

Lea Belair



Walk on Water

How to Make Change Easier

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*To all my teachers
With love and appreciation*

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■ INTRODUCTION

What it means to walk on water

What is it you would like to change in your life?

Is it having better relationships, improving your financial status, finding more time in a day, getting more satisfaction in your job, business, or career? Is it feeling more peaceful, or experiencing better health and a sense of well being?

Whatever your answer to the question, “What would you like to change in your life?” what if instead of changing *that*, you changed your idea of how life works and achieved what you really, really, really want as a result of shifting your perspective?

How much easier is it to walk on water vs. being stuck in the muck?

Here’s the trick to the miracle: You must be certain that it is possible to walk on water.

We call walking on water a miracle because it doesn't fit into our perception of reality and what is possible. That's because our perception, based on the place where we are looking from, keeps us from seeing the whole picture. What you believe is possible or impossible is based on where you are seeing from.

The person who looks at life from sea level has a radically different view of reality than the person who looks at life from a mountaintop. The observer on the mountaintop sees the same parts of life as the person at sea level, and is also able to take those parts and put them into the context of a greater whole. The bigger context changes everything.

Walk on Water is a series of signposts along the way on the journey to reach that mountaintop. From that mountaintop, the secret of how to walk on water is revealed. The promise of *Walk on Water* is that when you can see the whole, rather than just the parts, you won't have to struggle to achieve what you really want in life. Instead, you will be able to take a different stance, maintain a different perspective, and find that what you have been looking for has been there all along, you just weren't able to see it from where you stood.

The whole is more than the sum of the parts

The journey is our journey home, to our birthright. We make this journey not as human beings seeking to know the miracle — the divine, but as divine beings in human bodies, with human minds.

It takes us through several stages.

The first stage, popularized in the twentieth century, is the Path of Personal Development. In this realm we learned more about ourselves and our capabilities, beyond our past conditioning. Its power to help people move beyond their conditioning

was demonstrated by programs like Werner Erhard's est Training and the Gestalt Therapy movement.

The second stage is a path that is emerging in the twenty-first century, the Path of Personal Evolution. It goes beyond personal development, jumping into a new paradigm — the dynamic interplay of the personal mixed with the environment to create new possibilities for being and action. This dynamic interplay is demonstrated by the emergence of body centered therapies, uniting mind and body; the coaching industry, which cultivates collaboration; and culturally, by the advent of the Internet, where we can reach out and interact with the world from any computer.

Finally, we reach the mountaintop and all paths converge into one. In modern science, we are just starting to hear about, understand and apply the reality of this concept of wholeness in areas of quantum physics, fractal geometry, and string theory. From this standpoint, science and ancient philosophies intersect to become the timeless Path of Oneness. Here our perspective leads us to integration and transcendence, where our journey ends.

First, use this book as a guide as you walk your path of Personal Evolution. As the traveler on that path, I invite you to make experiments along the way — taking the actions and evolutionary steps suggested in these pages. Second, I invite you to be the observer of the journey as you make the experiments, by practicing self-awareness. It is a journey of evolution in the most practical sense, as each moment of your life unfolds offering you different choices leading to different possibilities and outcomes. From the perspective of the observer, the Path of Oneness opens before you (it was always there, you just didn't see it before) and allows you to walk on water.

Walk on Water, like any journey, is a series of steps. These steps are based on the successful coaching format I have used with my

coaching clients since 1999. Keep in mind as you read this book: The steps are not necessarily linear such as putting one foot in front of another. Sometimes they are more like a dance, activated and patterned by the flow and rhythm of life.

Step One – Develop Clarity

Clarity comes from observing your thinking and your behavior and taking a new and different action based on the awareness of more choices.

Step Two – Change Your Thinking

Change your orientation to your surroundings by changing your perspective.

Step Three – Take Action Daily

Engage in activities that will change your experience of life as you move through it daily.

Step Four – Evolutionary Step

Make your own personal experiment. Collaborate with your environment to leverage what is available to you as you master change.

Step Five – Transcendence

On the level of transcendence, a new dimension opens up as you transcend the field of opposites and change to experience yourself and the world as whole.

