

Life Mastery 2



Session 2 / Loving 'What Is'

By Mark Fournier

- **Setting Up**
- **Shifting**
- **Loving 'What Is'**
- **The Shift**
- **Assignments**

Loving What Is

Setting Up

As we've discussed, each week you will learn a new Self Mastery technique which I call a 'Shift'. I call them this because they 'shift' your current State / Reality from where it is now to where you would *like* it to be. The weekly lessons will be very short and simple leaving you with more time to practice and apply them to your life. You will be reminded from time to time that the secret to Life Mastery isn't in 'gaining more knowledge, but rather in *applying* that knowledge' therefore; it isn't how much you *learn* with us each week, it's how much you *do*. As such, many of the things you are going to experience through this course may not be entirely new to you...in fact, many lessons will involve something you've already learned but haven't yet MASTERED. Remember, *our* goal isn't for you to *learn* them, but rather to consistently APPLY and MASTER them. And we do this in part by 1) **Repeating** them, 2) **Applying** them, 3) **Teaching** them.

Before we begin with our first Shift, it's important for you to prepare yourself for making the most of each Shift, and one way of doing so is by being certain you can easily access these Shifts any time an opportunity arises for you to apply them. Eventually you will have them memorized, but until then, you need to have them stored in a convenient place.

Storage suggestions:

- Create a computer file labeled **Self Mastery 2**, then a *sub* file labeled **Shifts** and then within that sub file another set of sub files, one for each Shift technique that you will learn, for instance today's lesson is the '**Loving What Is**' Shift.
- If you have a smart phone and can create files for that as well, you may wish to do the same on your phone.
- If you don't have an electronic or portable means of keeping your Shift file with you, consider keeping a written journal of each Shift. You might keep a full-sized notebook at your home or office and a small portable one to carry with you.
- You can even create a 'summary key' to hang on your wall so you can see each of the Shift methods at a moment's glance to remind you of your various options.

The purpose of creating these lists is to make certain that you have access to each Shift throughout the day... and the reason why you will want to do *that* is because you never know when you'll have an opportunity to use and apply them (in your own life or in the life of someone else). Remember, you *need* to be able to quickly and easily apply them as often as possible because this is the only way you will ever get the practice needed to master them! Plus, being able to easily and frequently apply them to your own life can be VERY helpful and rewarding in regard to managing your own States.

Shifting

Remember, the way a Shift works is by altering the way you *think* and consequently the way you *feel* and *behave*. In some cases, we will alter how you *feel* by changing your *behavior* (such as through breathing exercises), but for the most part, we will be altering your conscious and sub conscious *thoughts*. As such, you need to be prepared to alter your thoughts (or those of others) at a moment's notice.

And the reason why we are offering ten different Shift techniques is because no single Shift will always work all the time for everyone. And even the Shifts that *do* tend to work *most* of the time still aren't ideal for every situation; for instance you may have a Shift technique that helps you or others feel greater Joy and Appreciation for your lives (such as the *Loving What Is* Shift), but when someone is highly agitated, nervous and frightened or overwhelmed and stressed out... you will find that other Shift techniques are far more effective at addressing these particular 'States'.

As a result of this, one of the first things you need to do when you begin working on changing States, is to find out what State you or others are in. And you do this by asking the following simple questions:

- 1) How are you feeling today (mentally and emotionally)?
- 2) How would you *like* to be feeling?

The answer to these two questions may tell you everything you need to know in order to decide which Shift techniques to use. Sometimes you may need to coax the answers out, but in time you will get better and better at this... just practice listening with compassion and empathy. Obviously there are subtle differences between help someone *else* Shift Vs helping *yourself*. For the time being, we will discuss the steps for helping 'others' shift, knowing that you will do nearly the same thing when it comes to Shifting *yourself*.

