

Purpose Octagon - Module 7

Working with Resistance

Part 1 - Behavioral Resistance.

Part 2 - Philosophy of Resistance.

Part 3 - Inner/emotional Resistance.

We'll begin this module with an experiential exercise to help you wade into the subject of resistance. We'll be looking specifically at the *behavioral* side of resistance first, because it is often what is most obviously visible in your life. By engaging this initial exercise you will uncover some of the various ways you slow down the purpose discovery process through distraction, bad habits and addictions.

Part 1 - Behavioral Resistance

Exercise 7:1 Uncover the behaviors that impede purpose discovery.

Step 1: Assign a number 1-5 for each statement below using this scale:

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Never A tiny bit Sometimes Often Way too often

The ways I avoid soul:

- Eating too much
- Eating too little
- Eating junk food
- Eating too much sugar
- Drinking too much
- Using marijuana too much
- Porn junkie
- Web surfing junkie
- News junkie
- Facebook junkie
- Thrill-seeking junkie
- Spend-a-holic
- Party-a-holic
- Work-a-holic
- Email addict
- Checking my phone addict
- Video game addict

- TV, DVD, Netflix, YouTube, etc., addict
 - Tobacco addict
 - Gambling addict
 - Prescription drug addict
 - Sex addict
 - Exercising addict
 - Shopping addict
 - Risky behavior addict
 - Drama addict
 - Hoarding
 - Masturbation addict
 - Perfectionism
 - Self-help book junkie
 - Therapy addict
 - Write some of your other ways of avoiding Soul here:
-
- 1.

 - 2.

 - 3.

 - 4.

(7:1) Step 2: Now copy your “Top 5” below. Your “Top 5” are the soul avoidance techniques you use to distract yourself from discovering/living your purpose at full force.

- 1.

- 2.

- 3.

- 4.

- 5.

(7:1) Step 3:

1. Write a short paragraph describing the way you use each of these five methods to avoid soul:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

(7:1) Step 4:

1. Over the next seven days, pay particular attention to the ways you use these behaviors, substances, etc., to avoid soul. Then ask, "Would watching two hours of Netflix (or whatever the behavior is) be consistent with living in attunement with my soul?" Write a paragraph describing what you noticed/learned through doing this exercise.

Part 2 - Philosophy of Resistance

Now that you've reached Module #7 of the Purpose Octagon Process, I'd like to ask, "Have you experienced any ebb in your enthusiasm for discovering your soul's purpose?" If your zeal to awaken your purpose has diminished, or if you have experienced some difficulty with getting in touch with your purpose, I want to suggest one factor that may be responsible: *resistance* to change. Resistance often appears when we desire to make a change in our lives. Examples:

We want to lose weight *and* we want to eat too much of our favorite foods.

We desire to become proficient at an instrument *and* we want to avoid frustrating hours of practice.

We want to be well read and knowledgeable, *and* we want to kick back, relax and watch Netflix.

We want to be in good shape *and* we don't want to break a sweat.

We want to save for retirement *and* we want to purchase things that will bring pleasure *now*.

The examples above are instances of *competing needs*, in that we find we have two urges that are pulling us in different directions: "I want the donut" and "I want to lose weight" co-exist side-by-side within us, sometimes creating tensions that can drive us nuts.

The same *resistance phenomenon* rears its head when we engage in any kind of spiritual practice. Examples:

We want to 'let go and let God' *and* we want to be in control.

We want enlightenment *and* we don't want the stability of our ego threatened.

We want to be a demonstration of love *and* hold a grudge against our partner or friend.

We want to "do unto others..." *and* we want preferential treatment.

We want a purpose-driven soul-infused life *and* we are afraid of what such a life could cost us.

It's important to know that resistance to change is natural. Once we are set in our ways, anything, that looks like it might upset the applecart of our lives, is perceived as a potential threat. From the ego's point of view, the journey to *purpose* is rife with opportunities to feel uncomfortable. So what can you do with your natural proclivity of wanting to change, but also to stay safe at the same time? The remainder of this module - "Working with Resistance" - seeks to offer you a path that can effectively address your "antibodies for change".



