelings I’d like to share. Can you give me ten or fifteen minutes of uninterrupted time to get my thoughts out? I’d really appreciate that. How about after lunch today?”

Once you have an agreed-upon time, be sure to reiterate your need for uninterrupted time before you begin. A clean way to say that might be, “If you could just listen, I’d be grateful. It helps me remember what I want to say and keeps me on track.”

### **Make the Talk About You**

It’s helpful to remember before entering any conversation that we all have wounds. When we say things of meaning to others, their wounds can be easily triggered. If you’ve taken the time to set up a time to talk with someone, that person may already be on red alert that the conversation might be challenging. And since most of us were not trained to say things well, the person you are about to talk to may be anticipating being blamed or shamed.

A skilful way around this is to talk about you. Start the conversation

by telling the other person that the issue is not about him doing anything wrong. Say something like: “I just want to start by telling you that this is all about me. It’s not about you. Yes, I may be having some challenging feelings about some of the things you do or say, but those feelings belong to me. I’m not blaming you for the feelings I have. I just want you to know what’s going on for me.” That usually sets things on the right track.

### **Use “I” Statements**

Using “I” statements are crucial for clean truth-telling. Anything else is like using a dirty rag to clean up a mess on the floor. To get something clean, you have to start clean or the results will not be good. So, talk about your perspective and how it might be different from the other person’s. Make it okay for the two of you to have contrasting opinions.

### **Keep Your Comments to the Present Tense**

Talking about what happened in the past is almost always a complete waste of time. Often it will lead to a disagreement about who said what or who did what when and that can get you both into the ditch. Stay away from the past. To do that you might say, “I don’t want to get into

what happened before, but I would like to ask in the future that you be aware that—” This will get you out of trying to untangle what happened or didn’t happen, which people can argue about endlessly, and it will also put all the focus on what needs to happen in the future, so you don’t get into the same situation again. The future, not the past, is the place of possible change. Play to it.

### **Speak Only About Specific, Observable, Behaviour**

If you feel you must discuss some aspect of what the other person did, make sure you talk only about specific, observable behaviour. In other words, don’t say to someone, “You were late.” Say instead, “You arrived at ten-thirty when we’d agreed to meet at ten o’clock.” Or, instead of saying, “You were mean,” you would say, “When you called me an idiot, I—”

### **Reflect, Reflect**

Take time to reflect back what you’re hearing. Often, just listening to the other person fully will have a calming effect all by itself. “Let me see if I’m getting what you’re saying because I want to understand. You’re saying—” You can also ask this in return: “Can you reflect back to me

what I'm saying just so I know I've said it in a way you understand?"

### **Explain Why You Want What You Want**

I find this step very helpful, especially if you can be vulnerable and truthful. Here are some examples:

"I want you to talk quietly to me rather than yelling because it's easier for me to hear you and I want to hear you."

"I want you to leave swear words out of our conversation because I feel more respected then and that makes me to want to cooperate more."

"I want you to tell me you love me because it calms me down and helps me feel valued."

### **Take Responsibility for Your Side**

Eleanor Roosevelt said, "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent." The truth is, no one can make you feel *anything* without your consent. Your feelings are your feelings. Outside things might trigger them, catapulting them to the surface of your awareness, but all feelings reside within you. They are yours and yours alone.

To tell someone she is making those feelings happen inside you is

part of the blame game our culture likes to play. But telling someone he's causing your feelings is not only a burden for the other person, it's disrespectful of your sovereignty. Don't give your power away.

If someone does something you find upsetting, a clean way of languaging this might be to say: "When you did X, I felt Y." This explains the progression of events but doesn't attribute any blame to anyone. It simply states the facts.

### **Adopt a Neutral Tone**

No matter how skilled you are with choosing your words carefully, for a conversation to be effective, your tone needs to be neutral. If your tone is demeaning or disrespectful, the words you choose won't matter much.

Your tone needs to be full of respectful intent. If you can't manage that, move the conversation to another time. You can say: "I don't trust myself to speak cleanly right now, so let's have this talk when I'm in a better place."

### **Ask for What You Need**

We teach people how to treat us, so don't hesitate to ask the other person to make changes in how he is speaking to you. Steering the conversation

toward a better outcome can be helpful. “Can you just listen for a few minutes without saying anything, so I can say what I need to say?” Or “Would you be willing to talk more calmly, so I can settle myself down?”

### **For Further Exploration**

Learning to be honest and clean in your communications will revolutionize your relationships. The first relationship it will impact is the one you have with yourself. There’s something so empowering about being able to express yourself fully and honestly. But speaking your truth will give other people a chance to understand you better and may result in others being more likely to respond to your needs. It can be a real game-changer. Try out the suggestions and notice their effects. You won’t be disappointed.

Meanwhile, consider exploring some of the other resources online for learning how to talk and listen in high-quality ways. One valuable resource is Non-Violent Communication. Developed by Marshal Rosenberg, Non-Violent Communication teaches people how. There are Non-Violent Communication programs in sixty-five countries around the globe. You can explore their protocol on their website at [www.drjoedispenza.com](http://www.drjoedispenza.com).

To Read more of *Find Your Inner Gold, 21 Powerful Tools to Bring Back Your Shine*, you can purchase it at most bookstores, or go to Balboa Press:

<https://www.balboapress.com/en/bookstore/bookdetails/784994-find-your-inner-gold>