

Mary Allen:

Okay. Let me officially welcome everyone to Momentum Mastery Monthly. This is our Inner Peace Call for the month, and our topic is Releasing Stressful Thoughts. We might even say, transforming toxic thoughts. And really super excited about our call today because it's probably one of the most essential in terms of maintaining and experiencing everyday inner peace. So, definitely a very important topic.

So I put out as a little teaser email about whether you've ever experienced a Valentine's Day gone awry? Maybe your expectations for romance and connection fell short? Or you found yourself picking a fight with your beloved? Of course, one of the biggest saboteurs is those electronic impulses that bash between our ears, otherwise known as thoughts. And when we're not careful, even the best of us can spin out of control, and that can lead to hurting ourselves or hurting even the ones we love most.

I have to fess up, because just Saturday night actually was the night that my husband John and I were celebrating Valentine's Day because he had a business trip yesterday. We planned a special dinner. And Valentine's Day is one of those days where there's a lot of expectations, a lot of "shoulds" shall we call it. And, I was noticing myself having these expectations. Okay, we're going to have just a really super engaging conversation. And it'll be really intimate. And, it'll feel like one of those first dates when you're first falling in love. And your partner is totally into you, and you're totally into them. And the wine is perfect, and the food is perfect.

And you know, we had a lot of those elements going, but I was kind of feeling like, take it up a notch. This is too much like every day. And I could feel that bumbling around and like almost wanting to pick a fight. And remembering all of the times in the past where expectations – or expectations as simply being attached to a certain thought had somehow turned an otherwise romantic evening into something that you have to apologize for the next day or just something that doesn't feel good.

So, certain thoughts were popping up that, we should be having a really engaging conversation. We should be more romantic. I was talking with another client today and she was commenting on how he shouldn't have brought up the ex-wife when they got in bed last night. Maybe there's the thought of they shouldn't be checking their Blackberry.

So on our call today, we're really going to take a close examination to thoughts and how they can play roles in picking fights and creating inner turmoil, and otherwise creating suffering for us. We're going to explore what it's costing our relationships, well-being, and productivity when our mind is fixated on these seemingly benign, yet toxic thoughts. We're going to focus on how to know when a stressful thought is lurking, and how you can avoid its damaging consequences.

We're going to explore two surprising characteristics that can take a harmless thought and make it destructive, caustic or violent. We'll explore why stressful thoughts are like cholesterol, and how you can avoid nasty build up. And maybe the part everyone will most look forward to today is seven simple strategies for releasing stressful thoughts in a manner of minutes or even seconds. And for those super booger thoughts, I like to call them, it's like how to surgically remove the most pain provoking thoughts without anesthesia or bleeding. That's our agenda tonight.

Before I jump into that and throw the first question out to our live listening audience, looks like we've got quite a group listening in here tonight, I want to just make a couple of quick announcements. First off, just welcome any of our newest members. Great to have you here. And I really invite you to explore around the Momentum Mastery Forum online to connect with other members here.

Also, as some of you who maybe poking around the site may have noticed that I have posted the details for the commitment contest, which actually officially starts, and it's going to go through June 1st. Right now it's listed to go through May 15th. But I just today made a couple changes that are going to be taking place in Momentum Mastery. And so, I'm actually going to extend the contest a little bit more.

But if you're already participating in Momentum Mastery, I'd say get a head start and a jump on things. You're essentially going to have an opportunity to win a free ticket to the Inner Peace Immersion Retreat. I'm planning to give away up to three tickets. It's going to be based on your participation on these live calls, interacting in the Forums, posting your focus forms, on accountability, and otherwise being an active participant here in Momentum Mastery, and in the pursuit of your success and inner peace.

So you can go to the Forum and you'll see one of the featured items is the contest information. You'll be hearing more about that in the days and weeks to come. And I also want to announce too that starting in May, we're going to start having one content call and one open coaching forum call a month. So they'll both still be recorded and you'll receive those on CD or MP3. But here is an opportunity, I wanted a way to support people even more individually. And so one call is going to be focused on content. The next call is really going to be focused on laser coaching you. So getting the support you need, accountability; if you're stuck in a certain place, if you're getting tripped up by the same inner peace culprit, these are your opportunities to come and get support.

Even if you're not feeling like you need anything to be coached on, it can be super valuable even just listening in to other people being coached. So I've done this a lot in the past. My success in Inner Peace Boot Camps, they're super popular, and I hope you'll all take full advantage of that. And the other little announcement, you'll be seeing over the weeks to come a new name actually for Momentum Mastery. I wanted to find a way to integrate Momentum into my Everyday Inner Peace brand. And it was feeling like, okay, this is all about pursuing your goals, and then the rest of my business is about Everyday Inner Peace. So the new name for Momentum Mastery is going to be Peaceful Momentum, which is all about creating and sustaining success with inner peace.

So the focus is still essentially the same. We're here to provide a venue to pursue your top goals in a like minded community, to have accountability about what's most important to you, and really hold the standards high for your experience of everyday inner peace. But from a branding standpoint, we're going to be adjusting the name. So it's going to take us a little while for my graphics scout to get us a new banner and to kind of get the language all transformed.

But I hope you all like the new name, Peaceful Momentum. I totally do. Excited to announce that. Okay, so that is it for logistics. One other thing is if you're in the part of the momentumnow.ning.com Forum, you received a little email from me about the Momentum Mastery focus form. And I just want to acknowledge those of you that have already jumped aboard and posted your weekly focus form as a discussion topic and tagged that as a focus form topic there in the Forum.

So if you haven't done that already, I highly recommend going. You'll always find that focus form. It'll be the top form listed in the exercises and handouts section which is always a featured item in the Forum. So highly, highly recommend doing that. It will make such a huge, huge difference in your life. And you'll also see that I'll be posting my own focus form in the Forum so you can see what I'm up to week by week as well.

