

Stepping Stones on the Pathway Home



Guidelines to Consciously Living and Loving

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www.steveleasock.com
info@steveleasock.com

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Foreword

Let's cut to the chase. You desire happiness, harmony and balance in your life. So, what's the problem? Why aren't you satisfied with the life you live? The trouble is that you are taught to search for something to make you whole. But, honestly, ask yourself how, and more importantly, why should you search for completeness. You are the totality of your being in this moment. So, in actuality, everything is already within you. Therefore, thoughts, emotions, beliefs and materialistic advantages are only evolutionary developments. Thus, concepts of the mind. And, all are temporary. Life does not need defining. *It is not your responsibility to examine or label life or living. Instead, your obligation is to accept and nurture the act of living. However, human beings think and do exactly the opposite.* Nevertheless, regardless of your attempts and interventions. You cannot truly and purely experience living through mind filters and conditioned behavior

However, the good news is that you can unlearn what you have learned and achieve the fulfillment of living life that is your birthright.

So, don't be fooled by thoughts or emotions. Yes, your experience of life will have difficulties. But, you decide how to interact with both life and your human self. You can continue to do this unconsciously or take the next step and consciously live life. It seems difficult to accept most daily situations because the mind interferes with your conscious observation of any moment. Thus, you are caught up in a whirlwind consisting of mind clutter. This is true for everyone. Only the level of intensity varies from person to person. The majority of the world populace is still struggling with confusion, anxiety and fear. So, you are taught to think positive, completely avoid thoughts, or if necessary, seek professional help. Nevertheless, avoidance and unconscious behavior are never the path to enlightenment.

Instead, pause and consider your thoughts and feelings from a perspective of conscious awareness. Thoughts and emotions are usually about the past or the uncertainty and fear of the future. Yet, the past and the future do not actually exist, other than in your mind. And, you are predominantly conditioned to focus only on the mind. Therefore, your expression of life is based solely on mind output. This statement first sounds logical, even relatively accurate. However, you don't need the mind to experience the presence of this moment. I can assure you that this assertion is correct in terms of conscious awareness to your state of being. Nevertheless, you are probably reluctant to accept this suggestion. Nonetheless, reach out consciously and take my hand. Let's take the first step together.

The first step requires that you are unencumbered and non-judgmental. So, I ask that you practice patience during the shifting process from mind to conscious awareness. Also, a given perseverance is helpful during this process. So, be patient with yourself and the stepping stones along the way. The next ten steps give you the opportunity to focus on yourself as a conscious being and the significance of your life experience. These steps, as well as everything you encounter along the way, are stepping stones on your inner journey home. That is to say, when you are ready to actively begin the awakening transformation.

This next step will first sound silly. But, let's deduce a fundamental fact from the first step mentioned above. Ultimately, you cannot define, nor limit, the experience of life with mind details. Yes, you try. And accordingly, this results in viewing yourself and the world as a place of confusion and suffering. Thus, you only experience short intervals of happiness.



The second step, acceptance and non-attachment, are essential in the conscious experience of fully living life. Embracing whatever is given to you each day opens space in any experience. Follow this with a clear understanding that you must not attach yourself to the details of any experience. So, how is this done? Simply walk the path of life with aware consciousness as a walking stick. Hence, you will always walk a path that is known and true. Be totally here and now. It takes practice. But, it is possible.

Nonetheless, the mind resists with its wishes, wants and demands. So, confusion, doubt and fear overcome you again and again. The reason is because you are much more than what the mind thinks or believes. Still, there is good news. Deep within you, and suppressed by the mind, is something much more than what the mind can conceive. Your very presence confirms this fact. Nevertheless, the mind will never comprehend the simply act of you being you. However, a state of being does not mean that you will not become ill. It does not imply that this human form will not encounter difficulty and pain. Being does not suggest that you will receive a paradise that the mind thinks was lost and is so desperate to find. Being is simply that; it is.

Therefore, the next step is to clear up the spider webs of confusion and fear relating to the reality of being you. Have you ever heard this statement? *Being in the world but not of it?* This has been mentioned in written works dating back thousands of years, including the Bible scriptures of John. (Please note that this quote is a paraphrase adopted by people to express the purpose of their beingness. The word *world* is actually a Greek translation of *cosmos*.) This is basically saying that we are now human beings in this world. It is okay to accept this form. But we do not need to be only this form with all its behaviors and tendencies. It is possible, through our species' consciousness, to witness the human development (dilemma) imposed onto the one self. We can also express this one self as a universal state of beingness. You are! This cannot be disputed. And, this acknowledgement removes any need for philosophical or religious attachments.

