

Mary Allen:

Okay, let me officially welcome everyone to Momentum Mastery Monthly. This is our Inner Peace call for the month, and I'm very excited about our topic here for today. Last week we actually spoke about creating Sustainable Inspiration, and if you happened to miss it, it is posted in the Forum, or you can look for it on CD, if you're getting that subscription

If you would like to be getting those CD's each month so that you can listen to these calls again and again, you simply need to go to lifecoachmary.com/momentum. For \$37.88 a month, you can tap into this resource of having both CDs shipped to you, as well as get the transcripts for these calls.

And of course, as always, you've got access to any of the MP3s in the Forum, and then the handouts in momentumnow.ning.com. Once you sign up as a member, you can get in there, and really access lots and lots of goodies from previous calls, and good work sheets and resources and all kinds of ways to really support both your success and inner peace.

So tonight, we're going to be talking about the Key to Inner Peace. I say sort of *the* key, and I was sort of joking earlier that of course there are many keys, but if there is a grand daddy of them all, what we're going to talk about tonight is the "big one".

If all you did was focus on this single one key, you would have tremendous inner peace in your life. So we're going to talk about one of the single biggest keys to experiencing greater freedom, power and fulfillment.

We are going to talk about six ways that we unknowingly create added stress and suffering, and of course once we understand these added ways, and get conscious about them we really have the ability to shift, and not do those self torturing things to ourselves anymore.

We're going to talk about how to separate out reality from the meaning-story-interpretation that we attach to it, so that we can have a lot more sanity and ease in our lives. Very simple ways to doing that and we may not be aware that we are doing that.

And we are going to talk also about what it really means to accept all three levels of reality in our life, so that we can enjoy greater success in everyday inner peace. And there is one other bonus that I will share as we get to that.

So what is this one single biggest key to experiencing greater freedom, power and fulfillment? And that key is embracing reality. It sounds like, okay, really *embracing reality* - that's it? Its kind of an esoteric concept, and yet, when we really start to dive into this more closely, we can really see that this is the single biggest key to inner peace.

I talk about reality, so we say embracing reality. Let's start with defining reality. It's good to know what we're talking about. Reality is whatever is really happening in the present moment, in actuality. Its not what you think *should be* happening.

It's not what you *hope* to be happening. It's not what happened 15 minutes ago. It's really what's happening right here now in the present moment, and as we can create a profound relationship with reality, our level of inner peace sky rockets.

We want to take a very simple concept, and that is when we fight reality, we create stress. Let's really take that in for a minute. When we fight reality, we create stress. When we push against anything, we talked quite a bit about resistance in Momentum Mastery, and resistance virtually always leads to stress and suffering, unless of course we're just totally embracing our resistance, then we might again find some embracing of any reality is going to resolve ultimately in peace. When we embrace reality, we have the ability and the power to choose consciously.

We can more rest in a place of peace. We can shape our future. We can give our gifts more fully, instead of just remaining a victim to reality, which is often what people's relationship is. Its like wow, its like this is happening to me - the economy or what's going on in government or what's happening over in the Middle East, like all of that, and sort of emotionally being victim to all kinds of circumstances.

So when we embrace reality, we're connected to the voice of spirit. We can really allow ourselves to live and flow. We've really got access to the here and the now. So I want to really explore here in today's call, this whole idea of embracing reality because this is one of the single biggest keys to experiencing greater freedom, power, fulfillment, and inner peace. This is it.

So let's just look at one another piece, and that is if we look at any time we're in a place of resistance, we can almost always recognize that there is a stressful thought that is resisting reality of some sort. You can try this out, and even get curious in your own experience.

Think about a situation that you haven't felt 100% at peace at, or peace with recently, look and see so what thought am I attached to or believing?

I was talking a little bit earlier with Juanita on the line right now, I've got the lines muted, but the ideas of speaking up publicly have been brought up before. There's something to coming on one of these calls and hanging on the wall, and listening in and taking in, absorbing the information, but really to look at, what might be the belief or thought about what it means to speak up, and some kind of resistance to that.

And we may just check in with her a little bit later on about exactly -- what was at play there because I guarantee any time there is not peace, there is more than likely some kind of thought lurking nearby, and as we begin to investigate those thoughts, they begin to lose their hypnotic power, and really allow us to return to peace, and really more consciously adopt more empowering thoughts, and beliefs to dance with in life.

Let's talk about embracing reality. Let me read this quote. It's a great quote here by Byron Katie.

"Reality is good just as it is, because when we argue with it, we experience tension and frustration. We don't feel natural or balanced. When we stop opposing reality, actions become simple, fluid, kind and fearless."

Really take that in. "When we stop opposing reality, actions becomes simple, fluid, kind and fearless," So, if we know this is true, and we know that when we begin to really fully embrace reality, that we can have a greater sense of emotional freedom, meaning that we're free of any kind of negative emotions, we've got the power to make more conscious choices.

