

An excerpt from *Loving What Is*

Four questions that can change your life

by **Byron Katie**, with Stephen Mitchell

*"No one can give you freedom but you. This little booklet will show you how."*  
– Byron Katie

This booklet is an excerpt from *Loving What Is*. Each year, thousands of these booklets are sent by request, at no charge, to non-profit organizations around the world, helping people discover the life-changing power of The Work.

If you would like to explore this process further, we suggest you ask for *Loving What Is* wherever books are sold. The book version will take you deeper into The Work, and includes numerous examples of Katie facilitating others on issues such as fear, health, relationships, money, the body, and more. *Loving What Is* is also available as an audiobook, which offers you the invaluable experience of hearing Katie do The Work in live workshop recordings. The book and the audiobook are available on our official website as well, [www.thework.com](http://www.thework.com), or they can be ordered by calling 800.98.KATIE or 1.805.640.1935.

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## Introduction

The Work of Byron Katie is a way to identify and question the thoughts that cause all of the suffering in the world. It is a way to find peace with yourself and with the world. The old, the young, the sick, the well, the educated, the uneducated – anyone with an open mind can do this Work.

Byron Kathleen Reid became severely depressed while in her thirties. Over a ten-year period her depression deepened, and Katie (as she is called) spent almost two years rarely able to leave her bed, obsessing over suicide. Then one morning, from the depths of despair, she experienced a life-changing realization.

Katie saw that when she believed that something should be different than it is (“My husband should love me more,” “My children should appreciate me”) she suffered, and that when she *didn't* believe these thoughts, she felt peace. She realized that what had been causing her depression was not the world around her, but what she believed about the world around her. In a flash of insight, Katie saw that our attempt to find happiness was backward – instead of hopelessly trying to change the world to match our thoughts about how it “should” be, we can question these thoughts and, by meeting reality as it is, experience unimaginable freedom and joy. Katie developed a simple yet powerful method of inquiry, called The Work, that made this transformation practical. As a result, a bed-ridden, suicidal woman became filled with love for everything life brings.

Katie’s insight into the mind is consistent with leading-edge research in cognitive neuroscience, and The Work has been compared to the Socratic dialogue, Buddhist teachings, and twelve-step programs. But Katie developed her method without any knowledge of religion or psychology. The Work is based purely on one woman’s direct experience of how suffering is created and ended. It is astonishingly simple, accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds, and requires nothing more than a pen and paper and an open mind. Katie saw right away that giving people her insights or answers was of little value – instead, she offers a process that can give people *their own* answers. The first people exposed to her Work reported that the experience was transformational, and she soon began receiving invitations to teach the process publicly.

Since 1986, Katie has introduced The Work to millions of people around the world. In addition to public events, she has introduced her Work into corporations, universities, schools, churches, prisons, and hospitals. Katie’s joy and humor immediately put people at ease, and the deep insights and breakthroughs that participants quickly experience make the events captivating (tissues are always close at hand). Since 1998, Katie has directed the School for The Work, a nine-day curriculum offered several times a year. The School is an approved provider of continuing education units, and many psychologists,

counselors, and therapists report that The Work is becoming the most important part of their practice. Katie also hosts an annual New Year's Mental Cleanse – a four-day program of continuous inquiry that takes place in southern California at the end of December – and she sometimes offers weekend workshops. Audio and video recordings of Katie facilitating The Work on a wide range of topics (sex, money, the body, parenting) are available at her events and on her website, [www.thework.com](http://www.thework.com).

In March 2002, Harmony Books published Katie's first book, *Loving What Is*, written with her husband, the distinguished writer Stephen Mitchell. *Loving What Is* has been translated into twenty-eight languages. It was on bestseller lists across the country. *I Need Your Love – Is That True?*, written with Michael Katz, and *A Thousand Names for Joy*, written with Stephen Mitchell were also bestsellers. *Question Your Thinking, Change the World* was published in 2007, and Katie's latest book, *Who Would You Be Without Your Story?*, was published in October 2008. *Tiger-Tiger, Is It True?*, published in 2009, is Katie's first book for children; it is illustrated by Hans Wilhelm.

Welcome to The Work.

## What Is Is

The only time we suffer is when we believe a thought that argues with what is. When the mind is perfectly clear, what is is what we want. If you want reality to be different than it is, you might as well try to teach a cat to bark. You can try and try, and in the end the cat will look up at you and say, "Meow." Wanting reality to be different than it is is hopeless.

