

# The Work of Byron Katie

An Introduction

“No one can give you freedom but you.  
This little book will show you how.”

—Byron Katie

This booklet presents the essence of The Work of Byron Katie. Each year, thousands of these booklets are sent by request, at no charge, to non-profit organizations around the world, helping people discover the life-changing power of inquiry.

If you would like to explore this process further, we suggest you ask for *Loving What Is* wherever books are sold. The book version will take you deeper into The Work, and includes many examples of Katie facilitating people on issues such as fear, health, relationships, money, the body, and more. *Loving What Is* is also available as an audiobook, which offers you the invaluable experience of hearing Katie do The Work in live workshop recordings. The book and audiobook are available on our website as well, [thework.com](http://thework.com), or they can be ordered by calling 800.98KATIE (52843).

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## Introduction

The Work of Byron Katie is a way to identify and question the thoughts that cause all the suffering in the world. It is a way to find peace with yourself and with the world. Anyone with an open mind can do this Work.

Byron Kathleen Reid became severely depressed while in her thirties. Over a ten-year period her depression deepened, and for the last two years Katie (as she is called) was seldom able to leave her bedroom. Then one morning, from the depths of despair, she experienced a life-changing realization.

Katie saw that when she believed her thoughts she suffered, and that when she didn't believe her thoughts she didn't suffer. What had been causing her

depression was not the world around her, but what she *believed* about the world around her. In a flash of insight, she saw that our attempt to find happiness was backward—instead of hopelessly trying to change the world to match our thoughts about how it “should” be, we can question these thoughts and, by meeting reality as it is, experience unimaginable freedom and joy. As a result, a bedridden, suicidal woman became filled with love for everything life brings.

Katie developed a simple yet powerful method of inquiry, called The Work, that showed people how to free themselves. Her insight into the mind is consistent with leading-edge research in cognitive neuroscience, and The Work has been compared to the Socratic dialogue, Buddhist teachings, and twelve-step programs. But Katie developed her method without any knowledge of religion or psychology. The Work is based purely on one woman's direct experience of how suffering is created and ended. It is astonishingly simple, accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds, and requires nothing more than a pen and paper and a willingness to open the mind. Katie saw right away that giving people her insights

or answers was of little value—instead, she offers a process that can give people their own answers. The first people exposed to her Work reported that the experience was transformational, and she soon began receiving invitations to teach the process publicly.

Since 1986 Katie has introduced The Work to millions of people around the world. In addition to public events, she has done The Work in corporations, universities, schools, churches, prisons, and hospitals. Katie's joy and humor immediately put people at ease, and the deep insights and breakthroughs that participants quickly experience make the events captivating. Since 1998 Katie has directed the School for The Work, a nine-day curriculum offered several times a year. The School is an approved provider of continuing education units in the U.S., and many psychologists, counselors, and therapists report that The Work is becoming the most important part of their practice. Katie also presents a five-day No-Body Intensive and an annual New Year's Mental Cleanse—a four-day program of continuous inquiry that takes place in Los Angeles at the end of December. She sometimes offers weekend workshops as well. Audio and video recordings of

Katie facilitating The Work on a wide range of topics (sex, money, the body, parenting, etc.) are available at her events and on her website, [thework.com](http://thework.com).

Katie has written three bestselling books: *Loving What Is*, which was written with her husband, the distinguished writer Stephen Mitchell, and has been translated into twenty-nine languages; *I Need Your Love—Is That True?*, written with Michael Katz; and *A Thousand Names for Joy*, written with Stephen Mitchell. Her other books are *Question Your Thinking*, *Change the World*; *Who Would You Be Without Your Story?*; *Peace in the Present Moment* (selections from Byron Katie and Eckhart Tolle, with photographs by Michele Penn); for children, *Tiger-Tiger, Is It True?*, illustrated by Hans Wilhelm; and her latest, *A Friendly Universe*, also illustrated by Hans Wilhelm.

Welcome to The Work.

## What Is Is

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

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

People new to The Work often say to me, “But it would be disempowering to stop my argument with reality. If I simply accept reality, I’ll become passive. I may even lose the desire to act.” I answer them with a question:

“Can you really know that that’s true?” Which is more empowering? — “I wish I hadn’t lost my job” or “I lost my job; what intelligent solutions can I find right now?”