We may, and I've heard many, many spiritual teachers say really enlightenment is recognizing reality exactly as it is. That's really all enlightenment is. Most of us just have such a distorted and twisted experience of reality, we're entrapped by the minds. But enlightenment ultimately comes out of embracing reality clearly. When we're embracing reality, we really have a sense of unconditional love for all parts of ourselves. We experience a tremendous sense of peace. There is a room for greater authenticity. We're not resisting ourselves. We can have deeper connections with others. And we can experience a greater sense of creativity and flow in life. That kind of makes sense, right? If

you're going down a river, and there is a dam that's covering all but maybe two or three feet of that river, the only way through the river as you get to that one tiny spot, so like lot of things can get jammed up, and when we remove the resistance, its sort of like moving a big wall in the middle of a river. It just allows things to flow more easily.

So let's look at these three levels of reality. The first level of reality is the world. If we were to embrace the world, which means accepting the world as it is, both what is perceived as good and what is perceived as bad. So we know the world is filled with all kinds of varieties of love and kindness and beauty and abundance, and the arts and plant life in oceans and mountains, right?

Also, we've got shopping centers, and farms and cities, lots of choices, but part of the world also includes things like hunger and war, crime, violence, injustice, accidents, the media, disease, lay offs, right?

So there are all these elements in the world, and of course we don't want our children to get sick. We don't want to be in a car accident; no one really wants war or crime, although I'm sure there are some companies that stay in business as a result of that, but I think fundamentally none of us want war, none of us want other people to be hurt, but when these things happen, how can it be helpful to argue with them?

Really sit with that. How it can be helpful to argue with them? There are lots of people who have aged themselves, and lost their hair, and maybe even lost their jobs, because they've gotten so distracted and frustrated about the wars going on in the Middle East, they are not even over there in the war, but just their emotional argument with this aspect of the world that happens to be included right now, is creating a lot of internal suffering for them.

And of course we can look on the outside and see somebody doing that, well that doesn't really make a lot of sense. As we take a closer look, you might ask how am I doing that?

How am I fighting against some aspect of the world? The weather falls into this category and pushing against that, not something that we can control. What's going on in the government whether you like it or don't like it -- how much energy are we going to waste pushing against what's going on in Washington, D.C.?

So just notice where you're at with that. Is there anything that you are arguing with in the world as it is? "It shouldn't be happening." So that's one level of reality, the world. And just take note of anything that you may be pushing against about world circumstances.

Next big level of reality is people. And of course here we get a variety of people here in the world, right. They can be kind and friendly and loving and warm and gracious and joyous and harmonious and open and responsible, understanding, humble.

But people can also be judgemental and deceptive and manipulative and dishonest. They can be argumentative even abusive. They can be selfish, they can be rude. They can be pre-occupied, right? They can be apathetic or indulgent.

When we think about embracing people, this level of reality of people, we really want to get that as we accept people as they are, that means all of the characteristics and actions of all people. If there are certain things people do, and we are kicking and screaming because they are doing it, because they are not living into the fantasy of who we want them to be, how much stress and suffering are we going to create for ourselves by pushing against that - emotionally, mentally, even physically sometimes with them, and getting into arguments. Telling them don't be like this, right?

So that's the second level of reality is people. And check in with the question, do you really want to dictate how another individual chooses to be in the world? Now there are some people that have to, down here on planet earth, to be humanitarians and give, really create value for the world.

There are other people that are just lazy; they want to feed off a welfare system or may be they want to take from others, harm others, and I'm certainly not advocating, gosh you know it's so great for people to go out, and just be who they are, harm people.

No, not at all, but my answer is not to experience pain and suffering every time somebody does something that isn't seen as a positive in the world.

Now, we want to get to the third level of reality, and that is you. Yes, you're a level of reality, and when we really embrace *you* on all levels, and embrace the reality of you, that means accepting all of who you are, that means all those good qualities that you love about yourself, and all of the things about yourself is that you try

not to be. You may have learned as a little girl or a little boy that it wasn't nice to be outspoken or it wasn't nice to put yourself first.

It wasn't nice to disappoint others. When we really get that speaking up is good and we've got good qualities, we've got the lazy side of us and we've got the inspired side of us. And to really get that both sides really make up who we are in this perfect mixture.

So, here is another quote from I Ching that goes "It is only when we have the courage to face things exactly as they are without any self deception or illusion, that a light will develop out of events by which the path to success may be recognized."

And so true that as we really see ourselves flaws and all and just can let ourselves hang out and the spirit of transparency and authenticity, that really out of all of this, success can be realized.

So just to check in with yourselves, and let me just check in and see, right now, what would you say is your current relationship with reality, is it really good? Is it fine except for when things are running late, or you're in traffic? Is your relationship with reality pretty good except for when you get depleted or angry or hungry or tired of some sort?

I'm going to just check with those of you that are in the Forum, you can now pop in any kind of response, what's your relationship with reality? I'm going to open up the phone lines. Here we go.

If you're in a place with some background noise you would need to press * 6 to mute yourself, but who would be willing to jump in and share a little bit about what's your current relationship with reality?

Juanita: Hello this is Juanita.

Michael: Hi Mary.

Juanita: Oh good, go ahead.

Mary Allen: Okay Juanita first, is that Michael?

Michael: Yep.

Mary Allen: We'll take Juanita first and then Michael.

Juanita: As you were going through those, I do not fight reality. I'm learning very -- I'm getting better at myself and others, but when I look at the world, somehow I have a belief that I'm not able or there is something wrong with me having a good life when someone else is suffering. And I've been working on that, trying to identify it, and it's very deep seated.