Stephanie's story

Sometimes I ask my clients to write what I call “their success story” about their coaching experience and what they have

learned along the way. A success story is not a testimonial, as you will see. It is more of a series of snapshots, before and after coaching, that tell the person's coaching story. Stephanie wrote the following letter to describe her personal journey and inspired the title of this book.

"I have been receiving Leap Coaching for approximately one year. I could write all manner of nonspecific glowing statements about self-improvement, personal growth and development, and other overused vernacular. It wasn't about that for me. It didn't catapult me into self-empowered high-energy mode. I didn't actualize into an efficient machine of community service and model citizen. I... uh... ended up climbing mountains, walking on water, and dismissing tumbleweeds.

The mountain part is about simplicity and effort and having just one thing to focus on for three to twelve hours — that would be the summit. There are times when it occurs to me that it is just me, the mountain, and my effort.

The tumbleweeds are the thoughts that used to collect in my mind, which made me fretful. They are borne of dust and chaff and all they need to become bigger and blow about in my mind is wind (or power). As soon as I summon the wind to stop blowing, the tumbleweed slows and then disintegrates.

As for walking on water, it's about rising to the surface of a mucky situation. Not engaging in the negative aspect of a situation but going straight for the solution."

Stephanie's story is real and I have used her name with her permission. Other stories, called Snapshots in this book, are based on real coaching client situations, where the names have been changed, or my own personal experiences. I hope they inspire you to take the leap into new territory.

Awareness Based Coaching

Awareness Based Coaching started with my fascination with ideas. Beginning with my earliest memories, I have always been intrigued with the process of the discovery of a new idea and how it complements our natural curiosity about the universe and our place within it.

The first time a scientific idea engaged me to start observing life from a different perspective was when I discovered Einstein's Theory of Relativity at the age of fifteen. The idea that 'the truth' was separate from 'the facts' and that the truth depended on the orientation of the observer was new for me. The introduction of this new idea launched my personal quest to discover if there was such a thing as immutable truth and what underlies the changing appearances and phenomenon of relative existence.

By questioning my orientation to situations and events, I began to see how many of the assumptions and conclusions I took for granted as real were actually the stumbling blocks in my life. Most importantly, I began to develop an “observer,” or a part of myself that was able to stand outside of my conditioning and question my assumptions and habitual behavior.

My personal quest eventually brought me into association with the teachings of the ancient yogis of the East who, like modern day scientists, explored and tested the nature of reality. I had the good fortune to be able to spend almost twenty years dedicated to the study and practice of the Science of Yog* and Meditation, several of them in India, studying with a Meditation Master in the Himalayan mountains. It was my great good fortune to have had those years integrated into the normal activities of my American life. Thus, I was able to take what I had learned through my immersion in meditation and Yog and make experiments as I reoriented to the values, expectations, and conditions that characterize life in Western culture.

In 1999, when I found out about the new profession called Life Coaching, I embraced it as an immediate and effective tool for bringing together the philosophical, scientific, and spiritual building blocks of life for Personal Evolution. To coaching I added my knowledge of transcendence and my experience of the Vision of Oneness I had imbibed in the mountains of the Himalayas, and Awareness Based Coaching was born.

* The conventional practice of adding an “a” at the end of Sanskrit words has been dropped to convey their accurate pronunciation and vibrational quality.

About Change and Personal Evolution

As we interact with our environment, we are immersed in a sea of change where nothing is static, linear, or separate. Outcomes are determined by fluid interactions. In order to stay afloat effortlessly, we must be able to act from more than intellect, information and past experience. We need to evolve to the next level of human development where we are in touch with the source of our intellect, knowledge and experience. The science of Personal Evolution gives us the permission and the ability to make new experiments, to recognize environments that support and inspire us, and to continuously design new environments that evolve us.

Why is change so difficult?

As human beings, we seek homeostasis. We like things to remain the same. There is an element of survivability and safety

in keeping things as they are. Our reticence to change is due partly to the desire to maintain positive emotional states that have become linked with our past experiences and the sense of safety linked to those memories. In addition, we act out of habit, and the simple fact that we often don't notice other choices and paths.

