

Inspired Life Formula with Nina Lockwood

MODULE 4 Access Inner Freedom

Exercise 2 Letting Go

This is Nina Lockwood, welcome to Exercise 2 of Access Inner Wisdom, Module 4 of the Inspired Life Formula.

This exercise is called Letting Go, because that's what you'll be doing. This is a simple resource when you need to be thinking clearly and feeling emotionally grounded and open. Once you learn how to "let go" with this method, you'll be able to very quickly release unwanted feelings that keep you from being in the flow and experiencing the beauty and goodness of life.

This particular way of letting go is based on the The Sedona Method, a process that's been expanded from the original teachings of Lester Levenson by Hale Dwoskin. Hale describes the Sedona Method as a way of uncovering the truth that you are ALREADY an unlimited being, which means you don't have to be controlled by stressful emotions and limiting thoughts. He, along with many other wisdom traditions, suggests at the core of your being who you are - your true nature- is freedom and happiness. But most of us don't know have this experience because those positive feelings are buried beneath all the negative thinking and feeling we're taught to cultivate, whether it's on a obvious level or a very subtle one. Now, letting go is becoming a popular piece of advice - from the buddhist traditions to psychotherapy. Even the recent animated movie Frozen has a song called Let It Go! So what exactly are we talking about and how do we do it?

We're talking about letting go of thoughts or feelings that keep you from really living fully, the things that make you doubt what you're capable of, or keep you from exploring new ideas, having

new experiences and developing new skills, or that prevent you from accomplishing your goals. It's as though we're all holding an umbrella over our heads, and each umbrella has the same logo: "Can't, shouldn't, won't". Some of the thoughts that live under that umbrella might sound like, "I can't figure out what I should do," "I shouldn't rock the boat" or "I won't be allowed to..." and some of the feelings that might go with those thoughts might include anger or discouragement or depression or fear or frustration. These thoughts and feelings are just some examples of the limitations or restrictions we live with that keep us from experiencing who we really are, why we're here and what we're capable of. Every one of us has some area in their life where we have these kinds of thoughts or feelings, and they stop us from being able to step out and become the person we imagine we could be.

In the first exercise for this module where you practiced using The Work, you were invited to write down your judgments of others and then see how your thoughts cause your suffering. All you do is look at those thoughts with honest awareness. That honesty and willingness to see the truth will allow you to become free.

With the Sedona Method, there's a slight shift of emphasis. Here, we think of our thoughts as stories (sound familiar?) and we notice the difficult feelings our stories evoke because those feelings are the fuel that keep our stories alive and well. Where The Work of Byron Katie invites you to let 'er rip and go into all the details when judging others (or yourself), The Sedona Method simply invites you acknowledge or welcome the story with all its thoughts and feelings and sensations, then choose to let it all go, as best you can. That deliberate and intentional choice has a great deal of power. I share both of these methods with you because they complement each other and my invitation to you is to experiment with both of them and decide which one works best for you. You might find that one technique works better for you in

certain situations and the other technique works better under different conditions. I've been using both these techniques for myself and with my clients for many years and I find that whatever feels right in the moment is the best thing to use. Just the fact that we welcome our feelings or question our thoughts enables us to dis-identify with them. And that's the first step to our freedom.

Letting go is a natural process that we can all do when we realize it's the right thing to do. Children let go automatically, and you can see it when young children play together - one minute everything's great, the next minute something's wrong and they're in tears or screaming and the next minute everything's fine and they're on to the next thing. As adults, we're taught to do just the opposite and hold on to our feelings - so we end up with a lot of emotional baggage in our hearts, our minds and our bodies. Just like in the song Let it Go from the movie Frozen, we're taught to suppress or repress our feelings in order to be seen as good or well behaved. But when we hold on to our feelings, we suppress the energy that's never meant to be dammed up and that energy gets stuck inside us, which makes us miserable and unkind. Or we go on a spree of inappropriate over-expression of our emotions and that has similar consequences. And that of course can lead to physical illness.

Our pent up emotions are already queued up, so to speak, and ready to be released, so when you stop holding on to them they release themselves but without the drama, only a gentle letting go. They start to unravel by themselves.

The goal of The Sedona Method is to enable you to release any unwanted feelings in the moment, and the Method offers different ways to do this. I'm going to introduce you to a couple variations just to get you familiar with the process. First I'll describe each

method and then go back and walk you through an example, and then you'll be able to start using your own life experience.

The first way of letting go is to choose to let it go - to drop it, just as you'd choose to drop a crumpled piece of paper into a wastebasket. It doesn't require a lot of effort, you simply choose to do it. Despite what you may have been told about how difficult it is to get rid of stressful emotions, it's not really true. We've just been talked out of it. But you can reclaim all that pent up energy and put it to good use just by choosing to let them go.

So let me guide you through a sample process of letting go using the first example of dropping the feeling using 5 short and simple questions. Start with a situation you'd like to feel better about. Step 1: What feelings arise when you think about this situation. Step 2, ask yourself, Could I allow myself to welcome those feelings, to just let them be here?... Step 3: ask yourself, Could I, just for now, let them go? Just drop them, allow them to dissolve or disappear? Step 4: ask yourself, would I let them go? and Step 5: ask yourself: when? (Hint: Now would be a perfect time). If your answer to these questions is no, then you can ask yourself : would I rather have these feelings or would I rather be free. Sometimes you need to hold on to something or at least say you need to until you realize you're making a choice to do something that's painful or hard on yourself. So here's the recap: What feelings are coming up? Could you welcome them, as best you can? Could you, just for now, let them go? Drop them, let them dissolve? **WOULD** you allow yourself to let them go? And, when? That's it. You'll find you the process will become automatic as you practice it a bit.

Let me say a little bit about this process of welcoming. It's a way of opening your consciousness to what's going on inside you - to just see it, just let it be here without automatically trying to do

something about it. I like to use the analogy of your feelings as wild horses and your consciousness as the gate. When the gate is open, the horses are free to leave. Just opening the gate of your awareness can be enough.

So here's another way of releasing that I've found to be very powerful, where you just use the invitation of welcoming. I want you to come up with a situation, past present or future, that triggers an unpleasant emotion. Ready? Step one: Can you welcome this (your story) with all its thoughts, memories, feelings? Step 2: And just for now, can you welcome wanting to do anything about it, like try to figure it out or change it? And Step 3: As best you can, could you welcome any sense that it's personal, about who you really are, any identification with it? Step 4: Could you just let all of that dissolve, and be open to the truth of who and what you really are?

And with either of these exercises, once you've done them, then just notice how you feel. You should notice an sense of expansion in your being, without any former sense of contraction or need to protect or defend yourself and a delicious sense of opening, and being more loving, more free to be who you. Once you've got the idea of what you're releasing, you can substitute the words you're using to fit your particular situation. You'll find yourself in a difficult situation and suddenly, you'll realize, oh, I can release that!

And just a reminder: as much as you're able to keep a record of your experiences in your journal. We'll have the opportunity to talk about your experiences and any specifics that you might need clarification on when we have our one-on-one time. And also, have fun with this! It's an incredibly freeing experience, so enjoy it!