Okay. So that's it for logistics. So we're going to just jump right in to our topic around releasing stressful thoughts. I had put everybody into lecture mode, but I am opening up the line. If you've got any background noise where you are, you can press *6. Hopefully, all of our live listeners will participate in our discussion here. So, as we explore this idea of releasing stressful thoughts, I want to put the question out to our live listening audience, "What is life like when the mind is full of stressful thoughts?"

So really just drop into that question. What if life like when your mind is full of stressful thoughts? How do you treat others? How do you treat

yourself? What is life like when your mind is full of stressful thoughts?
Who'd like to chime in?

Female: Hi Mary.

Stephanie: Hi Mary. It's Stephanie.

Mary Allen: Yes. Stephanie first.

Stephanie: I think I best describe it as life just slows down. I really am not connected to anything. I don't feel energized or the momentum is very slow. And I really just want to just kind of stay in bed, pull up the covers and not participate in life.

Mary Allen: Yes. Boy, you summed that up really well. Yes. Who would add to that?

Louise: Mary, this is Louise.

Mary Allen: Yes, Louise.

Louise: Hi. I would say – I was going between what the last person just said, and also being very irritable and snapping.

Mary Allen: Yes, irritable and snappy. Yes, good. Who else would add to that? I noticed for myself, I'll add a few here that I tend to be less present when I'm totally caught up in a bunch of mind stuff. I'm not so available for what's in front of me. That's a big one. And I might notice my body being literally physically tense. And maybe another couple ones is it could be an experience of overwhelm or stress, being self critical. Who else would add something here? What's life like when your mind is full of stressful thoughts?

Michael: This is Michael.

Mary Allen: Yes, Michael.

Michael: How are you doing?

Mary Allen: Doing great.

Michael: I don't know if this is true. I'm still trying to notice it. But my wife tells me that she read somewhere that when you get upset – and people get upset sometimes when they're stressed, you know, that your right and left half of your brain stops being able to communicate. So you start – you stop being able to reason.

- Mary Allen:* Interesting. Boy, I would love to track down that study. But it makes perfect sense, right? When people get stressed out or really caught up in thoughts to be able to even rationalize with them sort of goes out the window.
- Michael:* And be objective. Yes, they lose the ability to be objective about what's happening. And you know, that perspective just leaves.
- Mary Allen:* Boy, I think that's just right, right on. That's a good one.
- Louise:* Mary, this is Louise again. What just came up for me is that we switch from being conscious to being unconscious in our behavior.
- Mary Allen:* Yes.
- Louise:* Kind of goes hand in hand with being present.
- Mary Allen:* Exactly, exactly. Yes. So, okay. There's a fun question to explore. What life is like when our mind is full of stressful thoughts? I'll also add here is just how draining and exhausting it can be. Literally just by electronic impulses that go crazy, crazy in the mind, it can be what keeps people up at night having insomnia, and ultimately lead to health issues.
- So let's step into another group discussion which is what is life like in the absence of stressful thoughts? What is life like in the absence of stressful thoughts?
- Michael:* This is Michael.
- Mary Allen:* Yes, Michael.
- Michael:* It becomes a whole lot easier to relax, that's for sure.
- Mary Allen:* Easier to relax.
- Michael:* You can meditate. Things seem to come to you instead of having to work for the thoughts to come.
- Mary Allen:* Yes. And when you say things come to you, you mean...
- Michael:* I mean thoughts.
- Mary Allen:* People showing up, ideas?
- Michael:* Yes, ideas, yes.

Mary Allen: Okay.

Michael: Exactly.

Mary Allen: Yes. And the absence of a stressful thought is a different type of thought that actually shows up in the mind isn't it?

Michael: Yes. It reminds me of a scene in that movie, Eat, Pray, Love where they're talking and the guy from Texas there says, you know, "If you just open up your mind, the Universe would just come in." And I've experienced that. You know, if you relax and just empty your mind, it creates space for the Universe to come in and take care of you.

Mary Allen: Yes. Absolutely. I couldn't agree more. One of the chapters in my book, The Power of Inner Choice on Spirit versus Ego, literally what I talked about was opening yourself up to that divine guidance. And when we're present, when we're in a high energy vibration, we really have access to that direct communication. And it can be almost like following the simple directions. A thought arises, we simply respond as very friendly. Who else would add to this conversation?

Michael: Can I just add one more thing?

Mary Allen: Sure.

Michael: The opposite, when I'm stressed, I've noticed that I actually try to access that. And it just doesn't work. And I have to find that I have to get myself unstressed or clear my mind before that starts to happen.

Mary Allen: Excellent. Excellent point. So definitely not accessing intuition and guidance is a big problem when the mind is full of stressful thoughts.

Michael: Yes.

Mary Allen: Good one. Thanks for adding that.

Juanita: This is Juanita.

Mary Allen: Yes, Juanita.

Juanita: And going upstream when there is stress, I can just feel myself trying to go upstream and the world does not look friendly at all. And then when there's no stress, I can just feel myself getting into the flow. And the world around me seems friendly. When I'm stressed, it seems like everybody looks at me and says, "She's icky." And so I come at them with a challenge of you know, "Okay, I know you don't like me." And so what I

see on people's faces is a negative response. But when I get into everything is okay, then people are smiling at me.

So therefore in a negative space, I'm looking for negative things. And in positive space, I can see the positive.

Mary Allen: And isn't that true? It's so so true. We get mirrored back whatever is going on in our mind; it gets mirrored back in our world.

Juanita: Right.

Mary Allen: Interesting how the world gets friendlier in the absence of stressful thoughts.

Juanita: Right. Yes.

Mary Allen: And you know what, that's my experience as well, and my experience in coaching people that are really gnarled up with all kinds of stressful thoughts, really view the world as unfriendly, and evil, and experience so much inner turmoil as a result of it. So then they attract experiences that, you know, march hand in hand. Nobody might have a problem with a specific vendor, but all of a sudden they're going to have problems with that vendor, they're going to feel like they're constantly getting screwed over because like attracts like.

