INNER BONDING®
The Power to Heal Yourself

A FREE 7-DAY COURSE FROM DR. MARGARET PAUL & DR. ERIKA CHOPICH

The Inner Bonding® 7-Day Course

A Practical Introduction to Loving Yourself, Healing Old Patterns and Creating More Fulfilling Relationships

Small shifts can make a big difference.
Your journey to a kinder, wiser you starts here.



Margaret Paul, PhD & Erika Chopich, PhD
CO-CREATORS OF INNER BONDING®

A MORE LOVING YOU. A MORE CONNECTED WORLD.

WELCOME TO INNER BONDING

Welcome to Inner Bonding

I'm so glad you're here.

More than 40 years ago, we co-created Inner Bonding because we saw a need for something that went beyond understanding why we struggle.

In our many decades of working with individuals and couples, we've seen how valuable insight can be. Understanding where our fears, beliefs and relationship patterns come from can be an important part of healing.

But there is another question that so many people eventually ask:

> *"I understand why I do this. But how do I actually change it?"*

That question is at the heart of Inner Bonding.

We developed the Six-Step Inner Bonding process to give people a practical pathway for learning how to heal the underlying self-abandonment that creates so much pain, and how to develop a loving relationship with themselves.

In the seven lessons that follow, we'll introduce you to that process step by step.

You have access to the entire course now, so you can move through it at your own pace. You may want to spend time with each lesson and practice what you're learning before continuing, or you may prefer to read through all seven lessons first and then return to them.

Either way, we encourage you not to approach Inner Bonding as something you simply need to understand.

The real power of Inner Bonding comes from practicing it.

With love,

Dr. Margaret and Dr. Erika

READY TO GO DEEPER?

If you'd like help turning these ideas into a daily practice, *Love Yourself: The 30-Day Inner Bonding Experience* is the place I recommend beginning.

EXPLORE LOVE YOURSELF →

Or explore all the ways to learn Inner Bonding →

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MEET THE CO-CREATORS OF INNER BONDING

Dr. Margaret Paul & Dr. Erika Chopich

Two psychologists. More than four decades of experience developing and teaching a different way to heal.

When Dr. Margaret Paul and Dr. Erika Chopich met in the late 1980s, they brought together two very different bodies of experience and wisdom.

Margaret had already spent 17 years in traditional psychotherapy, working extensively with individuals and couples. She had become deeply skilled at helping people understand the roots of their pain, yet she kept seeing the same challenge: insight alone didn't help people change the patterns that were causing them pain.

Erika came to psychology with extensive experience in medicine, crisis care and public health. She had worked as a firefighter, paramedic, surgical and cardiac intensive-care technician, and administrator of the LA Free Clinic before earning her PhD in psychology. Her work had also led her deeply into the emotional and spiritual dimensions of healing, particularly the inner child and our connection to a higher source of love and wisdom.

When they began sharing their work, they discovered that each had developed an important part of what the other had been searching for.

Margaret brought her work around emotional responsibility and intention. Erika brought her understanding of the inner child and spiritual guidance. Together, they created Inner Bonding®.

Over the decades that followed, Margaret and Erika continued developing and refining Inner Bonding into the Six-Step process you're about to learn. They co-authored bestselling books including *Healing Your Aloneness*, taught workshops and seminars, worked with thousands of individuals and couples, and appeared on television together, including *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. Their books and teachings have reached people around the world, and Inner Bonding has now been practiced by hundreds of thousands of people.

More Than 40 Years Later, Their Work Continues

Today, Inner Bonding is far more than the work of two psychologists. It has grown into a global body of teachings, books, courses, workshops and trained facilitators built around one central idea:

> *Healing isn't only about understanding why you hurt. It's about learning what to do with that pain, and how to become a loving, responsible adult to yourself.*

That is the process Margaret and Erika will introduce you to in the seven lessons ahead.

LESSON 1

Definitions: Beginning to Understand the Six-Step Roadmap of Inner Bonding®

LESSON 1 OF DR. MARGARET PAUL'S AND DR. ERIKA CHOPICH'S
FREE COURSE ON THE SIX STEPS OF INNER BONDING®



Rick came to see me (Dr. Margaret) because, for the fourth time in the last two years, he thought he had found his mate, only to have her leave him after a few months. He had gone to numerous different therapists and workshops, yet here he was repeating this pattern again. Rick had discovered one of my books on the Inner Bonding process and had read it from cover to cover in one night. He came in two days later, so excited because he realized he had discovered the cause of his difficulties. "I have been making my girlfriends responsible for my feelings. When they feel my neediness, they leave. I knew I was doing it, but I didn't know how not to do it. Now I get it from reading your book and I just want a session to solidify my learning."

We spent the session practicing the Inner Bonding process. I didn't hear from Rick again until a year later, when he called to tell me he was getting married. "Inner Bonding has changed my life," he told me. "I am so grateful to have found this process and grateful that I can practice it on my own. It really works! I just want to say 'Thanks!'"

I was delighted.

Welcome to our introductory course on the Six Steps of Inner Bonding. This course will give you all the basics of the Inner Bonding process. Inner Bonding is a process which, when practiced consistently, heals fear, limiting beliefs, anger, shame, guilt, aloneness, depression, anxiety, addictive behavior, and relationship problems. Inner Bonding provides you with the skills to take loving care of yourself, share your love with others, and be empowered to take full responsibility for all your own feelings and behavior.

- Do you know how to stay centered, open-hearted and powerful when someone is yelling at you or blaming you?
- Do you know how to be immune to criticism, judgment and rejection?
- Do you know how to not lose yourself in the face of others' controlling, engulfing, or smothering behavior?
- Are you stuck in The Resistance Syndrome, wanting to make changes but not following through, with issues like weight, exercise, lateness, spending, chores, clutter?
- Do you know how to remain reliably loving with yourself and others, regardless of how others are behaving?
- Are you tired of reading books, attending workshops and seminars, trying therapies that do not bring the lasting results you hoped for?

Inner Bonding is a process that, day by day, moves you toward personal power and the discovery and fulfillment of your passion and purpose. It gives you the tools to create peace and joy, every day of your life. It does not matter how big a hole you have dug for yourself personally or in your relationship, Inner Bonding gives you the tools to dig yourself out. You will notice results immediately, as soon as you start to practice the process. It is a process that *always works*, provided you are practicing it consistently.

Let's start by defining six terms you'll need to master before using the Six Steps.

Spiritual Guidance

Inner Bonding is a spiritually based, not religiously based, healing pathway. You do not have to believe in God to practice Inner Bonding, but you do need to learn how to access the guidance that is available to you, whether you experience this as outside yourself or within yourself, or as the highest part of yourself. Learning to access this higher guidance is part of the practice of Inner Bonding.

When we use the term "God" we are referring to the energy of unconditional love, truth, wisdom, peace and joy that is available to all of us in the unseen spiritual realm when we learn to access it. "God" refers to your personal experience of the Divine – a person, a light, a presence, an energy, nature. We use the terms "God", "Spirit" and "Higher Power" interchangeably. When we use the term "spiritual guidance" we are referring to information coming *through* your mind (rather than *from* your mind), from your personal experience of God, Goddess, Jesus, Buddha, a guardian angel, a spirit guide, a mentor, a director, a teacher, a saint, a beloved deceased relative or pet, an imaginary being, a light, a presence, an energy, or the highest part of yourself.

Intent

Our *intent* is what governs how we think, feel and behave. Our intent is a powerful and creative force - the essence of free will. Your intent is your deepest desire, your primary motive or goal, your highest priority *in any given moment*. There are only two primary intents:

- To learn about loving yourself and others, even in the face of fear and pain.
- To protect yourself from fear and pain with addictive, controlling behavior and thereby avoid responsibility for your feelings and actions.

When your intent is to learn to love, you are willing to face your fears and feel your painful feelings in order to compassionately nurture them, or understand how you may be creating them and discover what you need to do differently. The deeper purpose here is to become a more loving human being, starting with yourself. When you open to learning about your own fears and beliefs and about what brings you joy, you move toward love. When the intent is to learn, learning about love becomes more important than protecting against fear. When your intent is to learn to love, your deepest desire is to find your safety, peace, lovability and worth through an internal connection with the unconditional love that is available on the spiritual level.