The Work reveals that what you think shouldn’t have happened *should* have happened. It should have happened because it did happen, and no thinking in the world can change it. This doesn’t mean that you condone it or approve of it. It just means that you can see things without resistance and without the confusion of your inner struggle. No one wants their children to get sick, no one wants to be in a car accident; but when these things happen, how can it be helpful to mentally argue with them? We know better than to do that, yet we do it, because we don’t know how to stop.

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

## Staying in Your Own Business

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

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

If you are living your life and I am mentally living your life, who is here living mine? We’re both over there.

Being mentally in your business keeps me from being present in my own. I am separate from myself, wondering why my life doesn’t work.

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

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

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

## Meeting Your Thoughts with Understanding

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

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

No one has ever been able to control his thinking, although people may tell the story of how they have.

I don't let go of my thoughts—I meet them with understanding. Then *they* let go of *me*.

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

## Putting the Mind on Paper

The first step in The Work is to identify the thoughts and judgments that are causing your stressful emotions and to write them down. (Go to [thework.com](http://thework.com) where you'll find a Judge-Your-Neighbor Worksheet to download and print.)

For thousands of years, we have been taught not to judge—but let's face it, we still do it all the time. The truth is that we all have judgments running in our heads. Through The Work we finally have permission to let those judgments speak out, or even scream out, on paper. We may find that even the most unpleasant thoughts can be met with unconditional love.

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

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

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

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

## How to Fill In the Worksheet

I invite you to contemplate for a moment a situation where you were angry, hurt, sad, or disappointed in someone. Please be as judgmental, childish, and petty as you were in that situation. Don't try to be wiser or more spiritual or kinder than you were. This is a time to tantrum, to look within yourself, to look back at that specific situation and be totally honest and uncensored about why you were hurt and how you felt when the situation was occurring. Allow your feelings to express themselves as they arise, without any fear of consequences or any threat of punishment.

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

1. In this situation, time, and location, who angers, confuses, or disappoints you, and why?

I am angry with Paul because he doesn't listen to me about his health.

2. In this situation, how do you want them to change? What do you want them to do?

I want Paul to see that he is wrong. I want him to stop lying to me. I want him to see that he is killing himself.

3. In this situation, what advice would you offer to them?

Paul should take a deep breath. He should calm down. He should see that his behavior frightens me. He should know that being right is not worth another heart attack.

4. In order for *you* to be happy in this situation, what do you need them to think, say, feel, or do?

I need Paul to hear me when I talk to him. I need him to take care of himself. I need him to admit that I am right.

5. What do you think of them in this situation? Make a list.

Paul is unfair, arrogant, loud, dishonest, way out of line, and unconscious.

6. What is it in or about this situation that you don't ever want to experience again?

I don't ever want Paul to lie to me again. I don't ever want to see him ruining his health again.

## Tips

**Statement 1:** Be sure to identify what most upsets you in that situation about the person you are writing about. As you fill in statements 2 through 6, imagine yourself in the situation that you have described in statement 1.

**Statement 2:** List what you wanted them to do in this situation, no matter how ridiculous or childish your wants were.

**Statement 3:** Be sure that your advice is specific, practical, and detailed. Clearly articulate, step by step, how they should carry out your advice; tell them exactly what you think they should do. If they followed your advice, would it really solve your problem in statement 1? Be sure that your advice is relevant and doable for this person (as you have described him or her in statement 5).

**Statement 4:** Did you stay in the situation described in statement 1? If your needs were met, would that take you all the way to "happy" or would it just stop the pain? Be sure that the needs you have expressed are specific, practical, and detailed.

# Inquiry: The Four Questions and the Turnarounds

- 1. Is it true?** (Yes or no. If no, move to question 3.)
- 2. Can you absolutely know that it's true?** (Yes or no.)
- 3. How do you react, what happens, when you believe that thought?**
- 4. Who would you be without the thought?**

Turn the thought around. Then find at least three specific, genuine examples of how the turnaround is true for you in this situation.

