

HEALING THE HEART OF THE WORLD

Harnessing the Power of Intention to Change
Your Life and Your Planet

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“The Perfect Dream”

By Allan Hardman

A chapter from the new anthology,

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Harnessing the Power of Intention to Change Your Life and Your Planet*

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Allan Hardman is a gifted spiritual counselor and Toltec Master personally trained by Miguel Ruiz, author of *The Four Agreements* (Amber-Allen, 1997). He is a born teacher, whose piercing insight and compassionate humor create a loving environment that supports growth on the path to Personal Freedom. Allan is an expert in emotional healing, and healthy communication in relationships of all kinds. Allan teaches in Sonoma County, California, and leads “Journeys of the Spirit” to Peru and Mexico. His extensive website, at www.joydancer.com, features an online apprentice program, insightful articles and a complete calendar of spiritual journeys and events.

ALLAN HARDMAN:

The Perfect Dream

Until all humans understand that they are dreaming reality, and that each person's dream is the truth for them but for no one else, only then will there be peace in the hearts of all humans, and the broken heart of the world can heal.

Do you remember a drawing in your school biology textbook of a tree and an eyeball? It illustrates that when you look at a tree, you are not really seeing the tree. It shows how light is reflected off the tree, passes through the lens of your eye, and stimulates the rods and cones in the back of your eye. The rods and cones transform the light waves into neural impulses that travel into your brain and reproduce an image of the tree in your brain. Because of how the lens of your eye works, it actually projects the image of the tree upside down on the back of your eye. Your mind inverts the image.

Fascinating, isn't it? You are not really seeing what is out there in the world; you are looking at an inverted image made from reflected light and neurological impulses projected into your mind. You are looking at a little Virtual Reality that exists only in your mind.

It is fascinating to me that the virtual reality we see in our minds is not an accurate representation of our physical world in at least three major ways. First, we *add* information that is not really "out there." Second, we *miss* most of the available information about our physical universe because of the limitations of our senses, and third, we distort the information coming from our senses as it travels through our minds.

We Add Information To the Light

I am going to use the word "light" here to represent all of the information that our senses perceive, including visual light, sound, taste, smell, and touch.

Much of what we believe we perceive through our senses is actually added by our minds. Colors, sounds, tastes, smells, and other sensory information we imagine we perceive do not actually exist in Creation; we have learned to interpret the nerve impulses created by sense organs and call them "green" or "loud" or "sour" or "fragrant." Most of us agree about these interpretations so we do not stop to question them. The reality is, there are no colors until we "see" them with our mind. There are no sounds or tastes or smells until our mind creates them in its virtual reality.

We Miss Information In the Light

We also miss most of what is happening in our physical universe because of the limitations of our senses. The wave lengths of visible light, for example, are a tiny sliver of

the entire electromagnetic spectrum. If you were building a scale model of the entire spectrum, and made the width of the band perceptible to humans equal to the width of a hair, then the entire spectrum would stretch one quarter the distance to the nearest star! We perceive just a tiny sliver, and miss all the rest of the information in the full spectrum. What would your world look like if you could see the light given off by variations in temperature in the infrared spectrum? Or if you could perceive the waves carrying television programming or cell phone communications through the air?

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Imagine what the world looks, smells, and sounds like to a snake in the grass, a bat tracking a mosquito with its sonar, a worm tunneling through the garden soil, or an eagle soaring on an updraft. The quality and scope of the images collected and processed by their brains create a world in their minds that we would not recognize at all.

What then, is the real world? The worm's? The eagle's? Yours?

We Distort the Information In the Light

There is a third very important reality about how we perceive. In the teachings of the ancient Toltecs of Mexico brought to us by my mentor, Miguel Ruiz (author of *The Four Agreements* and other books) we learn that we also *distort* the limited and enhanced information collected by our senses, *before* we create the images of "reality" in our minds.

As the light, sound, and other perceptions are collected by our physical senses, they must travel through our *channels of perception* before they reach that place where they project the virtual reality in our minds. These channels of perception are filled with what the Toltecs call "stored light." It consists of all of the experiences, memories, beliefs, and opinions collected throughout a lifetime. As the incoming sensory information passes through these channels, it picks up pieces of this stored light that are similar in quality, so that by the time it creates the virtual reality in the mind, it is very different from what the senses actually brought in from the outside world.