When your intent is to protect yourself from fear and pain, and avoid responsibility for your feelings, your deepest desire is to find your safety, peace, lovability and worth through externals, such as attention, approval, sex, substances, things and activities. When you believe that others are responsible for how you feel, you try to control them in order to feel safe and worthy.

In every moment, each one of us chooses our intent - either to attempt to feel externally safe by controlling others and our own feelings, or to create inner safety by learning about loving ourselves and others. While the choices that others make may influence you, no one but you has control over your intent. Not even a Higher Power can control your intent, since that would negate your free will. In each moment, you choose what is most important to you, and in each moment you have an opportunity to change your mind.

There is an important distinction between the *intent to know* and the *intent to learn*. The intent to know comes from the part of us that wants to know what to do and how to do it "right" in order to have control over getting what we may want - attention, approval and so on. People can even get addicted to gathering information; they think it will give them more control. Having the intent to learn means that you do not have to know what to do. You only need to learn how to open to a higher source of guidance, and you will be directed. Guidance in what is loving to ourselves and others is always available to us when we know how to access it. Part of the practice of Inner Bonding is learning how to access this powerful and wise guidance.

Core Self

Our core Self is our true Self or essence – the part of our soul that exists within our body. It is helpful to imagine the core Self as a bright and shining child, the natural light within that is an individualized expression of Divine Love. This aspect of ourselves is actually ageless - it always has been and it always will be, and it evolves through our life experiences. Our core Self contains our unique gifts and talents, our natural wisdom and intuition, our curiosity and sense of wonder, our playfulness and spontaneity, and our ability to love and connect with others. This is an unwounded aspect of the soul. It can never be harmed. It was never touched by any abuse we suffered. Instead, the core Self was hidden away. It waits to be retrieved through a healing process. Because of this unbroken part in each of us, healing can occur. Healing is apparent when you have retrieved and deeply know and value this aspect of yourself, who you really are - a child of the unconditional love that is God. Practicing Inner Bonding leads to the reclaiming of the core Self.

When I use the term "inner child," I am referring to the core Self. The core Self often communicates with us through our feelings.

Your inner child/core Self is an infallible inner guidance system. It lets you know through your feelings what is good or bad for you, right or wrong for you. The feelings you may experience coming naturally from the core Self are the joy, peace and love that, as an adult, are the result of being loving to yourself and others. The core Self also has the natural feelings of sadness and sorrow (over people's inhumanity to each other, for example), loneliness (when you have no one with whom to share love), heartache and heartbreak (over others' mean and rejecting behavior and various kinds of loss), grief (over loss), helplessness (over others' choices), outrage (over injustice), as well as fear of real and present danger - the fight or flight response. These core feelings of life need to be attended to and nurtured with deep compassion.

The feelings that result from the false beliefs and unloving behavior of the wounded self – as opposed to the feelings that come from life - are anxiety, depression, anger, hurt, aloneness, neediness, emptiness, misery, guilt, shame, fear (of a perceived rather than an actual threat), and so on. These feelings are letting you know that you are off track in your thinking and behavior, and need to be explored through the Inner Bonding process.

All of your feelings are a form of inner guidance, either letting you know whether what you are doing and thinking is right or wrong for you, or letting you know that you need to compassionately nurture yourself. They let you know whether someone is open or closed, dangerous or safe. The tightness in your stomach in reaction to someone's threatening anger tells you something important, as is the safety you feel when someone is being truly giving. Your anxiety, anger or depression may be telling you that you are rejecting and abandoning yourself, while your peace and joy let you know that you are being loving to yourself. Trusting these feelings and discovering what they are telling you will help you take personal responsibility for your own feelings.

Wounded Self

It is helpful to imagine the wounded self as a wounded child who learned to be an unloving adult. Our wounded self is often a mirror image of one or both of our parents. Even though we may have said, "I'll never be like that," our wounded self may have learned to be just like our parents. Another word for our wounded self is 'ego.'

Unlike the core Self, which is a feeling aspect of us, the wounded self is a thought aspect of us. It is housed in a part of the lower brain called the amygdala. The amygdala is the seat of our flight or fight stress response and houses our false beliefs that often trigger the stress response.

Your wounded self is the aspect that carries the fears, false beliefs and controlling behavior that result from not getting the love you needed as a child, and from physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse or neglect. While these false beliefs and self-abandoning behaviors cause us pain in our adult lives, they were the only way we could feel safe when we were children. They were our survival mechanisms.

Your wounded self can be any age in any given moment, depending upon how old you were when you learned a particular false belief, addiction or way to control.

The wounded self is the aspect of you that may use food, drugs or alcohol to numb out fear, loneliness, heartbreak and helplessness over others and over situations. In addition, the wounded self always fears being rejected/abandoned, on the one hand, and being engulfed/smothered/controlled on the other hand. In other words, the wounded self fears loss of other and loss of self, because it does not know how to manage rejection without taking it personally, or to set appropriate limits against engulfment. Through anger, blame, resistance, compliance or withdrawal, the wounded self hopes to ward off and control that which it fears. All the parts of the wounded self need healing, and they can be healed only through compassion, acceptance, truth and unconditional love.

Almost any activity can be used as a protection against your pain. It depends on your intent. For example, meditation can be used as a way to connect with a spiritual source and learn about loving, or it can be used to bliss out and avoid responsibility for your feelings. There are many people who have meditated for years without improving the quality of their lives because they have used meditation as a way to avoid pain rather than as a way to learn. Likewise, reading the Bible can be a way to help you open your heart and move into your lovingness and your desire to learn, or it can be used as an anesthetic, an addiction, a way to avoid yourself and your fear. When the Bible is used this way, it often becomes a tool to control others and God, to make God love you more or reward you. Neither the ancient Hebrews nor Jesus intended this sacred text to be used to manipulate and control.

The intent to protect closes the heart to avoid the core painful feelings of life - loneliness, heartache, heartbreak, grief, sorrow and helplessness over others. But closing the heart to protect against these painful feelings leaves you feeling alone inside and this terrible aloneness then drives your wounded self to try to have control over getting love to stop the painful feelings of aloneness and emptiness. You might try to have control over getting love with criticism, blame, silence, giving in and giving yourself up. You might avoid pain through withdrawal, resistance, numbing out with food, drugs, alcohol, TV, gambling, sex and so on. The more you try to have control over getting love and avoiding pain, the worse you feel and the more you do it to try to feel better. Can you see what a vicious circle is created by self-rejection and self-abandonment?

One of the major false beliefs of the wounded self is that we, as separate egos, cut off from a Higher Power, can have power over ourselves and others. We can, to a certain extent, control others' behavior (although not their feelings), but not without violating ourselves and others. The wounded self is willing to violate the core Self and others to have this control. We violate ourselves through substance and process addictions (addictions to things and activities). We violate others through controlling behavior - anger, blame, judgment, compliance, withdrawal, violence. Whenever we violate ourselves or others, we are acting from our wounded self.

False Beliefs

Our false beliefs are the lies we have learned that cause us unnecessary fear, anxiety and pain. We know a belief is false when the belief itself causes us fear, anxiety, depression, shame, or other painful wounded feelings. We then protect against the fear, anxiety and pain caused by our false beliefs by sinking into our various addictions, our ways of controlling ourselves and others.

It is our wounded self that has absorbed our false beliefs, many of which we adopted when we were very small. A false belief is a belief about ourselves, others, the world, the universe or God/Higher Power that disempowers us and causes us to fear. Our false beliefs are the conclusions we drew about ourselves, others, God and the world as a result of our difficult childhood experiences. Our false, self-limiting beliefs cause much of our pain *and* much of our behavior that causes us pain. For example, if you concluded (falsely) from your childhood experiences that you are bad, unlovable or unworthy, then you will generally behave as if this were true. Your

resulting behavior, such as anger or withdrawal, which is geared to protect you from the rejection or engulfment that you fear, may actually result in others rejecting you - which is just what you expected. This brings you pain and reaffirms your false belief about being unlovable. In addition, the very act of choosing to protect rather than to love is an abandonment of your own core Self and further reaffirms your belief in your unworthiness. You end up feeling rejected by others because you are actually rejecting yourself without realizing it.

The Loving Adult

The loving Adult is the vehicle through which the Spirit of love and compassion that we experience as God thinks and acts. It is God's emissary, receiving love, truth and power from Spirit and then taking loving action in our highest good.