Juanita: Yes.

Michael: This is Michael.

Mary Allen: Yes, Michael.

Michael: I'd just like to add to that, that those people that you – like what you just described, they often call themselves realists. Which I find very amusing.

Mary Allen: You know, I think you're right. Like, "Oh, this is just reality." Well, yes. When you believe your own thoughts...

Michael: It creates a reality.

Mary Allen: It feels pretty much like reality. Yes.

Louise: Mary, this is Louise.

Mary Allen: Yes, Louise.

- Louise:* I love this conversation. It's so rich. You were talking about vibration earlier and how we attract certain things. You know, the energy that we create when we're in stress is one of resistance. Most of the time we kind of – you know, that feeling of constriction, and when it comes to energy, and so nothing flows, and everything seems to go awry. You know when you're in that space of compulsiveness and feeling good about life and feeling presence, everything flows. You know the energy is freed up. And everything just goes swimmingly.
- Mary Allen:* Yes. An idea is freed up, and it goes swimmingly. I love that. Love that, love that. And it feels good too, right?
- Louise:* That's right.
- Mary Allen:* We have a sense of well-being, and connection. Yes. Much easier to be present. Who else would add anything about what life is like in the absence of stressful thoughts? Maybe more peaceful, maybe even more productive. More fulfilling.
- Louise:* Mary this is Louise again. Just going into that idea of being productive, I think you know, if we're in that flow and we're feeling good, we're not criticizing ourselves as much in our own minds. So you know, it's easy to get things done and not feel stopped by this, you know, little pesky beliefs that pop after every now and again.
- Mary Allen:* Yes. Exactly. So if we're not criticizing, what we might be kind and loving and supportive.
- Louise:* Yes.
- Mary Allen:* Encouraging of ourselves.
- Louise:* It's even not having that voice show up. You know, it's just the allowing.
- Mary Allen:* Right. Yes. I couldn't agree more. In fact, you know, I like to refer to stressful thoughts as kind of like cholesterol. And if we think of our arteries, when they're clear and clean, you're healthy. The body can do its job optimally. And when cholesterol builds up in your arteries and your system, well it's not so noticeable in the beginning. But as it builds up, the plaque builds and builds and builds, it creates a certain amount of resistance in the arteries, right? Making it harder for your heart to work. Ultimately, pinching off that flow of blood. And so we can think of cholesterol kind of like stressful thoughts in our minds. The more that we have, it impedes the flow of life in just a different way.

Louise: Mary, this is Louise again. You know, I know that you use that analogy because the reality of it is, is that stressful thoughts do impede the flow of life literally. I mean you can literally become ill and sick and die.

Mary Allen: Yes.

Louise: You know, based on our thoughts.

Mary Allen: Yes.

Louise: And how we live our lives.

Mary Allen: Yes. Yes. There's so much research that shows this, and a lot of the work with Louise Hay really correlates different illnesses and disease with what's going on in the mind, and where you're focused.

Louise: Yes.

Mary Allen: Yes. Sad, but true.

Louise: And also, Mary, just for anyone who might be listening, if they're interested, there's another chap you might have heard of called Bruce Lipton. And he talks about – he wrote a book called the Biology of Belief. And basically, he talks – he's a geneticist. And he broke the mold talking about – to set it to memory and how we can influence whether we are going to get sick or not based on the environment and our belief. And he talks about how you know, we think that we're genetically predisposed to certain things, but we have the power to change that.

And it's just fascinating. So if anyone is interested, just do a search on him. He does a lot of interviews on Blog Talk Radio. And you know when I listen to him, he just blew my socks off very much for sharing.

Mary Allen: Yes. We listened to those CDs as well. It's amazing work. Amazing work. Thanks for adding that. Really good. Well so let's see if we can pull some real live examples of stressful thoughts into the conversations. So kind of take inventory in your own life or think of what could be the most stressful thoughts that you could focus in on.

You know, "I don't know what I'm supposed to be doing," "I'm not reaching my potential," "I don't have enough time." Let's hear some other examples of stressful thoughts. How about, "The world is messed up," or, "People are selfish," "Money is the root of all evil," "No one cares," "I shouldn't be judging." Who'd be willing to share some examples of stressful thoughts. They don't even have to be yours.

- Juanita:* This is Juanita. And I have a difficult time sometimes interacting with other people because I have my own – own little way of doing things. I'm not as social as other people. And so the stressful thoughts when I have to interact with other people is, "Oh, no." You know, this is – what if you don't say the right thing, or what if they don't like you – or – those are stressful especially if I'm in a conversation with other people and I get a hint that maybe something's going wrong and want to come back and say, "Juanita you're wrong." How can you change yourself in this situation? And one of the things that I'm making great headway in is because I'm here with my own gifts, and I don't need to be different. I just need to know how to not bruise the world when I come in to it, but I am fine as me.
- Mary Allen:* Yes, you are. Absolutely.
- Juanita:* But those are one of the stressful things if I start into social situations. And I allow myself to start doubting myself.
- Mary Allen:* Yes. Yes. And you know, just hearing that – it just makes my heart hurt just to hear that. Maybe you got a kind of "cousin" to that you know, "They won't understand me."
- Juanita:* Yes.
- Mary Allen:* Right? That, "They won't get me." And even at the core of this, there's a little belief or thought of, "It's hard to interact with people."
- Juanita:* Yes. And then looking for – and kind of coming at it saying, "Juanita, you're not socially adept." And that is not true. What I am looking at are the things that I haven't known how to do that I am now doing better. And one of the things is that I'm a literal speaker. I say exactly what I mean. And understanding that other people are like more emotional speakers. So they give generalities and so forth. And those are the people who kind of like to sit around and talk a little more. Or you know, the legal debates of literal thinking. But just to understand that we have a difference in the way our mind works when we're conversational.
- Mary Allen:* Yes. So it's great to observe the differences between all of us as human beings. Different communication styles and patterns and habits. And then interesting to notice, as you're pointing to is just the layer of judgment towards yourself and maybe even towards others to a degree about those certain styles.
- Juanita:* Right. And I've been hard on myself and judgmental for years. And not knowing that that was a really, really – well I've known it wasn't really good. But I hadn't picked up on all the ways that I was doing it. And so

one of the stressful ways is, "I'm not qualified for today," "Or I'm not competent in this situation." So I guess one of my most stressful thoughts is, "Uh-oh Juanita, you're not enough."