And yet, if you pay attention, you'll notice that you think thoughts like this dozens of times a day. "People should be kinder." "Children should be well-behaved." "My husband (or wife) should agree with me." "I should be thinner (or prettier or more successful)." These thoughts are ways of wanting reality to be different than it is. If you think that this sounds depressing, you're right. All the stress that we feel is caused by arguing with what is.

People new to The Work often say to me, "But it would be disempowering to stop my argument with reality. If I simply accept reality, I'll become passive. I may even lose the desire to act." I answer them with a question: "Can you really know that that's true?" Which is more empowering? – "I wish I hadn't lost my job" or "I lost my job; what can I do now?"

The Work reveals that what you think shouldn't have happened *should* have happened. It should have happened because it did, and no thinking in the world can change it. This doesn't mean that you condone it or approve of it. It just means that you can see things without resistance and without the confusion of your inner struggle. No one wants their children to get sick, no one wants to be

in a car accident; but when these things happen, how can it be helpful to mentally argue with them? We know better than to do that, yet we do it, because we don't know how to stop.

I am a lover of what is, not because I'm a spiritual person, but because it hurts when I argue with reality. We can know that reality is good just as it is, because when we argue with it, we experience tension and frustration. We don't feel natural or balanced. When we stop opposing reality, action becomes simple, fluid, kind, and fearless.

## **Staying in Your Own Business**

I can find only three kinds of business in the universe: mine, yours, and God's. (For me, the word *God* means "reality." Reality is God, because *it rules*. Anything that's out of my control, your control, and everyone else's control, I call that God's business.)

Much of our stress comes from mentally living out of our own business. When I think, "You need to get a job, I want you to be happy, you should be on time, you need to take better care of yourself," I am in your business. When I'm worried about earthquakes, floods, war, or when I will die, I am in God's business. If I am mentally in your business or in God's business, the effect is separation. I noticed this early in 1986. When I mentally went into my mother's business, for example, with a thought like "My mother should understand me," I immediately experienced a feeling of loneliness. And I realized that every time in my life that I had felt hurt or lonely, I had been in someone else's business.

If you are living your life and I am mentally living your life, who is here living mine? We're both over there. Being mentally in your business keeps me from being present in my own. I am separate from myself, wondering why my life doesn't work.

To think that I know what's best for anyone else is to be out of my business. Even in the name of love, it is pure arrogance, and the result is tension, anxiety, and fear. Do I know what's right for *me*? That is my only business. Let me work with that before I try to solve your problems for you.

If you understand the three kinds of business enough to stay in your own business, it could free your life in a way that you can't even imagine. The next time you're feeling stress or discomfort, ask yourself whose business you're in mentally, and you may burst out laughing! That question can bring you back to yourself. And you may come to see that you've never really been present, that you've been mentally living in other people's business all your life. Just to notice that you're in someone else's business can bring you back to your own wonderful self.

And if you practice it for a while, you may come to see that *you* don't have any business either and that your life runs perfectly well on its own.

## Meeting Your Thoughts with Understanding

A thought is harmless unless we believe it. It is not our thoughts, but the *attachment* to our thoughts, that causes suffering. Attaching to a thought means believing that it's true, without inquiring. A belief is a thought that we've been attaching to, often for years.

Most people think that they *are* what their thoughts tell them they are. One day I noticed that I wasn't breathing – I was being breathed. Then I also noticed, to my amazement, that I wasn't thinking – that I was actually being thought and that thinking isn't personal. Do you wake up in the morning and say to yourself, "I think I won't think today"? It's too late: You're already thinking! Thoughts just appear. They come out of nothing and go back to nothing, like clouds moving across the empty sky. They come to pass, not to stay. There is no harm in them until we attach to them as if they were true.

No one has ever been able to control his thinking, although people may tell the story of how they have. I don't let go of my thoughts – I meet them with understanding. Then *they* let go of *me*.

Thoughts are like the breeze or the leaves on the trees or the raindrops falling. They appear like that, and through inquiry we can make friends with them. Would you argue with a raindrop? Raindrops aren't personal, and neither are thoughts. Once a painful concept is met with understanding, the next time it appears you may find it interesting. What used to be the nightmare is now just interesting. The next time it appears, you may find it funny. The next time, you may not even notice it. This is the power of loving what is.

## Putting the Mind on Paper

The first step in The Work is to write down your judgments about any stressful situation in your life, past, present, or future – about a person you dislike or a situation with someone who angers or frightens or saddens you. (Use a blank sheet of paper; or you can go to [www.thework.com](http://www.thework.com) to the section called "The Work," where you'll find a Judge-Your-Neighbor Worksheet to download and print.)