I haven't quite come to a clear identification with it. So it gets me if someone else is having a problem, then it's somehow my responsibility to fix it. I don't have a cut off point there as to what to do with that, and how to decipher over giving. So I started to approach that by saying who are you Juanita right now? What have you got to give? Where are you right now that you could look at other people, and I'm trying to go at it from a point of keeping my focus on myself, and then making sure that I have the resources to give if someone is just stating something that they need, or the people around me. It's getting clear what is their responsibility, and what is mine.

Mary Allen: Right, which is really good, and great to recognize, though a couple of things here. First off, thank you for sharing that openly that you know there is some things about the world that make it really hard for you to experience peace, and I bet you're not the only one that feels that way. We can point to at least here you've shared at least a couple of thoughts that you get attached to that it's hard for you to enjoy your good life if somebody else is suffering, so that's a rule or belief.

Also that it's your responsibility to fix if somebody else is suffering; that's an interesting rule. There is a great quote by Larry Eisenberg. You might want to write this one down. So "For peace of mind we need to resign as general manager of the universe."

Juanita: Yeah I like that.

Mary Allen: I'm in a profession that's very much about helping and supporting people, and so the way I choose to dance with that is not to suffer because, oh my gosh, I haven't gotten to everybody yet, and there are still people that are suffering. Instead, it's am I doing everything I can in this moment?

You know, the moment that I'm here, right now on this moment I'm on this call with all of you, so I'm here and available, and if I'm doing my best, I might not even get everybody out of their pain and suffering here tonight. I'm not going to pretend to be the

magician of all magicians, but if I'm doing my best then what more can I do.

Juanita: Right.

Mary Allen: Right.

Juanita: That is very, very helpful. I can see how I was wanting to manage people, and I could see how I was wanting to paint a picture for myself that was only perfect, and now that you've put it this way something clicked inside of me, that those words that I need to "resign as manager of the world" somehow that clicked.

Mary Allen: Very good, well you can play with that one. It probably means you will continue to help and contribute; it sounds like you're a huge giver, but how can your suffering really help?

Juanita: Right.

Mary Allen: If I meet you in suffering, am I going to be fully available to make a difference? Probably less so. I found the more I'm at peace, the better resource I am.

Juanita: Very good, thank you.

Mary Allen: You're welcome. Thank you, and Michael checking with you, what's your relationship with reality like?

Michael: I think my relationship with reality is pretty good. I deal pretty good with circumstances, with people. Where I probably feel that I could do better is when it comes to me. I often find myself, well often I find myself -- I sometimes find myself in a situation where I'm reacting a certain way, and then I have to stop and step back and get a, take a look at the bigger picture, and figure out is this really who I am or is this just a bad habit?

And I've noticed that sometimes, well actually pretty often it's just a bad habit that formed over the years, or something that somebody told me long time ago, and it's -- I went through an exercise when I was a teenager, and I questioned everything that I knew, everything that I felt, everything that I wanted, everything that I believed, and I decided that anything that I didn't have a really good reasons for believing or feeling or whatever, it wasn't important to me anymore.

But obviously there are some things that I didn't question, and I'm just discovering now in life that there are still things that I need to question, and there is stuff that comes everyday from other people that people will try to fuel your fires.

Mary Allen:

Right. Certainly an interesting thing with bad habits is one, is when we can embrace the bad habit, that's kind of the thing it's like okay, I think I was kind of joking about this weeks ago, about our addiction to CSI Crime Scene Investigations, watching that show, and just sort of recognizing and embracing okay you know what? We're spending way too many hours watching CSI reruns in the evening! So we wanted to transform some of that time into intimacy, so even just recognizing and sort of embracing the habit, it doesn't mean necessarily we went cold turkey, but just acknowledging it, is the first step in transforming it.

I'm also seeing here a quality that may come up as far as when we talk about ourselves, and not really embracing our own reality, that sort of points to the critic, and of course one thing that all humans do is we criticize. We can look and say well, that critical part of me is both a guest, and sometimes it can be an overactive guest.

So, good to be critical in some regards because it keeps us growing and keeps our edge sharp, and gets us inspired to go to the next level. There is a place where it also can be debilitating - beat you up, it can paralyze you, it can make you lower your self esteem. So it's sort of embracing the gift of any one of those qualities, and even any one of the habits.

There is gift in if you're watching CSI, of all the crazy things, it gives me snuggling on the couch with my honey to watch the show, and actually one of the reasons I love CSI is because it is about reality ultimately. It sort of starts out as who did it, and the people that you think were involved in the crime aren't necessarily the culprits, but the trail of evidence always leads to reality.

And so it's show about unfolding reality. Of course now you can see why I got addicted to it. And I'm going to tell you, I've been much better, pretty much down to about once or twice a week. So you guys don't need to send in AA for us.

So, really good. There is a way of really looking at how you can embrace all the aspects of yourself, and I think we'll have a call coming up probably in the next month or two around shadow stuff, and that's really where this can come into play; really just

whatever you're doing, just learning to love yourself, learning to love yourself.

Michael: Can you do me a favor, and just explain to me how being critical can be a positive thing? I spent a lot of times over the last few years replacing being critical with being understanding and putting myself in other people's place, and seeing things from their perspective, and I found that it's given me a tremendous insight in and understanding into how other people feel, and I've been able to replace a lot of feeling critical with understanding, so I'm wondering.