Mary Allen:

That one, I believe is probably one of the biggest universal stressful beliefs out there. "You're not enough." And oddly enough, doesn't matter the size of anybody's bank accounts, how old or young they are, but a very, very, very large portion of the population buys into that belief at some level. And we can really look at the consequences of that, "You're not enough." Right? If anything, it's just self-deprecating and putting us down, and maybe cracking the metaphorical whip on ourselves, pushing us to grow, which might be a good thing.

I mean, "You're not enough." There are a lot of people that are involved in personal growth that are born out of that belief that got on the path of personal growth. In some ways, "Okay. You're not enough. Great." You know, we're going to grow and learn. But ultimately we come to realize that all along, we were totally enough. And it's fun to grow too.

Juanita:

Right.

Mary Allen:

Yes. Thank you, Juanita. So we've got some examples of stressful thoughts. Hopefully you've jotted down a few more. And keep those handy, because we're going to be talking about some strategies for transforming them. So they will come in good and handy. I want to talk about two elements of stressful thoughts. It's something that is pervasive for every single stressful thought.

Let's first start by really getting that thoughts in and of themselves are harmless, right? Somewhere I heard the statistics 59,000 to 89,000 thoughts per day come through our mind. I don't know whoever measured that, but it seems like probably in the right ballpark. And the vast majority of those thoughts are coming into and out of our minds like clouds. They come in, they go out. But a thought ends up creating suffering when it has two characteristics.

One is, there needs to be attachment to it. Right? If I hold the thought, people are selfish, and I'm really, really attached to the fact that people are selfish like, "No, I *know* they're selfish. I mean look at – look at all of these capitalists, people out there that are having huge salaries and not paying their employees nearly the same amount. Or the Bernie Madoffs of the world, the people that aren't willing to volunteer and contribute to causes."

Right? We can look for lots of evidence, and when we're attached to that thought, that's one element that will lead to a stressful thought. The second

key thing is something Louise pointed to a little bit ago, and that's resistance. Resistance. Let's take the thought, "The world is coming to an end on Saturday." Okay, if I believe that thought, how do we know there's attachment? Part of attachment is belief. How strong is the belief? Certain things that make up our identity end up being fairly strong attachments or beliefs. Let's take this thought, "The world is coming to an end on Saturday." And I believe that. So there's some attachment, "Oh, the world is coming to an end on Saturday."

If there's no resistance, there's no suffering, right? I might totally believe the world's coming to an end on Saturday, but if I'm not kicking and screaming and fighting and worrying and crying and –just being devastated inside, fighting mentally, emotionally, spiritually that this is going to happen, there is no suffering. I need both to be present, right? I can take the thought, "That person is rude." Okay. First off, I've got to stay attached to it. If I'm in the grocery store, and somebody cuts me off the aisle with their shopping cart, and if I stay fixated on that thought, "That person is rude, that person is rude."

So the event is over, but I carry it with me other next three aisles, and through the checkout counter, and as I'm loading my groceries into the car, that's an example of attachment. But maybe I do resist that the person is rude, initially. It's like, "Oh, the person is rude, cut me off." But I don't stay attached to it, it's like, "Okay. Done. Over." It might be equivalent to getting a pin prick on my finger, like when you get your blood drawn. It happens, then it's gone. So we really need both of these elements. The attachment to it and the resistance of it in some way, shape, or form to create that stress and suffering.

We can take the thought, "It's cold outside." Okay, if I'm not fixated on the thought "it's cold outside", you know, zero degrees wind chill factor 20 below, and I'm not fighting that it's cold outside, and instead, I've got a nice, warm cozy fire on inside, I've got the heat turned up appropriately, I'm dressed for the climate, the fact that it's cold outside is not going to ruin my world.

But, you know, we go to attachment, "It's cold outside –" and sometimes I let this be an excuse not to get myself to the gym. It's like "Oh, it's cold outside." And then I resist. I don't want to be in the cold. Right? Then all of a sudden "It's cold outside," can start to impede my flow. So it's something to pay attention to with any of the stressful thought is to just notice how attached am I, how much resistance is present.

And there are different categories of stressful thoughts; judgments, so this pointed to some various judgments. They can be stressful, thinking something should or shouldn't happen. I think we used a couple of

examples of that early on. "My husband should be more romantic," "My son or daughter should pick up their room," or "they should call." You know, other examples of big stressful thoughts. And then a couple of other categories, "I need to – I have to," sometimes even, "I want." "I want a certain something." If I don't get that certain something, that can end up creating a lot of stress. So with anything, where we're heading with all these is to really learn to dance loosely with our thoughts.

And then maybe certain ones that we have to kind of relax our attachment to, to create a little bit more spaciousness. Maybe relax another resistance to it. Maybe we come to peace with the fact that people are selfish. Yes, I notice that there are people in the world that are selfish. And I also recognize there are people in the world who aren't selfish. And wow, isn't it great that everything can exist here on planet earth?

Let's look at a few other categories of thought. Hopefully as we're talking here, you can be jotting down any of the stressful thoughts that tend to percolate in your world. Another place that you can look is future thoughts. Do you have any predictions of the future that are stressful? "I may fail in my business," "The airplane is going to crash," "I'm going to look stupid," "I'm never going to amount to anything," "I'm not going to be okay," "Money is going to run out," "I can't handle what's coming."

