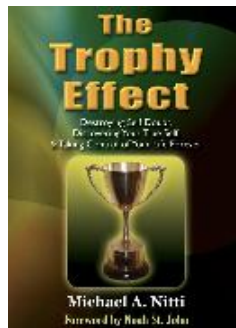


The Trophy Effect

Destroying Self-Doubt, Discovering Your True Self,
and Taking Control of Your Life Forever!

ADVANCED EXERCISES

(Exercises 5 & 6 and Recommended Practices)



By
Michael A. Nitti

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“To get up each morning with the resolve to be happy... is to set our own conditions to the events of each day. To do this is to condition circumstances instead of being conditioned by them.”

-Ralph Waldo Trine

Advanced Exercises & Practices

- * **Exercise #5: Excellence, Service, and Breaking through**
- * **Exercise #6: Oneness (Love, Empathy, & Connectedness)**
- * **Recommended Practices: Being in Nature, Reflection, Meditation**

This is Michael Nitti, welcoming you to what I call ‘the icing on the cake’- the Advanced Exercises! And although you probably wouldn’t be here unless you already created significant value for yourself by completing the first *four* exercises, I honor your intention to create even more! To which end, you will find that these next few exercises will not only support you in achieving an even higher level of consciousness, but in making your life *a masterpiece!*

In support of which, I invite you to not only continue to keep track of things in your journal, but to begin Exercise 5 by immediately *raising your game* – where you’ll find that by bringing as much excellence to the party as you can, you’ll be rewarded with an endless stream of *powerful* insights (yet, not a one that would have shown up had you not raised your game).

“Excellence is a better teacher than mediocrity. The lessons of the ordinary are everywhere. Truly profound and original insights are to be found only in the studying of the exemplary...”

-Warren G. Bennis

Exercise 5: Excellence, Service, and Breaking through

By embracing this Exercise & allowing ‘Excellence’ to be *your* teacher, you will not only be inspired to step beyond your mind’s *natural aversion* to playing full out, you’ll be able to do so even when it’s screaming at you not to! And as you do step up, you’ll not only get to celebrate the exhilaration of overriding your mind, but the joy of stepping *beyond* your *natural inclination* to settle for ‘good enough.’ In fact, by simply *refusing* to listen to your mind when it’s *imploring you* to play small – and by playing full out instead – you’ll realize that the only thing standing between you and the life of your dreams, is *you*, continuing to *play full out* until your mind surrenders...

Which is precisely what this exercise is all about – which is doing everything you do for the next 30 days with significantly more *intentionality* than you ever have before. In other words, to keep on adding value even when *your mind* is begging you to give up...

For example, if you're holding the door for someone while going in or out of a building, you'll want to continue holding it for everyone else who's approaching as well – no matter how many people there are, or even if you're beginning to feel 'silly' while waiting for them – while at the same time, offering everyone either a loving smile or a few kind words...

Yet this time, it's *not* about holding the door and earning a trophy, as it was with Exercise 2 – or even about your willingness to connect with someone, as it was with Exercise 3 – which is because you *already* know how to do these things. Yet, since you *also* know where you typically *give up*, this time you must actually *step up* and go *even further*...

In fact, the purpose of this exercise is to re-visit exercises 2 and 3, yet with the intention to bring even more excellence to the party than you did the first time around – even if you feel like *you did* play full out before! (*Note; you will find key excerpts of Exercises 2 & 3 on page 21, for reference*)

And yet, in order for you to show up in a way that will lead you to an *actual breakthrough*, the *secret* is to not only do what you're doing with an intention *to excel*, but with the intention *to serve others* – yet, without any need to award any trophies. In fact, for the duration of this exercise, I suggest that you replace 'looking for trophies' with 'looking to make a difference' – while at the same time, overriding your ego's desire to *prove anything* to either yourself *or* anyone else. Which is why, I urge you to do *everything* you do for the next 30 days, not only as excellently as possible, but for no other reason than *because you can!*

In fact, this is exactly the same level of 'ego-killing intentionality' that I brought to the party during my own "spirit-quest" some thirty years ago, which not only led to my own *awakening*, but to my discovery of The Trophy Effect itself. And, even though there were times when I'd have sworn to you that I *was playing full out*, it wasn't until I was coached through a similar series of exercises, that I was able to see that I never even *came close*. Yet, once I saw this was true, it was simply a matter of *stepping up* and staying the course until I finally broke through!

Which is why, the purpose of this exercise is for *you* to identify where *you*'ve been playing small, and then, for *you* to *step up as well!*

Interestingly enough, what I actually got to see for myself once I finally stepped up, is that the only thing I'd ever *really* done 100% before, was to *pretend* that I was giving 100%. Which is because, right up until the day of my epiphany, I realized that I had not only been settling for *not* doing things as well as I could – but instead, I had pretty much become a slave to making it *look* like I was. In fact, what I realized is that I had spent *more time* trying to prove to the world that I was playing full out, than I would have if *I'd simply played full out!*

Ironically, it was during one of these very situations (a time when I was hoping to convince everyone that I *was* giving it my all), that I was not only 'caught in the act' – but I came face-to-face with a "moment of truth" that ultimately changed my life *forever...*

A moment – a whole lot of years ago (1982, to be exact) – while I was volunteering at a 'Breakthrough course' in upstate New York – which was comprised of a variety of outdoor exercises that were intended to inspire the participants to stretch themselves *beyond their limits*. Where, as part of the leadership team– and in support of one of the ropes courses– I had been asked to be a "pull-back" on the zip-line – and although this appeared to be a pretty simple job – it turned out to be one of the *toughest* things I had *ever* done – given that I had to help 'pull back' the safety gear from the bottom of the ravine, after it had been worn by the last person who rode the pulley to the landing zone a few hundred feet below...

Even so, on that absolutely magnificent day in the Catskills, I clearly remember how 'cool' I thought it was to be part of a four-man team, that had been hand-picked by the Course Leader to handle this very 'manly' and high-profile position – which was "high profile" only because of all the people who were hanging out and watching us 'do our thing' while awaiting their turn on the zip-line...

