

Module 3 Exercise

Step One: Making Peace with the Past

An excerpt from the book, *Conscious Creation*

It has been said that the only past that *actually* exists is the past in our minds. When we're burdened by our stories about the past, we tend to either dwell on them or run from them. Dwelling on the past is giving in to its magnetic pull—ruminating or living in a state of regret. "Maybe if I hadn't said that" or "If only he had called me back" or "Next time I'll do it differently." When we realize that our past does not define us, we are standing at a new level of freedom. Our true nature is what we experience in the space between our thoughts and narratives. At some point, we realize that our story just isn't working for us. Maybe we have become so identified with the central story of our past that we don't know who we are in the present. Or we just don't like who we are. We feel ready to move on.

Releasing Statement

I release my painful past, right here, right now.

Affirming Statement

I am at perfect peace in this moment.

Simple Meditation Practice

This module's meditation is a walking meditation. Set a timer for 5-10 minutes (trust whatever feels like the right amount of time for you in this moment). Now walk in silence during your allotted time. The invitation is to simply notice your surroundings. See if there are aspects of your environment you have never seen. Do you see anything you've never noticed before? Do you now have a deeper appreciation for your surroundings? Now, take a bit of time to write out what you noticed.

What is Making Peace with the Past? Exercise:

- What are some of the main plot lines in the story of your life?

- Is there a conflict at the center of your personal past? What is it?

“That’s what suffering is, really—unconscious creation engrained in memory.”

- What does this quote mean to you?

- What painful stories do you still carry from your past?

- How might you rewrite those stories?

- What might that create in your life?

- What original screenplay could you create instead?

Key 1: Practicing Mindfulness and Gratitude: A simple mindfulness technique for working with a habitual feeling or inner voice is the RAIN acronym, made popular by psychologist Tara Brach: Recognize, Accept, Investigate, and Nonattachment.

- Recognize: What is one thing your inner critic tells you?

- Accept: Allow yourself to just listen and accept what it is saying, without resistance. What do you notice?

- Investigate: What happens when you accept the voice of your inner critic? How does it make you feel? Where do you experience it in your body?

- Nonattachment: What happens when you don't attach to what your inner critic says? Does it change the way you feel?

- What did you learn from this exercise?

- How might gratitude play a role in making peace with the past, and consciously creating your life?

Key 2: Embracing Self-Love: *"We live as if the core conflict of our life story is the main problem keeping us from happiness, so we live as though resolving that core conflict is our life's purpose."* (Conscious Creation, page 39)

- What does this excerpt mean to you?

- In what ways do you identify with it?

- What have you decided is "wrong" with you that you need to fix?

"It's really one minor step from self-criticism to self-compassion and from criticism of others to acceptance of others." (Conscious Creation, page 43)

- What does this excerpt mean to you?

- In what ways have you felt the need to be self-critical?

- How has that strategy of self-criticism worked for you?

- How has that strategy of self-criticism worked *against* you?

Key 3: Living Beyond Your Stories: *"When you're living from the Mystical level, you recognize that the truth of who and what you are is love, light, and peace. You recognize this truth in all of creation. At this level nothing needs forgiveness. At this level you can even see your 'enemy' is fundamentally love, light, and peace."* (Conscious Creation, page 44)

- What does this excerpt mean to you?

- When it comes to forgiveness, at what level are you mostly functioning: Martyr, Magical, Metaphysical, or Mystical? What does this create for you?

- How does it impact the story of how you see yourself?

"At the Mystical level, making peace with others is natural, it happens automatically, because you can see immediately that whatever 'wrong' someone might have done, you have committed the same or a similar thing yourself—even if only in your imagination. You can also know that their so-called wrong was the result of something you too share, whether that be ignorance, fear, or a deeply engrained habit. And so you empathize with those who, from another level of awareness, look like enemies; you live out of a genuinely felt compassion. How can you be at peace with others? There are no others." (Conscious Creation, page 44)

Think of a situation in which you find yourself in a state of judgment or unforgiveness toward someone.

- What "wrong" thing did they do?

- When or in what ways have you behaved similarly?

- How could you have compassion for them and yourself?

Key 4: Feeling Your Feelings: *"One of the side effects of holding on to our stories from the past is emotional pain. What's more, we often believe it is difficult to let go of our stories because of the pain we experience all over again when we remember those stories. We may also have a strategy of running from or attempting to conceal the pain. This simply doesn't allow us to make peace with the past. This is why feeling our feelings is a path to freedom and a fundamental key to making peace with our past."* (Conscious Creation, page 45)

- What does this excerpt mean to you?

- In what ways have you used the strategies of running from or concealing pain?

- How might feeling your feelings assist you in making peace with your past?

Think of a situation that has created emotional pain for you. Now, take a few moments and allow yourself to really feel the feelings, without resistance.

- What did you notice?

- What happens when you allow the feelings to move through you?

- In what ways are the feelings coming from a story or an old idea you are holding?

- What is another way to view the situation?

Key 5: Living in the Question: This inquiry process can either be done alone or with a partner. If done with a partner, start by sitting and facing each other. Choose one of the following questions. Person A asks person B the question and listens for an answer. Person B gives a *short* answer, (one word or a short sentence). Without responding, person A then repeats the same question, and so on, for whatever period of time you choose. We recommend asking the question repeatedly for at least 3 minutes.

Who are you?

What are you?

What is love?

What is spirit?

What is ego?

What is pain?

What is joy?

What is freedom?

What else is possible?

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- This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across its entire surface, typical of notebook or composition paper. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.

Questions for journaling and further reflection:

1. What to you, is the difference between pain and suffering?
2. In what ways have you unconsciously created your own pain and suffering?
3. What would it be like to become conscious of that and change it?
4. How would your life be different if you were to do that?
5. In what ways do you dwell on the past?
6. What does that create for you?
7. In what ways do you have regrets about the past?
8. What would it be like to be free of your past?
9. In what ways have you felt like a victim?
10. What story has that created for you?
11. What would it be like to rewrite that story and move beyond it?
12. In what ways are you blaming your past for what is happening today?
13. In what ways do you imagine others are judging you?
14. In what ways might that reflect how you judge yourself?
15. What would it be like to rewrite those judgments?
16. What would it take to begin to forgive, both others and yourself?
17. What would it be like to practice more gratitude?
18. What does true freedom mean to you?
19. In what ways do you see yourself as broken?
20. If you could begin to see yourself as essentially perfect and fundamentally whole, how might that shift your entire worldview?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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