For thousands of years, we have been taught not to judge – but let's face it, we still do it all the time. The truth is that we all have judgments running in our heads. Through The Work we finally have permission to let those judgments

Speak out, or even scream out, on paper. We may find that even the most unpleasant thoughts can be met with unconditional love.

I encourage you to write about someone whom you haven't yet totally forgiven. This is the most powerful place to begin. Even if you've forgiven that person 99 percent, you aren't free until your forgiveness is complete. The 1 percent you haven't forgiven them is the very place where you're stuck in all your other relationships (including your relationship with yourself).

If you begin by pointing the finger of blame outward, then the focus isn't on you. You can just let loose and be uncensored. We're often quite sure about what other people need to do, how they should live, whom they should be with. We have 20/20 vision about others, but not about ourselves.

When you do The Work, you see who you are by seeing who you think other people are. Eventually you come to see that everything outside you is a reflection of your own thinking. You are the storyteller, the projector of all stories, and the world is the projected image of your thoughts.

Since the beginning of time, people have been trying to change the world so that they can be happy. This hasn't ever worked, because it approaches the problem backward. What The Work gives us is a way to change the projector – mind – rather than the projected. It's like when there's a piece of lint on a projector's lens. We think there's a flaw on the screen, and we try to change this person and that person, whomever the flaw appears to be on next. But it's futile to try to change the projected images. Once we realize where the lint is, we can clear the lens itself. This is the end of suffering, and the beginning of a little joy in paradise.

## **How to Write on the Worksheet**

I invite you to be judgmental, harsh, childish, and petty. Write with the spontaneity of a child who is sad, angry, confused, or frightened. Don't try to be wise, spiritual, or kind. This is the time to be totally honest and uncensored about how you feel. Allow your feelings to express themselves, without any fear of consequences or any threat of punishment.

On the next page, you'll find an example of a completed Judge-Your-Neighbor Worksheet. I have written about my second husband, Paul, in this example (included here with his permission); these are the kinds of thoughts that I used to have about him before my life changed. As you read, you're invited to replace Paul's name with the appropriate name in your life.

1. Who angers, confuses, saddens, or disappoints you, and why? What is it about them that you don't like?

I am angry at Paul because he doesn't listen to me. I'm angry at Paul because he doesn't appreciate me. I don't like Paul because he argues with everything I say.

2. How do you want them to change? What do you want them to do?

I want Paul to give me his full attention. I want Paul to love me completely. I want Paul to agree with me. I want Paul to get more exercise.

3. What is it that they should or shouldn't do, be, think, or feel? What advice could you offer?

Paul shouldn't watch so much television. Paul should stop smoking. Paul should tell me that he loves me. He shouldn't ignore me.

4. What do they need to do in order for you to be happy?

I need Paul to listen to me. I need Paul to stop lying to me. I need Paul to share his feelings and be emotionally available. I need Paul to be gentle and kind and patient.

5. What do you think of them? Make a list. (Remember, be petty and judgmental.)

Paul is dishonest. Paul is reckless. Paul is childish. He thinks he doesn't have to follow the rules. Paul is uncaring and unavailable. Paul is irresponsible.

6. What is it that you don't want to experience with that person again?

I don't ever want to live with Paul if he doesn't change. I don't ever want to argue with Paul again. I don't ever want to be lied to by Paul again.

### **Inquiry: The Four Questions and Turnaround**

1. Is it true?

2. Can you absolutely know that it's true?

3. How do you react, what happens, when you believe that thought?

4. Who would you be without the thought?

*and*

Turn it around, then find at least three genuine, specific examples of how the turnaround is true in your life.

Now, using the four questions, let's investigate the first statement from number 1 on the example: *Paul doesn't listen to me*. As you read along, think of someone you haven't totally forgiven yet.

**1. Is it true?** Ask yourself, "Is it true that Paul doesn't listen to me?" Be still. If you really want to know the truth, the answer will rise to meet the question. Let the mind ask the question, and wait for the answer that surfaces.

**2. Can you absolutely know that it's true?** Consider these questions: "Can I absolutely know that it's true that Paul doesn't listen to me? Can I ever really know when someone is listening or not? Am I sometimes listening even when I appear not to be?"