And again, since I'd watched a few other guys doing this 'pull back job' a bit earlier, it seemed to be a pretty simple task – so I had no way of knowing just how tough it was until *my* team stepped in and actually began pulling the gear back up the hill – at which point, I recall being *very grateful* that there were four of us to share the load. And, since I already "*knew*" that I probably

wasn't going to play full out, I was even happier to know that there were *eight hands* tugging on the ropes – figuring that no one would notice if I slacked off or wasn't pulling just as hard as the others guys! Which, was precisely what my *mind* was *imploring* me to do, in order to “survive” the situation – even though I had already noticed that ‘slacking’ probably wasn't going to cut it – since I could *already tell* that it was likely going to take *all four of us giving it all we had!*

And yet – and even though our job was to pull the gear back as fast as we could – *my mind* was screaming at me not to. And although I made sure that I was *grunting* and *sweating* just as much as my team-mates, I knew very well that, for the most part, I was only giving it *just enough* to get by. Which, even though I didn't know it at the time, I later realized was *my mind* not only wanting to provide me with an excuse *in case I failed*, but wanting me to *believe* that I was ‘winning’ – which it wanted me *to* achieve by way of *dominating* the situation by ‘getting away with something.’ And yet, not only was I definitely ‘*not winning*’ - I quickly found myself in *whole lot of trouble* when things began to unravel...

You see, what I had failed to consider was that each of us were pulling on *separate* ropes – which meant that if I was to slack off *too much*, the others would finish pulling their ropes to the top *too soon*; leaving me to finish the job *on my own*. Which, is precisely what *did* happen, just a few ‘pull-backs’ shy of calling it a day, when all three of my team-mates got done pulling their ropes to the top a good 30 seconds or so before I did. At which point, it was *me* – very literally – who was the only one left holding a rope! And, worst yet, every bit of this was going on in front of about 100 cheering participants, who, even though they were now cheering *for me* – were totally unaware of my little dilemma...

Needless to say, I flat out started to panic – knowing that there was no way I could pull that gear back up the rest of the way by myself – *unless, I instantly stepped up and gave it everything I had!* Yet, besides the fact that I had *zero history* of this happening – even if I had, there was *zero guarantee* that I wasn't going to fail anyway, *and* in a *very public way*...

As you can see, I was standing *squarely* at a crossroads – where, I could either listen to *my mind* – which was *already* imploring me to fake an injury – which would have not only justified me giving up, but would have given me

“an out” in case I did fall short – *or*, I could actually *step up*, play *full out*, and *give it all I had!* In any case, in front of all those people – and with absolutely *no promise* of success – I was left with no more than a couple of seconds to make a *very critical decision...*

Now – before I share with you whether it was ‘*my mind*’ or ‘*my Self*’ that won that tug-of-war, since *you* have already completed the first four Exercises and are now fully immersed in this one, what would *you* do if you were faced with this same situation?

Well, hopefully, you’d rely on *all the insights* you’ve had so far in order to make the “right” decision, which you’d be inspired to do mostly because of everything you *now* know about the Trophy Effect! Which, of course, you *wouldn’t* have been able to learn from this teaching if *I hadn’t created it* – which is something that I certainly wouldn’t have been inspired to do... *if I hadn’t pulled back that rope with every ounce of courage and determination that I had within me!* Which, of course, is precisely what I did do on that absolutely magical day!!

In fact, with everyone – including my three teammates – cheering me on, I was not only inspired – but *driven* – by something I had never felt before! And, with *every* tug on that rope, I could feel myself growing stronger! And, as the gear literally *knocked me over* with my very last pull – and although I was *totally spent* from giving it my all – I realized that these were the most wonderful feelings I had ever experienced...

Suddenly, there was no more *need* to pretend. No more *wondering* if I was good enough. No more *hoping* that others wouldn’t find out. No more *stopping* short... In that moment, *all* that I was present to was *the truth* of my magnificence and my connectedness with others. *All* that I could feel was the love – and yet, at the same time, a desire to step even *further* beyond where I had always stopped before – *and to serve...*

And, in the midst of all these feelings, I was *so overcome* by this desire *to serve*, there was no way I was able to sleep that night... In fact, my intention was so strong that I soon found my way to the kitchen – where, at 2am – and while everyone else was sleeping – I was inspired to prepare a spectacular breakfast for the entire staff!

Not just any breakfast mind you, but one where I was privileged to step *way beyond* the norm. After all, I didn't even know how to cook! And yet, for the entire the rest of that night, I went at it with all my heart! Finding a recipe book, measuring ingredients, baking an amazing coffee cake & home-made muffins, squeezing dozens of oranges for orange juice, and cutting up several pounds of fruit – all of which I accomplished while not only *playing full out*, but with as much *excellence* as I could possibly bring to the party – and all with a *selfless intention* to serve the entire team...

“The high destiny of the individual is to serve rather than to rule.”

-Albert Einstein

As a result – and as you can imagine – I was not only blessed with an on-going stream of epiphanies, but with an amazing sense of *joy* throughout the evening – yet especially when I *refused* to listen to my mind when it *implored me* to settle for “good enough.” As a result, I found myself in an *incredibly* blissful state of *pure* intention – at which point, my *mind* went silent – allowing me to be present to not only “the truth” of the *human spirit* – but to an experience of being *divinely connected* in a way where I could tell that **love** was clearly the source of every little thing that I was thinking and doing. And from *this* perspective, it was equally clear that *excellence* and *intention* were not only one and the same, but the *highest expression of my being*...

By then – and just as the morning sun was beginning to find its way into the kitchen – I was *thrilled* to be putting the finishing touches on my ‘feast’ for the staff – who would have otherwise awoke to their usual breakfast of cereal and toast. And yet, my gift to *myself* was even *greater*, which is because, at some point during the night – any & all thoughts of ‘*not* being good enough’ had *forever* been replaced with **Love** – which was *all* that I was present to, as I carefully cut each & every piece of fruit into *perfect* cubes. One at a time, I removed *all* the seeds – placing every cube *precisely* into serving bowls. I washed *all* the dishes and made sure they were dry before putting each one in its place. The kitchen was spotless. The food was incredible. I had created a masterpiece! And *then*, it hit me...