Spencer Johnson's best selling book, *Who Moved My Cheese?* illustrates how we repeat the same behaviors over and over in the face of changing conditions, unconsciously making the same choices, whether they work for us or not. It also shows us the importance of moving out of that model. Johnson's observations about change are pre-cursors to the Personal Evolution movement:

- "The more important your cheese is to you the more you want to hold on to it."
- "Movement in a new direction helps you find new cheese."
- "If you do not change you can become extinct."

Up to this point, maintaining homeostasis has been essential for our evolutionary success. But as the pace of change quickens and complexity deepens, we find ourselves mired both physically and energetically.

According to his article in *The Futurist Magazine*, June 2003, Theodore Modis, a former researcher at Brookhaven National Laboratories, strategic analyst, futurist, international consultant, and author of four books on change, states:

"The rapid appearance of evolutionary turning points has rendered our lives increasingly complex. The exponential growth pattern of change is striking and presents a challenge to ordinary people unable to adequately cope with it."

No surprise that as of January 2005, a Google query of “information overload” yields 2,090,000 results. Now, on the most practical level of living, we must be able to adapt to change more efficiently and with less risk. We can do this by first observing, challenging, and shifting out of our automatic assumptions and behaviors — the process of Personal Development. Secondly, we take the leap to another orientation that allows us to see and make other choices in collaboration with our environment — the process of Personal Evolution.

The Shift – Personal Development

*“The roots of language are irrational and
of a magical nature.”*

— Jorge Luis Borges

One way to observe and challenge our automatic thinking and acting is by re-evaluating the meanings we ascribe to language and the concepts we connect to our words. In this book I will use ‘distinctions’ to help you clarify what stance you want to take in life. The distinctions in this book will help you to walk on water as you look more closely at your choices in thinking and acting.

Distinctions are simple comparisons between two linguistic concepts. Although the distinctions in this book are set up as *this vs. that*, they are not opposites in the classical sense of the word versus. They are simply comparisons. Some distinctions (like Rush vs. Overwhelm) point out differences we mistakenly attribute to two concepts, failing to notice their likeness and connection. Others (like Growth vs. Development) point to an entirely different way of seeing and being.

My favorite distinction is love vs. trust, which was drawn by the late Thomas Leonard, a leader who spearheaded the formation of the modern coaching profession and a champion of the art of distinctions. Leonard realized that by recognizing, labeling, and defining the meanings inherent in the subtleties of language we become empowered to look at practical situations in a different light, choose a different orientation to our situation, and thus take a different path. In drawing the distinction between love vs. trust, Leonard came to understand that even though his relationship with his brother was difficult, he could choose to love his brother without trusting him.

The Leap – Personal Evolution

In talking about patterns and language, Christopher Alexander, author of *A Timeless Way of Building*, a holistic approach to environmental design, writes:

*“It is a fearsome thing, like diving into water.
And yet it is exhilarating — because you aren’t
controlling it. You are only the medium in which
the patterns come to life, and of their own accord
give birth to something new.”*

You are at the center or core of your life and life’s changing situations. You hold the power to make change work in your life, but only if you are the observer and the focal point in life’s changing landscape. You as the focal point means that you incorporate that changing landscape as part of you, and as a means to interact with life fully. (See diagram on pages 20 and 25.)