Many of us do not yet have a powerful, spiritually connected loving Adult who knows how to nurture and truly protect us and love others without trying to control them. Many of us do not have a loving Adult who knows how to set appropriate inner boundaries against our harming ourselves with addictive behavior. Nor do we have a loving Adult who knows how to set loving limits against harming or being harmed by others. This is because we may have had little or no role modeling on how to be a loving Adult. If your parents and their parents before did not know how to take loving care of themselves, they could not provide the necessary role modeling. That's why most people don't know how to take loving care of themselves in the face of other's anger, blame, or judgment.

You, however, have the opportunity to practice a healing process that creates a powerful loving Adult. If you do not have role models for loving behavior, do not despair. We can all learn to access our higher guidance as a role model for loving action. If you decide to pursue learning more about Inner Bonding, you can learn to access this guidance.

Until we are in the process of developing a loving Adult, the wounded self is in charge with the intent to control. There are two circumstances under which we may decide to open to learning. One is when we are in a lot of pain and realize that our protections are not working to bring us the safety, peace and joy that we want. The other is when we remember that we came here to this planet to love and evolve in our lovingness. The memory of our soul's mission is within our core Self. Spirit attempts to remind us each day of our soul's mission in the hope that we do not have to hit bottom to shift our intent. Those of us who learn to hear the voice of Spirit may then open to learning about loving.

Below is a very brief summary of the Six Steps of Inner Bonding.

STEP ONE	Become mindful of your feelings. Decide that you want 100% responsibility for the ways in which you may be causing your own pain, and for creating your own peace and joy.

STEP TWO	Choose the intent to learn to love yourself and others. Making this choice opens your heart, allows Divine Love in and moves you into your loving adult self.
STEP THREE	Compassionately dialogue with your core Self to discover how you are treating yourself or what you are telling yourself that is causing your wounded pain. Dialogue with your wounded self, exploring your false beliefs and the resulting behaviors that may be causing your pain. Explore your gifts and what brings joy to your core Self.
STEP FOUR	Dialogue with your spiritual Guidance, discovering the truth and loving action toward your self.
STEP FIVE	Take the loving action learned in Step Four.
STEP SIX	Evaluate the effectiveness of your loving action.

These steps are actually a powerful roadmap to healing the false beliefs that may be keeping you limited in your personal life and at work. The following lessons go into more detail about these steps.

LESSON 2

Step One of Inner Bonding

Choose to be aware of your feelings. Be willing to take responsibility for the ways in which you may be causing your own pain, for nurturing your core pain, and for creating your own peace and joy. Make use of somatic (body-based) therapies to access your feelings.

LESSON 2 OF DR. MARGARET PAUL'S AND DR. ERIKA CHOPICH'S
FREE COURSE ON THE SIX STEPS OF INNER BONDING®



You cannot begin a journey without the *willingness* to do so. Without the willingness to do whatever it takes to heal from your wounded self, you will not begin the journey of healing and evolving your soul. "Doing whatever it takes" means that you are ready and willing to feel, understand and take full responsibility for the whole range of your feelings - from fear, anger, hurt, shame, depression, loneliness, heartache and heartbreak, to safety, worth, lovability and joy. Willingness also means that you are ready to see how you are responsible for many of your own feelings by becoming aware of creating them with your thoughts, beliefs and actions.

Willingness means that you have decided to face your fears, your demons, the shadow side of yourself you hide from everyone. It also means you are ready to stop hiding *from yourself*; in other words, to stop being in denial about the pain you are in. Willingness means being ready to learn to *love* rather than *ignore or judge* your painful feelings. Willingness means that you are ready to ask for help from your higher Guidance - and from others who can bring Divine love through to you - to help you heal. It means that you have admitted to yourself that you cannot find the safety you seek without spiritual guidance, that you are ready to invite Spirit into your heart to nurture and guide you. It means that you have embraced the journey, the sacred privilege of learning about love.

When we tell people that they need to be willing to feel their pain, they often say to us, "What's the big deal about that? I feel my pain all the time." But there is a world of difference between feeling pain and having the *willingness* to feel it in order to learn from it. There is no healing in just feeling and expressing your pain. You can cry and rage forever, but if you are not willing to take responsibility for your pain, you will be stuck with it forever.

Sometimes people respond with, "Why? Why feel my pain? What's the point?" They believe that feeling pain - especially the pain of childhood - is a waste of time. "Why cry over spilled milk?" they argue. "Why can't we just try to find our joy and skip the pain?" The answer is: because your pain is telling you that you are off track in your thinking and behavior - that you are going the wrong way on the freeway of life. In addition, joy and pain are in the same place in the heart. When you put a lid on your pain and stuff it back inside, you put a lid on your joy. You choose to live an emotionally stunted life.

Pain is how your Inner Child lets you know that you may be behaving in ways that are not in your highest good, or that you need to compassionately nurture yourself and take loving action on your own behalf. Pain is also your teacher in other ways. For example, if you are sawing a piece of wood and you accidentally slice into your finger, the physical pain you experience tells you to stop sawing! The same is true of your emotional pain; it tells you to stop thinking or doing the thing that is causing you pain. If you do not pay attention to your emotional pain, you will go on thinking and acting in ways that are causing your pain. What's more, you will develop unhealthy, even harmful, mechanisms for *not* feeling your emotional pain: addictions to substances, people, manipulations, activities and things.

Ask yourself this. When you want to binge, eat sugar, drink alcohol, use drugs, smoke, blame, hit, appease or resist someone, run away, turn on the TV, gamble, shop, masturbate with pornography, demand sex from your partner or compulsively act out in any way, what are you feeling? Anxious, fearful, angry, depressed, shamed,

guilty, hurt, alone, rejected, helpless, lonely, heartbroken, sad, unworthy? Are you turning to your addictions to distract you from your painful feelings? Are you willing to open to learning from these feelings instead of blocking them with addictive behavior?

The idea of feeling your long-suppressed emotional pain may be very scary to you. The truth is, you can handle it when you learn how, which is a major part of the Inner Bonding process. Your fear of those feelings is based on beliefs about pain that you acquired in childhood, beliefs that are false now that you are an adult. Let's take a look at some of them.

False Beliefs about Pain

When we were very small, we could not handle our pain alone. Our little bodies were too small to endure the huge energy of physical and emotional pain, so unless we had loving parents to help us when we were in pain, we learned various ways to numb out and endure it. As adults with grown-up bodies, we can now handle the big energy of emotional pain, once we learn how to do it. Most of us don't realize this. Nor do we realize that we are no longer victims. We now have choices we didn't have when we were young. We can learn to notice our thoughts and behavior that may be creating our pain and access the truth. We can leave a painful situation, call a friend or therapist for help, and learn to bring through Divine love and compassion, all things we could not do for ourselves when we were small.

What beliefs do you have about your pain? See if you relate to any of these.

- I can't handle my pain. It's too much for me. I'll go crazy or explode into a million pieces and die from it.
- If I open to my pain, it will be unending, a bottomless pit with no way out. Better to keep a lid on it.
- There is no point in feeling my pain.
- No one wants to hear my pain. If I open to my pain, I will end up alone.
- Feeling and showing my pain is a sign of weakness and will lead to my being rejected.
- Feeling my pain makes me too vulnerable to being controlled by others.

To move beyond these false beliefs, you must be willing to test them, to prov*e* them false. And to test them, you must resist the urge to blunt your pain with addictions (which includes controlling behavior). You see, until you stop numbing out in the face of your pain, you will never know that you can feel your pain without going crazy or dying, that your pain is not endless, and that it can actually be a source of information and strength rather than weakness.

In all the years we have been working with people in pain, we have never had anyone die, explode or go crazy from opening to their pain. We have never met anyone whose pain was unending. Nor do people kill themselves from feeling their pain when they are willing to learn how to heal it, and when they reach out for the appropriate help. It is not opening to pain and learning how to manage it lovingly that causes suicidal feelings; it is sitting in pain with no inner and outer help that causes a person to take his or her own life. Suicide may be

how the wounded self avoids taking responsibility for being the cause of much emotional pain. A loving Adult would never think of killing a child, which is what some acts of suicide are - killing the Inner Child who carries the pain. When you open to feeling, learning about and healing your pain, and learn how to manage and release deep pain, there is no longer a need to avoid it.