Suddenly, I realized that ‘this thing’ I’d been calling ‘*me*’ was no longer present. In fact, it wasn’t even “*me*”- (at least not who I ‘*thought*’ was “*me*”) – who had been preparing that meal or who had been having so much

fun in the kitchen! What's more, *nowhere* could I find *anything* that I could even identify as *me*. Which is because, once my "fear of not being good enough" disappeared – so did this thing called "I"...

"I" was no longer important. There was only Source. The only thing I was present to was God and Excellence. Nothing but *love*...

As you can imagine, when I finally served the meal, the staff was ecstatic, and *everyone* gave me a standing ovation. I felt the love. I gave myself trophies. Yet, at the same time, I realized that the trophies weren't *new*, but *had always* existed – *waiting to be discovered*.

I realized that because of what happened on the ropes course and after my night in the kitchen, it wasn't that I had broken through to a "new me," but I had simply revealed the *real* me – and it wasn't even a "me" at all. I could clearly see that who the staff was acknowledging was *us*. *All* of us. We were truly 'one' – and always had been. I simply hadn't seen it before, because I had always considered myself to be "a me"; the 'me' who was afraid of looking foolish & who had spent my entire life pretending to be good enough in the face of a fear that I wasn't. The 'me' who had been unwilling to go 100% because I was afraid I would fail – which, if you think about it, is pretty silly, since it's only when we *do stop short* or *don't play full out*, that we're more inclined to fail!

Anyway, in the aftermath of all the applause and having observed all this, my '*Self*' was born – and along with it, a magnificent new experience of "being one with it all." And I was truly *grateful*...

So, are you inspired yet? I trust that you are – yet not by what I discovered for *myself*, but by the possibility of *you* seeing *your* truth! The possibility of finally letting go of any lingering fears you may still be holding onto about not being good enough. The possibility of discovering your true Self.

Which is why, for the next 30 days, I invite you to embrace this Exercise with *all* your heart! To step so far beyond "good enough" that you not only get lost in Excellence and Service, but to the extent that your *true Self* shows up to help celebrate your breakthrough!

"Wherever you go, go with all your heart." –Confucius

Challenge yourself! Refuse to play small! *Now* is the time to let go of everything that's been causing you to live 'in reaction' to your past, and to replace it with *the truth* of who you *really are*. Dedicate your-Self to ensuring that the path you're traveling for the next 30 days is paved with Excellence and Service, and then, make it your mission to *wear this path out* by consistently stepping up!

*“We are what we repeatedly do.
Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.”*

-Aristotle

Now, to provide you with a little *jump start* to your '30 day challenge,' I'm privileged to share with you the following *true story*, which speaks to the very heart of what these Exercises are all about. So, I invite you to not only enjoy this essay, but to allow it inspire you to live these next 30 days exactly how you intend to live the entire rest your life... *On Purpose!*

Namaste

“Rhys story” – The following essay was shared with me by my good friend, Dr. David Morehouse, who is not only a former Army Ranger and a best-selling author, but a consultant to the government; who conducts courses on the very latest in Emergency Battlefield Medical Techniques...

Folks,

I took the opportunity to write something the other evening and I wanted to share it with you. It was quite synchronistic given the "Sack Lunch" email that follows. It is important to note that the young man who began this inspiration, Rhys, is a former Navy Corpsman. He worked for a very "special" SEAL unit and deployed to combat several times. He has lost friends while trying to save their lives with medical aide (his job) and he has engaged the enemy. He is 27 years old and is a very special young man....

Dave

MESSAGE FOLLOWS

ALCON,

On Tuesday night, very late, our young friend, Rhys, told a story that inspired me to be a better person...

He said, that with all of his air miles, he is frequently upgraded to business or first class. I was thinking, "Yeah, me too. It's so nice when you can get it, and I usually scramble to be first in the seat, grab a drink, sit back and relax while all the rest of the "cattle" are boarding." Really quite ridiculous and selfish I suppose –

Rhys interrupted my thought, continuing with his story... Anytime he is upgraded to 1st class, he will look for a uniformed service member boarding the plane and he will exchange tickets with them. He said this with tears in his eyes. He really meant it. He said, "It is the least I can do for them. The very fact I am on that plane – and in that seat – is because of them."

Suddenly, I felt very small and forgetful – yet I was inspired by his example and in awe of his insight and respect.

The next day, Jeremy (a colleague of mine) and I were upgraded to first class on a flight from Tampa to Chicago. I looked at him as we sat down and grabbed a glass of orange juice... "You know, if anybody in a uniform walks through that door, I am giving them my seat." Jeremy replied, "I know, if that happens, we're giving away two seats today." Not to spoil the story, but nobody in uniform walked through the door. We traveled first class.

I kept thinking to myself about the gesture Rhys made as a matter of routine and how absolutely powerful it was for a young man to have such wisdom and compassion. I could not get over how moving it was. Not that it is so out of this world unthinkable, but I have never thought to do it. Now and forever more, I will be thinking it, and more importantly, acting on it.

This brings me to the next part of the story – about the leg from Chicago to San Diego. So, I put it out there, "If there is a uniform, it gets my seat." Only problem is, I didn't have a seat in first class from Chicago. I was on the wait list, and I was five or six passengers down; not much chance of it on a sold out aircraft. "Next time," I thought.

I walked to the gate; people were piled up everywhere waiting to get on the plane. As I approached the mob, I heard my name being called, "I'm getting a first class seat!" I thought. I did...I stood there with a grin on my face while the agent printed my ticket; "3B" for me. Then, I heard a baby crying. I looked to my left and a young mother stood at the counter trying to quiet the child with a frantic look on her face. Another gate agent was desperately trying to find her a seat on an

already overbooked aircraft of worried passengers. “3B,” that beautiful golden colored ticket began burning my hand. I knew I had to give it up. I asked the gate agent, “If I give you this, will you give it to this mother and her child?” The response (with a smile), “Yes, and I will even give you another seat. How’s 31C work for you?”