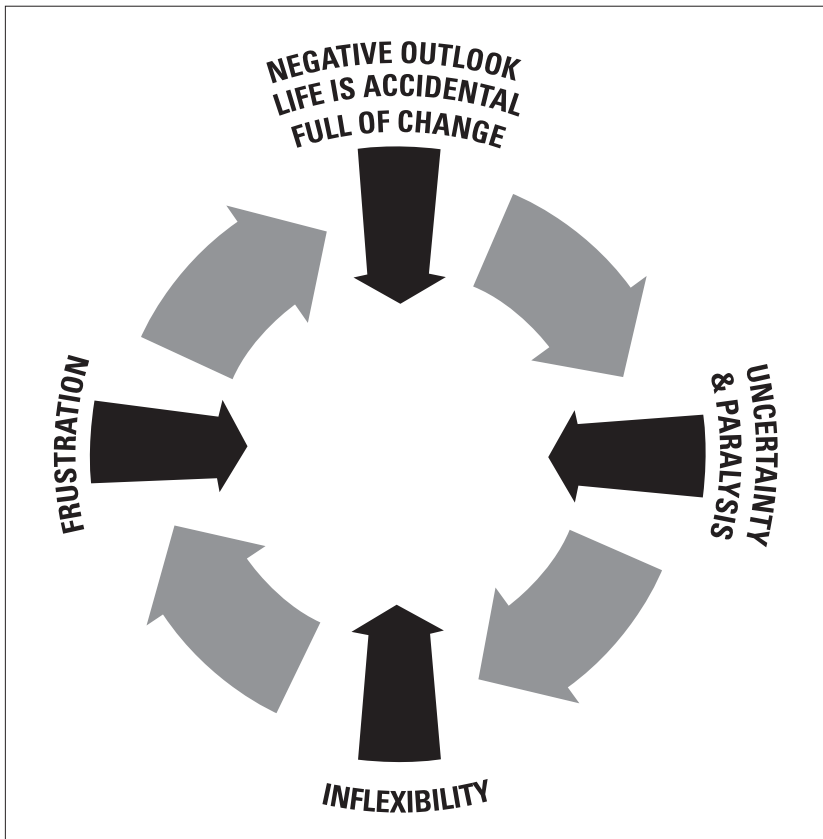
How often do we leave out this most important element in the formula for change — the core of you, what I’ll refer to as the “Core You,” from which actions and interactions flow naturally and in

aliveness? It's easy to do. Leaving out the Core You is like thinking you have lost your glasses, looking for them everywhere, only to find that they have been perched on top of your head all the while!

The Core You that we leave out is the alchemist's stone, the secret ingredient, the center from which our life energy radiates out into the world. It is our orientation to the core that enables us to thrive in change rather than coping with change.

When I was a consultant and trainer doing workshops on stress management I used the following two diagrams to show how leaving out the CoreYou affects our ability to successfully interact with change in stressful situations:

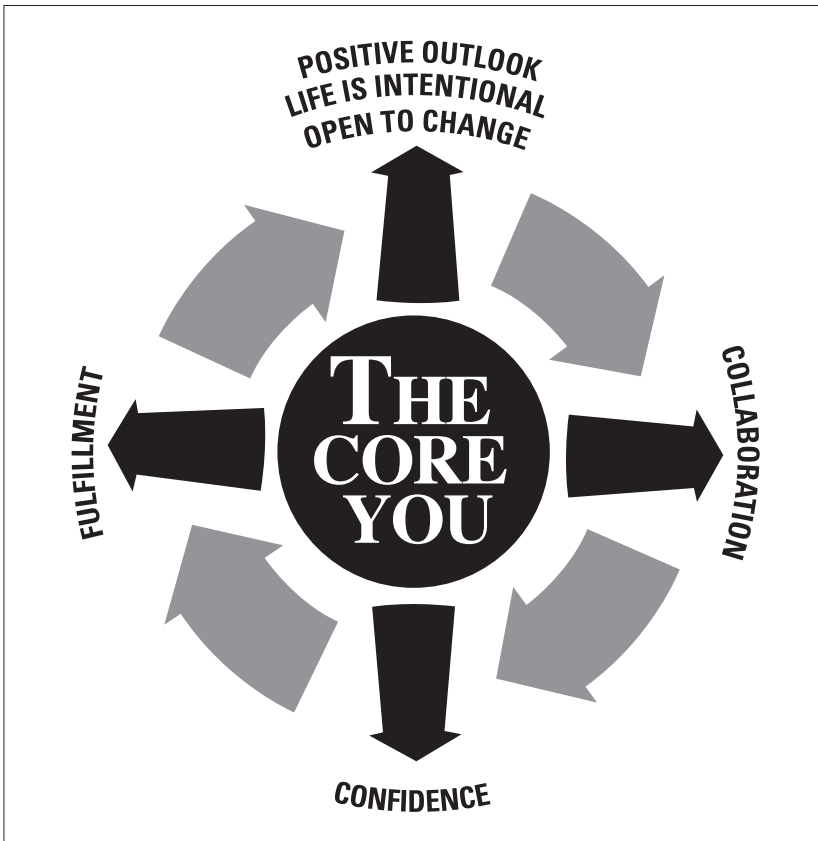
Circle of Stress



The Circle of Stress

A stressful event occurs. The orientation is from the outside in. A sense of ourselves as central (our Core You) is missing. The result of this outside-focused, isolating orientation is negative, producing a fear of change. We are cut off from ourselves and our inner resources, and our perspective tells us that we are at the mercy of something uncontrollable. It also paralyzes our ability to work collaboratively with the person or situation at hand.