If they tell you they are feeling 'fine' it doesn't mean you can't still contribute to them, it just means that you get to have the fun of moving them from feeling 'fine' to feeling 'GREAT'. So if they tell you they feel 'fine'... ask them if they would like to feel GREAT, and when they say 'yes', you will begin using a Shift that is designed for just such a purpose. The following 'Loving What Is' Shift is good for this particular situation, although there are even better ones for taking someone from 'fine' to 'GREAT'.

As you go through the 'Loving What Is' Shift, you will notice quite a few steps to this particular process. Not all Shifts are as complex as this one, and many of them share several of the same steps, so you will eventually find the various steps in this process to be easier to memorize and master than it might at first appear.

Loving ‘What Is’

One of the most common causes of emotional pain comes from wanting things to be different from the way they are. Whether it involves wishing we had ‘more things’ like money, time, or love, or wishing we had *different* things, such as a different spouse, a different job, or a different life. Any time we want something other than what we have we are setting ourselves up for pain and suffering.

This doesn’t mean we can’t aspire... it’s perfectly natural to want to improve our lot in life and it’s certainly programmed into us through media and advertising. The challenge occurs when we confuse ‘wanting’ more with ‘needing’ more. The secret to living a joyful and fulfilling life is in being able to *reach* for more (of anything) while simultaneously *loving* where we are *now*. This isn’t easy to do, but it’s essential if we want to consistently feel good about ourselves and our lives.

So how do we accomplish ‘wanting more’ AND ‘loving what is’ at the same time? We do this by learning how to stay focused on what we love about our lives right NOW, while at the same time enjoying the *thought* of having more. When we think of things we want but don’t yet have, we must think of them as we would think of going on a vacation or having a special holiday... in other words, we must enjoy the ‘thought’ of them while still enjoying the ‘experience’ of what is now. When a child dreams of Christmas for instance... they imagine finding gifts beneath the tree, hearing Santa’s sleigh outside their window, eating lots of treats and playing in the snow... these thoughts create a wonderful feeling in them. And yet, they are still able to enjoy whatever they are doing NOW as well... and this is because they think of Christmas as a ‘bonus’... not something they ‘*need* in order to make their life work’, but rather something extra special that makes their life even better. This is HUGE!!! Mastering this one skill alone, could provide the tools to love your life no matter what happens in the future... and better still, it makes it possible to enjoy a future (NOW) that might never even come to pass.

**We must learn how to see the beauty in ‘what is now’
before we can fully enjoy the wonders of ‘what could *also* be’.**

By taking this approach we are able to create not *one* but TWO Shifts. The first Shift is the one we are working on this week ‘Loving What Is’. The second Shift involves the wonderful experience of seeing what *could* be. I highly recommend however that you perform the ‘Loving What Is’ Shift *first* so as not to create a feeling of discontent in others as they compare their exciting ‘dream life’ with their ‘more ordinary real life’ (not that they have an ‘ordinary’ life, but that is how it can feel to them if they haven’t *first* focused on ‘Loving What Is’).

It is time now to learn and practice the ‘Loving what is’ *Shift*.

The Shift

Loving What Is

The *Loving What Is* Shift is used for helping yourself and others:

- Feel greater joy and appreciation for their life
- Replace anxiety about their future with a sense of peaceful security
- Create a general sense of wellbeing

This Shift involves dialog between you and others, as you will be guiding them down a specific path, and *they* will be providing you with feedback as you go. As you take them through these exercises pause from time to time so they can savor the experience... any time they appear to be ‘feeling good’ give them a few moments to ‘Love What Is NOW.’

As you speak to them allow your voice to be calming and encouraging. It is okay to sound excited when you’re discussing something of an exciting nature... as this particular Shift isn’t for the purpose of creating ‘peace and calm’ in their life.

Step #1

Acknowledge: Get them to acknowledge that there *is* something to ‘love’ about their life

Step #2

List: Get them to share a mental list of as many good things in their life as they can think of (count their blessings). Have them start with the most basic of needs such as ‘Food and Shelter’ and if they wish, add more and more to the list as they go

If they have trouble getting started, you can help them with questions such as “Do you have a place to live, do you have enough to eat, warm clothes, loved ones...” etc.