“Okay,” I replied, “31C” for me.”

There’s more.

I shuffled to the back, stowed my gear and sat down in a hot stuffy plane. I pecked out a few emails and wished I could sleep through the 5+ hour flight. I still don’t understand why it takes that long to get to San Diego from Chicago. To make matters worse, the in-flight movie was “Elf” which I didn’t like when it first came out seven years ago. Now I was going to be forced to watch it for what must be the 17th time.

About thirty minutes into the flight - while watching Elf - the Purser makes an intercom request -- “we have an extremely ill passenger and we need to know if there are any physicians onboard the aircraft...please ring your call button.” No response.

Watching Elf, a few minutes later, “...is there a nurse, or EMT, or a paramedic on board? Please ring your call button.” No response.

Watching Elf, a few minutes later, “...is there ANYONE with ANY medical training or experience onboard? Please ring your call button...” No response.

I think, “Well, I probably qualify for the last category, and no one else is moving.” I get up and walk to the back of the plane, which didn’t take long from 31C...

There on the floor of the plane was a flight attendant (off duty) flying home for Christmas, who had taken ill. She lay there, in the fetal position, vomit on the front and poop down the back of her legs. “What happened?” I asked. The other flight attendant filled me in; “She has had 35 diarrhetic bowel movements in the last 4 hours, 4 since she got on the plane, and she just doubled up on the floor after she came out of the lavatory. “Okay...” I’m thinking, “...not good, but that explains what I’m looking at.”

All the stuff from days gone by (really gone by) as well as OEMS, CTM’s, DMOC’s, every story, every lecture, every example, and every class came back. I knew what to do... Okay, I know it wasn’t like she was missing legs or anything, but it was still pretty messy.

To shorten this part of the story, I took charge. I got her cleaned up, got a bag for her to vomit in (instead of her sweater), got her warmed, got some warm water into her (which she vomited again), coordinated with the Purser who was in contact with a physician on the ground in SD. I got them to open the med case, got vitals, got permission to administer 25ml of phenergan IM from the case (and only

dropped the ampoule once trying to open it), and spent the rest of the flight attending to “my patient”. She did well; obviously dehydrated, slept a little, vomited on my hand (and apologized), didn’t manage too well with the water – but was stable and comfortable until landing. I handed her off to two SD paramedics, gave a version of a 9-line report, grabbed my gear and deplaned.

There’s more...and a lesson.

As we deplaned, an elderly woman in front of me was struggling with her roll-on. It was really more like a drag-on. I carried it for her (I know you’re thinking “stop” with the story already... but it really did happen this way). As we waited for bags to come off the carousel, I tried to make conversation. “What brings you to San Diego?” I asked.

“My nephew is going to become a Marine on Friday, he is graduating from MCRD”.

Now I am invincible... “Let me get something for you to give him.” I reach into my bag and took the new key fob I’d just purchased from SOMA (Special Operations Medical Association). I purchased it the morning before and I already had it on my key ring. I handed it to her and said, “This is the symbol of a great number of men and women who devote their lives to the service your nephew is now entering. The people who are behind this organization will be there to care for him if he is injured, they will fight for him and provide for him if ever he needs it.

They are an amazing group of people in uniform, and they stand beside your young Marine; if he gets hurt, they will be there. You take this and give it to him on Friday. You tell him everyone who stands behind this symbol gives it to him under one condition...that he brings it back home personally, safe and sound.”

She cried...and that made me cry. “He has never had anything like this” she said. My husband and I just adopted him last year, his father is gone, and his mother is too ill to care for him, even to travel to his graduation, we have been taking care of him since he was 15, and he has lived a really horrible and troubled life. All he has ever wanted to be is a Marine, and this will mean so much to him.”

It was a good and meaningful day.

The lessons for me:

If you put it out there, it will come to you. Remember, this all started with Rhys’ example. That example started my day with an “intention to be of service.” To do something great. God gave me every opportunity – because I asked.

If you turn your heart to the service of others and to God, you will live a life of infinite promise and possibility. How many more chances could I have been given? How much fuller could my life be on this day?

If you live, even for a moment, with the full knowledge and acceptance of, “Thy will be done...” and “Ask and ye shall receive...” your life will be filled with miracles.

There is a formula for life and we all know it. Deep in our hearts we know it. Sometimes the world just steals us away and we stop listening. We ignore what we know is good and right. It is a choice.

It has been some time since I've had a day like this...because I had forgotten what is possible. Thanks to one young man's example... I remembered to ask and to receive.

Now, I invite you to read a story from Dr. Bruce Cummings, a great ER doc who works with me frequently...

----- Forwarded Message ----- From: Bruce Cummings Subject: **SACK LUNCHES**

(and get ready for some goose-bumps)

The Sack Lunches

So, I put my carry-on in the luggage compartment and sat down in my assigned seat. It was going to be a long flight. I'm glad I have a good book to read. Perhaps I will get a short nap, I thought.

Just before take-off, a line of soldiers came down the aisle and filled all the vacant seats, totally surrounding me. I decided to start a conversation...

"Where are you headed?" I asked the soldier seated nearest to me. "Petawawa. We'll be there for two weeks for special training, and then we're being deployed to Afghanistan."

After flying for about an hour, an announcement was made that sack lunches were available for five dollars. It would be several hours before we reached the east, and I quickly decided a lunch would help pass the time...

As I reached for my wallet, I overheard a soldier ask his buddy if he planned to buy lunch. "No, that seems like a lot of money for just a sack lunch. Probably wouldn't be worth five bucks. I'll wait till we get to base."

His friend agreed.

I looked around at the other soldiers. None were buying lunch. I walked to the back of the plane and handed the flight attendant a fifty dollar bill. "Take a lunch to all those soldiers." She grabbed my arms and squeezed tightly. Her eyes wet with tears, she thanked me. "My son was a soldier in Iraq; it's almost like you are doing it for him."

Picking up ten sacks, she headed up the aisle to where the soldiers were seated. She stopped at my seat and asked, "Which do you like best - beef or chicken?"