Mary Allen: Okay so lets take critical, and do you want to give a specific context for critical?

Michael: No I just...

Mary Allen: Okay, so let's take critical. So if I'm critical about - let's say I'm writing an article that I want to put out to the world. If I'm critical, then I may sharpen up a few sentences; I may raise the standards of the quality of what actually gets put out, so it can actually have a positive effect, and critical that now I can take it to another level.

Michael: So you're talking about being critical of work or of things, not or people?

Mary Allen: Well it could be of anything, critical of people, too. Let's say my husband is critical of me about something that he would like me to do more of, or less of, around the house. I can take critical as feedback as well. In fact, case in point. My job is to season whatever goes on the barbeque, and his job is to cook it on the barbeque. And so recently, he was basically being critical about how much pepper is going on to the seasoning, right? If he doesn't give me that feedback, then he is going to continue to have food that feels like it has more pepper on it than he would like.

If I'm resistant of that feedback, and I'm choosing 'feedback', because I like that word better, but it's also critical, and I responded, hey I don't like this, but as a loving spouse, of course I want that feedback, so that I can help support his happiness and pleasure and well being.

If I'm fighting and saying no, no, I'm not going to listen to you or take his feedback around the pepper as though I'm not a loving partner, he is not committed to me, or like all of a sudden I'm really leaving reality? The reality, if we can take the feedback for

what it is, just as it is, in this case, hey can you ease up on the pepper, or use the seasoning that doesn't have pepper in it, which was what was happening; it wasn't that I was adding so much pepper, it just it was part of the seasoning that I was choosing to use, which I like. We're out of it now, so again, we're all good on that and great! So I'm exploring different kinds of seasonings that don't involve pepper.

That's what happens when you can embrace in this case criticism in a positive way, but the ego loves to dig its heels in that, doesn't it, and say no, no, but you liked it this way for months. Well, it doesn't matter. In *this* moment, he is wanting less pepper.

This is a good segue into some other patterns about how we can be with reality that aren't necessarily empowering, and I think most people, I know myself that before I was really on to this dance with reality, I totally was indulging in each and everyone of these not so empowering ways to be in reality. So did that give you some insight for how to be with criticism?

Michael: Yes.

Mary Allen: Okay good.

Michael: And I actually saw those aspects of criticism as a feedback and I didn't actually think of them as criticism, but I suppose there is you could call it constructive criticism right, and as long as you make sure that it's being received in the way that it's being offered, it works great.

Mary Allen: Right, and we can also say, by the way, somebody throws out some criticism like they don't like the way you're doing this or that, can you do it differently? The response might also be actually I really appreciate the request, and you might really take a stand for a boundary, and say and I'm going to continue to do it this way because this is more important, and these are the reasons why, and maybe I'm thinking more with a business. In business, we often want to do things that are really going to support our clientele, and there are certain places where if somebody criticized me for not taking appointments on Monday or Friday, I would be like okay, fair criticism, you're right I'm not available on those times for appointments, but I'm available here and here, and here is why I really need to reserve those times for me. So, sometimes criticism doesn't mean that we're supposed to just do whatever somebody says they want.

Just to acknowledge Gaile's joining with Juanita with, "Thanks, I need to resign as general manager of the universe too!" It can be a very useful thing.

Okay, so let's do this. We're going to talk about these six ways to be with reality that are not empowering. I want to invite you as we look at each one of these as, first off, it's just noticing your own life where you may do this on occasion. Great if you can find at least one example where you have done it, not to beat yourself up, but as a way to just gently realize you get what that means.

So, here is the first thing that we can do, and that is we can add to reality - adding to reality. I've got a simple formula for this it's A plus B equals C. I know, very scientific! ☺ So the A here is the actual reality, you know what exactly happened. B is the meaning, and C is the altered reality. It's essentially what happened (A) plus whatever you're making up (I call it making stuff up) equals altered reality. So A is really the facts. And it's just that, an objective fact.

It's either an event, it's a behavior, it's an action, it's a mood, an experience; it's reality. And the way we can identify the A, one of the facts, is if we took five, ten people, lined them up, and said okay what's the reality of the situation? Everybody could get to what the reality of the situation is. Let's say the car ran the red light. Or let's say somebody cancelled plans with you, or your house is messy, or I'll say I didn't get a returned phone call.

These are all examples of just basic facts. Reality is neutral, it just is, and anything that is not an objective fact is part of the meaning, story or interpretation of the facts, and is *not* reality.

So, let's go to B. B is any meaning, story, interpretation, or a thought that we make up. We can point to something bad, for example, somebody is suffering, and Juanita was pointing to the thought that if somebody is suffering, then I can't feel good, which is going to now change her reality.

Because she's got that thought, plus what's going on in the world, and that equation leads to suffering. Well, it did up until about 15 minutes ago. She is not going to do that anymore, and probably not nearly as much.

So, if we just take a look here, A plus B equals C. Just recently in one of my programs, somebody had put out a request to the Forum and the group, and a certain somebody hadn't responded to it, even though the message was directly related to that person. I was on

the phone with the woman that put out the request, and she is like “Well, she didn’t respond. I don’t think she really likes me for whatever reason; we don’t connect, and it’s I don’t know what’s there”, so that was her “made up story”. That now equals altered reality, that they don’t have a connection. The fact that she didn’t respond means “this”. And of course, I’m very big into always coming back to reality, and saying well is that really true?