Sample:

What I *currently* HAVE:

- Food and Shelter
- Sufficient Clothing
- Healthy, happy kids
- Friends and family who love and care about me
- Good health with little or no pain
- A mate who I love deeply
- A career I enjoy
- My family and I are alive (we do not have a terminal illness)
- My family and I are safe (no one is trying to physically harm us)

Once they have a list, move on to the next step:

Step #3

Enhance: Enhance their level of *appreciation* for the blessings in their life by having them do the following:

- **Compare** their life to those who have less or who are missing even the most basic needs. However, don't let them *dwell* on this as it could cause them to *overly* empathize thereby creating negative feelings... just help them to be generally aware that they probably have 'more of everything' than 99% of the world's population, and that *most* of the population would be thrilled beyond words to have a fraction of what they have. Point out that their 'worst case scenario' is probably better than the 'best case scenario' of most people on earth.

'Comparing' is important because everything in life comes down to 'context'... it's all 'relative'... which means that nothing means anything until we compare it to something else. Unfortunately, most of us compare ourselves with those who appear to have 'more' instead of with those who appear to have 'less' and in so doing we set ourselves up for disappointment. And worse yet... we tend to compare our 'worst traits or challenges' with someone else's 'best'! So pay attention to this as you walk them through this process... see where they are doing this and help them to become aware of it... while simultaneously helping them to reverse it by doing the exact opposite when they make comparisons.

- **Imagine** their life without the things they have. Once again, you don't want them to dwell on the dark and terrible life they would have if their current blessings were missing, otherwise you could bring about negative feelings, but you do want to help them experience the gratefulness that comes from comparing the life they have now, with a version of their life where none of these things exist.

This is very much like what happens to George Bailey (Jimmy Stewart) in the movie 'It's a Wonderful Life' when he is shown what the world would be like had he never been born at all. It can be highly effective.

Step #4

Need: Have them make a list of what they really *need*.

You do this by asking them to:

- 1) Think about the list they've made of what they *have* and *love* about their life...
- 2) Think for a moment about those in the world who have far less...
- 3) Separate in their mind the things they *have* in their life that are more or less 'conveniences' from the things they really '*need*'. Get them to see the difference between what they '*need*' and what they merely '*want*'.
- 4) Make a mental list of just the things they '*need*' ... ideally this will all come down to a few very basic things like 'Food, Shelter and Clothing'. Some will include basic health, love etc.
- 5) Get them to acknowledge that they already have all or nearly all of 'everything they *need*'.

The purpose of the above list is to help them see how complete their life already is... how many of the things they *already* have of what they really need. And just as importantly, to set a simpler 'foundation' for them to build upon; if they already have everything they need... the rest is just 'icing on the cake' and therefore much easier to appreciate (or let go of).

Step #5

Wish List: Have them imagine once again that they are like the rest of the world and have almost nothing at all... then ask them to make a 'Wish List' of what they would ask for under such circumstances.

Ideally you will ask questions that lead them to make a list of the things they **ALREADY HAVE**, thus creating even greater appreciation for their current lives and teaching them how to 'Love What Is'.

Example:

You ask: "If you were terribly ill, perhaps even terminal what would you wish for?"

They respond: "To get better or for my family to be taken care of"

You respond: "Your wish is granted... you are now 'better' and your family is being taken care of.

You then say: "Let's just pause for a moment and imagine what it would be like to suddenly and instantly be 'cured' of a terrible or even terminal illness and know that your family will not only be cared for, they will be cared for by *you*... appreciate how you are feeling right this moment to be 'Alive and Well' it's wonderful and its *true*.

You ask: "If you and your children were so poor that none of you had eaten for days and didn't know where your next meal was coming from, what would you wish for?"