"Chicken," I replied, wondering why she asked. She turned and went to the front of plane, returning a minute later with a dinner plate from first class.

"This is your thank you..."

After we finished eating, I went again to the back of the plane, heading for the rest room.

A man stopped me. "I saw what you did. I want to be part of it. Here, take this." He handed me twenty-five dollars.

Soon after I returned to my seat, I saw the Flight Captain coming down the aisle, looking at the aisle numbers as he walked. I hoped he wasn't looking for me, but noticed that he was looking at the numbers only on my side of the plane. When he got to my row he stopped, smiled, held out his hand and said, "I want to shake your hand." Quickly unfastening my seatbelt, I stood and took the Captain's hand.

With a booming voice he said, "I was a soldier and I was a military pilot. Once, someone bought me a lunch. It was an act of kindness I never forgot." I was embarrassed when applause was heard from all of the passengers.

Later, I walked to the front of the plane so I could stretch my legs. A man who was seated about six rows in front of me reached out his hand, wanting to shake mine. He left another twenty-five dollars in my palm.

When we landed I gathered my belongings and started to deplane. Waiting just inside the airplane door was a man who stopped me, put something in my shirt pocket, turned, and walked away without saying a word. Another twenty-five dollars!

Upon entering the terminal, I saw the soldiers gathering for their trip to the base. I walked over to them and handed them seventy-five dollars. "It will take you some time to reach the base... It will be about time for a sandwich. God Bless You."

Ten young men left that flight feeling the love and respect of their fellow travelers.

As I walked briskly to my car, I whispered a prayer for their safe return. These soldiers were giving their all for our country. I could only give them a couple of meals. It seemed so little...

A veteran is someone who, at one point in his or her life, wrote a blank check made payable to "The United States of America" for an amount of "up to and including my life."

That is Honor, and there are way too many people in this world who no longer understand it... Honor, and Excellence...

*“There is no higher religion than human service.
To work for the common good is the greatest creed.”*

-Albert Schweitzer

Exercise 6: Oneness (Love, Empathy, & Connectedness)

What you’ll need: Two chairs, a partner (a friend who is willing to do an open-eyes “be-with” process with you for 30 minutes).

The purpose of this Exercise is to experience your *inherent connectedness* with another human being, which will allow your partner to experience their connectedness with you as well. Although you will not be physically touching one another, what is available is the experience of being connected at a very deep level. Therefore, seek out a partner who is fully willing to play at this level – and then have them read these instructions (pages 14 & 15) before you both begin this process.

The intent is to surrender fully into your “natural state of being connected” by establishing an emotional connection between you and your partner. In support of this outcome, you will need a fairly sound-proof room where you will not be disturbed for the duration of the Exercise, as well as two high-backed chairs. To begin, you and your partner should be seated face-to-face with your knees touching and your hands resting on your own knees (do not fold your arms or otherwise assume a “closed” posture). Adjust the lighting to be bright enough to see one another, but not distracting.

If possible, set a timer for 30 minutes, or find another means of being notified when the time is up (without being distracted by glancing at a clock). You should also turn off the ringers on any phones so as to not be disturbed during the course of the exercise. In addition, please drink enough water to avoid becoming thirsty and also use the restroom before you begin the Exercise.

Once you and your partner are in position, your mission is to look directly into each other’s eyes with the intention to connect *as deeply as possible*. Do not “stare” at each other. Instead, “*be with*” one another. Allow any fears or feelings of discomfort to show up as they may, and then allow them to drift away...

“Be” with whatever thoughts you are having and allow them to drift away as well. Let go of any judgments about your thoughts. Notice any embarrassment or any inclination to look away, but do NOT look away or allow any such feelings to deter you from “being” with each other. After a few minutes, allow yourself to be present to what you appreciate about the person sitting across from you. Notice anything about your partner that you may have previously had judgments about and see if you are willing to let those judgments go. Then allow yourself to be present to the fact that your partner is likely feeling what you are feeling and then allow all of these thoughts and feelings to drift away...

Once you have allowed your reactive mind to empty itself of what “it” brought to this Exercise, see if you are willing to replace those thoughts with an intention to align with the ‘natural connectedness’ that exists between you and your partner. Allow yourself to be present to whatever you are feeling, while at the same time intentionally bringing forth all the empathy and love you can create in the moment. Notice any resistance you may have to doing so and then, let that go. Allow your heart to be filled with as much love as you can bring forth and send that out to your partner with the intention that they “get it.” If you feel any fear or discomfort, simply notice these feelings and continue to send your love to your partner...

Ultimately – and once you are able to “feel the love” or a deeper connectedness with your partner, notice if you’d be willing to “replace” your partner with someone else; specifically, someone with whom you may have an unresolved issue that is preventing you from feeling your love for that person. Allow yourself to imagine that this person is sitting across from you and notice if you are now willing to feel connected with this person even if you believe that they might not be willing to feel connected to you. Once this process is complete, notice if you are willing to reach out to that individual – and then, make good on that intention as soon as you can...

Finally, acknowledge your partner with a hug and share any insights you may have had during this process; being sure to celebrate your connectedness with each other, as well as your Oneness with Source. Complete this exercise by recording anything you would like to remember about it in your journal, and then, award yourself all the good trophies you feel you deserve!

*“A miracle is nothing more or less than this. Anyone who has come into a knowledge of his true identity, of his **oneness** with the all-pervading wisdom and power; this makes it possible for laws higher than the ordinary mind knows of to be revealed to him.”*

-Ralph Waldo Trine

Recommendations: Being in nature, Reflection, & Meditation

Now that you've completed the first six Exercises, the following practices are highly recommended in support of your ongoing transformation. As is evidenced by the many quotations I've included by some very wise people, these are timeless strategies that will empower you to remain associated to "the truth" of who you are.

By taking pause to reflect upon the beauty and magnificence of your natural surroundings, you are more likely to be empowered to surrender into your natural connectedness with *Source* and nature itself. Therefore, I suggest that you allow these quotations to inspire you, and I invite you to embrace these practices and "*create them*" as part of your daily ritual.