Now, using the four questions, let's investigate statement 1 on the Worksheet: *Paul doesn't listen to me about his health*. As you read along, think of someone you haven't totally forgiven yet, someone who just wouldn't listen to you.

**1. Is it true?** As you consider the situation again, ask yourself, "Is it true that Paul doesn't listen to me about his health?" Be still. If you really want to know the truth, the honest yes or no from within will rise to meet the question as you recall that same situation in your mind's eye. Let the mind ask the question, and wait for the answer that surfaces. (The answer to questions one and two is just one syllable long; it is either yes or no. And notice if you experience any defense as you answer. If your answer includes "because ..." or "but ...", this is not the one-syllable answer you are looking for, and you are no longer doing The Work. You are looking for freedom outside you. I am inviting you into a new paradigm—alive, right here, right now.)

**2. Can you absolutely know that it's true?** Consider these questions: "In that situation, can I absolutely know that it's true that Paul isn't listening to me about his health? Can I ever really know when someone is listening or not? Am I sometimes listening even when I appear not to be?"

**3. How do you react, what happens, when you believe that thought?** How do you react emotionally when you believe that Paul doesn't listen to you about

his health? How do you treat him? Be still, notice. For example: "I feel frustrated and sick to my stomach, I give him 'the look.' I interrupt him. I punish him, I ignore him, I lose my temper. I begin talking faster and louder, I lie to him, I threaten him." Continue your list as you witness the situation and allow the images of past and future in your mind's eye to show you how you react when you believe that thought.

Does that thought bring peace or stress into your life? What images do you see, past and future, and what physical sensations arise as you witness those images? Allow yourself to experience them now. Do any obsessions or addictions begin to appear when you believe that thought? (Do you act out on any of the following: alcohol, drugs, credit cards, food, sex, television, etc.?) Also, witness how you treat yourself in this situation and how that feels. "I shut down. I isolate myself, I feel sick, I feel angry, I eat compulsively, and for days I watch television without really watching. I feel depressed, separate, resentful, and lonely." Notice all the effects of believing the thought *Paul doesn't listen to me about his health*.

**4. Who would you be without the thought?** Now consider who you would be, in that same situation, without the thought *Paul doesn't listen to me about his health*. Who (or how) would you be in the same situation if you didn't believe that thought? Close your eyes and imagine Paul apparently not listening to you. Imagine yourself without the thought that Paul doesn't listen to you (or that he even *should* listen). Take your time. Notice whatever is revealed to you. What do you see now? Notice the difference.

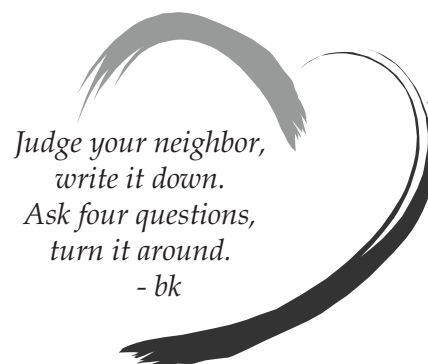
**Turn it around.** The original statement, *Paul doesn't listen to me about his health*, when turned around, becomes "I don't listen to myself about my health." Is that turnaround as true or truer? Now identify examples of how you don't listen to yourself about your health in that very same situation with Paul. Find at least three specific, genuine examples of how this turnaround is true. For me, one example is that in that situation I was out of control emotionally, and my heart was pumping.

Another turnaround is "I don't listen to Paul about his health." Find at least three examples of how you were not listening to Paul about his health, from *his*

perspective, in that situation. Are you listening to Paul when you're thinking about him not listening to you?

A third turnaround is "Paul does listen to me about his health." For example, he put out the cigarette he was smoking. He might light another one in five minutes, but in that situation, even as he was telling me that he didn't care about his health, he was apparently listening to me. For this and for each turnaround you discover, always find at least three specific, genuine examples of how the turnaround is true for you in this situation.

After sitting with the turnarounds, you would continue a typical inquiry with the next statement written on the Worksheet—in this case, *I want Paul to see that he is wrong*—and then with every other statement on the Worksheet.