They respond: "Food and Water"

You respond: "Your wish is granted... you and your children now have food and water... in fact, you also have a home and a job and income and clothing and... people who love you and..." (list the items they have placed on their list of what they 'have' and 'love' about their life)...

You then say: "Let's just pause for a moment and imagine what it would be like to go from having nothing at all to having all that you currently have."

Step #6

Ask how they are feeling at this time (do not ask what they 'think' but rather what they '**feel**'). Ask if they feel they have reached their objective in regard to how they were hoping to feel when this process was complete.

- 1) If they are now feeling the way they wish to feel, go to a Shift that simply reinforces the way you now have them feeling. At this time you know of only this one Shift (Loving What Is), however, each week you will learn a new Shift to use during this process.

- 2) If they still aren't feeling the way they would like to, go to a Shift that approaches the same issues but from a different angle. (Again, you will learn more Shifts each week of this program).

Step #7

Assignments: Before releasing them, recommend that in order to sustain and build upon the positive feelings you've created that they do the following after they go home:

Have them make a list of everything you've discussed with them, and then, any time they wish to create greater joy in their life, tell them to look at that list and focus on how fortunate they are to have these things (in comparison to those who do not have them). Tell them to continue this focus until they truly 'Love What Is'.

Assignments

Take on as many of these assignments as possible (remember, it isn't what you learn that will help you master this process, it's what you DO).

Continuing Assignments:

Continue enrolling others into your Support Community.

Continuing Assignments:

Continue sharing the lessons you've learned thus far with as many members of your Support Community as possible.

Assignment #1:

Practice applying the 'Loving What Is' Shift to your own life throughout the week

Assignment #2:

Do the 'Loving What Is' *assignments* for yourself (as listed above under Assignments).

Assignment #3:

Practice applying the 'Loving What Is' Shift with members of your Support Community throughout the week

Optional Assignment:

'Think about your Thinking': For the next week, pay attention to your *conscious* 'thoughts, Stories and Self Talk', notice throughout the day the kind of things you *tell yourself, think about* and *focus on*, then experiment by replacing any *negative* 'Focus, Thought, Self Talk or Stories' with more *positive* ones and see how differently this makes you feel and behave.

Optional Assignment:

'Pay Attention to what you Pay Attention to ... Notice what you're Noticing': For the next week, be aware of what you are 'looking for' in your circumstances and in others, next, experiment by *looking for* new more positive things in each of these scenarios and see how this changes what you 'see' and consequently how you feel and behave.

Optional Assignment:

For the next week, pay attention to the difference between 'what is happening' and your *interpretation* of what is happening. See if you can remove your interpretations from the equation and see things for what they 'really' are. This is nearly an impossible feat, but just see how close you can come to pulling it off.

Optional Assignment:

For the next week, pretend that it's all just a game... and view each challenge that comes along as you would if it were only Hide-N-Seek, and would all work out in the end.

Optional Assignment:

For the next week, begin figuring out how you can eliminate the things in your life that wouldn't really matter if you knew you had only a year to live, and begin focusing more on the ones that *would* still matter.

Optional Assignment:

For the next week, refuse to look at anything negative that happens as being a catastrophe, see it instead as nothing more than an inconvenience... or better still as a catalyst for something wonderful.

Optional Assignment:

For the next week, do everything in your power to keep from judging others... accept that their behavior is appropriate for their perceptions and programs. And whenever you get the opportunity, ASK them to describe 'what they see and how they feel' so you can too can see inside of *their* Glass Box. Make sure you paraphrase what you've heard.

Optional Assignment:

For the next week, any time you feel yourself slipping into fear or self-pity, pretend that you are a 'wild animal'... then go about your day as they would and just refuse to give it another thought.

Optional Assignment:

For the next week, take every single dark or negative thought as it occurs and immediately replace it with a better, more positive one, and then act upon it.

Optional Assignment:

For the next week, practice replacing your vacation-hells with vacation-heavens. Then once you've affectively climbed aboard the Bright Train, practice returning to NOW and appreciating the moment.