In addition to incorporating these simple practices into your regular routine, I also invite you to revisit the first four Exercises as often as it serves you to do so – *or as follows:*

Exercise #1: Every six months, or as desired

Exercise #2: Ongoing, yet review every six months

Exercise #3: Every three months – *yet why not play at this level on an ongoing basis?*

Exercise #4: Gratefulness; weekly. Forgiveness; every six Months

Exercise #5: Same as Exercise #3.

Exercise #6: Every 6 months, or as often as you like...

*"Follow effective action with quiet reflection.
From quiet reflection will come even more effective action."*

-James Levin

Being in Nature

“Observe the wonders as they occur around you. Don’t Claim them. Feel the artistry moving through and be silent.”

-Rumi

“One ought, everyday at least, to hear a little song, read a good poem, see a fine picture, and if it were possible to speak a few meaningful words.”

-Goethe

“Only in quiet waters things mirror themselves undistorted, only in a quite mind is adequate perception of the world.”

- Hans Margolius

Reflection

“Learn to get in touch with the silence within yourself, and know that everything in your life has purpose. There are no mistakes, no coincidences. All events are blessings given to us to learn from.”

-Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

Get this if you get anything: You are not what you do! If you are what you do, when you don’t, you aren’t. Your value comes from yourself and your very existence.”

-Wayne Dyer

*“Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others
cannot keep it from themselves.”*

-Sir James Barrie

*“Let us not look back in anger, or forward with fear,
but around in awareness.”*

-James Thurber

“The mind asks the questions, the heart has the answers.”

-Byron Katie

*“Don’t spend your precious time asking “why isn’t the world
a better place?” it will only be time wasted. The question to ask
is “How can I make it better?” To that there is an answer.”*

-Leo Buscaglia

*“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny
matters compared to what lies within us.”*

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

*“Everything that begins also ends.
Make peace with that and all will be well.”*

-Buddha

*“Love is everything. It is the key to life,
and its influences are those that move the world.”*

-Ralph Waldo Trine

*“Appreciation is a wonderful thing.
It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well.”*

-Voltaire

Meditation

*“In the sweet territory of silence we touch the mystery.
It’s the place of reflection and contemplation,
and it’s the place where we can connect with the deep
knowing, to the deep wisdom way.”*

-Angeles Arrien

“Learn to be silent. Let your quiet mind listen and absorb.”

-Pythagoras

“He who conquers the mind, conquers the world.”

-Paramahansa Yogananda

*“I have so much to do today,
I will need to take twice as long to meditate.”*

-Gandhi

*“Meditation brings wisdom; lack of meditation leaves
ignorance. Know well what leads you forward and what
holds you back, and choose the path that leads to wisdom.”*

-Buddha

“The unexamined life is not worth living.”

-Socrates

Recommended Meditation resources:

www.chopra.com

www.waynedyer.com

Journey of Awakening; a Meditator's Guide Book, Ram Dass
Wherever You Go, There You Are; Mindfulness Meditation in
Everyday Life, Jon Kabat-Zinn
Meditation - The Complete Guide,
Patricia Monaghan & Eleanor Viereck

Love is Space, Deva Premal: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmC1T7Q_7hc&list=PLOPEaG7fGQPhbZXB7qopR7J8rAXUN9Ex8

Meditation Mantra / Nature sounds: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_gnN-MDZDWA

Recommended modifications to any meditation practice: Begin each session by spending time in the Good Trophy Room for about five minutes or so. Allow yourself to reflect on any “new” trophies or any special trophies that come to mind and then allow yourself to slip into a state of gratefulness (perhaps for another few minutes or so) before letting go of these thoughts and beginning your mantra or however else you normally meditate. Whether or not you add these five or ten minutes to your session or incorporate them as part of the session is up to you.

Namaste.



Revision; June 21, 2016

The Trophy Effect, by Michael Nitti * Advanced Exercises * Copyright © 2009 Michael Nitti

Note: The following excerpts of Exercises 2 & 3 have been included as a reference in support of Exercise 5. These exercises can be found in Chapter 19 of the Trophy Effect, yet, if you would like a separate PDF copy of these Exercises (1, 2, 3, & 4), please click on the following link, enter your full name in the subject line, and hit SEND. exercises@thetrophyeffect.com

Excerpt, Exercise 2: (Enjoy: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmC1T7Q_7hc&list=PLOPEaG7FGQPhbZXB7qopR7J8rAXUN9Ex8)

The purpose of this Exercise is to teach you to *override your reactive mind* by training you to be on the lookout for “good intention” *rather* than for proof that you (or others) aren’t good enough – while at the *same* time, awarding yourself as many good trophies as possible! Which means, you must immediately begin looking for situations where you (or others) are acting *intentionally* and in support of the *greater good, instead of reacting from fear*. As you can imagine, the more you award yourself good trophies, the sooner you’ll realize that “the fear of not being good enough” has no power over you!

Now, to extract *all* the value you can out of this exercise, you’ll want to keep your eyes peeled for *every* little thing that’s deserving of a good trophy – whether it’s actions that you initiate *or* actions initiated by others – and then, celebrate these things in your journal. As with the first Exercise, this will require that you let go of any notion you have that good trophies are “special or rare” or any resistance you have to patting yourself – or anyone else – on the back...

With *this* Exercise, it’s about being *fully conscious* of what you’re looking for, which is because once you *begin looking* for “good things,” you *will* see them!

Look around! Allow yourself to be moved and inspired by every act of *positive intention* you come to observe. Whether it’s courage, determination, contribution, or compassion, *or* excellence, empathy, or love – or any other evidence that the universe is unfolding in alignment with the greater good. *Any time* you see *any* of these things, *it’s trophy time!*

Recently, I was in a grocery store waiting to check out when I noticed two women in line at the next register. Both of these ladies had children in tow and were attempting to unload their groceries onto the conveyer while keeping an eye on the kids. I could tell that the one lady had noticed something about the

woman in front of her that caused her to laugh, and could *also* tell that she was about to say some-thing, but didn't. In fact, she actually began to speak, and then didn't, *several* times before finally excusing herself to say what she wanted to say. At which point, the other lady started to laugh as well – which resulted in an *immediate rapport* – and within no time, both of them were laughing and chatting away – which inspired the lady who had just finished checking out to wait for her “new friend” at the door. And from there, I continued to watch as they laughed all the way into the parking lot – where they finally said goodbye with giant smiles on their faces...

