



The freedom TO BE WHOLE

Are you enslaved to a negative view of your life?

BY LEONARD CARR

THE ULTIMATE FREEDOM IS THE FREEDOM TO BE whole, to live wholeheartedly and to feel complete. You experience true shalom in those perfect moments when the best of who you are shows up at the right place at the same time. This is what is poetically referred to as “being in the flow” or being fully present. In order to experience this you need to understand how your placement of attention and habits of mind influence how you experience the world in general, and the individual moments that aggregate into your life.

The whole person is completely free because s/he is not trapped or dominated by a sense of lacking in life. The preoccupation with trying to appropriate what you experience as lacking in your life complicates your world. The slavery that arises out of a sense of lacking in some important area of existence can be so intense that it puts you into a survival mode where you lose touch with what really matters to you. When you get locked into just surviving, you can forget what the most important people in your life mean to you and even your own needs and feelings.

Any sense of lacking makes you feel insubstantial, powerless and weak. In response to those feelings, your heart becomes contracted, hardened and closed in self-protection. You hold onto your emotional and material resources, fearing that if you give of yourself, you will deplete yourself further. When you feel fundamentally lacking you become preoccupied with trying to fill your lack. You try to compensate by manipulating others into giving you what you sense is missing.



When you feel a lack materially, you become preoccupied with acquisition of material objects. When you feel emotionally lacking, you feel needy and dependant. You may then become trapped in constantly trying to manipulate others to fulfill your needs. When you feel unimportant or not honoured enough, your perception of events is distorted by focusing on how you are treated and not on the myriad sources of pleasure and richness that the moment offers. It goes without saying that when you are enslaved to your mental preoccupations, your emotional neediness, or material and physical desires, you have no capacity left for spiritual awareness, aspiration or growth.

The most destructive belief that you can have and the source of all your suffering is the belief that life has dealt you a bad hand and that there is something better for you out there in the world, only you cannot reach it. Your suffering is nothing more than the experience of your own resistance to accepting your reality. When focusing

on doubt, worry, and criticism or when you are being judgemental, you invest mental and emotional energy in the space between reality and your inner demands and expectations of what you believe the reality should be. The space between what actually exists and what you imagine should exist is a black hole of unreality. When you invest energy in unreality, you feel swallowed by that void. This leaves you feeling empty, unsupported and therefore betrayed by life, and by extension, Hashem. When you feel abandoned by Hashem and betrayed by life, you feel that you have no option but to become a law unto yourself, impervious to feedback from others and not even trusting the guidance of Hashem to show you how to be a more effective version of yourself.

People who are in the habit of these destructive thought practices feel let down and robbed by life. Caught in these negative patterns, they try to retaliate against the world and reclaim what they feel robbed of by undermining, criticising or

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dominating others. They become demanding and combative, treating others like enemies and competitors who cannot be trusted or relied on for support.

Your inner black hole uses criticism and blame to recruit others into the belief they are not good enough or do not have enough substance to be worthy of love and validation from you. That induces a sense of lacking in the people around you.

People who focus on depreciative thoughts and speech rob others of their sense of value and resourcefulness, thus destroying value and potential and fragmenting the world. All lacking in the person depletes the world of goodness and leads to conflict and fragmentation. People who come from a place of lacking relate to the world as an adversary and perceive others as competitors for scarce resources.

In order to free yourself from these destructive dynamics, you need to realise that you have the power to become a whole person and to achieve shalom in your life. Shalom is a choice. It is also a responsibility. Just like people who operate from a place of lacking are destructive create conflict and fragmentation in the world, people who are whole build and create more shalom in the world. When you liberate yourself from the slavery of lacking, you will be able to put the best of what you have to offer into the world and live the fullest life that you are capable of living.

The first step to achieving wholeness is investing your energy and attention in what will make you feel whole and complete. This means developing the habit of placing your attention and focusing your thoughts on what you can appreciate in every moment and about life in general.

Appreciation implies thankfulness. On

the most fundamental level, this means an acknowledgment of the other. Then it implies recognition of the presence or contribution of the other. Thankfulness suggests having a sense of gratitude, being thankful and testifying to the contribution made or benefit received and paying tribute to the source of that goodness.

Appreciation also implies an understanding and recognition of worth. Appreciation in this sense demonstrates a grasp, perception, responsiveness, sensibility, sensitivity, sympathy and understanding. It is a response to an appraisal or assessment or something of which one has become aware and taken cognisance of, comprehended, esteemed and valued. It can apply to an aesthetic sense or knowledge, to a realisation and recognition. This could be in the sense of high regard and admiration. It could be in the sense of attraction, liking, affection, enjoyment, love, relishing and respect.

It further connotes an increase in value or worth as in enhancement, gain, growth, improvement. This sense is the most important one for this approach; although it is dependent on the other two senses of the word 'appreciate' in order to become a manifest reality. It is this aspect of appreciation that led me to choose the word appreciative to describe my psychological approach.

When you view your world through the appreciative lens, you focus on what is real, on what actually exists. When you become in tune with what is working in your life, then you will notice the abundance of resources and gifts you have in front of you all the time. By viewing others appreciatively, you start to perceive them as valued contributors to your growth. You perceive the inval-

able role that the people around you are applying, making your world interesting and rich. This recognition will make you feel richer and more substantial. It will also sharpen and deepen your awareness of how your life is being guided and supported at every moment. This knowledge will help you to relax into life. When you relax into life you start to feel more comfortable and at one with the world. When you feel substantial and resourceful, you have more trust in yourself. When you sense that the world is overflowing with opportunities for you to receive and to do good, you increase your basic trust in life. When you trust in your own power and effectiveness and in the process of your life, you start to open your heart and become more responsive and sensitive to others.

Feeling rich and resourceful, you become more giving and more determined to make a difference by sharing your gifts with the world. In so doing, you perceive the world as a unified ecology. In an ecological reality, the ultimate form of self-service is serving others by sharing your gifts and resources with them. Investment in any part of the ecology enriches the whole world. You ultimately become the beneficiary of any good that you put into the world. When you come from a place of wholeness, you are able to recognise the unique qualities and gifts that others bring into the world. You stop seeing others as competitors for scarce resources and start looking at them with gratitude, empathy and compassion. You use any sense of need on your part to deepen your awareness and appreciation of what others need. You can only give what you have. When you give what you lack, you discover in the process that paradoxically you already possess what you believed you lacked. This is the reason that giving makes you feel richer, more powerful and complete. When you view the challenges that other people are facing as opportunities for you to share your goodness with the world, you experience the power of partnering with Hashem in the creation of a perfect world. **IL**

“PEOPLE WHO COME FROM A PLACE OF LACKING RELATE TO THE WORLD AS AN ADVERSARY AND PERCEIVE OTHERS AS COMPETITORS FOR SCARCE RESOURCES.”