All of these are examples of thoughts about the future. And those of you that have been hanging out with me for any length of time know that I like to name that worrying is the practice of attaching to future thoughts with resistance. Worry is essentially resisting a thought that hasn't happened in reality. And of course, even though it hasn't happened in reality, the results can be very real. Like we were talking about before. Like having fear and anxiety and stress; we can get irritable and snappy. Like we just want to stay in bed and cover up our heads. All these by painting a picture of a future that isn't so lovely.

We can also look in the past, right? We can look, "I should've gotten up earlier." Or, "Ted shouldn't have yelled at me," or "Lisa should've responded by now," or here's a big one, "I shouldn't have reacted." I don't know if that happened to any of you. But if you show up in a way that is less than ideal, great, now we go into a whole judgment. "Oh, I shouldn't have reacted." Well, the reality is is you did. And we can't change the past. It is what it is. We can learn; we can make requests to influence a different future. But when we're not resisting the past, we actually free our energy up to live in the now.

We can also look at any present thoughts. So it might be, "Joe should be nice to me right now." And then if we notice that if he isn't, okay there's a level of resistance. "They shouldn't be judging me," yet that's your

deciphering, they are. "Or it shouldn't be cold outside," and it is. Another example, "I should be doing something else." And this is one, I think it came from one of my boot camps, that somebody was really fixated on the thought that, "I should be doing something else."

Can you imagine what life is like that no matter what you're doing in the present moment, to hold the thought, "I should be doing something else." So it's unconsciously resisting the present moment and what you are doing all the time.

I'm going to open up the lines here again. And if got any background noise, you can press *6. So how do you know a stressful thought is lurking? How do you know a stressful thought is lurking? We've just done lots of brainstorming for stressful thoughts. How do you know one might be around?

Louise: Mary this is Louise. In relating to what you said earlier which is, you know, how you feel in your body. Yes, generally, there's going to be some discomfort somewhere in your body physically or negative emotions that comes with it.

Mary Allen: Yes. Two big red flags. Right?

Louise: Yes.

Mary Allen: The body and some kind of negative feelings or emotions present.

Louise: Some kind of discomfort, whatever that looks like.

Mary Allen: Yes. So true. So true. What could be some other signals to know that a stressful thought is lurking?

Louise: Mary this is Louise again. I find I get argumentative.

Mary Allen: Yes.

Louise: When I notice I'm getting argumentative, and I don't seem to be – no one seems to be agreeing with me or vice versa, then I have to look at that. It's like, there's something going on here that I'm causing.

Mary Allen: Yes. That's a good one. A very good one. Love that. Maybe the word snappy can come into play. Yes.

Louise: [Laughing] Don't hold it against me!

Mary Allen: Yes. Well, and I noticed that it kind of goes hand in hand with this one, but the tone of my voice seem to change. So you're all getting my nice peaceful, connected version. And in the past, in other relationships, I noticed that the tone of voice would shift and change. Of course that doesn't happen at all anymore. Okay, maybe occasionally, but – tone of voice. What else? How do you know a stressful thought is lurking?

Stephanie: Hey, Mary, it's Stephanie.

Mary Allen: Yes, Stephanie.

Stephanie: I noticed I'm not as engaged or productive in life.

Mary Allen: Good ones. Very good. Not as engaged, not as productive. Yes. When we're not productive or when we start noticing ourselves not being engaged or when we're feeling discomfort, or when we're noticing we're getting argumentative is a time to check in with ourselves and ask that question. So, you know, "What thoughts am I attached to right now?" "What am I believing?" Really good.

Here are a couple of other ones that maybe you haven't thought of. One is, we can get into striving mode. If we are unconsciously attached to some kind of future thought about not being successful or failing or something, we might get into strive mode, and just go, go, go, go, go, go, go, go. Right? Believing "I need to make use of every single minute and moment."

Or we might be avoiding an interaction with a friend or a loved one. We might be avoiding, let's say a work project. Maybe we're believing the thought that, "Gosh, you know, I don't know that I can really be successful." So unconsciously, that could interfere and add to the procrastination factor.

We might check and see if there's any sense of nervousness. Or do you feel off balanced? Check in, you know, are you at peace or not at peace? Noticing if you're reacting. Here's another big category. It's any kind of circling thought. So if you're noticing something replaying in your mind again and again and again, it could be another clue that there are some stressful thoughts lurking. So any other clues that a stressful thought is lurking?

Okay. So let's talk a little bit about how we can transform these stressful thoughts. First off, there's two big, big keys. And actually I'm going to show those two big, big keys at the end. But let me run through seven simple strategies for releasing stressful thoughts.

Key number one – are we ready? This one kind of equates to Nike's, "Just Do It." Instead we're going to rephrase it, "Just Release It." If I'm at the grocery store and somebody bumps into my shopping cart, and I have the thought, "People are rude. That person was rude", I might just choose at that moment, "I'm just going to release that. I'm not going to hang on to that one." Or maybe I showed up somewhere and didn't feel like I did my very best. Well, instead of ruminating on that and judging myself and going on and on, I might just choose to release it and not focus on it.

So just release it. So that's one. And by the way, each of these strategies is going to get progressively more powerful, depending on the thoughts. Sometimes we need just a set of tweezers to remove the thought from our mind. Sometimes we need more like heavy duty surgery. And so we're going to give you a variety of tools here. So first one is, "Just Release It."

Second one is along the same lines, "Redirect Focus." Redirect Focus. So let's say for example, I'm with my husband on Valentine's Day, and I'm noticing I've got judgments that he doesn't seem 100% engaged, or I'm going down the path of different stressful thoughts. What I could do is redirect my focus. I might ask a question, "What is *great* about this?" Right? And start to take inventory there.

Or maybe I was really expecting to win a big contract at work. And maybe I didn't get that. And so I could dwell on that or I could redirect my focus and say, "Okay, so that was not happening, but I've got these three proposals that I *am* working on." Right? So redirecting focus.