So, the desire of each person is to discover a balance between this mortal existence and the divinity within the presence of living life. Further references used for presence are universal consciousness or oneness. But, don't let the mind focus on words or meanings. Strictly speaking, neither science or religion can explain your presence. Ask yourself these questions. Why should I explain the act of being me? Isn't it enough just to *be*?



The Third Step is to become more aware of the natural flow of universal life energy. And, to acquire a deeper understanding of living in a state of presence. You might ask yourself again and again how to become truly aware of living. Let's illustrate with an analogy. Consider, a hot baked potato thrown into your hands. What do you do? You drop the potato as quickly as possible. You do not need to think about the potato or what you should do. Similarly, awareness is something you are and not something you do. Unquestionably, just beyond the boundaries of thought, emotions and other mind restrictions, there is a continual flow of unmanifested energy. So, your practice is to consciously live within this flow of unmanifested possibilities. This, in turn, allows consciousness to expand. Thus, the universe becomes more and more aware of itself through you. And vice versa.

Consciousness, life and unconditionally living life go hand in hand. The next step of our evolution would benefit greatly from the expansion of these energy frequencies. The key to unlocking greatness is found by awakening to the truth of your essence. You are a vessel that is transforming energy from your inner universe, into the outer universe.

The transition back to a state of presence and conscious living first seems long, even unreachable. However, it is not difficult. On the contrary, it is quite simple. Just be. No attachment to thoughts, emotions or existence details can deter you from being, if you are openly aware. Therefore, ask yourself. How do I wish to be? And how will I choose to experience being? Life is to be lived now. Just be. Realize that thinking about living is not the same as simply living life.



The Fourth Step involves living outside of your mind-made box. You might often complain. You expect frustration, fear and even suffering as normal outcomes of your existence. Nevertheless, these are only mind concepts. You think that your frustration is real. Fear of countless daily activities overwhelm you. Therefore, you believe the mind when it says to be afraid. Strangely enough, you are lying in a warm bed with a full stomach. And yet, the mind convinces you to be anxious and afraid. This fear is not genuine. It is conceptual.

Additionally, our species is always reaching for more. But, why reach for more when there is an abundance here and now? A deeper awareness of living opens the portal to universal life energy consciousness. We actually manifest what we experience through the flowing vastness of the unmanifested. This is to say, an aware observation of ourselves, mind, and the universe offer true clarity in any situation.

The truest form of purity and blissfulness is to deeply acknowledging what is and the willingness to be what is; regardless of the form. This realization is beneficial to living in balance and harmony. Do distractions, attachments and expectancies relating to temporary details confuse you? The miracle is in acknowledging that to *be* needs no word, definition, or reason. Focus on the following realization. You are not the mind (thoughts and feelings), body (symptoms, defects, illness). However, you are the observer of all and have realized that everything is not influencing you. Instead, you are influencing everything that manifests.



The Fifth Step is the practice of focus. Observe your path of life in a silent mode as often as possible. A footpath commonly indicates a simpler means of travel. Then why does the way frequently seem so complex? Remember, you are the path itself and not the details encountered on the way. Therefore, the path is only complicated if you complicate it. You ask questions and you search for answers. But, in actuality, it is the mind asking the questions and not you. And, the mind answers itself. The mind tells you thoughts and emotions that are ninety-nine percent stories resulting from conditioned behavior, assumptions, and outright illusions. All of which, are not true.

So, a relationship with the mind based on non-attachment and non-expectancy can change everything. Actually, not the mind itself. Rather, you will learn how to live with yourself through an aware relationship with the mind. Your observation, either conscious or unconscious, determines everything you experience. The if, what, why and how of any situation is directly associated with you. Most people, and probably you, are quick to blame other people and things for your life experiences. The majority of people will say this is the easiest method to explain everything. But, not only is this NOT accurate, it is an outright lie. Therefore, it is best to refocus your energy to the origin of all things within your experiences. This point of origin is you. Don't try to run or deny this simple fact because you can never run away from yourself.

Firstly, how you live is a direct result of your co-creation with the life energy that manifests. Secondly, your aware or unaware observation of anything that manifests determines your life experience.

The sun rises and sets and it often seems that we are a puppet dancing to the strings of the mind. However, you can cut the strings. You are the co-creator of all you experience. The foremost question to ask in each moment would be what will you create now.