Let's look at the source of the information stored in your mind's channels of perception. Where does it come from? Very early in your life, you began collecting and storing knowledge about what is good and what is bad; what is right, and who is wrong. You stored emotional memories and fears from your childhood. Your parents, siblings, relatives, teachers, religious leaders, peers, magazines, and TV, all downloaded information into your mind about the world, how it should be, and how you should be in it. You listened and stored opinions about sex, drugs, and rock and roll—not to mention politics, love, work, money, marriage, God, anger, and your body. That process has continued all of your life, supplemented by lovers, mates, bosses, talk show hosts, and beer commercials. All that knowledge is stored in your channels of perception, and distorts the reality perceived by your senses.

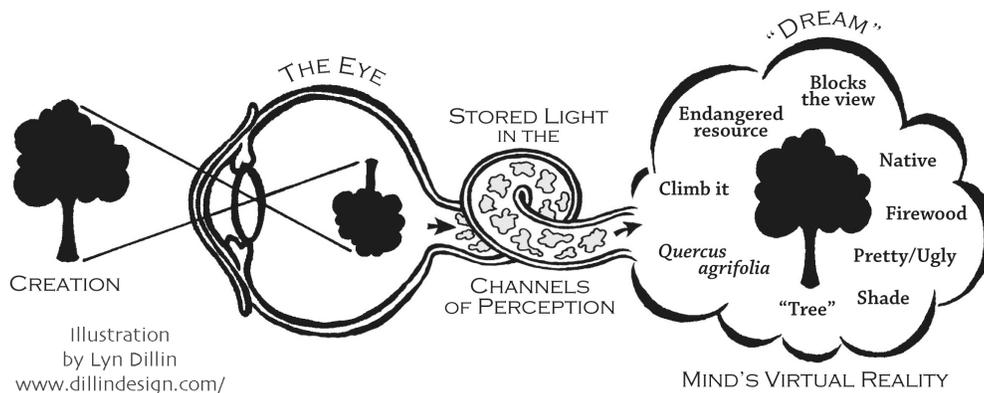
Here is an illustration of how the emotional programming works: A young woman grew up with a father who was always sarcastic and angry with her, and punished her harshly. The father wore a large bushy mustache. The images of the mustache, along with the painful emotional memories of her father's abuse, were stored in the young woman's channels of perception. As an adult, whenever she met a man with a large mustache, she felt a disquieting fear that she could not explain. When she learned that the reality of these men was being distorted by the memories and images stored in her mind's channels of perception she was able to understand her fear—and eventually free herself from it by clearing those old images and beliefs from those channels.

Your eyes, ears, and other physical senses collect data ("Light") from the outside world that is both enhanced by the mind and limited by your sense organs. This light then travels through channels of perception in your mind that are filled with stored light: old experiences, beliefs, opinions, and emotional memories. The stored information is added to the light the senses have collected and distort it. That distorted light is projected into your mind, to create your personal virtual reality.

The best way to describe this little virtual reality in the human mind is to say that it is a dream. We are all dreaming. The dreamed reality is unique and personal to each person—and does not exist anywhere in the outside world.

Imagine that five people go to a party. The first is someone who knows and loves you from your childhood. This person meets a stranger at the party, strikes up a conversation, and tells him about her longtime friend, you. The next person who arrives at the party is your mother, and she meets the same stranger. Your mother tells him all about her wonderful (or incomprehensible) child. The stories are completely different, and the stranger believes he has heard about two different people. Imagine then that someone who is angry with you arrives, meets the stranger, and tells him the angry story about you. The fourth person to arrive at the party is an ex-lover of yours (you know the one) who has a big story of his or her own to share with the stranger. Finally, you arrive at the party. You meet the stranger, and share your story about yourself. The stranger believes he has heard about five different people! He has heard five different dreams of you, each true for the teller.

Which story describes the real you? *Is there a real you? What then is reality?*



The Freedom of Awareness

There is tremendous freedom in the awareness that you are dreaming. If you recognize that your dreamed reality is unique to you and you alone, you can be free of all conflict. You will no longer need to defend your point of view, nor convince anyone that they are wrong about theirs. You will honor your beliefs and opinions as absolutely true, but true for you only. You will respect the beliefs of every other person, knowing that how they dream is the perfect expression of who they are and from whence they have come.