First off, we can’t know what somebody’s intentions were or not, and until there is evidence that comes out, and somebody says, hey I don’t feel a connection with you, or I don’t want to help you, maybe then we might take that under advisement.

But sure enough I think it was like the next day that the person responded, and was really gracious that hey, give me a phone call, I would love to support you with this, and viola, and so often here is another one where we add meaning to reality.

Hasn’t this happened a million times? Just recently we were going to be flying back for two weeks to spend in North Carolina with family, and we found out that there was a really important meeting that John was supposed to be at up in Northern California on the day after we were supposed to leave, which meant, oh he was going to have to delay our plans two days. That would mean less time with my father, and I could make up this whole reality of, okay, so this isn’t going to happen, and that’s going to mean we’re not going to have good quality time with my father, and that means John is not really committed to our family, and he is not committed to our vacation time, and my vacation is going to be a whole lot less. Right? Here, I’m adding a whole lot to reality, and what’s of course going to happen is reality is going to unfold as it does, and we’ll see.

So far I know John is invited to a certain meeting. He may go, he may not go. We haven’t seen yet what will happen in reality, and as it turns out in this particular case, doesn’t always, but sometimes, he decided to let the CEO of his company, and one other person handle that particular meeting which was actually a meeting with former Secretary of State George Shultz, which is a pretty important meeting, but turns out John got to meet with him a couple of weeks later.

He could have made up the story, oh, I’ll never get the opportunity to meet with former Secretary of State George Shultz ever again, but he decided not to make up that reality, and just kind of -- again if we stick with reality, reality is dynamic. It’s constantly

unfolding, and if we can just simply allow it to unfold and meet each moment that it unfolds with fresh eyes, with excitement like okay, I guess this is my reality of the day. It can often very much surprise ourselves.

As a little way to how you really separate out reality from meaning, story, and interpretation, here is what you can do. I like to pull out a sheet of paper and draw a line down in the middle. Then on the left hand column, write fact; you can write fact or reality. On the right hand column, write meaning, story, interpretation.

And when you have a situation in life that you're feeling stressed about, or maybe it's something that happened in the past, and you kind of want to tease out, okay what am I making up about reality? What really happened? You can start to go through and identify. Maybe somebody canceled plans. Meaning: they don't want to be in a relationship with me. They don't like me.

Or you might say, as an example of a fact, somebody is not paying full attention to me. So we might have the meaning that, oh they're not listening to me, they don't love me. Just by taking that column, and you can kind of do a little practice, is it reality, is there something emotional, is there some kind of judgment? Often when there is a judgment is a big clue that you've gone into meaning, story and interpretation.

And I'll tell you the very first time that this lesson hit me on the head. I was in a relationship, a very challenging relationship, I have to say, and something had happened in the morning before both of us were heading off to work, and he started saying to me, it's like you're making stuff up. He's like you're making stuff up, and I'm like, I'm not making stuff up.

It didn't click with me that I was taking whatever actions were occurring and putting some kind of spin on it; he didn't love me, he didn't care about me. Finally when it landed, it went through my ego, and my ego decided to actually look at this. I realized I'd been making up stuff all the time. It can be very easy to do, not to judge yourself, or be harsh with yourself, but really notice, just see where am I making up stuff? Something is going to be harder, or be scarier, or I can't do something. All this is kind of making stuff up. That's the first way that we can be with reality in a not so empowering way.

Second, and we'll go through these next ones a little bit quicker, second way is we distort reality. Distorting reality if we can do, we can either exaggerate it, or we can minimize it, and a way to know that we're doing this is if we're bringing in absolutes. An absolute is something like, "he never", so never, none, every, all, or any; so there are five of those: any, all, every, none, never.

Any time we're using one of those absolute words - he *never* calls me. *Every* time we talk, I get criticized. *All* of the emails have been mean. There is another, and here we go, "mean". What's mean? Mean is adding to reality. Mean is adding some kind of interpretation. It's a judgment word, and there are certain words that are specifically judgment words, so we want to kind of be on the look out for that. Also, any time we're exaggerating or minimizing something: This is the worst thing that happened to my whole life, or I'm completely messed up. This is impossible. It's all their fault, so it's somehow exaggerating or minimizing reality.

And an example of a minimizing one is "I don't care". Or they don't care, right? Again, it's a very absolute. It's really distorting reality, so we want to gently invite ourselves back.

Third way that we can be with reality in a not so empowering way is to deny reality. So you can imagine the ostrich that puts its head in the sand, that's the exact metaphor here. Its like na, na, na, I can't hear you. I don't want to hear. Now, sometimes it can be useful to deny reality, but to the extent that denying reality is not supporting our dreams and goals, is not supporting our full self expression, or denying reality is creating any kind of internal suffering or stress, we want to really look at this.

So, an example is if we pretend reality doesn't exist, or ignore some or all of the relevant facts relating to the situation, then we might hold the belief that we can't effectively be with that reality. And the truth is we can actually handle way more than we think. So for example, let's use credit card debt.

If I have \$15,000 credit card debt and I want to be fiscally responsible, my expenses are exceeding my income, and yet I'm not taking any concerted action to reduce the expenses, or increase my income, that's denying reality.