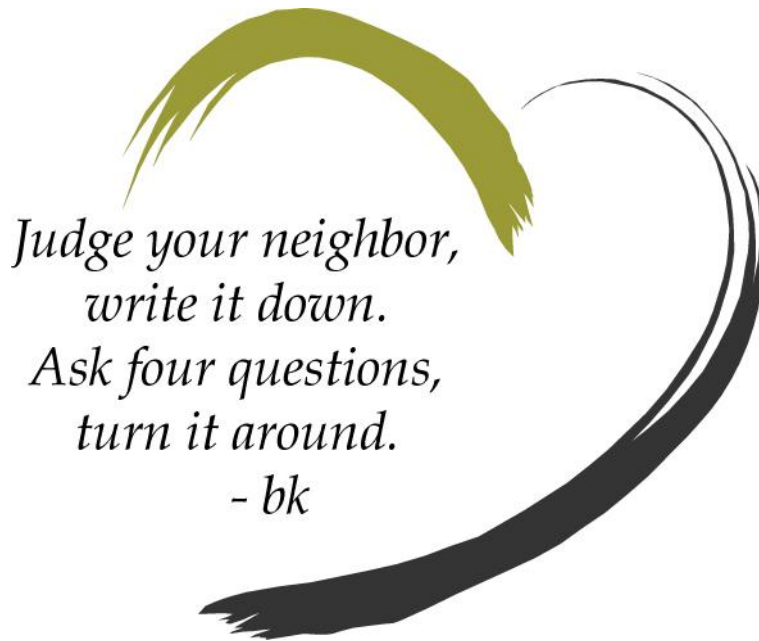
**3. How do you react, what happens, when you believe that thought?** How do you react when you believe that Paul doesn't listen to you? How do you treat him? Make a list. For example: "I give him 'the look.' I interrupt him. I punish him by not paying attention to him. I start talking faster and louder, and I try to force him to listen." Continue making your list as you go inside, and see how you treat yourself in that situation and how that feels. "I shut down. I isolate myself. I eat and sleep a lot, and I watch television for days. I feel depressed and lonely." Notice all the effects of believing the thought *Paul doesn't listen to me*.

**4. Who would you be without the thought?** Now consider who you would be without the thought *Paul doesn't listen to me*. Who would you be if you weren't even capable of thinking that thought? Close your eyes and imagine Paul not listening to you. Imagine you don't have the thought that Paul doesn't listen (or that he even *should* listen). Take your time. Notice what is revealed to you. What do you see? How does that feel?

**Turn it around.** The original statement, *Paul doesn't listen to me*, when turned around, could become "I don't listen to Paul." Is that as true or truer for you? When is it that you do not listen to Paul? Are you listening to Paul when you're thinking about him not listening to you? Find at least three genuine, specific examples of how this turnaround is true in your life.

Another turnaround is "I don't listen to myself." A third is "Paul does listen to me." For each turnaround you discover, find at least three genuine, specific examples of how the turnaround is true in your life.

After sitting with the turnarounds, you would continue a typical inquiry with the next statement written in number 1 on the Worksheet – *Paul doesn't appreciate me* – and then with every other statement on the Worksheet.



### Your Turn: The Worksheet

Now you know enough to try out The Work. First you'll put your thoughts on paper. Simply pick a person or situation and write, using short, simple sentences. Remember to *point the finger of blame or judgment outward*. You may write from your present position or from your point of view as a five-year-old or twenty-five-year-old. Please do *not* write about yourself yet.

**1) Who angers, confuses, saddens, or disappoints you, and why? What is it about them that you don't like?** (Remember: Be harsh, childish, and petty.) I don't like (I am angry at, or saddened, frightened, confused, etc., by) (name) because \_\_\_\_\_ .

**2) How do you want them to change? What do you want them to do?** I want (name) to \_\_\_\_\_ .

**3) What is it that they should or shouldn't do, be, think, or feel? What advice could you offer?** (Name) should (shouldn't) \_\_\_\_\_ .

**4) What do they need to do in order for you to be happy?** (Pretend it's your birthday and you can have anything you want. Go for it!) I need (name) to \_\_\_\_\_.

**5) What do you think of them? Make a list.** (Don't be rational or kind.) (Name) is \_\_\_\_\_.

**6) What is it that you don't want to experience with that person again?** I don't ever want \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Your Turn: The Inquiry**

One by one, put each statement on the Judge-Your-Neighbor Worksheet up against the four questions, and then turn around the statement you're working on. (If you need help, refer back to the example in the section entitled "How to Write on the Worksheet.") Throughout this process, explore being open to possibilities beyond what you think you know. There's nothing more exciting than discovering the don't-know mind.

