



## Let Your Light Shine!

This is our third article in this series on the scale of emotions as presented in David Hawkins' book Power vs. Force. We are working our way from the lowest emotional states (the ones that drag us down) through the highest emotions (the ones that enable us to live in harmony). Previously we wrote about shame and guilt. To recap: shame lies at the bottom of the scale; it is that quality you tend to identify with your self-worth versus your actions. With shame you feel that you are bad, wrong or flawed. Guilt, on the other hand, is a feeling you have when you act in a way that violates certain rules that you or society hold as the right or correct way to behave.

The next emotional state on Dr. Hawkins' scale is apathy. Apathy in the extreme is a state of hopelessness and despair. It often includes poverty, helplessness and loss of hope. Most of us are not subjected to the circumstances of birth, oppression or abject poverty without options for change that characterize the deepest forms of apathy.

The type of apathy that typically visits us includes: lack of interest, an inability to become, enthusiastic or be happily engaged in our lives. As opposed to the extreme version that has a soul deadening aspect, the more fleeting version of apathy seems more like a temporary disconnect from the more soulful parts of ourselves. This type of apathy reflects a total lack concern in regards to everyday life or matters of general appeal. In short, apathy is indifference to what is going on around you. It can be a heavy, dark emotion. When you are apathetic, you simply don't care. You lack enthusiasm and have no zest for life.

Apathy can be experienced at different levels. You can experience apathy as an individual or as part of a group. As an individual, you may feel great about certain parts of your life and experience apathy in particular areas, such as your job, your relationships or even your health. You could even live your entire life in a state of apathy, a state of little emotion and not caring ... just going through the motions. The group might be your family, your work environment and colleagues, your community, and the list could go on. How often do we hear about "voter apathy" ... the community not really caring about the issues at hand? Have you ever experienced apathy about any issue within your family? Perhaps you've seen it or felt it within

your work group, your town or community. When there is apathy, there is little movement and little emotion.

Apathy can visit for several reasons. It is important to identify the cause in order to have a well thought out approach for resolution. Burn out is a common reason for apathetic feelings. Our physical vitality takes a beating trying to keep up with the demands of our lives. Eventually our inner reserves are not there to help us bounce back or to 'keep on keepin' on. We get so used to abusing ourselves that we do not stop to consider that our well may run dry. Of course we get hints previous to a complete depletion of physical vitality. Our minds are not as sharp; we cannot remember as easily, we become confused more. We notice signs that we are stressed and tired. Emotionally we may become more constricted, flat or have a harder time balancing and managing feelings. Some describe a sense of emotional bankruptcy: no emotion, interest, passion or joy.

So apathy can be a result of the stresses and strains of being human. Or a deeper cause can be at the source of this poisonous type of indifference. Apathy can be a sign that we've fallen into living separated from our true selves, our souls and our creative potential. In an effort to live by the rules, be successful, and meet the material goals of one's life there is an abandonment of SELF, a profound disconnect with that which is soulful, juicy, life enhancing.

We do not have to eschew rules, success or material gain. That is black and white thinking that will only lead to more of the same polarized living that is the problem. The answer is to take the necessary steps to live from the inside out. Start small and build on things that bring some lightness, joy and ease into your life. Living from your core, true or essential self means to identify and allow yourself your dreams. It means not getting caught up in the "have to's" so much that you do not bring in enough beauty, relaxation and fun. It means taking the time for the quiet construction of communication with your interior.

When moving away from apathy, just take it a step at a time. It is unrealistic to expect to move from a state of not caring to suddenly caring without experiencing anything in between. Realize that whatever you experience is OK. It is more important to accept how you are feeling and work with it vs. ignoring your feelings and suppressing them. When you suppress your feelings, you're pushing them deeper inside. Doing so can manifest as health problems or imbalances.

**Here are suggestions to begin to spark enthusiasm in your life:**

**Step out into nature ...** see if you can find something to appreciate about your natural surroundings and things that are outside of yourself. Consider how you feel when you experience a clear blue sky, bright sunshine, the stars on a clear night, birds flocking to a bird feeder, buds emerging on the trees after a long cold winter.

**Exercise ...** movement raises the energy and life force in your body. Movement carries oxygen to your cells. Choose any form of movement that suits you. Begin slowly with gentle stretches

or a short walk if you haven't been exercising. Choose something that you might enjoy or at least something that isn't *work* for you. Make it easy on yourself. If you choose something hard or something you don't enjoy, you are simply blocking your path.

**Choose to feel better** ... just pretend. If things could be different, how would they be? If you could choose to feel any way you wanted, how would you feel? Go there now, feel what it would feel like for just a short time. Focus on what it feels like to live your desire. As you focus on your desire, you can't focus on your lack of desire so you naturally let it go.

**Find something to care about** ... it doesn't have to be a person or an issue. You could begin with a plant or even an animal. Caring for something outside of yourself can trigger feelings inside that you tucked away or didn't even know you had.

Carl Jung, a Swiss psychologist (1875 - 1961), said it best when he said "there can be no transforming of darkness into light and of apathy into movement without emotion." Choose to let your light begin to shine by expressing your emotions.

Could it be that our fascination with some other cultures is recognition of their ability to immerse themselves wholeheartedly in life? There are cultures that have very little materially and yet they live with a wonderful simplicity...with joy and happy hearts. An appreciation of nature, an ability to see true beauty, good food, music and community all seem a common denominator in these groups. Apathy does not have to be a cloud that creeps into our lives and surrounds us. Apathy can be a warning sign that we have lost the way to live from our heart and breathe from our soul.

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