The Sixth Step is the readjustment of your pace on the path of life. Recognize that you must first acknowledge that this is your path and you must walk it. No one can walk it for you. The majority of people are still not aware of the necessity to look inward and ***begin the inner journey***. That's okay. Either they will or they won't. Either way, it is as it is now. Still, don't let the words fool you. To be conscious is simply to be deeply aware of being here and now. And, only you can be conscious of the potential consciousness within you. The acknowledgement and active observation of the inner universe are paramount in initiating change.



The Seventh Step encompasses letting go. This step, rather your acceptance of this step, is crucial. Letting go does not suggest *doing* anything. Sure, letting go is an action verb and statement. But, detachment is not about the word used to describe the experience. A very large percent of the thoughts and feelings that you attach yourself to are useless to the experience of living life. The mind tells you otherwise. It will say that this thought or that emotion is critical for your existence. But existing has little to do with living and still less with consciously living.

You are not your thoughts. Therefore, it is not necessary to attach yourself to them. Use the following mantra daily. *I am not my thoughts*. Practice allowing the mind to think. While you, as a conscious being, remain detached from 99% of the brain's activities. What about the remaining 1 percent? This is the focus point of your conscious awareness. Practice letting each thought flow without attaching anything to it. No labels, no judgement, and no anxiety. Realize deeply that most thoughts are not as significant or as serious as the mind tells you.

The unconscious mind distracts and deceives. Aware presence reveals and enlightens.



The Eighth Step initiates the dawning of a deeper awareness to a path that is of your choice. You are now aware of the unmanifested vastness within conscious awareness. This new perspective and clarity are confusing. This is because the mind still periodically dominates your sense of being in the here and now. Nevertheless, you begin to feel space and freedom in all you experience. Yet, this is frightening for you and the mind is defiant. Imagine, if you will, a tug rope game. This battle of control first appears to be between the mind and consciousness. You, as an unaware entity, seem caught in the middle of this game. But, the mind is fooling itself and you because the mind is on both ends of the rope. While enlightenment (consciousness) is on the sidelines neutrally watching the conflicting mind. Thus, this mind-confliction is misleading in the beginning of the awakening process. Nonetheless, you are awake. You now see that the mind and consciousness are NOT in a power-struggle. Rather, the mind is only in conflict with itself. It is a foolish game played by the mind as the king of conditioned behavior. So, your practice is to remain actively present as the observer. It is now possible for you to change this repetitious mind behavior pattern. Be aware, accept and let go.

Continue to practice non-expectancy and non-attachment in any situation. It gets easier and easier as the mind loses its hold on you. The simplicity and blissfulness of living will suddenly become clear, regardless of any temporary circumstance. It is best to emphasize

again and again that conscious awakening has nothing to do with reaching a divine state. Rather, it is the acknowledgement that every moment is about accepting life's divinity. Living is the acknowledgement that every moment is about accepting the flow of life. And, you now understand that you are partially responsible for this flowing movement.

Also, it is beneficial to remember that conscious awakening and enlightenment never imply disregarding your content existence practicalities. Peacefulness and balance are to be discovered in recognizing that both the practical aspects of your existence and the totality of life are within the eternal now. And, you, as a consciously active observer know that impartiality and bliss are available within the spaciousness of conscious presence.

So, you are now on a clearer path of conscious awareness. Still, the world is a playground filled with mental and materialistic superficiality. And, there are many things about this world that you enjoy. This encourages you to continue indulging yourselves and to want more. Still, deep within, and somewhere beyond the mind, you know that more will never be enough. But, the urge to stay entangled in this mind complexity is strong.

Therefore, my question to you is simple. Are you ready to stop this insidious mind game? You are a conscious being that has the capability to choose. Yes, the behavioral tendencies of a million years are strong. But, conscious presence has the potential to be wiser, without the need to dominate the mind.

Therefore, the one (presence) that looks beyond the mind knows there is only one truth to find. And, this truth, in whatever form, can only be experienced now. Furthermore, this truth is not a thing or a goal. Rather, the certainty of living life is within the isness of this moment. Thus, this is where a decision is made. Step fearlessly into this realm of simplicity or stay outside cast in a self-made Hell. The stillness within unconditional beingness is the gateway to everything. This totality is always here and now. Living life is definitely NOT in the past and not in a supposed future. Hence, always practice diverting energy to the focus of living fully within the moment. The moment is a vast realm, a spaciousness. Life is the experience of living. Living is not the result of the details within this experience.

The mind will always cast shadows that seem to darken the way. The mind is programed to invoke complexity, if you allow it. It questions everything and when there are no answers it makes up assumptions, beliefs and stories. *In other words, the mind is oblivious to simply living and loving because it is overwhelmed with determining why and how to live and love.*

So, the prerequisite for enlightened living is to remain anchored in the now. *Do you truly wish to change how you experience life? Then, openly and completely acknowledge that life will always reveal itself according to how you see yourself in relationship to it.* All experiences, except the isness/beingness within this moment, are temporary. The mind will tell you otherwise. But, it is lying to you and will do so until you are ready to look beyond what the mind insists is a true reality.