Some people have such deep pain from childhood abuse that they will not be able to endure opening to it until they have a solid, loving, spiritually connected Adult in place. Inner Bonding is a powerful process for developing this Adult. It is not advisable to attempt to open to the pain of severe abuse on your own. If you suspect that you may have deep buried pain or if you have not succeeded in feeling your pain despite a genuine willingness to do so, it is imperative that you receive therapeutic help while practicing the Six Steps of Inner Bonding. While Inner Bonding is a self-help process, this does not mean that you have to do it alone. Part of being a loving Adult is asking for help when help is needed.

Right now, focus inside your body, attending to the physical sensations inside. Breathe into any painful feelings, embracing them with deep compassion. Is there any tension, tightness, fluttering, emptiness, aloneness, loneliness, sadness, heartache, heartbreak? Sit and keep your feelings company while moving on to the next aspect of Step One.

Wanting Responsibility for Your Feelings

We all have two kinds of painful feelings - our wounded feelings that we cause with our thoughts and actions, and our existential core feelings, which are the result of life.

Feelings such as anger, anxiety, stress, depression, hurt, guilt, shame, frustration, emptiness and aloneness are wounded feelings coming from our own thoughts and actions. Painful feelings such as loneliness, heartache and heartbreak, helplessness over others, grief, sorrow over people hurting other people, or outrage over injustice are existential core painful feelings.

Do you want to take full 100% responsibility for learning how you are creating your wounded feelings and for learning how to nurture your core feelings? If you do, then you can move on to Step Two of Inner Bonding. If you don't, then you might want to explore what is keeping you from wanting this responsibility. Are you deeply devoted to someone else taking away your pain and making you happy, believing that someone else can do it better than you? Are you afraid that you can't do it - that you are inadequate and can't learn to access your guidance and learn to take loving action? These are just two of the many false beliefs that might keep you stuck in being a victim.

For the sake of this course, you might want to decide that you are willing to take temporary responsibility, just as an experiment!

The next lesson will help you start to understand how to learn from your feelings.

LESSON 3

Step Two of Inner Bonding

Choose the intent to learn to love yourself and others. Making this choice opens your heart, allows Divine Love and Compassion in, and moves you into your loving Adult. Use any meditation or spiritual practice—or anything else—that helps you surrender and opens your heart to a compassionate intent to learn about how you might be causing your wounded feelings, and to being able to nurture your core painful feelings.

LESSON 3 OF DR. MARGARET PAUL'S AND DR. ERIKA CHOPICH'S
FREE COURSE ON THE SIX STEPS OF INNER BONDING®



Once you are aware of your painful feelings and you consciously want responsibility for them, you can choose to learn what you may be thinking or doing that is causing your wounded feelings, and what might be happening regarding a person or event that is causing your core painful feelings. Knowing this will enable you to make new choices that will be more loving to yourself. It is choosing the intent to learn to love that releases your individual will and allows Spirit into your heart so that you operate as a loving Adult. You cannot learn unless you are a curious, compassionate loving Adult, and you cannot be a loving Adult unless you surrender to higher guidance. Surrendering your individual will, letting go of control over the outcome of things, and inviting the presence of Divine love and compassion into your heart are the results of moving into a true intent to learn with your spiritual guidance about loving your Inner Child.

Lots of people are uncomfortable with the word "surrender," so let's talk about what surrender is - and what it isn't. Surrender is not an act of acquiescence, but an invitation to your Higher Power to use your being as a vessel of love, compassion and truth. Surrender does not mean that you give up the things that are important to you. It does not mean that you have no personal goals and just wait to see what God does with you. Nor does it mean relinquishing your free will or giving up your "normal" life for a more ascetic life.

Surrender means that you relinquish the controlling thoughts from your programmed mind and let Spirit take over so that you, as a loving Adult, can *embrace* your wounded self rather than *be* your wounded self. It means opening your body, mind, heart and soul to the presence and action of your spiritual guidance. Surrender means letting go of attachment to the outcome and opening to an exciting journey of discovery.

The idea of choosing to learn to love sounds simple, yet doing it is not always easy. In order to let Divine love into your heart, your desire to learn to love must be stronger than your desire to protect yourself against the pain of rejection, engulfment, helplessness, loneliness, heartache, heartbreak, grief, or whatever else you fear. You must decide that loving is more important to you than anything else, even being controlled, hurt or manipulated by others.

Even when you say you want to surrender control and let go of attachment to outcomes, blame, anger and misery can get in your way. When you feel victimized, you may be unwilling to open your being to Spirit and learn about yourself because you do not believe that you may be the one causing your pain, or that you are the one responsible for compassionately managing your pain. As long as your focus is on blaming your past, others or God, you have no power to do anything about your pain. As we saw in Step One, although your childhood experiences may have caused you much pain and created your false beliefs and resulting behavior, those beliefs and behavior are now *yours*. Your thoughts that come from your beliefs - not the past - are what cause much of your current pain.

If You are Closed, How to get Open: Bridges to Learning

When you are stuck in the anger, blame, depression or numbness of your wounded self, you need to find a bridge that will take you into a state of openness to learning. Bridges are things you can do to open your heart. Of the many bridges you can use, prayer, especially a prayer of gratitude, is probably the most powerful bridge.

Prayer can take many forms, such as dialogue, meditation, recitation or song. The choice is up to you. Some people have found that repeating a simple prayer of gratitude throughout the day helps them stay open to learning.

Generosity is another bridge to opening the heart. Many of us focus on how we can *get* what we want or avoid getting hurt. But one of the quickest ways of moving out of a closed heart and into openness is to ask your guidance: "What can I *give* to myself and others?" The moment you sincerely ask this question - with no attachment to its outcome - your heart will open and Divine Love will rush in, just as air rushes into your lungs the moment you take a breath. This happens because the very nature of God's love is abundant, unconditional and always here for you when you ask for help.

Everything changes when you decide to go through life thinking about how and what you can give instead of how to get what you want or avoid the things you fear. For example, if you are going to a party where you don't know anyone, you can create a lot anxiety for yourself by worrying, "How can I get people to like me? How can I avoid being alone?" However, if you walk in thinking, "What can I give? I can give people my smile, my interest, my acceptance and my sense of humor," you will feel great. The moment you decide to give, your heart opens and Spirit fills you with love and peace.

How can we know this is true? Many of us fear that nothing will happen if we open - that a Higher Power will not show up for us. The problem is that the wounded self does not believe that anything in the unseen spiritual realm is here for us and believes that if we let go of trying to have control over getting what we want, we will just end up feeling very alone. Our fears of being rejected and feeling alone, of being controlled by a Higher Power, or even of dying from being alone and helpless (feelings that come from infancy) may be so strong that we are unwilling to open our hearts to see if a Higher Power is really here for us. Until you are willing to take a "leap of faith" and open your heart through the intent to learn about love, you will not know God.

If you are too stuck in your woundedness to pray from your heart, or you don't believe in prayer, then you need to try other bridges that can open your heart to learning about love. These include:

- Listening to music
- Taking a walk
- Being in nature
- Talking with a friend
- Reading spiritual literature
- Journaling
- Drawing or doing other artwork like sculpture or collage
- Dancing
- Attending Twelve Step or other support group meetings
- Playing with a child or a pet

- Being held by a loving person
- Letting yourself cry
- Releasing your anger alone by yelling and pounding into a pillow.

If you decide to further pursue learning about Inner Bonding, you can learn a powerful three-step Inner Bonding anger process for releasing and learning from your anger, a process that allows you to release your anger without dumping it on others.

Exploring Your Good, Compelling Reasons

There is another essential aspect of the intent to learn: you must believe that there are good, compelling reasons for your present feelings and behavior. These reasons are your childhood experiences of disconnection from love that led to your fears and the false beliefs that create them. Understanding that you have good reasons for your feelings and behavior is the opposite of being judgmental. It is being compassionate. Your Inner Child will not open to you if you are shaming and judgmental of his or her feelings or behavior. And if your Inner Child doesn't open to you, you will not be able to learn what you are doing or thinking that may be causing your pain.