*Judge your neighbor,  
write it down.  
Ask four questions,  
turn it around.  
- bk*

## Your Turn: The Worksheet

Now you know enough to try The Work. First relax, get very still, close your eyes, and wait for a stressful situation to come to mind. Fill in the Judge-Your-Neighbor Worksheet as you identify the thoughts and feelings that you were experiencing in the situation you have chosen to write about. Use short, simple sentences. Remember to *point the finger of blame or judgment outward*. You may write from your point of view as a five-year-old or of any time or situation in your life. Please do *not* write about yourself yet.

- 1. In this situation, time, and location, who angers, confuses, or disappoints you, and why?**  
I don't like (I am angry at, or saddened, frightened, confused, etc., by) (name) because \_\_\_\_\_ .
- 2. In this situation, how do you want them to change? What do you want them to do?**  
I want (name) to \_\_\_\_\_ .
- 3. In this situation, what advice would you offer to them?**  
(Name) should (shouldn't) \_\_\_\_\_ .
- 4. In order for you to be happy in this situation, what do you need them to think, say, feel, or do?**  
I need (name) to \_\_\_\_\_ .
- 5. What do you think of them in this situation? Make a list.**  
(Name) is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- 6. What is it in or about this situation that you don't ever want to experience again?**  
I don't ever want \_\_\_\_\_ .

## Your Turn: The Inquiry

One by one, put each statement on the Judge-Your-Neighbor Worksheet up against the four questions. Then turn around the statement you're working on and find at least three specific, genuine examples for each turnaround. (Refer back to the example in the section entitled "How to Fill In the Worksheet." You can also find help at [thework.com](http://thework.com), or with The Work App, which includes a tutorial with Byron Katie.) Throughout this process, explore being open to possibilities beyond what you think you know. There's nothing more exciting than discovering the don't-know mind.

This Work is meditation. It's like diving into yourself. Contemplate the questions, drop down into the depths of yourself, listen, and wait. The answer will find your question. The mind will join the heart, no matter how closed down or hopeless you think you are: the gentler polarity of mind (which I call the heart) will meet the polarity that is confused because it hasn't yet been enlightened to itself. When the mind asks sincerely, the heart will respond. You may begin to experience

revelations about yourself and your world, revelations that will transform your whole life, forever.

Look at statement 1 on your Worksheet. Now ask yourself the following questions:

### 1. Is it true?

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

When asking the first question, take your time. The answer is either yes or no. (If no, move to question 3.) The Work is about discovering what is true from the deepest part of yourself. You are listening for *your* answer now, not other people's, and not anything you have been taught. This can be very unsettling at first, because you're entering the unknown. As you continue to dive more deeply, allow the experience to have you completely.

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

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

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

For instance, when I heard someone say, "People should be more loving," the question would arise in me "Can I absolutely know that that's true? Can I really know for myself, within myself, that people should be more loving? Even if the whole world tells me so, is it really true?" And to my amazement, when I listened within myself, I saw that the world is what it is in this

moment and that in this moment people couldn't possibly be more loving than they were. Where reality is concerned, there is no "what should be." There is only "what is," just the way it is, right now. The truth is prior to every story. And every story, prior to investigation, prevents us from seeing what's true.

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

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

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



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

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

After the four questions found me, I would notice thoughts like “People should be more loving,” and I would see that thoughts like these caused a feeling of uneasiness in me. I noticed that prior to the thought, there was peace. My mind was quiet, alert, and serene. This is who I am without my story. Then, in the stillness of awareness, I began to notice the feelings that came from believing or attaching to the thought. And in the stillness I could see that if I were to believe the thought, the result would be a feeling of unease and sadness. When I asked, “How do I react when I believe the thought that people should be more loving?” I saw that not only did I have an uncomfortable feeling (this was obvious), but I also reacted with mental images to prove that the thought was true. I flew off into an imagined world that didn’t exist. I reacted by living in a stressed-out body and mind, seeing everything through

fearful eyes, a sleepwalker, someone in a seemingly endless nightmare. The remedy was simply to inquire.