Antibodies for change:

Looking at Maslow's hierarchy of needs (on the previous page), what happens when the needs at the base and middle of the pyramid come into competition with the needs at the top? Let's explore some of the potential conflicts:

Safety and Security vs. Purpose: To the ego, the path of allowing your Soul's purpose to flower doesn't always feel particularly comfortable or safe. Transformation (by definition) is a threat to the status quo of your life. Why risk the comfort and security of your former way of being for a pie-in-the-sky dream of purpose? Example: "Will living my purpose end up making me feel even more financially stressed?"

Belonging vs. Purpose: The road to purpose can threaten the stability of your relationships. What if, as a result of living your purpose, you find that certain relationships no longer bring you alive, and you don't feel inclined to continue maintaining them? Your former way of belonging to your family, to the world (even to ourselves!) can be destabilized by walking on the purposeful path.

Esteem vs. Purpose: The journey of discovering your purpose can have consequences for your usual ways of getting your esteem needs met. Suppose you are a successful person in your career. Now suppose that as a result of learning your purpose, you give up that career and initially find that your esteem needs aren't being met in the same way as before. Temporarily, this means you are getting *less* of a certain type of need met.

These "antibodies" are part of you. An antibody is a cell that defends against viruses and bacteria. In your psyche an antibody is a facet of you that experiences transformation as a threat. When this happens, we get a classic intrapsychic power struggle: autonomy vs. communion, short-term pleasure vs. long-term pleasure, authenticity vs. belonging. In the next section you will discover some of these internal power struggles that may exist inside of you.

Exercise 7:2 - Needs vs. Purpose

Using Maslow's *hierarchy of needs*, let's uncover your fear regarding each need or "level" of the pyramid. With each level ask the question: "If I were to uncover my purpose and then live that purpose boldly into the world, my fear or concern would be..." Example: **Survival:** "If I live my purpose my fear or concern would be that I won't make enough money to survive...and then I might die on the street homeless and hungry." Now, write *your* fear for each of the needs below.

Safety:

Survival:

Relationships/Belonging:

Self-Esteem:

Esteem from Others:

Complete the above exercise before reading on.

Having completed this exercise, you now understand that there are dimensions of your being that don't necessarily welcome your interest in seeking your life purpose. These are the "antibodies," the facets of you that feel threatened by change. Read on and you'll discover that behind each of these *level of needs* is one or more "voices".

Part 3 - Inner/emotional resistance.

Working with the "Voices" of Resistance

The part of the ego that resists change isn't a monolith; rather, it is like a rope made of different filaments. Recall the person who wanted to lose weight (to look and feel healthier) and wants donuts (the pleasure of eating fat and sugar.) In this case, voice #1 is the *caretaker* and voice #2 is the *pleasure seeker*. Other names for these "voices" include: *parts, facets, selves, dimensions, and sub-personalities*. The following five sub-personalities (which most everybody has) are just a few of the hundreds of possible sub-personalities:

Critic, Controller, Rebel, Achiever, Protector

What happens when one of our parts exhibits resistance or fear as we attempt to embrace our soul's deepest purpose? What happens when one of these voices experiences purpose as an existential threat and goes into "antibody" mode? Well...we might experience tension, anxiety, paralysis, fear, or distraction. Resistance to growth and change is natural. Why risk what we have for something greater, when what is greater may not materialize or may come with some risks of its own?

We need to understand both the real and the imagined risks of living our true purpose from the perspective of the *voices of resistance*. You are now ready to uncover the authentic concerns of these parts of yourself that have reservations about you choosing to live your purpose.

Exercise 7:3 - Uncovering Common Fears about living from Purpose:

Examples:

Survival Fear - I won't be able to make enough money to survive and flourish.

Esteem Needs - I'll be laughed at.

Achiever - I won't be successful enough.

Protector - I'll put my life, image, comfort, or relationships in jeopardy.

Critic - Who am I to live a life of purpose? I won't be good at my purpose.