There *are* times when we have to make judgments about things, but there is a big difference between judgment intended to discern what is in your highest good and judgment intended to condemn. If you approach an actual child and ask, "What are you feeling?" in a condemning tone, the child will not feel safe in giving you an honest answer. If you ask that question in a compassionate tone, the child will probably tell you. The same is true of your Inner Child. Compassion is the natural result of understanding that you and others have good reasons for your feelings and behavior. You cannot be judgmental and compassionate at the same time. Accepting that you and others always have good reasons for your feelings and behavior will move you out of judgment and into the open heart of compassion.

A true intent to learn is not focused on an outcome - such as getting rid of the pain or changing yourself so you can find a mate. The only outcome we are looking for when we are in a true intent to learn is to become a more loving human being. If you have any goal other than that, you will not be in a true intent to learn. Being in a true intent to learn means we want to learn to be loving, period!

If you choose to pursue learning more about Inner Bonding, you will learn much that will help you maintain a consistent intent to learn within and with others.

LESSON 4

Step Three of Inner Bonding

Compassionately dialogue with your Inner Child, discovering your thoughts/false beliefs and the resulting behaviors that are causing your painful wounded feelings. Open to exploring what happened as you were growing up that created your loneliness, heartbreak and helplessness over others, and the resulting false beliefs. Compassionately embrace your core painful feelings. You can also explore your gifts and what brings joy to your Inner Child/core Self.

LESSON 4 OF DR. MARGARET PAUL'S AND DR. ERIKA CHOPICH'S
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In Step Three, we open our arms to all aspects of ourselves - our wounded aspects as well as our core Self. Although one of the goals of Inner Bonding is to integrate all parts of ourselves, we first need to separate the various parts of the wounded self and heal them individually. Eventually the energy from these parts unites with our core Self and our loving Adult. Some of the immense energy that once went into protecting and avoiding is free to go into playing and creating (activities of the core Self) and into taking loving action (the role of the loving Adult). The more you operate from your core Self and loving Adult, taking loving care of yourself and sharing your love with others, the more connected, integrated and joyful you become.

Look at this as an exploration into the layers of yourself. Welcome rather than judge or condemn anything that comes up. When you talk to your angry, hurt, frightened, anxious, numb, guilty, shamed, needy or depressed inner child, welcome and embrace those feelings, *whatever they are.* Your job is to welcome him or her into your loving embrace – to move toward your feelings rather than away from them - so you can learn what you may be thinking or doing that is causing these painful feelings. Ask your inner child questions such as:

- "What am I telling you or doing that is making you feel anxious (or depressed, angry, shamed, and so on)?"
- "Are you angry at me?"
- "Am I letting you down or not taking care of you in some way? How?"
- "How do you feel when I give you junk food (or drugs, or alcohol, or spend money, etc.) when you are feeling lonely, hurt, bored, anxious, depressed or angry?"
- "What are you really wanting from me when you are feeling badly?"
- "What do you need from me right now?"
- "How am I abandoning you? Am I making others responsible for you? Am I judging you? Am I ignoring your feelings and needs and not listening to you? Am I discounting you? Am numbing you out with substances or activities?"

Remember, no feelings are ever wrong or bad. All the feelings you have are for good reasons, and by using Step Three's dialogue process gently, with great compassion, you will be able to discover the information these feelings are trying to tell you.

In Step Three you explore - with love, compassion and curiosity - not only your feelings, but also whatever related false beliefs, behaviors and memories you might have. For some people, using a doll or stuffed animal acting as a surrogate Inner Child is very helpful; you can hold this surrogate child and bring yourself comfort when painful feelings come up. It is best to dialogue out loud or in writing. Both speaking out loud and writing slows the process down so you can hear it.

Once you understand what you are telling yourself and how you are treating yourself, you can then dialogue with various aspects of your wounded self, as well as various ages, from a young child to an adolescent. You are dialoguing with your wounded self about your false beliefs that are causing your self-abandoning behavior, which is causing your painful wounded feelings.

The following is a very brief example. In this example, a woman in one of Dr. Margaret's intensives has decided to work with Dr. Margaret, but she feels very anxious.

ADULT: What am I telling you or doing that is making you feel anxious?

CHILD: You are telling me that I have to do this right, and I don't know how. You are telling me that if I don't do it right, others will judge me and I will be rejected.

ADULT: Yes, I have been telling you that. How do you feel when I tell you this?

CHILD: I feel like you won't like me unless I do everything right and prove that I am worthy. I always feel I have to prove that I'm okay to you and everyone else. You keep telling me not to make a fool out of myself.

ADULT: So, of course, you feel anxious. Wow! I tell myself these things a lot, and I always thought my anxiety was coming from other people. I'm the one who is causing it!

Now speaking with the wounded self:

ADULT: There must be a good reason you keep telling the child she has to do everything right. What are you trying to control or avoid feeling by focusing on doing everything right?

WOUNDED SELF: I want people to like us.

ADULT: So you believe that we can have control over how people feel about us by doing things right?

WOUNDED SELF: Yes.

At this point in an Inner Bonding process, you would then to go Step Four (next lesson) and ask your higher self what is true.

You also dialogue with your core self when you are feeling core painful feelings, compassionately keeping yourself company when you are feeling loneliness, grief, sorrow, heartache, heartbreak, helplessness over others and events - over the difficulties we all face in our lives.

In Step Three, you also dialogue with your core self about what you love to do, exploring your gifts, passions and talents, what brings you joy, what is your true calling, what fulfills your soul.

Hints for Successful Dialoguing

A very important aspect of dialoguing with your wounded parts is to be aware of who is asking the questions: Is it your loving Adult or your wounded self? Are you really in a compassionate intent to learn (your loving Adult) or are you asking the questions from your fear and woundedness? Do you want to learn about how you may be causing your pain (your loving Adult) or are you just trying to get rid of it? You will not receive helpful or accurate answers when your wounded self asks the questions. This is why it is *imperative* to do Steps One and Two before starting to dialogue.

When you begin, it is best to dialogue with your Inner Child out loud or in writing so that you don't get lost in your wounded self. A written (or taped) record of your dialogue can also be helpful later, when you look back at your early process. After a year or so of regular spoken or written dialoguing, most people find that they can dialogue silently.

Were you surprised we said a year? Inner Bonding is not a quick fix. It becomes a way of life. It is a way of creating and maintaining a daily connection with your innermost self and with the sacred, as well as with others. As you grow and your life goes on, more and more challenges will come your way. You can use this Six-Step Process for dealing with all of them, the big ones and the small ones. Some of these challenges will bring up old pain from childhood events. You can use this Six-Step Process to address those feelings, too. In learning Inner Bonding, you learn a tool that you can use again and again to deal with all of life's challenges in a loving, wise and powerful way.

Listening to the Answers

When you are ready for your Inner Child to answer your questions, move your attention into your body. The answers will come from deep within you rather than from your mind.

You won't act out addictively if you remember to do Step Three whenever you feel anything other than peace inside. Instead, you will be able to find out what you really want by dialoguing with your inner child. You might ask, "What is it you are *really* seeking or feeling hungry for?" The wounded self always grabs for a short-term fix - new clothes, food, sex, scotch, cocaine. But by embracing and listening to your feelings, you can discover what your inner child *really* wants and needs.

Of course, the answer is always love and connection. Your Inner Child wants to experience Divine love coming to him or her through your heart, the home of the loving Adult. It is only when you learn to bring through Divine, unconditional love to yourself that the hunger, emptiness and aloneness you experience gets filled. Until you address the issue of your inner aloneness and emptiness - the aloneness and emptiness that you have been filling with your various addictions - you cannot begin to address the issue of the loneliness you may feel either

with others or from not having others around, as well as the past and present heartache and heartbreak. You will feel both alone and lonely until you heal your aloneness, your separation from Spirit. Using Step Three, you can discover the fears and false beliefs that are in the way of receiving Divine love.

Often, people tell us that they have been dialoguing with their Inner Child but they don't seem to be getting anywhere. When we ask them to show us exactly what they have been doing, we invariably discover that they have not decided that they want responsibility for their feelings, or taken the time to first open to learning by inviting compassion into their hearts. They think they are open because they are asking their Inner Child questions, but the tone of their questions is curt, bored, condemning or embarrassed. We gently remind them to go back and do Steps One and Two.

If your Inner Child still refuses to talk to you, that's okay for now. Go ahead and skip to Step Four. Eventually, when you have developed a solid, loving Adult, your wounded self and your core Self will open to you.