If there are certain qualities of ourselves, say I'm selfish, righteous, judgmental, rude, and disrespectful. At one time or another we've all demonstrated these qualities. Often if we're denying those qualities in ourselves, we're going to be reacting really strongly to

those qualities in somebody else, so that might be a clue that we're denying some part of ourself.

As another example if you're carrying around 100 pounds of weight that you don't enjoy, there may be a part of denying reality there. If you're in a really unfulfilling relationship, and you have been for a period of time, and you're not doing anything to get out of that, there may be some denial in that relationship. It's kind of a coping mechanism, but the more we can just face reality head on, really the more choices begin to open up for us. So just check and see if there is any place you maybe denying reality.

Let's go to the fourth key, or the fourth way that we can be with reality, and in a not so empowering way, and that is to try and perfect reality.

And those of you that just recently resigned as general managers of the universe, this is what you've been doing, trying to perfect reality, adding a big *should* or *supposed to*. To the world it's like life will be better if nobody is suffering, right. I'm thinking people should be nice. Well, sometimes people are nice and sometimes they are not. It's just reality.

May be we get upset at the government because they should have passed a certain law, but they didn't. The clues that we're trying to perfect reality is we're adding a *should* or some kind of *supposed to*. There is some kind of rule that something is supposed to happen in order for you to be okay or for you to be at peace.

So look and see if there is any way that you've wanted to perfect reality. We might think something should have happened, we may say that, but if we get attached to no, my husband *should have* responded to me in *this* way.

What's the reality of the situation? He responded as he did. I can continue to think that reality should be different and all it's going to do is create stress and suffering and separation in our relationship - not so much fun.

Okay, so then lets go to the fifth way that we can be with reality, in a not so empowering way. That is arguing with reality. The clue we know that we're arguing with reality is there is a "it shouldn't be this way", or it wasn't supposed to happen, or you're just fighting what is happening here and now.

For example, losing money in the stock markets. It's either lost or it's not lost, and continuing to beat yourself up is sort of like taking a sledgehammer, and continuing to beat yourself over and over. Lets just keep arguing with reality. As Byron Katie says, "When we argue with reality, we lose, but only 100% of the time."

Maybe you feel you shouldn't have to be experiencing this. It's like well you are, whatever you -- this is what is. The quicker that we can adapt and begin our dance with reality, and to say okay, this wasn't the communication I wanted, or plans didn't unfold, or somebody didn't respond in the way I wanted, and this is how it is right now, what am I going to do in this moment? What conscious choice can I make, coming back to the here and the now, and really getting that all stress is a result of immensely arguing with reality.

Those of you that have challenges with other people, being with them, in a way you're arguing with reality. People behave in a certain way. They may not be living into the fantasy of who you want them to be. It's kind of like saying don't be who you are, don't be who you are.

As a way to dance with this with my mom, my mom has been known to be critical, and she can be a really good backseat driver, particularly when her husband is driving. I remember one time when I'm in the backseat, and here she was doing what she does in the car, and instead of getting upset, and oh here she is again giving her husband a hard time, making it unpleasant for him, and I don't enjoy listening to this, and gosh you shouldn't be doing that, instead I think there is my mom being my mom and just appreciating her for just doing what felt natural to her in the moment.

Then out of that that space of accepting she is just being who she is, then I'm in a connected place, and I might actually make a connected, loving comment. Maybe I would redirect the conversation to something else, or maybe make a reassuring comment that you know, I think Andy's got it; you know, he is good. Say something kind of soothing, but I'm going to be doing it out of a place of connection instead of out of a place of, oh mom, stop, stop doing this! How do most people respond when you're using a more stern voice, and you're all upset because you're arguing with reality, very different.

We don't have to like reality, but we can stop the argument. When we come back to a place of peace, we can make really stronger requests.

Finally the last way that we can be with reality, in a not so empowering way is forecasting reality. What forecasting reality is about is attaching to a future reality. If we attach to a future reality, we kind of set ourselves up for the potential of disappointment. It takes us away from the free flow of life unfolding.

You get really super attached to certain events unfolding in a certain way, then boy, recipe for disaster. Versus well I can put my intentions out there, but if I can hold them loosely, and allow them to unfold in the natural way, and continue to just meet reality as it's showing up one step at a time, then I can maintain that sense of peace and calm, and be able to navigate whatever is going to come my way.

I'm trying to think of a Conversations with the Masters call; one of my guests came on and was being a little feisty, shall we say. I don't want to point names, but instead of going, oh my gosh, I can't believe this person is treating me in this way, and then getting defensive, I met what was happening in the moment with fresh eyes.

I couldn't be attached to it's got to go a certain way or not, and you just dance in the moment. Sometimes surprises pop up along the way. It can be in the middle of the move, and if you -- I think sometimes my husband can get attached to electronics working reliably, and guess what? When they don't, boy, I know a lot of pain and suffering can happen.

Suppose I'm attaching to a future reality, in that case probably also arguing with reality, and maybe even adding meaning to reality. Technology is not working; I add the meaning. That means I'm not getting to get this project done, that means this is broken forever, that means I'm never going to fix this, that means this is going to take hours and hours to fix. Right, very quickly we can see how we can leave reality and blossom it up.