Now it's your turn. For each *sub-personality* (aka, "voice" or "facet") below, fill in the space with the fear that it has about your choice to discover your life purpose. It's ok to skip a sub-personality (or "sub") if it doesn't resonate with you. Please remember *not* to pathologize any sub-personality, no matter how tempting. Some of these "subs" are trying the best they can, with the tools at their disposal to help you (see the "loyal soldier", as described at the end of this handout). Note, many of these subs came into being when you were quite young, in an effort to protect you. Some of these subs didn't come online due to any specific circumstances of your own life, but are actually archetypal facets of nearly anybody's psyche.

Survival Fear -

Esteem Needs -

Achiever -

Protector -

Critic -

Control Freak -

Bad Boy/Girl -

Good Boy/Girl -

Image Consultant -

Party Boy/Girl -

Rescuer -

Saint -

Victim -

Perfectionist -

Pleaser -

Reactionary -

Innocent One -

Loner -

Mr. Cool -

Heartbroken One -

Rebel -

Skeptic -

Controller -

Did you notice that you have numerous sub-personalities that each have their unique agendas? Now that you know there are parts of you that resist knowing and living your purpose, it's time to work with them. Our goal is to: 1. Listen to them. 2. Honor them. 3. Make peace with them by finding a way to coexist with them. The recording under "Module #7" on the website, will lead you through the process of reducing the resistance that arises from these sub-personalities.

Exercise 7:4 - Ocean Cave Meditation

Listen to the recording of the Ocean Cave Meditation, and then write a paragraph about your experience.

Module #7 - Writing Assignments & Ongoing Homework

7:1 - 7:3 - Write at least 1 paragraph describing your experience for each of the three exercises above (7:1, 7:2, and 7:3)

7:4 - Ocean Cave Meditation Listen to the recording of the Ocean Cave Meditation, and then write at least one paragraph about your experience.

Additional Listening - Listen to the Module #7 audio.

Soulcraft - Read *Chap 7*

Circle of Trust Meeting #2 - If you haven't yet conducted your first COT council, please do so now. Your next COT meeting should be scheduled now for sometime between Nov 9 - Nov 17 (though earlier is totally fine.) If you haven't already done so, please contact them with an email or doodle poll this week.

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Before we conclude with Module #7 I want to share with you a brief story concerning the *image* of the "loyal soldier." It is the sub-personality that is often most resistant to your discovering your purpose. In his book, *Soulcraft*, author Bill Plotkin explains:

The image of the Loyal Soldier derives from a World War II epilogue. Hundreds of Japanese marines and soldiers who survived shipwrecks or plane crashes in the Pacific found themselves stranded, alone or in small groups, on uninhabited or sparsely settled islands. Some of them managed to endure despite extreme conditions and severe social-cultural isolation. Several of these soldiers were discovered many

years after the war had ended - one of them thirty-five years later! The most astonishing thing is that, when found, these men exhibited an extraordinary, perhaps fanatical, loyalty to their military mission. Unaware the war had ended, each one, upon being found, was ready to immediately return to the war effort. They were told, of course, the war was over (and that Japan had lost.) But this was literally unthinkable to them: the war could not be over because their loyalty to the cause was what had kept them alive all those years.

The rescued soldiers were welcomed home in Japan with great honor and celebration despite their stubborn belief in the discredited cause of military empire building. The Japanese people deeply respected the soldiers' capacity to sacrifice their personal agenda for a greater cause. Their sustained welcome as heroes eventually enabled the soldiers to reinvent themselves and to productively rejoin society.

Each of us has a Loyal Soldier sub-personality, a courageous, creative, and stubborn entity formed when we needed somewhat drastic measures to survive the realities (sometimes dysfunctional) of childhood. This subpersonalities primary task was to minimize the occurrence of further injury, whether emotional or physical... The Loyal Soldier learns to restrain another sub-personality we might call the Wild Child, our original sensual, magical, untamed self that has an essential relationship to the soul and is not interested in limiting itself in any way.