If you decide to pursue learning Inner Bonding in more depth, reading *Healing Your Aloneness, Inner Bonding, Do I Have To Give Up Me To Be Loved By God?* and *Diet For Divine Connection* will help you toward gaining the skills you need for successful dialoguing. Joining our membership community is a powerful way to support your learning and healing process.

LESSON 5

Step Four of Inner Bonding

Dialogue with your spiritual guidance, exploring the truth and loving action toward your Inner Child.

LESSON 5 OF DR. MARGARET PAUL'S AND DR. ERIKA CHOPICH'S
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Once you understand which of your thoughts, false beliefs and actions cause you pain, you are ready to learn the truth about those beliefs and discover what new, loving action you need to take on your own behalf. This information will come to you through a dialogue with your spiritual guidance.

Accessing the Spiritual Realm

All physical matter vibrates at a specific frequency. This has been confirmed by science. The spiritual realm exists at a higher frequency - a higher vibration - than the earthly realm. One way to understand "frequency" is to imagine a room filled with people who are sharing love and joy with each other. This room has a feeling of lightness - a high frequency - whereas a room filled with angry, tense people has a feeling of heaviness - a low frequency.

In order to access the higher frequency of the spiritual realm, you must raise your own frequency. There are numerous things you can do to raise your frequency. First, though, you must truly have the intent to learn with your spiritual guidance about loving yourself and others. When you have a true, pure intent to learn, your frequency automatically raises. Your intent to learn is your most powerful tool for raising your frequency. None of the actions we suggest below will raise your frequency without this intent. However, once you have this intent, the following actions can help to further raise your frequency.

- *Move into your imagination.* Imagination itself is a high frequency state. Our willingness to move into and trust our imagination is essential to being able to connect with our personal spiritual guidance. When you first begin to utilize your imagination to increase your frequency and connect with your guidance, you might feel as if you are just making things up. However, as you take the risk of trusting what you think you are "making up," you will discover that it really is coming *through* you from Spirit rather than *from* your mind.
- *Keep your body clear.* Your body is an energy system. If your body's energy is clogged with drugs, alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, sugar, processed foods that turn into sugar in the body, heavy foods, lots of food or foods contaminated with pesticides, preservatives, artificial sweeteners, factory-farmed food filled with antibiotics and GMOs, or any of the thousands of chemicals that are added to foods, your frequency is lowered.
- *Pray.* Sincere prayers of gratitude and asking God for help in healing all blocks to loving can raise your frequency.
- *Chant.* Repetitive prayers (such as the rosary), chants and mantras can open you to higher frequencies, as can singing in general.
- *Dance.* Rapid repetitive movement, such as Native American drumming dances, and other forms of expressive dancing may open you to higher frequencies. Drumming itself can also raise the frequency.
- *Spend time in nature.* The frequency of a city is far lower than the frequency of nature. Being among trees and flowers, near a river, creek or lake, at the ocean, in the desert, or on a mountain can all raise your frequency.

- *Listen to classical or spiritual music*, such as Bach, Vivaldi, Handel and some of Mozart's work, as well as Kitaro, Taize, and Gregorian and Indian chants. Throughout the ages music has been used to raise the frequency.
- *Do creative activities,* such as painting, sketching, photography, working with clay, or writing. Moving into your creative imagination raises the frequency.
- *Use incense, aromatherapy, or do "smudging."* Incense has been used for centuries to raise the frequency and invite spiritual connection. "Smudging" is using the smoke from various dried plants such as sage, pine, cedar and lavender to clear the energies in a room and raise the frequency. Smudging has been used for thousands of years by indigenous peoples throughout the world.

Connecting with Your Spiritual Guidance

What does dialoguing with your spiritual guidance mean? Naturally, it means different things to different people. Our spirituality is as individual as we are. Some people find they can dialogue directly with God, whatever their concept of God is: a person, an energy or simply light. Others dialogue with a personal Teacher (also called a Master Teacher); an Ascended Master; a religious figure like a saint, a guide or a guardian angel; a beloved deceased relative, friend or pet; a power animal; or with an image of the highest part of themselves. Even young children can contact their guidance by imagining a coach or a fairy godmother.

If you have no connection with any kind of personal spiritual guidance, imagine an older wiser part of yourself - your Higher Self. If you find it difficult to open to your imagination and create this guidance, utilizing some of the Inner Bonding books, tapes, visualizations, workshops and intensives that are available can help you learn to access this guidance, as can working with an Inner Bonding facilitator in person or on the phone or Skype.

If you practice dialoguing with your spiritual guidance - or with whatever or whomever feels loving and comforting to you - asking questions and "imagining" the answers, eventually you will feel and know through your own experience that a spiritual being is actually helping and guiding you. You will develop a relationship with this light being, and you will find answers to your questions coming more and more easily. You will also discover that you are never alone. When you imagine your guidance in any form with an intention to learn about becoming a more loving human being, and you keep your body clear and healthy, you will access the comfort, power, love, compassion, peace, joy and wisdom that is here for you.

Imagining a being of light - or light itself - surrounding you with love can energize your being and bring you great comfort. Being connected with Spirit is like being connected with an infinite source of power. It is the difference between trying to light your way with a small flashlight and rundown batteries, or with a huge lamp plugged into an industrial-strength wall socket. Our wounded self is exhausted from running on batteries. We have only to plug into the infinite source that is God to energize our beings.

Trust the Process, the Answers Will Come

The universe is filled with the energy of love and truth. It is filled with all the information there is and it has the answers to all our questions. Just because you cannot see this energy does not mean it is not there. When you turn on your TV, a picture shows up, even though you cannot see the waves coming through the air. We are like TVs. We are receivers and our intent to learn about loving is the "on" button. When we ask a particular question, we tune in to a particular channel.

Often when I work with people, they say, "I don't know how to take care of my Inner Child. I don't know how to be a loving Adult." It's true. Many of us *don't* know how because we haven't had anyone do it for us. We haven't had any role modeling. The good news is that you do not have to know how to do it - you just need to be willing to ask. That's why Step Four includes asking your spiritual guidance what loving action you can take.

Asking your guide, God or your Higher Self questions about the truth of your beliefs and about what is loving behavior toward your Inner Child will eventually result in answers, although sometimes they do not come immediately. They may pop into your mind when you least expect it. They may come to you in a dream or when talking to a friend, in meditation or when you are in the shower. They may come verbally or in pictures or in feelings. You may open a book and find your answer, or meet someone who says the exact thing you need to hear. But whatever form your answers come in, know that they will light the way for your next step.

When you sincerely ask the questions, "What is the truth about this belief?" and "What is the loving action in this situation?" you open the channel for this information to come through you. We have long been told to "ask and you shall receive." Try it. It really does work.

Steps Three and Four: Example of the Dialogue Process

The following brief dialogue was written down by Samuel, who was upset that he had started smoking again after recently getting married. He had not smoked in a long time. He was deeply in love with his wife, Ariel, and because he felt very loved by her, he was totally perplexed as to why he was suddenly smoking again.

LOVING ADULT: Why are you smoking again? I'm sure there's a good reason. Is there some way I'm not taking care of you? I really want to know what the problem is.

INNER CHILD: I feel anxious a lot. I'm smoking because I feel anxious and tense.

LOVING ADULT: But what are you anxious about?

INNER CHILD: I just want to make sure Ariel is happy. She seems so happy when I'm with her, so I try to be with her a lot, and then I don't have time to do other things I want to do—or have to do. And I never have any time alone anymore.

LOVING ADULT: Well, would you feel better if we spent more time alone?

INNER CHILD: I don't know. I'm afraid that then Ariel would not be happy and that scares me.

LOVING ADULT: (Now talking with the wounded self) Are you saying that you feel responsible for Ariel's happiness?

WOUNDED SELF: Yes. Aren't we together to make each other happy? Dad made sure that Mom never felt alone. He was always available for her. Mom would get angry and sullen if Dad wasn't there when she wanted him there.

LOVING ADULT: And you believe Ariel is the same way?

INNER CHILD: I don't know, but I'm afraid she is.

LOVING ADULT: Do you want us to be with her like Dad was with Mom?

INNER CHILD: I don't know. I just feel trapped. I love Ariel, but I hate not being able to do what I want to do.