Let's get to the third one. The third one is about Getting Present. Getting Present. We've talked quite a bit in Momentum Mastery about now practices - about taking something that we do everyday in our lives anyway and consciously practicing being more present in that activity. And if you think about it, think about a thought that could be a stressful thought for you, and then take an item in front of you. Maybe it's on your desk, or in the room that you're at. And just really get present with the here and the now.

Just allowing all of your attention like focusing on a candle here on my desk. And as I focus here, actually, it's doing two things. I'm redirecting my focus, because on this candle there's a message that says "Let your light shine. Be a source of strength and courage. Share your wisdom. Radiate love." So I'm getting a redirecting of my focus, but just being present with this candle, I can't remember an example of a stressful thought right now. Right? So really practice that one.

This is what I often practice if I'm in the middle of a move – I've moved quite a lot in my lifetime and so have made it a peace practice to get

transferred from one home to the next. But often one of the things I'll do is just stop and get present. Maybe sipping a glass of water, just noticing the fresh air outside, noticing a plant, stop and getting present with a view really has a way of just kind of melting away thoughts.

So the next one, fourth key is, to quiet the mind. So we can really get here this is just a higher level of practice than getting present. Quieting the mind without thought, there is no reaction, no inner turmoil, no resistance to reality. We need thoughts to fight reality. And I challenge you to find a situation where you're in turmoil or you're in resistance, and there's not a thought that you're attached to that's lurking nearby. They go hand in hand in hand.

So if you meditate, you'll notice that the more you practice being mindless, that the easier and easier it is to really find peace in any moment. It doesn't even matter what the thoughts are that are going on, just sitting down, closing your eyes, quieting the mind and even visualizing all of those thoughts melting away and just disintegrating into infinity.

Now we're going to get into some of the more heavy duty power tools. On occasion, there can be those times when there's an accumulation of cholesterol in your life or accumulation of stressful thoughts in your life. Maybe you've been taking on too many things; you've got lots of projects going on; some kind of interaction with others that was more stressful; you've got a variety of news; maybe even physically you're not feeling well. You maybe have lots of things going on, so your degree of difficulty gets a little bit more challenging. Let's look at tips five, six and seven.

Tip number five is a big one. And that is, "Question the truth of the thought." Is the thought really based in reality, or is it somehow made up? Let's say for example, a friend hasn't acknowledged a gift that you sent them. And you make up the thought, "Well I never heard back from them. They didn't call, they didn't email me. They aren't appreciative." So that's maybe the made up thought. Right? The truth is if we question the thought, just because they didn't verbally or in writing acknowledge the gift, is that true? Are they really not appreciative just because they didn't express it? They might be super grateful; maybe they even tried to send a communication and got lost in email heaven. Or maybe they were just about ready to call you, or maybe they're out of the country travelling, maybe they're sick, who knows? Right?

But we want to be careful – are we making up thoughts about reality? "My husband doesn't respond a certain way. That means he doesn't love me." Well, is that really true? Probably not. Here's a big one, actually – let's take something like, "The world is messed up." If we were to take, "The

world is messed up," many of us here on the call might well agree say the world is messed up. It absolutely is messed up.

But we might also say, "What's the truth, the world is messed up?" And we might look at how many innovations have been made over the last 100 years; how many people are enjoying food every night and have roof over their head, and the ability to connect via Facebook and Twitter, through social media, that more and more people are living lives that are fulfilling, where they're honoring their passion, they're doing great things in the world.

So is it true the world is messed up? Well, yes we might make a case that, "Well, I don't know maybe the world isn't so messed up." There might be pieces that could be more optimized.

Let's look at the next tip here. And that is number six. And this one works really well, and that is write down your stressful thoughts. We want to contain them, we want to slow them down.

So those of you that are familiar with my Inner Peace Reality Check process, this is actually really where this process got born from. I, after getting tacked into a deep sense of inner peace, I would also notice that there would be these times where extreme overwhelm would come over me; I would feel this kind of crazy matted mind full of stressful thoughts. And so I pulled out a sheet of paper and I just started writing down what all the thoughts were that were going through my head. I found that just the process of writing all the thoughts down in my head, thoughts of judgment, thoughts of attachment, "shoulds," even about reality, "I'm hungry," "I'm thirsty," "I'm tired." so just naming as many of the thoughts that were present in my reality.

Naming them had a way of releasing them by putting them down on paper. Also, I could look objectively at all the different thoughts. I might take one of them, one by one by one and apply some of these other strategies. I might look at the thought and just release it. Maybe a disappointment that a certain something hasn't arrived. Maybe I would redirect my focus from one of them. Maybe I would question the truth about that, if there's some type of a judgment involved.

So writing down your stressful thoughts in and of itself can be a really, really powerful practice. I highly recommend that. And right now, I've got the lines on mute.

But Michael, I'm thinking also if your kids – kids get stressed out too. You know, everybody can get caught in that cycle too, really take them through one by one. It's like, "Okay, you know, what else are you thinking, what

else are you believing?" And one by one by one when they're all matted up together in our minds, we tend to get run by them.

When we take them, and put them down on paper, one by one by one, we can be with each one individually, and they have less power over us. It's really transforming. So I invite you to try that even with your kids if you've got kids.

And then last but not least, actually, I call this my heavy duty surgery tool for those nasty little buggers that you just can't seem to shake. And they just – you can't just release it, you can't redirect your focus, getting present – it's like a beach ball, it just keeps popping back up to the surface. You question the truth of it; you know like, "Nope, its true. There's just no question. It's true. I write it down, it's like that's not helping, Mary."

Great. This is where you bring in the heavy duty artillery, the surgery. And this is the process of Inquiry. Some of you may be familiar with Byron Katie's work? Known as, "The Work." Her book or – I even prefer her audio series even more called, "Loving What Is," is a super powerful process that actually combines all the elements that we've just talked about. But as we apply it in the process that she recommends, it really allows for the release to happen. So Inquiry is a way of investigating our thoughts a little bit more up close. And as we do, we're going to loosen the grip.