Now, first of all, if I wasn't *open* to seeing this little interaction, I wouldn't have noticed it, yet what would I have missed? Was this really such a big deal?

Well, what I saw was *the truth*. I got to see a human being – who allowed herself to be moved by another – who then struggled with her *fear of not being good enough* before she finally spoke up. In other words, I got to see a tug-of-war between *the Self* and *the Mind* where the Self ultimately won – at which point, the one lady acted with *an intention to empower* the other. She *brought forth* empathy...

And, because she did, the other lady allowed *herself* to be inspired, instead of simply saying “thank you” and hurrying to her car – which, I could tell she was *about to do* before she re-thought it and decided to wait – which, was another *intentional act* on the other side of a tug-of-war, that was won by the *Self*. I then got to watch as two *fully present* and empowered human beings laughed their way to their cars, while their kids were becoming fast friends as well – more than likely because *they* were inspired by *the energy* that was going on between the two mothers...

In any case, because I allowed myself to be empowered by this whole interaction, I gave all three of us trophies! Yep, even the ladies. And I got back into my car a lot more inspired than when I arrived at the store – feeling even better about my day than I already was. All because a stranger pushed through her fears and said something she could have just as easily not said. She could have lost that tug-of-war with her mind and I'd have gotten back in my car without awarding anybody any trophies – or being inspired.

Now, to support you in being able to replicate this Exercise, please notice a few things about this incident: it happened in a public place, it involved people I didn't know, and it had nothing to do with me – and I wouldn't have noticed it if I hadn't been open to seeing it.

And still, although what I observed inside the store was fairly subtle, on the way out of the grocery store, I paused to buy a box of Girl Scout cookies (also taking time to commend the salesmanship of the young lady who was selling them) and then helped a woman lift a heavy case of bottled water from the bottom of her shopping cart into her trunk. Bingo! Two more trophies. Pretty easy, huh?

Yes, it *is* easy once you are *looking* for situations such as these, but please be clear that this Exercise isn't about doing "good deeds" (although what would be so terrible about that?). It's about discovering that you have full control over your perceptions and how you show up in every moment...

What's important to notice is that I didn't have to go out of my way to make any of these things happen because each one of these situations presented itself – and I recognized them as trophies – all within the context of my daily routine. And yet, if I hadn't trained myself to be on the lookout for trophy-worthy situations, then what would I have probably observed in each case?

Well, I might have seen two mothers who weren't able to keep their bratty kids from disturbing other customers, *or* I could have been annoyed by the cookie stand blocking the exit in order to shame me into buying cookies, *or* I could have seen a lady who was too meek to ask the clerk for assistance to her car. But I didn't. I saw what I saw, *and so can you...*

So, please get out there, build some momentum, and have fun!

Of course, while fun is a good thing, your first priority must be to capture your "trophy-earning moments" in writing, as they occur. Therefore, whether you use your smart phone or a day-planner, or a simple pocket notepad, try to take a moment to document every little trophy. And then, even if you simply write things down on "post-its," I suggest that you transfer everything into your primary journal at least once per day (which will provide you with yet another opportunity to feel good about these things as you do). In any case, and no matter how you choose to do it, it will serve you to commit all of your good trophies to memory by writing them down whenever possible...

And, as important as this is, it's your newly modified "evaluation criteria" that's paramount to your success. Therefore, it's imperative that you make it as easy as possible to award yourself good trophies. So, as I've said, *lighten up!* This is your life. You get to invent the rules. If you choose to acknowledge yourself for waking up on time or for walking your dog, what a great way to start the day!

Remember, until now, your aversion to feeling too full of yourself or to celebrating every little thing has prevented you from – well, feeling good about every little thing. This must stop! Life is filled with little things, so putting off being happy or inspired until the big things show up is a recipe for resignation and despair.

So, no matter how you begin your day, if you do so by keeping your word to yourself, that's a trophy! Did you work out? Did you prepare anyone a nice breakfast (including yourself)? With whom in your family did you share some love before going your separate ways? Whatever you do, there are surely several trophies "waiting to happen" somewhere within your morning routine. And yet, it's up to you to look for them or cause them to occur – which is the point!

Do you drive to work? If so, would you be willing to allow another driver to cut in front of you where you typically would have sped up to prevent that from happening? Or, maybe someone else let you go first. Either way, it's trophy time!

As you can see, once you shift your focus to looking for good intention – and to intentionally do good things on purpose – you could easily collect a dozen trophies before you even reach your workplace. In fact, it will serve you to pause several times each day to think back on what's happened up to that point in order to capture anything you may have overlooked – including anything worthy that "seems" to have happened by accident! Accident or not, if it was a good thing, be grateful, and give it a trophy!!

Allow yourself to be moved and inspired by every *act of intention* you observe. Whether it's you doing something in support of someone else or somebody else doing something for you – or *anyone* doing *anything* in support of others (including incidents as subtle as the ones I witnessed at the grocery store). No matter how trivial an incident may seem, if it was born of a positive intention, please apply your newly-revised evaluation criteria and honor it with a trophy!

Again, it's as easy as holding a door for a stranger, allowing someone to cut ahead of you in a check-out line, complimenting someone, sending or receiving a thank-you card or email, leaving a generous tip, taking out a neighbors trash, or simply offering someone an intentional, loving smile...

No matter what trophy-worthy actions you initiate or observe, whether you choose to employ your smart phone, a journal, or a notepad (or simply scribble

your trophy on a scrap piece of paper), please capture your trophies as you go, and then transfer as much of what you capture each day into your Good Trophy Room journal each night...

No matter how quickly you master this process, I invite you to re-visit this Exercise for the next few weeks – or until you feel that you’ve fully conditioned yourself to “perceive your world” in this manner. At the very least, please review your journal at least once a day, allowing yourself to be empowered by your ever-expanding sense of intentionality and worthiness!