LOVING ADULT: It sounds like I am making Ariel's feelings and needs more important than ours—that I am taking care of her Inner Child instead of taking care of you, and it is making you very anxious. I can see that smoking gives us an excuse to have some time alone. I've given up some of the things that are important to us, like going to the gym, and I smoke when I feel anxious about this. So, Higher Power, what would be loving toward myself?

HIGHER POWER: Plan time to go to the gym and have time alone—you have to plan it into your day just as you plan time to work and sleep and spend time with Ariel. If you don't plan it, it won't happen.

LOVING ADULT: How do I deal with my anxiety if Ariel is sad or upset about my doing this? Do I have the right to take care of myself if she is upset?

HIGHER POWER: Ariel's feelings are her own responsibility. Your well being is your responsibility. You have the right and the responsibility to take good care of yourself. You can be caring about Ariel, but let her handle her own feelings.

LOVING ADULT: What do I do if she gets mad at me, or gets sullen like Mom?

HIGHER POWER: Taking good care of yourself is loving behavior. Keep telling yourself that you are being loving to yourself and to Ariel when you take care of yourself. You can open to learning with her and explore the conflict with her, and both of you will learn a lot.

LOVING ADULT: So if I start to exercise again and take time alone for myself and keep telling myself that this is loving to both me and Ariel, maybe I can get through this anxiety without smoking. And when she gets mad or sullen, I need to remind myself of all this—that I am being loving and that I'm not responsible for her feelings and let her work them out or offer to explore with her. Sounds good to me, but I guess I'll have to try it and see how it works.

LESSON 6

Step Five of Inner Bonding

Take the loving action learned in Step Four.

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Healing is about moving out of your false belief system and into living in truth. Healing is about moving beyond judgment and into compassion for all your feelings. Healing is about taking loving action on your own behalf. While bringing through the truth from your spiritual guidance (Step Four) is essential in healing your false beliefs, it is not enough. Nor is it enough to gain understanding and release your old pain and fear. Unless you, as a loving Adult, take new loving action on your Inner Child's behalf, nothing really changes, nothing heals. For example, if your daughter came to you and told you she was scared by your yelling, and you listened and understood but made no attempt to change your behavior, your child would not *feel* heard. She would not feel loved. Likewise, if your Inner Child is hungry for love, compassion, connection, attention, safe boundaries, the end of an intolerable situation at work, a fit and healthy body or just plain fun, and you listen and understand but take no action, your Inner Child will continue to feel unloved, unlovable, alone and unfulfilled. And your wounded self will continue to protect against these painful feelings with your various addictions.

You can tell yourself the truth all day; you can stare into the mirror and affirm over and over that you are a beautiful, wonderful child of God, but if you do not treat yourself as a beautiful, wonderful child of God, your Inner Child will not believe your affirmations. Words mean very little without action. A loving Adult takes action on behalf of the Inner Child.

If you find yourself failing to take the loving action, that's okay. Our opportunity to begin taking loving action comes when we choose to *observe* rather than *condemn* ourselves, to be compassionate with ourselves, for example, when we slip up and indulge in addictive behavior. This is part of Step Five because non-judgmentally observing yourself choosing the intent to protect and control rather than love is in itself a loving action.

You cannot make new choices until you watch yourself making your current choices. You will never know that you can choose to learn about love until you observe yourself *choosing* to try to control. You cannot choose to love your wounded self until you notice your wounded self. If you are not willing to non-judgmentally notice yourself acting out the false beliefs of your wounded self, you cannot make new choices.

Taking loving action means learning to love both the core Self and the wounded self. It means releasing judgment and accepting the angry, hurt, shamed and frightened parts of yourself with love and compassion, understanding that your wounded self has been doing the best it can to take care of you and help you feel safe. Loving action means understanding and having compassion for all the parts of yourself that you have hated or judged as inadequate, unlovable and unworthy. You heal your false beliefs when you learn to be loving to your wounded self and take the loving actions guided by Spirit.

Taking loving action also means embracing the core painful feelings of life with deep compassion rather than avoiding them with addictive behavior.

Taking loving action eventually results in becoming immune to criticism and moving beyond fears of rejection as you learn how to not take others' behavior personally. Loving action also leads to moving beyond fears of engulfment, of being controlled by others, as you learn to set loving limits in your own behalf.

Here are some examples of loving actions you might take with the help of your spiritual guidance.

- Lovingly disengage from another's behavior that feels unloving to you - such as getting off the phone when someone is going on and on about themselves, or walking away from your partner when he or she is blaming you or judging you.
- Move into an intent to learn with someone important to you, opening to caring and connection rather than withdrawing, getting angry, or judging when he or she is upset.
- Read books on health, nutrition, and exercise and establish a new way of eating and exercising.
- Risk doing something you want to do, such as take a class or go on a vacation with a friend, even if your partner finds it threatening.
- Learn to define your own worth and lovability rather than hand that responsibility to others.
- Start the process of being able to leave a job that you hate or that isn't fulfilliing.
- Notice your self-judgments, without judging yourself for judging yourself.
- Choose to express gratitude throughout the day.
- Focus on kindness and good will towards others.
- Practice staying in the present moment instead of ruminating on the past or future.
- Attend to your feelings throughout the day, attempting to stay in Step One of Inner Bonding all day.

Frequently, taking loving action on your own behalf, means being willing to risk losing something: A relationship, a job, power over others. It boils down to this: are you willing to continue losing yourself through your addictions in order to protect yourself and maintain "control," or are you willing to risk losing someone or something to gain your true Self - your freedom, your soul's mission, your dignity, self-respect, integrity, personal power, passion and connection to God? Are you willing to lose your sense of self to avoid pain, or are you willing to face pain in order to have your true Self and evolve your soul?

There is no right answer to these questions. You are not bad or wrong if you are unwilling to face the pain of loss, heartbreak, and loneliness that may occur if you take loving action. What is important is to accept that your present pain may be the result of your protective actions and loss of Self, and will not go away until you are willing to risk feeling the pain of loss and loneliness when you let go of "control." And you need to accept that you will not experience the light and grace of Divine Love until you are willing to take these risks.

Taking loving action leads you out of emotional dependency and into emotional freedom, out of relationship conflict and into the possibility of relationship connection, intimacy and joy.

LESSON 7

Step Six of Inner Bonding

Evaluate the effectiveness of your action.

LESSON 7 OF DR. MARGARET PAUL'S AND DR. ERIKA CHOPICH'S
FREE COURSE ON THE SIX STEPS OF INNER BONDING®



Once you have taken loving action, you will need to evaluate whether the action is working for you. First ask yourself what you are feeling. Do you feel happier, less alone, more connected with Self, others, and God? Is your core shame - the belief that you are intrinsically bad, flawed, or unworthy - diminishing? Do you feel freer and less afraid? Are you less interested in pursuing your substance or process addictions? Do you have a greater sense of personal power and self-esteem? Are you feeling more playful, more creative? Are you laughing more? Are you more compassionate? More intuitive? More honest?

If the answers to your self-evaluation show you that healing is *not* occurring, go back to Step Four and ask your spiritual guidance to help you discover another loving action. For example, perhaps your Inner Child needs even more time with you, more time in prayer, or needs you to get help with the process. Perhaps he or she needs to be held by someone who can bring through unconditional love to him or her and help heal the wound of not having been held this way as a child. Or, your Inner Child may need you to spend more time having fun with others or may need more time alone to pursue passions or hobbies.

Here are some questions that you, as a loving Adult, can ask your Inner Child. Be sure to listen carefully to the answers.

- Are you feeling loved by me?
- Do you feel a sense of relief?
- Do you feel you can trust me to be there for you and not be self-indulgent when the urge to act out addictively comes up?
- Do you feel you can trust me to not harm others with my anger?
- Do you feel you can trust me to set good limits with others? Or are you still afraid I will give in to them or allow them to violate you and take advantage of you?
- Are you feeling safe inside, or are you still feeling alone and afraid?
- Am I defining your worth and lovability or am I still allowing others to define you?
- Do you feel a deep sense of worth that cannot be shaken by others' disapproval, or are you still afraid of rejection?