Circle of Wellness



The Circle of Wellness

A stressful event occurs. The orientation is from the inside out. A sense of ourselves, our Core You is not only present, it is the focus of our attention. The result of this inside-focused orientation is positive, connecting us with our life energy and an ability to move forward. By changing the focus from outside to inside we are able to act intentionally and mobilize our inner resources to make choices that serve us.

Transcendence

“Coaches are spiritual leaders introducing spiritual concepts into everyday life.”

— Dave Buck, President of CoachVille

After the Shift of Personal Development (beginning to challenge our automatic thoughts and actions) and the Leap of Personal Evolution (bringing our Core You observer into sharper focus and interacting more fully with our environment), I have dared to bring in a glimpse of what is over the horizon: Transcendence. The state of transcendence is where we are collectively headed as human beings as we continue to evolve past the personal to the universal. Transcendence is a state of being, before thinking and acting, and the transcendent orientation is a radically different way of experiencing change. It is a Vision of Oneness where the observer is not affected by the changes because that observer is not identified with the observation, or even the personality who is observing. Instead, the identification is with what I will term the “Essential You.”

Transcendence is a different playing field where we enter into a new paradigm. In this field, also called the Field of Oneness, opposites still exist and keep their definition, and they are part of the larger whole. This changes their meaning within the larger context. The transcendent Essential You is more than the repository of your thoughts, feelings and resources. The Essential You cannot be divided out into parts that are separate from the whole. *The most important aspect of the Essential You is that it is unchanging.* It is what the spiritual masters from many traditions have referred to as Life Everlasting, Eternal Bliss Consciousness, the Soul, and God Realization.

It is very difficult to talk about the transcendent state of consciousness which is not relative (a state of relation and relationship, this vs. that) using words. That is because words are relative terms. To illustrate, I'll give an example of how an emotion is played out in the three stages — Personal Development, Personal Evolution, and Transcendence — using jealousy as the example:

Stage 1 – Personal Development

Situation: Something triggered the emotion jealousy. I am on automatic pilot and I react.

State: I am jealous. I am one with the emotion of jealousy. I identify so completely with the emotion that there is no me separate from the jealousy. Because I cannot separate from the emotion, I have no choice other than to act unconsciously according to my previous conditioning.

What needs to happen: I need to develop ways to see and experience myself differently so that I have choices. Through personal development I get a tool bag of new choices. For instance, I might choose to fully express myself instead of hiding or denying my emotion.

Stage 2 – Personal Evolution

Situation: Because I have been through the stage of personal development, I am able to observe myself and the situation and separate them out.

State: I observe that jealousy is happening to me before I slip into a habitual reaction. I am identified with the observer of the emotion, not the emotion itself. Because I know that I am separate from jealousy, I no longer react. Instead I can respond by creating a more positive environment in my life where I get my emotional needs met in a healthy way.

What needs to happen: I shift my orientation to jealousy. I have more choices. I can be creative in how I respond to emotions because I am now in a different position with respect to them. These expanded choices can evolve me beyond my own expectations. (See the example of how to handle the emotion of loss in Distinction #1, Step 4.)

Stage 3 – Transcendence

Situation: I am able to observe myself (thoughts and emotions) and the situation. I am not identified with any of them; they do not belong to me.

State: The Essential You alone exists everywhere and permeates everything. Emotions and the one observing the emotions are both expressions of the Essential You because the orientation is one whole, more than the sum of the parts. I am in the reality but I am not of the reality.

What has happened: In this state of being, there is no one who is separate from any object, place, other person or experience. Existence itself is the undivided basic substance of all life.