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

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

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

For many people, life without their story is literally unimaginable. They have no reference for it. So “I

don’t know” is a common answer to this question. Other people answer by saying, “I’d be free,” “I’d be peaceful,” “I’d be a more loving person.” You could also say, “I’d be clear enough to understand the situation and act in an appropriate, intelligent way.” Without our stories, we are not only able to act clearly and fearlessly; we are also a friend, a listener. We are people living happy lives. We are appreciation and gratitude that have become as natural as breath itself. Happiness is the natural state for someone who knows that there’s nothing to know and that we already have everything we need, right here now.

#### Turn it around.

To do the turnarounds, find opposites of the original statement on your Worksheet. Often a statement can be turned around to the self, to the other, and to the opposite. First, write it as if it were written about you. Where you have written someone’s name, put yourself. Instead of “he” or “she,” put “I.” For example, “Paul doesn’t listen to me about his health” turns around to “I don’t listen to myself about my health.” Find at least three specific, genuine examples of how this turnaround is as true as or truer than your original statement. Then

continue with “I don’t listen to Paul about his health.” Another type is a 180-degree turnaround to the extreme opposite: “Paul does listen to me about his health.” Don’t forget, for each turnaround find at least three specific, genuine examples of how the turnaround is true for you in this situation. This is not about blaming yourself or feeling guilty. It’s about discovering alternatives that can bring you peace.

Not every statement has as many as three turnarounds, and some have more than three. Some turnarounds may not make any sense to you. Don’t force these.

For each turnaround, go back and start with the original statement. For example, “He shouldn’t waste his time” may be turned around to “I shouldn’t waste my time,” “I shouldn’t waste his time,” and “He should waste his time.” Note that “I should waste my time” and “I should waste his time” are not valid turnarounds; they are turnarounds of turnarounds, rather than turnarounds of the original statement.

The turnarounds are a very powerful part of The Work. As long as you think that the cause of your problem

is “out there”—as long as you think that anyone or anything else is responsible for your suffering—the situation is hopeless. It means that you are forever in the role of the victim, that you’re suffering in paradise. So bring the truth home to yourself and begin to set yourself free. It’s no longer necessary to wait for people or situations to change in order to experience peace and harmony. The Work is the direct way to orchestrate your own happiness.

## The Turnaround for Statement 6

The turnaround for statement 6 on the Judge-Your-Neighbor Worksheet is a little different from the others. “I don’t ever want to...” turns around to “I am willing to...” and “I look forward to...” For example, “I don’t ever want Paul to lie to me again” turns around to “I am willing to have Paul lie to me again” and “I look forward to having Paul lie to me again.”

This turnaround is about embracing all of life, just as it is. Saying—and meaning—“I am willing to...” creates open-mindedness, creativity, and flexibility. Any resistance you may have to the world is softened, and that allows you to open up to the situation in your life rather than hopelessly applying willpower to eradicate it or keep it away. Saying and meaning “I look forward to...” actively opens you to life as it unfolds. Some of us have learned to accept what is, and I am here to invite you to go further, to actually love what is. This is our natural state. Total freedom without fear is our birthright.

It’s good to acknowledge that the same feelings or situation may happen again, if only in your thoughts. When you realize that suffering and discomfort are the call to inquiry and to the freedom that follows, you may actually begin to look forward to uncomfortable feelings. You may even experience them as friends coming to show you what you have not yet investigated thoroughly enough.

## Questions and Answers

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

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

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

**A** How could I condone them? I’m not crazy. I simply notice that if I believe they shouldn’t exist when they do exist, I suffer. Can I just end the war in me? Can I stop raping myself and others

with my abusive thoughts and actions? If not, I'm continuing in myself the very thing I want to end in the world. I start with ending my own suffering, my own war. This is a life's work.

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

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

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

**A** My experience is that I do want something all the time: what I want is what is. It's not only interesting, it's ecstatic! When I want what I have, thought and action aren't separate; they move as one,

without conflict. If you find anything lacking, ever, write down your thoughts and inquire. I find that life never falls short and doesn't require a future. Everything I need is always supplied, and I don't have to do anything for it. There is nothing more exciting than loving what is.

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

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

Example: "My body should be strong, flexible, and healthy" becomes "My thinking should be strong, flexible, and healthy."