It's like diving. Keep asking the question and wait. Let the answer find you. I call it the heart meeting the mind: the gentler polarity of mind (which I call the heart) meeting the polarity that is confused because it hasn't been investigated. When the mind asks sincerely, the heart will respond. You may begin to experience revelations about yourself and your world, revelations that can transform your whole life, forever.

Look at the first statement that you have written on number 1 of your Worksheet. Now ask yourself the following questions:

#### **1. Is it true?**

Reality, for me, is what is true. The truth is whatever is in front of you, whatever is really happening. Whether you like it or not, it's raining now. "It shouldn't be raining" is just a thought. In reality, there is no such thing as a "should" or a "shouldn't." These are only thoughts that we impose onto reality. Without the "should" and "shouldn't," we can see reality as it is, and this leaves us free to act efficiently, clearly, and sanely.

When asking the first question, take your time. The Work is about discovering what is true from the deepest part of yourself. You are listening for *your* answers now, not other people's, and not anything you have been taught. This can be very unsettling, because you're entering the unknown. As you continue to dive deeper, allow the truth within you to rise and meet the question. Be gentle as you give yourself to inquiry. Let this experience have you completely.

## **2. Can you absolutely know that it's true?**

If your answer to question 1 is yes, ask yourself, "Can I absolutely know that it's true?" In many cases, the statement *appears* to be true. Of course it does. Your concepts are based on a lifetime of uninvestigated beliefs.

After I woke up to reality in 1986, I noticed many times how people, in conversations, the media, and books, made statements such as "There isn't enough understanding in the world," "There's too much violence," "We should love one another more." These were stories I used to believe, too. They seemed sensitive, kind, and caring, but as I heard them, I noticed that believing them caused stress and that they didn't feel peaceful inside me.

For instance, when I heard the story "People should be more loving," the question would arise in me "Can I absolutely know that that's true? Can I really know for myself, within myself, that people should be more loving? Even if the whole world tells me so, is it really true?" And to my amazement, when I listened within myself, I saw that the world is what it is – nothing more, nothing less. Where reality is concerned, there is no "what should be." There is only "what is," just the way it is, right now. The truth is prior to every story. And every story, prior to investigation, prevents us from seeing what's true.

Now I could finally inquire of every potentially uncomfortable story, "Can I absolutely know that it's true?" And the answer, like the question, was an experience: No. I would stand rooted in that answer – solitary, peaceful, free.

How could no be the right answer? Everyone I knew, and all the books, said that the answer should be yes. But I came to see that the truth is itself and will not be dictated to by anyone. In the presence of that inner no, I came to see that the world is always as it should be, whether I opposed it or not. And I came to embrace reality with all my heart. I love the world, without any conditions.

If your answer is still yes, good. If you think that you can absolutely know that that's true, it's always fine to move on to question 3.

## **3. How do you react, what happens, when you believe that thought?**

With this question, we begin to notice internal cause and effect. You can see that when you believe the thought, there is an uneasy feeling, a disturbance that can range from mild discomfort to fear or panic.

After the four questions found me, I would notice thoughts like "People should be more loving," and I would see that they caused a feeling of uneasiness. I noticed that prior to the thought, there was peace. My mind was quiet and serene. This is who I am without my story. Then, in the stillness of awareness, I began to notice the feelings that came from believing or attaching to the thought. And in the stillness, I could see that if I were to believe the thought, the result would be a feeling of unease and sadness. When I asked, "How do I react when I

believe the thought that people should be more loving?" I saw that not only did I have an uncomfortable feeling (this was obvious), but I also reacted with mental pictures to prove that the thought was true. I flew off into a world that didn't exist. I reacted by living in a stressed body, seeing everything through fearful eyes, a sleepwalker, someone in an endless nightmare. The remedy was simply to investigate.

I love question 3. Once you answer it for yourself, once you see the cause and effect of a thought, all your suffering begins to unravel.

#### **4. Who would you be without the thought?**

This is a very powerful question. Picture yourself standing in the presence of the person you have written about when they're doing what you think they shouldn't be doing. Now, just for a minute or two, close your eyes, and imagine who you would be if you couldn't think this thought. How would your life be different in the same situation without this thought? Keep your eyes closed and watch them without your story. What do you see? How do you feel about them without the story? Which do you prefer – with or without your story? Which feels kinder? Which feels more peaceful?