*“Increasing your self-esteem is easy.
Simply do good things and remember that you did them.”*

-John Roger

Excerpt, Exercise 3: (Enjoy: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_gnN-MDZDWA)

The purpose of Exercise #3 is to cause you to express your true intention, *at will* - allowing you to know that you have *full* control over your focus and your actions. What’s possible is the experience of feeling fully responsible for your own life (meaning, the ability to actually experience yourself as *the creator* of your life), which you will come to learn by actually *acting intentionally* whenever you choose.

All of us have been blessed with the power of choice and the ability to manifest our own destiny, yet most of us rarely feel this way because of our social conditioning and our fears. On top of that, *most* of us are living “in reaction” *most* of the time – which not only prevents us from feeling our *connected-ness* with others, it interrupts the natural flow of intention and love. This Exercise will allow you to break free of all this, so that you can access to this *natural* flow of *Source energy*.

In Exercise #2 your job was to acknowledge all of the trophy-worthy situations that showed up during the course of your day – *without having to go too far out of your way*. In *this* Exercise, we’ve raised the bar; which means you’re about to be presented with the opportunity to earn some *very special* trophies, by stepping *even further beyond* your comfort zone. In other words, it’s breakthrough time! So, I *urge you* to not only play full out, but to *keep* stepping up *until* you know you’ve had a breakthrough!

In the previous Exercise, an example of “not having to go too far out of your way” may have been helping someone load groceries into their car, which was parked directly next to your own. In that situation, although your action was fully deserving of a trophy, the opportunity more or less showed up for you. In this Exercise, an example of “stepping beyond your comfort zone” would be to notice someone who could use some help *on the other side of the parking lot* (which would definitely require that you go out of your way) and then, after joyfully lending a hand, returning their shopping cart to the store.

Your mission is to be on the lookout for situations that require you to stretch yourself beyond the norm; Situations where your mind whispers in your ear that you’re going too far or that you’re about to look foolish and implores you to quit. And yet, this is precisely when you’ll know that you’re on the right track, as the outcome of this Exercise is to discover what happens when you *intentionally* override your mind in favor of doing something you normally wouldn’t do...

This time we’ve raised the bar. So the only way to earn a good trophy during this Exercise is by truly *connecting* with someone. Again, this isn’t about playing “good deed tag” – where you sneak in, collect a trophy, and be on your way. Instead, you must establish and complete a “cycle of connection,” – which is an interaction where two human beings have understood that a difference was made and acknowledged their “oneness” in that moment. For instance, when paying someone a compliment or lending someone a hand, you must elicit a response. Make sure that it’s acknowledged (even if it’s just a smile) and then acknowledge it back.

One fairly extreme, yet otherwise perfect, example of this occurred when one of my long-time clients encountered an elderly gentleman on a walker, who was entering a public restroom, as my client was leaving. At first, my client simply held the door but then realized that the gentleman was in need of additional help – as he was shaking pretty bad and seemed to be having trouble making his way inside. In support, my client steadied the walker and guided the man by the elbow while walking him *s-l-o-w-l-y* to the urinal.

At this point, my client’s mind was whispering into his ear that holding the door would have been just fine and to leave while the leaving was good – yet instead, he asked the gentleman, “Are you okay?” To which the man responded “No.” By now, my clients mind was no longer whispering, but *imploring* him to leave without asking any more foolish questions. However, my client refused

to listen to his mind and instead asked the man what was wrong. “I can’t get my zipper down,” the man replied.

By then, my client’s mind was literally *screaming* at him to wish the man well and to leave at once – yet, my client pushed through his “discomfort” and proceeded to help the gentleman with his zipper.

But then, for whatever reason – perhaps because he was already so nervous – the man was suddenly shaking so badly that he told my client that he couldn’t *free himself* from his pants to do what he came to do. And just who do you suppose helped “free him” from his pants?

Now, I know this is a rather extreme example, but what happened that day is that my client walked into that restroom as the person *he wasn’t* and walked out of it as the person *he was*. He had been transformed. And although he didn’t know *how* it happened, what he did know was that for one brief, beautiful moment, his mind actually *shut up*. It went silent. In the end, he did not have to push past his mind, because it literally disappeared when the *Self* showed up. And when the *Self* showed up, so did courage, empathy, compassion, and love.

So, does this mean that in order to play full out you’re going to have to hang out in public restrooms? Of course not. Yet you must be willing to step into situations where you’re prepared to keep telling your mind to shut up – until it does. So long as you stretch yourself, your mind will get the message...

No matter what, keep putting yourself out there! Remain on the lookout for situations where you can make a difference – and then speak and act with the intention to leave another human being more empowered than they were before you showed up.

Therefore, I invite you to remain on the look-out for situations where you will be required to step beyond your comfort zone, such as: 1) Gladly going beyond where you normally stop, 2) Adding significantly more value than others would expect, 3) Doing something for someone so that they don’t have to, 4) Giving someone the gift of your listening and your empathy, or 5) Re-establishing a relationship by resolving an “in-completion” or a misunderstanding from the past. Or, figure out how to step beyond a more tangible fear that you may have, such as flying, or heights, or public speaking. If you typically avoid any of these things, find a way to schedule an activity that will both require and inspire a breakthrough – and then make it happen!!

In fact, why not intend to do all these things – and *more* – as often as possible over the course of the next few weeks?

And just as with Exercise #2, please capture these incidents in writing as they occur – and then transfer whatever you capture each day into your Good Trophy Room journal each night. And also make note of any insights you may be having as a result of doing this Exercise.

Finally, I encourage you to continue with this Exercise for at least two weeks – or until you're satisfied that you've truly experienced a break-through – or have otherwise achieved the outcome. Until then, please review your journal entries whenever possible, allowing yourself to be empowered by your ever-expanding expression of *Self* and your connectedness with others...

Please click on the following link to purchase either The Trophy Effect book or audio program: <http://thetrophyeffect.com/10.html>

...and, if you already own a copy, I invite you to send one to someone as a gift...

Namaste.