So here's how the process works. Some of you may already be familiar with Byron Katie. If you're not, I'm going to be uploading a worksheet in the handout section on the Forum. It'll be called, "The Judge Your Neighbor" worksheet.

And Inquiry works – there's two parts to it. Actually there's three parts to "The Work" really. The first part is to complete a Judge Your Neighbor worksheet. And I highly recommend this structure just because you can actually just take all the thoughts that – let's say you took all the thoughts and you wrote them all down, you can actually apply the four questions and the turn around to those questions. But better to start with step one which is a Judge Your Neighbor work sheet.

The Judge Your Neighbor work sheet is essentially a series of questions where you get to fill in the blanks. The first question is, I'm angry at "fill in the blank" because, and then "fill in the blank". And let your mind just have a hay day. This is where you want to be as judgmental as possible. It's not about being nice or kind or editing yourself in anyway. You really just want to let your ego have a hay day and get those thoughts out on paper.

Another question on the worksheet is I need so and so to “fill in the blank”. So you go through question by question. So that's step one, is to complete the Judge Your Neighbor worksheet. I'm offering that up as an assignment for everyone here on this call to pick one person in particular – it works really well with the Judge Your Neighbor worksheet to pick one person and then just have all the thoughts be about that one person.

You can also do it with – I've actually had a client recently that was really, really angry and frustrated with the world, the way the world is working. So I would invite him or her to fill out a Judge Your Neighbor worksheet with the world being what you're angry at. "I'm angry at the world because it's messed up." You know, "I'm angry at the world because there is war." And just one by one, get all of the thoughts down on paper. So that's step one, it's the Judge Your Neighbor worksheet.

Step two is to apply four questions and the turn around. The first question is, "Is it true?" Second question is, "Is it absolutely true?" Third question, "How do I react when I think that thought?" Fourth question, "Who would I be without that thought?" And then the last step in the process is to look for any potential turnarounds.

I'm going through this part a little bit quickly. But for the sake of time, I think what we're going to do is actually we'll do a whole call that will be just around Byron Katie's work. It's actually pretty self-explanatory. If you pull out a Judge Your Neighbor worksheet, on the back of the Judge Your Neighbor worksheet, are the four questions and the turnaround. But essentially, what we're doing is, we're questioning the truth of the thought. And we're noticing how we react when we think that thought. We're noticing who we would be without that thought.

Let me just give you an example to make it a little bit more concrete. I've got a client who has been in inner turmoil about a particular relationship in his life that – a relationship that's been on and off for many, many years. And right now, it's a little bit more off. But the thought that he cannot get out of his head, amongst many, there's usually – they come in bunches – is, "I need her." All right? So we might take that, "I need her," and check in with the first question, "Is it true, I need her?" You know, it might first thought be, "Well, it feels like I need her. Yes." So we ask the second question, "Can I absolutely know that it's true that I *need* her?" And that second question is going to loosen up again the attachment to the thought. "Can I absolutely know that it's true that I need her?" "Well, she's not here now. And I'm still breathing. Maybe I don't need her. You know, I'm doing okay on my own. I've survived how many years in my life."

So then we look at the next question, "How do I react when I think that thought, 'I need her'?" Well, that person would be, you know, "I feel clingy," "I feel like I can't focus on work," "I feel unproductive," "I feel angry and upset," "I am not open to dating anyone else." "How do I react when I think that thought, 'I need her'?" One – three little words, boy, they can affect a lot of behavior. Then we look at the next thought, "Who would I be without that thought, 'I need her'?"

About that thought, "I need her." "I might be freer," "I might be more at peace," "I might be open to dating other people," "I might attract her giving me a phone call," or "Maybe I might be inspired just to pick up the phone and reach out," "Maybe I would be more productive." Right? "Who would I be without that thought?"

So we notice, with any thought, that when we attach to a thought, that generally, we get a list pretty similar to what we brainstormed earlier in the call, a lot of tightness, a lot of self-deprecating behavior, criticizing, lack of flow. Without the thought, we notice a lot of the same things we discovered as well, more flow, more freedom, higher access to our intuitive self.

And then here's the last piece that can really ultimately make a difference. And that's looking at turnarounds. We want to take the original thought, in this case, "I need her," and we might look at various turnarounds. So, "I need her," might turn into, "I don't need her. I don't need her." So I might look at three ways where that could be true if not truer. "I don't need her." "Well, I can manage my business without her, so I guess I don't need her there." You know, "I don't need her to be able to make a meal because I know how to cook." "I don't need her to fall asleep at night because I've been sleeping alone at night for however many weeks." Right? So we can just check in and find evidence that oppose the thought, "I don't need her" is equally true.

Then we want to look at different ways where we can, I call it – substituting pronouns. So we might flip it around either, "She needs me," and we might look for examples for how that may be true. Like "Wow, that could even be truer; she actually has demonstrated behavior in the past that indicates that could be true. She reaches out when she's really in crisis." We might also substitute again, pronouns and just put ourselves in there. "I need me." Like, "I need me." Well that kind of sounds weird, right? But as we look closer, "I need me," you know, "I need me, especially when I get all fixated on her, I notice I'm not here for myself. I'm not connected here in my power. I need me, yes, I do need me. I need me to be connected in my own being. In my own sense of power."

So, we can also end up substituting "My thoughts," in here as well. So, "I need her," might turn into, I'll do another turn around, "I don't need her. I don't need my thoughts." Right? Especially when we're really fixated on them, on a thought like, "I need her," it's like, "Well, I don't need that thought." So you want to allow your own creativity to flow here. And look for possibilities. Not every turn around is going to land. But the more willing you are to try on every possible turn around, and allow each one of those turnarounds to land inside of your being, my experience is things free up in incredible ways.

I know this to be one of the most powerful processes. It's included in my book, *The Power of Inner Choice*. Everybody here at Momentum Mastery should have a copy of my book, so you can open up to lesson number 9 and see a lot of information in much more detail about working with *The Work*. Let's do this. I want to open the lines. I've been talking here for a bit. If you have background noise, I don't hear any, but you can press *6 to mute yourself.

