



Stop Pulling! How Do I Do That? Part II

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In the previous article, we were left either standing on the ledge of a cliff or far below trying to find a way to help our friend jump to safety. In part two, I wish to present a way to solve this problem by taking Inner Bonding to perhaps its deepest level. But first I need to provide a little bit more context and background.

As a student of A Course in Miracles (ACIM), the idea that "*we create our own reality through the thoughts held deeply within our own mind and that the world we experience is an effect of those thoughts projected outward*", has long fascinated but also frustrated me. At first glance this seems like an absurd and totally insane idea! How could the violence taking place in Africa, the Gulf oil disaster or someone "pulling" on me possibly have anything to do with *me* or be *my* responsibility? And yet, this spiritual idea, that what we are calling "reality" is actually an illusion/dream/projection that has its origins within our own mind, is not unique to ACIM, but also has a basis in other unrelated spiritual traditions such as Buddhism, Shamanism, Hinduism, Ho'oponopono and probably many others.

Part of my frustration with this concept in the past has been in how it has been misused by wounded selves: from gurus who violate boundaries with students; to people who unlovingly deny their emotions and experiences; to people who passively stand by and allow harm to be done to self or others; to some who shame and blame themselves for having "attracted" a disease or problem into their lives or use the principle as yet another way to try to control life. And yet as maddening as this idea has seemed to me at times, I have somehow also sensed that it is the deeper truth of our reality. But if it is true, what does this really mean on a practical level and how do we apply it to our lives?

If we consider this spiritual premise as true, it would mean that there is no problem "out there", whether in another person, in my relationships, in the environment, in the economy, in my body or in the false persona I created and identify with as my "wounded self". So if we accept for a moment that this idea is valid and that the world we experience is a projection of thoughts held within our mind, then trying to solve problems in the usual way is akin to trying to change a movie we're watching by attempting to control the characters on the projected screen. This is a hopeless endeavor that makes us feel increasingly helpless, powerless and frustrated. On the other hand, the good news is that we can invite change at the level of cause. True transformation happens when the unloving thoughts in our mind are released and removed, thus revealing the underlying unity, peace and love which is the true essence of all things. When we allow the Divine to clear out the film in the projector, the movie must change as well.

This spiritual principle might sound good in theory but how can we apply it in practical ways in daily life? If it is really true, then how do I apply it to this situation with my spouse who seems to be pulling on me in this moment? How do I use Inner Bonding to not just take care of myself in response to my partner's pulling but how do I actually dissolve the cause of the pulling experience so that it is healed and no longer shows up as a problem in my life?

What I am suggesting is that if you fully embrace the Inner Bonding idea of taking 100% responsibility for emotions and expand it to the level of taking 100% responsibility for *everything I experience* in life, you can use Inner Bonding as a practical tool to live what ACIM, Ho'oponopono and other spiritual paths are talking about. However, taking 100% responsibility does not mean 100% blame. It simply means that if a problem seems to be showing up in my life (perhaps as a partner pulling or resisting), rather than focusing on the problem externally and trying to control it, I need to acknowledge that there must be some unloving thoughts replaying deep within *my* own mind that are causing *me* to have this experience. It is my responsibility to turn towards my experience, do Inner Bonding or forgiveness work (forgiveness in the ACIM or Ho'oponopono sense) to release the unloving and mostly unconscious thoughts and thus change my experience by changing the cause.

What we find is that upon releasing the unloving thoughts, either our life circumstances seem to change or that the "charge" is gone and we are inspired to loving action from a peaceful heart. What better vehicle to explore and uncover our unconscious unloving thoughts than within the dynamic of our most intimate personal relationships? Isn't this where all of our withholding, our judgments, our control patterns and other unloving thought effects show up?

In my own marriage, we have found that when worked with in this way, problems now sometimes seem to dissolve like magic and miracles really do begin to happen. Over the years we had gotten much more skillful at taking care of ourselves in our relationship dynamic and our marriage had greatly improved as a result. But it wasn't until we took Inner Bonding to this level, influenced by our work with ACIM and Ho'oponopono, that we began to notice that not only could we respond more skillfully to problems but also that the seeming problems (even pulling) could literally disappear...poof!

This poofing seems to happen not because we are trying to control the situation but because we are wanting to re-experience love and are willing to turn towards the discomfort, take 100% responsibility for all of it, and open to the Divine for help.

Strangely, even when an outer situation does not seem to change, somehow everything still feels okay because the "charge" is now gone and we feel connected. At that point we also feel completely free to take the loving action because we know the world is okay either way. We remind ourselves that the real goal is to experience peace directly by letting go to the Divine, not by trying to get peace by using strategies to control life (e.g. the other partner).

The solution to the cliff conundrum

Therefore, returning to the cliff analogy, when we do our relationship work in this way of taking 100% responsibility for *all of it*, the whole scene begins to change. We may notice that there is suddenly a rope ladder available to climb up; or a helicopter shows up; or the fear disappears and jumping sounds like fun; or that, as the person below, we can walk away from the FOAC (Friend On A Cliff) with peace and love in our hearts knowing they are okay.

However, my personal favorite outcome is when we find ourselves safely at home, sitting next to our dear friend, realizing that we have been watching the “stranded on a cliff” movie. We both smile, Starbucks in-hand, and realize there is no problem to solve.

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