It's also an example of exaggerating and distorting reality, making it worst then it is. So some examples of dancing with reality can actually embrace all six and of course you can guess there is lots of stress associated with that in the process.

So as we've been going through these, and hopefully you have been taking some mental notes, just check in and see how you may be adding to reality, how you may be distorting reality from time-to-time, making it worse than it is, or minimizing it in some way;

may be how you've denied some aspect of reality, how it'll be fun to try and perfect reality, adding a big should or supposed to, how we can argue with reality, thinking something shouldn't have happened, or wasn't supposed to happen, or how we can forecast reality, and get attached to a future reality, trying to predict things which doesn't always work so well for me. I like to set those intentions, hold them loosely, and go from there.

In a minute I want to open up the lines for those of you on the listening line. If you're listening in the Forum, you can add a comment, answering this question, which is the level of reality that you resist the most? So one of these six: adding to it, distorting, denying, perfecting, arguing, forecasting.

Just check and note, and as you're thinking about that answer I just want to say that as we're dancing with reality, really getting that its dynamic and changing, that if we keep coming back to a place of awareness, and keep really looking at what really is the reality of the situation, if we can keep reminding ourselves that we're always at choice.

If we can be listening to our own intuition, and I like to call it following the simple directions, and we're just allowing ourselves to respond to the intuition that's rolling in the moment, sort of mapping everything out. And if you can step into the "I don't know" mind, the example I used with the gal who thought when a colleague didn't respond to her email, so that meant there was a disconnection, that meant she didn't want to help, and that there was some kind of attitude going on. Instead, coming back to "I don't know what's going on maybe she is busy."

Maybe she really wanted to put together a thoughtful reply; maybe she is actually typing an email right now; maybe she didn't get the email right? So stepping into that "I don't know". I would much rather stand in I don't know then to attach myself to some story that's going to lead to more suffering.

It's sort of actually insane to keep doing that, so I like to play the reality game, and keep stepping back, and then the last key in dancing with reality is just what's the attachment? And as I'm speaking to this, there is some things that we've got coming up in the next few months, and just noticing a little bit of the attachment, and noticing that boy, maybe I ought to let go of that attachment. It'll open up more options for me instead of really trying to force a certain something to happen on a certain timeline.

Okay, so I'm going to open up the lines here. We have lines open; if you have any background noise you can press * 6. If you would like to, I'd love couple of you to jump in, and say which of these six do you end up resisting the most? So who would like to jump in?

Michael: This is Michael.

Mary Allen: Yeah, Michael.

Michael: I can't really say. The problem is that I'm torn between agreeing with you and disagreeing with you.

Mary Allen: Okay, great, I love it.

Michael: On one hand I agree with you 100%. On the other hand every once in a while I have to wonder if I'm just accepting everything the way it is to read the reality for the reality it is.

Mary Allen: Yes, oh, I'm so glad you're saying this.

Michael: Am I being lethargic and just, so letting things be and just --

Mary Allen: Exactly! Okay, I'm so glad you brought this up, because actually I meant to speak to this before, and your question made sure that I got this covered. Here is a great way of dancing with reality. First off, I want to be really, really clear that accepting reality does not mean we're condoning it. So when people lie, cheat, steal, make mistakes, crimes happen, we're not condoning it.

We're not saying, oh everything is okay la la la. Whatever happens is fine, so we're not condoning it. We're also not being passive, right. So, this doesn't mean we're just whatever happens we just have to take it. Somebody raises their voice at us, or does something that feels abusive? No. It's not about not being passive. It's about seeing something for what it is, and then out of that moment, making a conscious choice about how to be with that reality. If somebody is being verbally abusive, you might stop and interrupt them, and say I can tell you want to communicate something really important, and I'm really having a hard time hearing you in the voice you're communicating in. Can you try saying what you're saying in a different tone of voice?

Of course, if I'm fighting reality, my voice is probably not going to sound that calm, right.

Michael: Right.

Mary Allen: Right, for sure not. Trust me, you can ask John. It's not like I do this perfectly either. You know we can all get...

Michael: You're not perfect? ☺

Mary Allen: No! We can all get caught up in this for sure, and when it's happening we can notice its like wow, I'm really fighting it. There is the way where we can come back to a place of awareness, kind of step back and begin to just see the reality of what's going on, even the reality what's going on inside of myself. It's like boy, I'm really attached to a thought that if this doesn't change, that life as I know it is going to be over!

So it's not about condoning it, it's not about being passive; it's also not about letting somebody off the hook. Really get that first off your responsibility is you, so it's not your job to make sure somebody corrects their nasty behavior, or to make sure that they're honest, or successful or understands your view point, but you are your own responsibility. If you can come back in a grounded place of reality, somebody can be totally upset, and everything else, and you're going to be in a calmer, more grounded way in which to navigate through whatever situation is arising.

Michael: Thank you.

Mary Allen: Does that address what your --

Michael: Yes

Mary Allen: Good.

Michael: Absolutely.

Mary Allen: Yeah, and to really get here, I mean and this is a big one. We can't control other people. We can't control things going in the world. We can't control war, wars happening and laws. I mean we can do things to influence certain things, but we have to really be clear what we can control, and what we can't. And what we can always control, well, not always control, is our starting with awareness.