So, let's just check in. Any questions about any of the simple strategies?

Okay. So all good, good. Would anyone like to share about how you applied even one of the simple strategies while I was talking here over the last 20 minutes or so, that has given you a different perspective or relationship maybe with a thought that previously was on your list? Are you all there? Okay, Okay.

Well let's do this, as we're approaching the bottom of the hour, here's what I'd like to do. I want to just offer up some homework.

And then I'd love to just take some gems and golden nuggets from those of you that are on the call. And also, I noticed some people commenting in the Forum as well. So something that you're taking of value from today's call. Be thinking about that here for a minute.

Here's what I'd like to invite as homework. First off, I invite you to observe your thoughts over the coming week. Really allow yourself to watch them without judgment, notice thoughts coming and going, notice the ones that you're not resisting or attaching to, notice you're a little bit more attached to certain thoughts. Just observe your thoughts over the coming week.

And then second step is identifying the five most stressful thoughts that are alive for you, and apply one of the seven keys that we just talked about. All right? See if you can do a little mini surgery on yourself. Then I'd love to invite everybody to complete a Judge Your Neighbor worksheet on someone who irritates you, frustrates you or angers you, and then apply the process of Inquiry to your worksheet.

I'm going to be posting some follow up notes that will include some examples of when is the good time to do The Work and just some key principles about doing Inquiry as some guiding compasses. I'll tell you the two biggest reasons to apply The Work, or Inquiry, is if you're in heavy duty reaction mode, activated by somebody, if you're in judgment; somehow if you really notice yourself reacting to somebody in particular. First off I say get totally excited that somebody is pushing your buttons, because there is a lot of freedom to be gained by taking those thoughts and allowing them to take you into a deeper place of inner peace as a result.

The person that most pushed my buttons that created so much inner turmoil for me in my life was the person that I must have done – oh my gosh – the first time that I applied the Judge Your Neighbor worksheet, I didn't even use the form, I used a notepad. And I probably had four or five pages of thoughts. I literally did a cleansing of every single thought I could think of that was judgmental and petty. I literally went through one by one by one, each and every one of those four questions. I wrote down by hand, each and every one of the turnarounds.

And I sat with each and every one of the turnarounds. I will tell you that just in doing that, all of a sudden, there was a whole bunch of freedom. I was like, oh, this is feeling pretty good. I decided to test this, and I drove up to Northern California which is where I was living at the time. Kind of to test this new emotional freedom. The next morning, there was something that pushed the buttons again. And so I found a few more thoughts that I could bring to the surface and apply these four questions of Inquiry and apply the turnarounds.

It was actually later that night that was really truly the most profound experience of inner peace for me ever. Because I truly had investigated each and every one of the thoughts that was activated inside of me. By questioning those, they lost their foothold. All that was left was a tremendous and deep sense of inner peace. And that's one of the reasons why I highly recommend The Work because it's truly this – one of the single biggest tools that I've used in my own life. Most people are just not in enough pain and suffering to be diligent enough to actually investigate their thoughts.

So if your buttons are getting pushed, be excited and happy, and use this worksheet; use these questions to do this little minor surgery on yourself. That's my extreme endorsement for Byron Katie's, "The Work." I will also include a link in the follow up notes to a couple of interviews that I've done with Byron Katie in my "Conversations with the Masters" series, so you just can be more familiar with her work. It's truly one of the most powerful inner peace tools that there is on the planet.

So there you go. I'm going to open up the lines one last time here. For those of you that are here, I would love to just check in with you. What are you taking of value from today's call? What are you taking of value from today's call?

Michael: This is Michael.

Mary Allen: Yes, Michael.

Michael: Your 7 Stress Busting tips. As you were going through those tips, it reminded me of some things that I do to relieve stressful feelings. And if you want to know what they are, you can go to the Forum, because I'm about to post them.

Mary Allen: Awesome, I can't wait to see.

Michael: There are six of them. And some of them overlap with some things that you do, and some of them don't so...

Mary Allen: Great. Okay.

Michael: I'd encourage everybody to go and see what they might be.

Mary Allen: Great. And people can look for...

Michael: You never know, they might work for you.

Mary Allen: Exactly. Look for Michael Milette, there in the Forum. Excellent. Thank you. And who else? What are you taking of value from today's call?

Louise: Hi Mary, this is Louise.

Mary Allen: Yes, Louise.

Louise: Just some really beautiful reminders of work that I had been doing a while back that I'd forgotten and how powerful it is. So I'm just really grateful for that.

Mary Allen: Beautiful, beautiful. And who else, what are taking of value from today's call?

Stephanie: Hi Mary, it's Stephanie.

Mary Allen: Yes, Stephanie.

Stephanie: It's a very timely call for me today. And what I like from it is in the tips, just really redirecting my focus and being able to just release it and move on.

Mary Allen: Yes. It's so simple and so powerful. And now that you just even have this more presence at the front of your mind, you're going to see how easy it is to put this into practice. Something pops up, it's like, you know, "I could totally get attached to that, and let that ruin the rest of my day," or, "I'm going to refocus over here." And that's really my hope and intention for all of you that what used to create stress just becomes a little trigger to pull a little tool out of your tool belt and become a little bit freer emotionally and mentally, so that you can optimize your flow in life.

Very good. And anyone else like to chime in with what you're taking of value from today's call? Okay. Well then, we will wrap up for this evening. I thank you all for your participation and adding so much to this rich conversation around releasing stressful thoughts. I will look forward to seeing many of you playing in the Forum. And we'll look forward to talking to you on – I believe our next call is on March 1st. We're going to be talking about your Systems for Success. So, you all have a fabulous evening, and we'll look forward to talking to you in a couple of weeks.

Louise: Thanks, Mary.

Juanita: Thanks, Mary.

Stephanie: Thanks, Mary. Bye-bye.

Mary Allen: Bye-bye. Thanks everyone.