For many people, life without their story is literally unimaginable. They have no reference for it. So "I don't know" is a common answer to this question. Other people answer by saying, "I'd be free," "I'd be peaceful," "I'd be a more loving person." You could also say, "I'd be clear enough to understand the situation and act efficiently." Without our stories, we are not only able to act clearly and fearlessly; we are also a friend, a listener. We are people living happy lives. We are appreciation and gratitude that have become as natural as breath itself. Happiness is the natural state for someone who knows that there's nothing to know and that we already have everything we need, right here now.

#### **Turn it around.**

To do the turnaround, rewrite your statement. First, write it as if it were written about you. Where you have written someone's name, put yourself. Instead of "he" or "she," put "I." For example, "Paul doesn't appreciate me" turns around to "I don't appreciate Paul" and "I don't appreciate myself." Another type is a 180-degree turnaround to the extreme opposite: "Paul does appreciate me." For each turnaround, find at least three genuine, specific examples of how the turnaround is true in your life. This is not about blaming yourself or feeling guilty. It's about discovering alternatives that can bring you peace.

The turnaround is a very powerful part of The Work. As long as you think that the cause of your problem is "out there" – as long as you think that anyone

or anything else is responsible for your suffering – the situation is hopeless. It means that you are forever in the role of the victim, that you're suffering in paradise. So bring the truth home to yourself and begin to set yourself free. Inquiry combined with the turnaround is the fast track to self-realization.

### **The Turnaround for Number 6**

The turnaround for statement number 6 on the Judge-Your-Neighbor Worksheet is a bit different from the others. We change "I don't ever want to..." to "I am willing to..." and "I look forward to..." For example, "I don't ever want to argue with Paul again" turns around to "I am willing to argue with Paul again" and "I look forward to arguing with Paul again."

This turnaround is about embracing all of life. Saying – and meaning – "I am willing to..." creates openness, creativity, and flexibility. Any resistance that you may have is softened, allowing you to lighten up rather than keep hopelessly applying willpower or force to eradicate the situation from your life. Saying and meaning "I look forward to..." actively opens you to life as it unfolds.

It's good to acknowledge that the same feelings or situation may happen again, if only in your thoughts. When you realize that suffering and discomfort are the call to inquiry, you may actually begin to look forward to uncomfortable feelings. You may even experience them as friends coming to show you what you have not yet investigated thoroughly enough. It's no longer necessary to wait for people or situations to change in order to experience peace and harmony. The Work is the direct way to orchestrate your own happiness.

## Questions and Answers

*Q I have a hard time writing about others. Can I write about myself?*

**A** If you want to know yourself, I suggest you write about someone else. Point The Work outward in the beginning, and you may come to see that everything outside you is a direct reflection of your thinking. It is all about you. Most of us have been pointing our criticism and judgments at ourselves for years, and it hasn't solved anything yet. Judging someone else, inquiring, and turning it around is the fast path to understanding and self-realization.

*Q How can you say that reality is good? What about war, rape, poverty, violence, and child abuse? Are you condoning them?*

**A** How could I condone them? I simply notice that if I believe they shouldn't exist when they do exist, I suffer. Can I just end the war in me? Can I stop raping myself and others with my abusive thoughts and actions? If not, I'm continuing in myself the very thing I want to end in the world. I start with ending my own suffering, my own war. This is a life's work.

*Q So what you're saying is that I should just accept reality as it is and not argue with it. Is that right?*

**A** The Work doesn't say what anyone should or shouldn't do. We simply ask, "What is the effect of arguing with reality? How does it feel?" This Work explores the cause and effect of attaching to painful thoughts, and in that investigation we find our freedom. To simply say that we shouldn't argue with reality just adds another story, another philosophy or religion. It hasn't ever worked.

*Q Loving what is sounds like never wanting anything. Isn't it more interesting to want things?*

**A** My experience is that I do want something all the time: What I want is what is. It's not only interesting, it's ecstatic! When I want what I have, thought and action aren't separate; they move as one, without conflict. If you find anything lacking, ever, write down your thought and inquire. I find that life never falls short and doesn't require a future. Everything I need is always supplied, and I don't have to do anything for it. There is nothing more exciting than loving what is.

*Q What if I don't have a problem with people? Can I write about things, like my body?*

**A** Yes. Do The Work on any subject that is stressful. As you become familiar with the four questions and the turnaround, you may choose subjects such as the body, disease, career, or even God. Then experiment with using the term "my thinking" in place of the subject when you do the turnarounds.

Example: “My body should be strong and healthy” becomes “My thinking should be strong and healthy.”