The 'being' state of transcendence goes beyond coaching in the traditional sense of the word, however, it is a pointer in the

direction where coaching is heading, especially as we move into the Age of Inspiration. It's a necessary ingredient in creating the magic of *Walk on Water*. Step #5 the Transcendence step, in each of the distinctions, is an expression of the Vision of Oneness as I have come to understand it through my studies of Yog and meditation and is, in some cases, directly taken from the teachings of the Masters and the ancient yogic scriptures.

Core You vs. Essential You

What does it mean to say that our Essential You is unchanging? All the forms are changing in that they have a beginning, middle and end. Whatever is born must die. However, there is something transcendental in being human. That is why humans have always sought immortality; we already have a sense that we are immortal. We call ourselves minds and bodies, yet our Essential You by any name cannot be found in the mind or in the physical body when we dissect the brain, the heart, and other parts of the human form.

In addition to the forms that are born, live, and finally cease to exist, a thought in the mind has a beginning, middle, and end. Thoughts are changing. The one who knows the changing nature of the forms and the thoughts is the Essential You, even beyond the Core You observer. The Essential You is the source of the Core You observer, and that source never changes.

On the relative level, our Core You is based on our deepest values. Those values play out in natural inclinations such as acceptance, accomplishment, stability, adventure, etc., and provide us with an anchor in the sea of changing situations.

Our Essential You is more than our values or any relativism. The Essential You is a state of being that never changes — the underlying source of our values and actions. It is beyond the

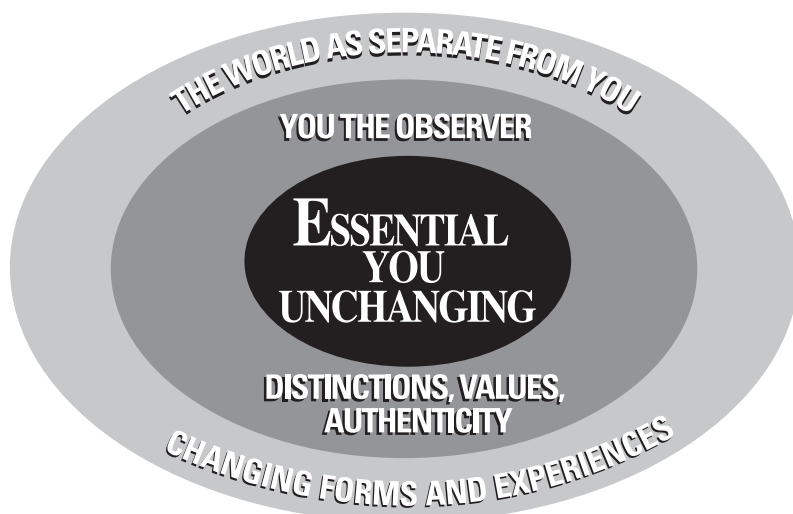
limits of name, personality, changing body, and changing mind. It is the Essential You that holds this wisdom:

- As a young person — “I will live forever.”
- At middle age, looking in the mirror — “How can that be me? I have not changed! I am the same person I was when I was younger.”
- In old age — “How can I die?”

Why do we say this and feel this way? Because on the deepest level of being we know that our Essential You at any age is unborn, undying, and unchanging. The Essential You is the unseen essence, beneath the manifest form.

We look at change as chaos from the standpoint of seeing change from the outside in, without control or input. We look at change as manageable from the inside out, with our Core You focal point as the anchor, and our ability to make distinctions and choices. We look at change as the timeless dance of forms in relationship, when we come from the Essential You orientation of transcendence.

Here’s a two dimensional visual of how the world looks from these three perspectives:



Now imagine this diagram as multi-dimensional: What if the Essential You circle encompassed the other circles as well as being at the center of the other circles?

Reorientation to the Essential You enables us to flow with changes without struggle, fear and risk because it knows itself as unchanging. That Essential You is the Immortal Self, the Spiritual Self, the Immortal Soul. Change your orientation to include the Essential You in your life, and you will have taken the next evolutionary step, Transcendence — unleashing the power of your true potential not as a human being reaching for the divine but as a divine being in human form.

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