So, dropping back we can always choose to breathe. You know, what can I do to just bring myself back in this moment? First off get in the reality of this moment that "all is well". I'm okay. I'm actually really okay. I may be making up the story right now that

things aren't going to be okay, or if something doesn't change that that means I'm going to get a divorce, or my business is going to go down the tubes if a certain something doesn't happen.

So is there any of the six ways that we pointed too that you would like to pay a little bit more attention to over the coming week?

Michael: Not especially. It was really that conflict that I mentioned earlier, that I need to work out.

Mary Allen: So this conflict between bad habits and --?

Michael: I don't know; the conflict between agreeing with what you're saying and being that way, and finding the balance between not feeling like I'm just letting everything be. You know not --

Mary Allen: Yeah, okay. So I can put you on the spot, here is where we're adding a little bit of something to reality but embracing reality may mean I'm being passive, or what do you make it mean if you really were to embrace reality?

What's the meaning you're putting on it? For a week, if you were to just full on kind of turn up the volume.

Michael: Well, embracing reality to me is just seeing things as they are, not worse and possibly even seeing them better than they actually are, or than you perceived them, because the chances are, a situation is more likely to be better than we often perceive it to be.

Mary Allen: Right, and certainly my favorite is if you're going to put a meaning, story or interpretation on something, put a positive one on it.

Michael: Yeah.

Mary Allen: You know or a positive expectation that will come.

Michael: If you've a choice, why choose the negative?

Mary Allen: Right.

Michael: You may just as well choose the positive.

Mary Allen: Might as well feel good.

Michael: But I have to work out when do I, where do I draw the line, and say no this is not acceptable to me.

Mary Allen: Yes, so I'll let you dance with that one, because I think it's a really important place to play with, and to really pay attention to that if you can first be in a place of acceptance about what is going on, then you're going to be in a much stronger place to make a request about changing it, about putting in a boundary, about either removing yourself from the situation.

You are much more a choice, but when we're in reaction mode, which is what most of us are doing as we dance with reality, we're in reaction mode, so it's like knee jerk reaction, and of course there's a place for a knee jerk reaction, but if we can first just step back and really be clear that we're seeing reality for what it is and what it isn't, then we're going to be in the more powerful and connected place to influence that reality.

Michael: Great, and I actually believe that if you actually practice that, like I noticed that years ago I used to be in a much more reactive mode, and it's been a practice of mind to try and not react first. See things for the way they are, and then decide how I'm going to react. The more I do that the easier it becomes.

Mary Allen: Yes, absolutely, very good. So let's see, here in our Forum, thanks for Gaile chiming in here. She says "I try to perfect reality with a fair dash of denying reality too. Thanks for this". Great, thank you for that, and also just made a little comment about laughing out loud to Byron Katie's quote about losing 100% of the time when arguing with reality. Yes that's definitely a big one.

Anyone else that's here on the line that would like to chime in and share which of these six ways that you recognize that you've played with reality in a less empowering way that you want to take a closer look at over the coming week?

Juanita: This is Juanita, and I noticed, started noticing, oh, say six months ago, that I would say things, things would come out of my mouth dramatic. And I thought, wow that is wild, I wonder where that came from? That's not even close to, and I'd been watching it coming out of my mouth that way.

So, therefore distorting reality is something that is showing up in my language. Therefore, I need to watch for it in other places, and now that you've put words to it, and now that I can see that this is something - it was confusing to me when that showed up. I thought

where in the heck is that coming from because I didn't really consider myself a drama queen, but now to look at this being one of those distorting reality.

I know that I've ... of course -- you know now that we start to awaken, we can see how we looked at reality before and you can look at all of these wonderful ways, and like you were saying trying to perfect reality. One of the things that I've really attached myself to, my life can't be this bad.

Mary Allen:

That's right. Well, and the truth is we could do all of these things, and still have a great life, but of course here in Momentum, I hope, and really everything that I'm about is why not experience as much success and inner peace, and as truly one of the greatest keys to inner peace is this mastering, and just really developing this profound relationship with reality.

I know if I'm ever in some kind of a more intense conversation with my own husband, and I start to get into absolutes or exaggerate things, I try, I'm not perfect, try and come back and really say, okay that is not really fair. The truth is you don't do something in this situation, but you do do that in this situation. I really want to acknowledge and appreciate you for doing these things.

Again, we bring ourselves more back to reality. Ego sure loves to have it be on the extreme ends, but with consciousness and attention, and a little bit of commitment, we can shift this dance with reality, and have a little bit more peace in the meantime.

So as follow up before we wrap up here for tonight, you can review lesson number eight from The Power of Inner Choice, the lesson on embracing reality, and I would love to invite you to pick one of these six disempowering ways that you may have interacted with reality in the past and pay special attention to this one over the coming week.

And don't try and master all of them right away, but just pick one that you're really going to focus on, and then enjoy dancing with reality throughout the week. And I'll look forward to our next call next month, and as always will be posting some follow up notes in the Ning Forum and posting the MP3 recordings for those who would like to listen to this call again.

And with that, I just want to thank everyone for your time and attention. I know we did a little bit longer call than normal, so that

wraps up tonight. Wish you all a fabulous evening, good bye for now. Bye everyone.

Michael: Thanks Mary. Bye.

Mary Allen: Bye.

[End of Audio]