Isn't that what you really want – a balanced, healthy mind? Has a sick body ever been a problem, or is it your thinking about the body that causes the problem? Investigate. Let your doctor take care of your body as you take care of your thinking. I have a friend who can't move his body, and he is loving life. Freedom doesn't require a healthy body. Free your mind.

*Q How can I learn to forgive someone who hurt me very badly?*

**A** Judge your enemy, write it down, ask four questions, turn it around. See for yourself that forgiveness means discovering that what you thought happened didn't. Until you can see that there's nothing to forgive, you haven't really forgiven. No one has ever hurt anyone. No one has ever done anything terrible. There's nothing terrible except your uninvestigated thoughts about what happened. So whenever you suffer: Inquire, look at the thoughts you're thinking, and set yourself free. Be a child. Start from the mind that knows nothing. Take your ignorance all the way to freedom.

*Q Is inquiry a process of thinking? If not, what is it?*

**A** Inquiry appears to be a process of thinking, but actually it's a way to undo thinking. Thoughts lose their power over us when we realize that they simply appear in the mind. They're not personal. Through The Work, instead of escaping or suppressing our thoughts, we learn to meet them with open arms.

## **“Katie-isms”**

When you argue with reality, you lose – but only 100% of the time.

Personalities don't love – they want something.

If I had a prayer, it would be this: “God spare me from the desire for love, approval, or appreciation. Amen.”

Don't pretend yourself beyond your own evolution.

An unquestioned mind is the only suffering.

You either believe what you think or you question it. There's no other choice.

No one can hurt me – that's my job.

The worst thing that has ever happened is an uninvestigated thought.

Sanity doesn't suffer, ever.

If I think you're my problem, I'm insane.

I don't let go of my concepts – I question them. Then *they* let go of *me*.

You move totally away from reality when you believe that there is a legitimate reason to suffer.

Reality is always kinder than the story we tell about it.

I'm very clear that the whole world loves me. I just don't expect them to realize it yet.

There are no physical problems – only mental ones.

Reality is God, because it rules.

When I am perfectly clear, what is is what I want.

Arguing with reality is like trying to teach a cat to bark – hopeless.

How do I know that I don't need what I want? I don't have it.

Forgiveness is realizing that what you thought happened, didn't.

Everything happens *for* me, not *to* me.

Gratitude is what we are without a story.

## Comments on *Loving What Is*

“Good lord! Where did Byron Katie come from? She’s the real McCoy. Her Work is amazingly effective – a simple, straightforward antidote to the suffering we unnecessarily create for ourselves. She asks us to believe nothing, but provides a surprisingly effective and simple way to cut through the tangle of delusions we wrap ourselves in.”

- David Chadwick, author of *Crooked Cucumber*

“Suppose you could find a simple way to embrace your life with joy, to stop arguing with reality, and to achieve serenity in the midst of chaos. That is what *Loving What Is* offers. It is no less than a revolutionary way to live your life. The question is: Are we brave enough to accept it?”

- Erica Jong, author of *Fear of Flying*

“If I could give one book to everyone in the world, this would be it. I’m an ordained Christian minister, and I’d give out this book before the Bible itself. It is literally the key to end all suffering. The information it contains can replace all self-help books. It’s that transformational.”

- J.B., Nemaquin, PA (on *Amazon.com*)

“I am fifty-two years old, and I’m not someone who is trying to work out my relationship with other races, or explore why a spouse was unfaithful to me. I’m a disabled vet; for over thirty years I’ve been diagnosed with ‘paranoid schizophrenia.’

One day a few weeks ago, my friend Fred stopped by. He brought over a book called *Loving What Is*. ‘Let’s try this,’ he said. I went through the processes as Fred facilitated. ‘Who would you be without that thought?’ I sank down into what it would be like to be without that thought, someone simply enjoying my relationships with other people, exchanging ideas, passing time. It felt... free.

In twenty minutes, years of irascibility, anger, and confusion... just went away.

I used to sit in Rap Groups when the Vet Centers first came out and I watched Vets struggle with the horrors that had changed their lives so dramatically. Today, I wish someone had been sitting there like my buddy Fred, with *Loving What Is* and a piece of paper with four questions scribbled on it. Who might it have helped? I can only wonder. Three decades later, I know it helped me. I only have one thing to say to other Vets about that: For those who fought for freedom, it's your time to be free. Do The Work.”