The Ninth Step is significant because you are now more aware than ever before. You shift more easily from mind distractions to aware consciousness. Surprisingly, everything is as it was before you became consciously aware. But, now thought and emotion manipulations and restrictions cannot influence your state of being. Instead, you now use thoughts and emotions as useful signposts that bring you back to conscious presence. The ability to awaken awareness to conscious living is significant to allow this shift in how you experience life. You understand more and more why something happens as you become actively conscious and aligned with the flow of life. You now realize the totality of your own creation when you acknowledge that you are within everything.

Life is a stream that is always moving and changing. Don't fear living and don't be afraid of change. The gift of life energy gives you the opportunity to experience the universe in each person, animal and thing. There within each object and within yourself, is where you will discover everything. You are the totality experiencing itself in this moment. The universe is a dimension of possibilities for a person that is living in a state of conscious presence. Furthermore, the reality that you experience always parallels the manifestation of your inner universe.



The Tenth Step is the simple but unconditional realization and acceptance of your state of being. Therefore, what is your relationship with the mind and your inner universe? This is the key question in consciously awakening to a state of deeper presence.

Likewise, always realize that only this moment is real and true. And, the moment has nothing to do with the content of any experience. The presence within this moment is real and everlasting. On the contrary, the details of any moment/situation/thought/emotion are temporary. Therefore, remain observant of your mind's behavior. Accept and experience thoughts and emotions. But, live in a place that is beyond the mind. *Live life outside the box.* This place is called the conscious presence of here and now.

Hopefully, the insight I share with you is beneficial on your inner journey. Please reflect on the insight. Read one, several, or all of these stepping stones daily or at least from time to time. Practice living accordingly with the flow of any experience that unfolds. This acceptance offers you the clarity to decide if and how you should respond, without becoming intertwined within details, thoughts and emotions.

We chase after the brightness of life without every realizing that we are this light.



P.S. Are you aware that the steps have a similarity? This is the expression of a full circle to indicate that you are already everything you seek and wish. You have just temporarily been misguided by the mind. Now, you are ready to return home.



Epilogue

Please use the following mantras as additional stepping stones from here to there as you cross the winding stream of life. It is a process of unlearning the learned as you accept and let go of conditioned behavior. Thus, you also acknowledge non-attachment as a beneficial virtue. Live life as it is and not as you think, want and demand that it should be. I have written the following steps in first-person perspective. Practice these as focus points on your inner journey.

1. Everything is Temporary, regardless of what the mind tells me. Thoughts and emotions are not as threatening as the mind depicts them to be.
2. Therefore, my conscious observation of thoughts, emotions, people and situations determines the outcome of my experiences.
3. Accordingly, I interact consciously, openly and wisely with the mind. This offers a mutual and direct understanding of life. I am the master and the mind is my diligent companion.
4. The mind has assumptions, definitions and intentions based on conditioned behavior. Therefore, I will never take the mind too seriously, regardless of any situation.
5. I will practice detachment and non-expectancy as a basis for all interactions within the aspects of my life experiences.

About the Author

Steve grew up in the American northern Appalachian Mountains. He enjoyed the beauty and simplicity of nature and life in the tranquility of country living. There were experiences during his youth that were difficult but have enriched his understanding of life and humankind immensely. He spent over three years practically living out of a backpack traveling from place to place, working as a farmer, convention coordinator, bartender, and DJ.

He studied Marketing and Management in the United States and later Psychology and Humanities in Europe, where he has lived for many years. This cultural diversity has nurtured and expanded his understanding of human nature and given him firsthand experiences with individuals from around the world.

Steve's current written works are the result of an inner transformation that took place after he came to terms with the realization that life is much more than the content of our existence. He is involved in sharing, learning, and growing with others who are embracing a level of human consciousness that is attuned with universal consciousness.

He is the author of *One Moment in Life*, *Simplicity of Life* and *Love Will Show You the Way*. His books, blog and website offer topics relating to our existence and living consciously in sync with ourselves and life. Steve's written works provide a sharing portal for people who are consciously awakening and have started the inward journey home. He is dedicated to sharing a universal knowledge that is innately known to everyone. But, has been forgotten.

You can contact Steve at www.steveleasock.com

Email: info@steveleasock.com

Facebook: sleasock

Twitter: @SteveLeasock