When you evaluate your actions, you cannot just look at how you feel *in the moment.* Acting out addictively, such as overeating or taking out your anger on someone, generally feels good in the moment - that's how it got to be an addiction. Often, when you take a loving action, such as cutting out sugar or chocolate or caffeine, stopping drinking, taking drugs, or smoking, not acting out sexually, no longer taking responsibility for another's feelings, or no longer dumping your anger on others, you feel awful in the moment. Your wounded self feels frightened at having a crutch taken away, or feels deprived of something that gives him or her momentary pleasure, or feels terrified of rejection and aloneness. Your addictions worked to make you feel better for the moment, so when you stop them, you will likely go through a period of feeling much worse. You may go through both physical and emotional withdrawal. Often, what works for you in the short term undermines you in the long term, while what works in the long term may not feel good in the short term.

Even though loving action may not always feel *good* in the moment, if it is truly in your highest good, it will feel *right*. You will experience a sense of inner rightness when you act in a way that is in harmony with your soul. There is a sense of lightness, freedom and power that comes from taking good care of yourself, even when it feels difficult, frightening or painful at first.

When you check in with your Inner Child to evaluate your actions, you must be sure you are talking to your core Self and not your wounded self. Your wounded self will often tell you that you are making a mistake when you give up a cherished addiction. Your wounded self has many rationalizations for wanting to keep the addictions, especially as you start to feel the emotional or physical withdrawal symptoms. You might hear something like this:

- Life is too short to give up these pleasures. What's the point? Why not just enjoy life while I can? So what if I cut a few years off my life? It's worth it.
- Oh, this is not working. Maybe this isn't the right day to start eating differently. I *really* want that doughnut. I'll start eating well tomorrow. One more day of eating junk won't hurt me.
- Life just isn't worth living without cigarettes. I love smoking so much. Not everybody who smokes gets lung cancer, so why go through this hell? Anyway, the stress of not smoking is worse for me than the cigarettes.
- The anxiety and guilt I feel when I don't give in to my husband is too hard, and he hates it. I'll probably end up alone if I keep this up.

If you fall for these rationalizations and give in to the wounded self, you will be giving your Inner Child a pacifier rather than the real thing. You will force him or her to be satisfied with the illusion of nurturing rather than the true sense of joy and well-being that comes from the loving Adult bringing through Divine love in the form of loving action.

Here's the bottom line: If you look inside to evaluate your loving action, and you find that you are still feeling genuinely, not momentarily, depressed, frightened, hurt, angry or powerless, then you need to go back to dialoguing with your spiritual guidance (Step Four) to see what else you need to do regarding a particular situation. This process may go on for days, weeks or sometimes even months (with very difficult issues) before you discover the loving action that really works for you regarding a particular situation. Sometimes you may need to reach out for help with this.

Practicing All Six Steps

When you have been doing the Six Steps of Inner Bonding for a while, and you are bringing through the love and taking the action to give your Inner Child what he or she really needs, you will find that more and more frequently you feel a wonderful lightness of being, a sense of fullness in your heart, and joy that bubbles up from within your soul. This is a state of grace. Fear gradually diminishes and is replaced by peace and joy in the process

of learning. The gnawing aloneness and emptiness within that led to addictive behavior no longer exists when you stay in contact with your Inner Child and meet his or her deep need for love through connection with your spiritual guidance. You will often feel a sense of aliveness, wholeness and integration.

Gradually the experience of separation from Self and others that so pained you will diminish, and you will feel a sense of oneness with yourself and others. You will find yourself unwilling to behave in any way that hurts yourself or others; you will discover your integrity. You will experience a deep trust in yourself and your spiritual guidance. And you will discover that you no longer have to strive to believe in God, for now you *know* God.

No longer will you experience others in terms of "us" and "them." There is no judgment, no enemy. No one is left out, no one is less than you or more than you, regardless of their gender, sexual identity, race, religion, or spiritual path. You will come to understand that all ways of learning about love are valuable and all paths intended to unite with God lead to God.

When you operate as a loving Adult you never have to wait for someone to fill your emptiness. You never have to feel alone. You have the complete freedom to fill yourself with love and peace whenever you want. You never have to wait for someone to come along to take loving action for you. You have the complete freedom to take that action for yourself. As children, we did not have this freedom. We needed others to fill us and take action for us. When they didn't, we may have become locked into thinking that we needed others to do this for us or that doing it ourselves was selfish or too much work, failing to see that taking responsibility for ourselves is a most delicious privilege and freedom.

Once you learn to take responsibility for your own feelings, the way is open to creating safe, sacred relationships. The power struggles that exist in so many relationships fall by the wayside as you learn to let go of trying to control the other and take responsibility for yourself. Conflicts get resolved in healthy ways when you learn the powerful skills of conflict resolution that are available for you when you pursue learning about Inner Bonding. You will find all your relationships improving, whether or not your family, friends, or partner learns Inner Bonding. In addition, if you have children, as you become a loving role model of personally responsible behavior, your children naturally learn to be personally responsible as well. Let's raise a generation of healthy children by learning, through practicing Inner Bonding, how to become loving, personally responsible Adults!

> **To join the Inner Bonding Membership Community: http://www.innerbonding.com/register.php**
>
> **To Learn about SelfQuest®: http://selfquest.com**
>
> **To sign up for a workshop, telephone support group, phone or Skype session, or an Intensive, call 888-646-6372 (888-6INNERBOND).**

YOU'VE LEARNED THE SIX STEPS. NOW PUT THEM INTO PRACTICE.

Inner Bonding Is a Practice

Over these seven lessons, you've learned the complete Six-Step Inner Bonding process.

You've learned how to become aware of your feelings, move into an intention to learn, dialogue with your wounded self and Inner Child, connect with your spiritual guidance, take loving action, and evaluate how that action makes you feel.

But as you've also learned throughout this course, knowing the Six Steps and living them are two different things.

Inner Bonding becomes truly transformative as you practice it in your own life.

> *When you're triggered.*
>
> *When you're afraid of rejection.*
>
> *When you're judging yourself.*
>
> *When you're struggling in a relationship.*
>
> *When your wounded self takes over and you aren't sure how to find your way back to your loving Adult.*

That's why I created:

LOVE YOURSELF

The 30-Day Inner Bonding Experience

For 30 days, I'll help you take what you've learned in this course and begin making Inner Bonding part of the way you actually live.

Through daily video lessons, guidance and practical Inner Bonding exercises, we'll go deeper into the patterns that may be keeping you from loving yourself and help you practice responding to yourself in a new way.

You'll learn to recognize more quickly when you're operating from your wounded self, understand what your feelings are telling you, strengthen your loving Adult, and practice taking loving action on your own behalf.

Because the goal isn't simply to understand Inner Bonding.

> *It's to learn how to be there for yourself when you need yourself most.*

BEGIN THE 30-DAY LOVE YOURSELF EXPERIENCE →

KEEP PRACTICING. KEEP LEARNING. KEEP GROWING.

Bring Inner Bonding Into Your Real Life

Throughout this course, you've learned that Inner Bonding isn't something you practice once and master forever.

There will be moments when your wounded self takes over.

Times when you're triggered and aren't sure how to move back into an intention to learn.

Situations when you understand the Six Steps, but you're still not sure what loving action actually looks like.

That's where having ongoing guidance can be especially powerful.

MASTERCIRCLE

Live Inner Bonding With Dr. Margaret Paul

MasterCircle gives you an ongoing place to bring the real situations you're facing and deepen your ability to practice Inner Bonding in your everyday life.

As a member, you'll receive:

- **Two live sessions each month with Dr. Margaret**
  Learn directly from Margaret and watch the Inner Bonding process applied to the real challenges members are experiencing.
- **Personal guidance and precision facilitation**
  Have the opportunity to receive Margaret's guidance as you work through your own patterns, beliefs and challenges.
- **Learn through other people's experiences**
  Seeing Inner Bonding applied to real situations can help you recognize your own patterns and understand the process at a much deeper level.
- **A supportive Inner Bonding community**
  Stay connected with others who are learning and practicing the same process alongside you.
- **Full access to the Inner Bonding Village**
  Explore an extensive library of Inner Bonding teachings and articles and connect through the Village community as part of your membership.

You already know the Six Steps. MasterCircle helps you keep learning how to live them.

EXPLORE MASTERCIRCLE →

Wherever you go from here, keep practicing.

Be curious about your feelings.

Notice when you're abandoning yourself.

Open to learning.

Connect with love and truth.

Take loving action.

And then notice what happens inside.

The more you practice Inner Bonding, the more it can become a way of life.

With love,

Margaret