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**Topic:** Two Pathways

## **Self Improvement**

1. I'm sad - life's out of control - I'm running out of money and the rent is due.
2. Why can't I be like Bob, he's always so happy and confident?
3. What should I do?
4. I'll buy one of those The Secret books
5. I read the book.
6. I see that I have lots of "self-defeating" beliefs.
7. I learn that it is these beliefs that are keeping me poor.
8. I also see that I don't have to keep believing in these beliefs.
9. I can believing in things that I would like for myself - like more money.
10. OK let's give that a try.
11. I'm feeling better already - I'm really not a loser - I really don't have a clue what's going on in Bob's mind - maybe he's even more miserable than me!
12. It's just a matter of time before 'something happens' and puts a ton of money into my bank account.
13. The phone rings - it's the landlord demanding my overdue rent.
14. I am so fucked and feeling worse than ever.
15. But I learned from reading The Secret that I'm really harboring an underlying thought that I'm poor and this defeats my conscious thought envisioning lots of money in my bank account.
16. It seems that matter what I do, I'm screwed.
17. I feel shitty about myself and my life.

Let's now take a look at a more sophisticated version of self-

improvement.

## **Self Improvement 2**

1. I'm sad, etc.
2. I'll read one of those Wayne Dyer books.\*
3. I can now see that I have lots of self-defeating beliefs
4. By believing these beliefs, I have created my own misery.
5. If I created it, then I can un-create it.
6. It's all about self-empowerment.
7. I'll adopt some very positive beliefs about myself and the world.
8. And I'm not making this stuff up - I have quite a few genuine accomplishments that I can claim for myself.
9. Also I'll meditate to imagine myself in the middle of a perfect golden globe.
10. I'll feel radiations of love fill my body and soul.
11. I will radiate love and compassion to everyone I meet.
12. She is almost killed by someone driving while on a cell phone.
13. What a fucking asshole - ooops, that's the old me.
14. I should have caught that - but I actually I did and that's great. I'm improving.
15. I'm feeling a little better about myself and my life.
16. I'm taking stock of my many accomplishments.
17. Phone rings - it's the landlord demanding the over-due rent.
18. Fuck - I feel shitty about me and my life again.
19. I wonder if I can still return this book to Barnes & Noble.

## **Now let's take a look at the Liberation from the Lie Path.**

1. I'm sad, etc.

2. This book says that sadness happens to everyone.
3. hmhhh
4. According to this book, I was the victim of a terrible invalidation trauma in my earliest days and that the pain was too awful to bear.
5. To allay the pain, I had to adapt to the rules and expectations of my parents.
6. I accepted my own deficiency.
7. So to be accepted and loved I needed to create another self, what he calls a "fear-self".
8. It's these "fear-selves" that create a life-long trance that acts to dis-connect ourselves from the authentic self and that awakening means to see that they are just illusions - phantoms that I myself created to avoid pain.
9. I learned the harsh lesson that love is earned and is not a given.
10. So I became the "good little girl".
11. Or I became the "bad little girl" if I still was connected to my victimized self and I needed to express anger.
12. I learned to play the game.
13. I saw that schools played the same invalidation game as my parents did - even though both are so well-intended.
14. This is really interesting.
15. But now I feel this gnawing emptiness inside.
16. I see that everything I believe about myself is a natural outcome of this terrible trauma - what he calls the Wound.
17. I see that I must stop resisting this underlying pain and emptiness.
18. When I feel this pain - I see the vulnerable little girl who had to negate her own self to receive the love she so desperately needed.
19. To re-connect to my authentic self, I must first see what is false.
20. I now see that all of the self-improvement books I read were

really about creating a “better” false-self.

21. That’s why they never really “worked”.
22. I’m not even sure what that word means anymore.
23. I’m starting to feel that for the first time in my life I can stand on my own two feet, even if the old-fear selves want to take over my self.

I am simplifying a complicated problem, but before ending this post, let’s take a look at the most profound implications of this understanding - as a list.

1. Through the Liberation path I see that I cannot find a self that I can grasp and possess.
2. While there *is* a me, I cannot know it through thought - just like I can’t really *know* a tree through thought.
3. How I experience the tree and everything else in this life is utterly new and different in each passing moment.
4. Thought makes a concept of objects. Thought itself is a concept.
5. And since the self, as we conceive it, is a concept - an “improved” self is just a different concept. It still isn’t my authentic self.
6. As long as I work on an illusion, I just wind up with a different illusion and even that is highly unsustainable.
7. So why bother?
8. I see that Life happens even before the mind notices!
9. Thought is a secondary response to life and all of this self-improvement and psychological projection is just stuff that is *added* on to the immediate experience of life.
10. So when we see through our illusory thought-based selves we see that there is ultimately, nothing to do.
11. Everything gets done.
12. Life happens and I can merge into this vast stream when I just stop believing in the self AND life as thoughts.

\*I rather like Wayne Dyer

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