- J.M.L., Reno, NV

## **The School for The Work**

This is the ultimate inner adventure. Unlike every other school on earth, this one isn't for learning – it's for unlearning. You'll spend nine days losing the fear-based stories you've innocently clung to all your life. The curriculum at the School is a living, evolving process, changing with the needs of the participants and on the basis of past students' experiences. Each exercise is led directly by Katie and is tailored to meet the needs of the participants attending – no two Schools are the same. And after nine days with Katie, you won't be either. "Once the four questions are alive inside you," Katie says, "your mind becomes clear, and therefore the world you project becomes clear. This is more radical than anyone can possibly imagine."

## **Weekend Workshops**

The Weekend Workshops are an opportunity to experience the power of the School in a two-day program. Katie leads participants through some of her most powerful exercises, designed to mirror the transformation she went through after awakening to reality. By working on issues such as gender, body image, addiction, money, and relationships, you'll discover deeper levels of freedom. The workshops have been called "amazing," "revelatory," and "the most powerful weekend of my life."

## **The Work Store**

A popular and enjoyable way to deepen one's understanding of The Work is to listen to Katie as she facilitates others. Her fluidity, her balance of firmness and compassion, and her trademark sense of humor all make for great entertainment and powerful realizations. The Work Store offers audios and videos of Katie expertly facilitating audience members on topics such as sex, money, parents, relationships, work, and much more.

## **The Work on the Internet**

Katie and The Work are always accessible at [www.thework.com](http://www.thework.com). When you visit the website, you'll be able to watch video clips of Katie doing The Work, view Katie's calendar of events, enroll in an upcoming Nine-day School for The Work, learn about the Institute for The Work, download Worksheets, listen to archived radio interviews, subscribe to the BKI Newsletter, and shop in the online store. A

wealth of information and resources about Katie and The Work is available at [www.thework.com](http://www.thework.com).

### **For School Graduates: The Institute for The Work**

Join the Institute for The Work of Byron Katie and continue to deepen your experience of The Work. The Institute offers the only official Facilitator Certification Program for The Work of Byron Katie, and it also gives School graduates a way of staying immersed in The Work through The Work Community. Whether you choose to enroll in the Facilitator Certification Program or not, The Work community forums are an exciting, interactive hub where members from around the world connect to discuss relevant issues and learn about The Work from each other. Here you can view and discuss Katie’s “Topic of the Month,” and you can chat about topics such as relationships, parenting, addiction, and whatever else you want to bring to the forums. You can also have the opportunity to do The Work daily in round robin, with a new partner every month. Go to [www.instituteforthework.com](http://www.instituteforthework.com).



### **Turnaround House for The Work**

Turnaround House is the twenty-eight-day residential program that confronts the ultimate addiction, the only addiction: the mind’s addiction to the unquestioned thoughts that cause all the suffering and internal violence in the world. It is focused on The Work of Byron Katie, a remarkably simple, powerful process that millions of people – addicts, veterans, prisoners, students, homemakers, executives, politicians, mental health professionals, people from all walks of life – have used to overcome deep-seated self-defeating behaviors. Turnaround House is the only facility approved by Byron Katie to use The Work in its addiction and emotional rehabilitation programs. In an eco-friendly, supportive, and safe place, Byron Katie with her staff of certified facilitators guides you through a program that is specifically designed to radically turn your life around.



## The Four Questions

Here are the four questions again. Some people print them out on a card and carry them close at hand.

1. Is it true?
2. Can you absolutely know that it's true?
3. How do you react, what happens, when you believe that thought?
4. Who would you be without the thought?

Turn the statement around, then find at least three genuine, specific examples of how that is true in your life.

Contributions to The Work Foundation supporting The Work are gratefully appreciated. Through your gift, others will have the opportunity to learn this transformational practice. You can make a contribution by mail to The Work Foundation, P.O. Box 20310, Santa Barbara, CA 93120; on our website, [www.thework.com](http://www.thework.com); or by calling Byron Katie International at 888.98.KATIE or 1.805.444.5799.

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“Byron Katie’s Work is a great blessing for our planet.

The root cause of suffering is identification with our thoughts, the 'stories' that are **continuously** running through our minds. The Work acts like a razor-sharp sword that cuts through that illusion and enables you to know for yourself the timeless essence of your being. In *Loving What Is*, you have the key. Now use it.”

— Eckhart Tolle, author of *The Power of Now*



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This booklet is excerpted from *Loving What Is*, published by Harmony Books. *Loving What Is* is available wherever books are sold, and through [www.thework.com](http://www.thework.com).