Isn't that what you really want—a balanced, healthy mind? Has a sick body ever been a problem, or is it your thinking about the body that causes the

problem? Investigate. Let your doctor take care of your body as you take care of your thinking. I have a friend who can't move his body, and he loves his life, because he loves what he thinks. Freedom doesn't require a healthy body. Free your mind.

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

**A** Judge your enemy, write it down, ask four questions, turn it around. See for yourself that forgiveness means discovering that what you thought happened didn't. Until you can see that there's nothing to forgive, you haven't really forgiven. We're all innocent; we hurt others because we believe our unquestioned thoughts. No one would ever harm another human being unless they were confused. So whenever you suffer: identify the thoughts you're thinking, write them down, question them, and allow the answers from within to set you free. Be a child. Start from the mind that knows nothing. Take your ignorance all the way to freedom.

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

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

## Katieisms

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

Personalities don't love—they want something.

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

Don't pretend yourself beyond your own evolution.

An unquestioned mind is the only suffering.

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

No one can hurt me—that's my job.

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

Sanity doesn't suffer, ever.

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

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

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

Reality is always kinder than the story we are believing about it.

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

There are no physical problems—only mental ones.

Reality is God, because it rules.

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

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

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

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

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

Gratitude is what we are without a story.

## The School for The Work

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

## The No-Body Intensive

The No-Body Intensive, a five-day guided exploration of your belief system, lovingly explores and questions the main aspects of identity. It brings to awareness everything identity is made of. It looks at how we create an identity, what it feels like to carry it, and how we can un-create it. Every step is a joyful lightening of being as your true nature appears.

## Weekend Workshops

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

## The Store for The Work

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

## The Work on the Internet

Katie and The Work are always accessible at [thework.com](http://thework.com). When you visit the website, you'll be able to do any of the following: read detailed instructions about The Work; watch video clips of Katie facilitating people on a wide variety of issues; view Katie's calendar of events; register for an upcoming nine-day School for The Work, a five-day No-Body Intensive, a weekend program, or Turnaround House; find out how to call the free *Do The Work* Helpline; learn about the Institute for The Work and its Certified Facilitators; download Judge-Your-Neighbor Worksheets; listen to archived radio interviews; download apps for your iPhone, iPad, or Android; subscribe to the free newsletter; or shop in the online store. We also invite you to Katie's Twitter and Facebook pages, with periodic live streaming video.

## For School Graduates: The Institute for The Work



After attending the School for The Work, you are invited to join the more than one thousand members enrolled in the Institute for The Work of Byron Katie. The Institute offers School graduates a way to stay immersed in The Work and offers the only official certification program for The Work. Whether or not you choose to enroll in the Certification Program, you'll have access to The Work community forums. The forums are an exciting interactive hub where members from around the world connect to discuss relevant issues, and where you can view and discuss "Topics with Byron Katie." You'll also have the opportunity to do The Work on a regular basis in our Daily Practice program. For more information, visit [instituteforthework.com](http://instituteforthework.com).

## Turnaround House for The Work

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



## The Four Questions

Here are the four questions again. Some people print them from a free template available at [thework.com](http://thework.com) or buy The Work App to keep sanity close at hand.

1. Is it true? (Yes or no. If no, move to question 3.)
2. Can you absolutely know that it's true? (Yes or no.)
3. How do you react, what happens, when you believe that thought?
4. Who would you be without the thought?

Turn the statement around to the self, to the other, and to the opposite. Then find at least three specific, genuine examples of how each turnaround is as true as or truer than the original statement.

Contributions to The Work Foundation are gratefully accepted. Through your gifts, others will have the opportunity to learn this transformational practice. You can make a contribution by mail to The Work Foundation, P.O. Box 638, Ojai, CA 93024, USA; on our website, [theworkfoundationinc.org](http://theworkfoundationinc.org); or by calling Byron Katie International at 800.98KATIE (52843).

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

The Work acts like a razor-sharp sword that cuts through illusion and enables you to know for yourself the timeless essence of your being.”

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



THE WORK OF BYRON KATIE

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A PDF version of this booklet can be downloaded on [thework.com](http://thework.com). This booklet includes excerpts from *Loving What Is*, which is available wherever books are sold, and through

**[thework.com](http://thework.com)**.