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This freedom is not easily won. The old dream is strong. It knows who is right and who is wrong, what is good and what is bad. You learned it long ago. It is embedded deeply in the recesses of your mind, and shared by most of your culture. The various versions and nuances (often conflicting) are enforced and enhanced by every subculture to which you belong—consciously or unconsciously.

People are rarely interested in hearing that their opinions and beliefs are not “true” outside of their own minds. Imagine you are a member of a progressive ecology-based political party, and you are invited to speak at a Young Republicans rally in the Midwest. What would they think of your description of the political problems in this country? How would they receive your solutions for change and your ideas about progress? Probably not very well. Why? Because they already know what is true, and they would know you are wrong. The same difficulty would exist if they came and spoke at your progressive party rally—you would know *they* were wrong. Without awareness, everyone believes that their dream of reality is the *true* reality.

When planes flew into the Twin Towers in New York City in 2001, the media in the U.S. was filled with stories and images of the terror, anger, pain, and disbelief that swept through this country. Did you also see the photos of people dancing in the streets, shooting guns into the air in celebration and joy? Celebrating made perfect sense to them. They were in a different part of the world, a different culture, and in a different dream about the U.S.

If an infant human pops into the world on the Palestinian side of the street, he is going to be taught a dream that believes the Israelis are a threat and deserve to be harmed. If that infant happens to enter the world on the Israeli side of the street, he learns that the Palestinians are the enemy. Their learned dreams of what is true are so real to them both, they are willing to kill and be killed in defense of them. They will die to defend a virtual reality constructed of distorted information that has been programmed into their minds that has nothing to do with what is really “out there.”

The Tutsis and Hutus in African Rwanda lived together in peace for centuries. They shared a common language, customs, genetics, and religion. After WWI, their Belgian colonizers decided that the minority Tutsis were a superior “race,” and issued ethnic identity cards to separate them from the Hutus. The Tutsis learned to dream their supe-

riority, and became harsh masters of the Hutus. When the limit of Hutu tolerance was reached in 1994, the Hutus slaughtered a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus in a one-hundred-day rampage.

Chaos and death were the result of an outside dream, enforced on peaceful people, and believed by them.

Our lives are filled with examples of how believing that our personal dream is the truth creates conflict and separation. A mother alienates her teenage daughter in a fight about the family rules. A husband and wife grow distant from arguing over who is right about the best way to manage money. Your inner voices argue about which outfit to wear, the mistakes you make, and the best course of action in your business. Religious organizations split over interpretations of doctrine. Saints are venerated and sinners are persecuted. Sides are chosen and conflict follows. Right and wrong circle each other, looking for weakness, proving points, creating winners and losers. The opinions, fears, and dogmas learned and believed create conflict, war, divorce, hurt, anger, hatred, and death.

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The Path to Freedom

If you believe that the personal dream in your mind is a true representation of what is “out there,” it will cause you endless conflict and suffering. You will believe that you are right about what you see and know, and others are wrong. You will create conflict through your need to convince others and defend yourself. You will be afraid of being wrong.

There is a simple price for freedom from the conflict and difficulties that I have described above: Understand that you are dreaming, and give up your need to be right.

The price is simple, but it is not easy. Your entire identity is created by, and depends on, what you believe is right. When you know you are right about politics and wars, global warming and the rain forest, teenage morality, the best spiritual path and the right diet, you feel safe. It is as though you have created a little island of safety in the midst of the chaos and turmoil of a confusing and unpredictable world. The price of freedom is to leave that island of safety, to face the unknown, and to understand that you do not know, and perhaps will never know, what is true and real in this universe. You can only dream your dream of it—and every other person can only dream their dream of it.

By leaving your island of safety, you offer yourself the opportunity for real personal freedom. You will discover that the fears, opinions and beliefs programmed into your mind are mostly lies that you were required to believe as a child. You are no longer the vulnerable child who had to conform or perish. As an adult you have resources and wisdom that can support and guide you into a new relationship with life, and all of creation.

You can change how you dream. If you have been distorting the incoming light with the beliefs and opinions stored in your channels of perception, you can clean those channels. You can find and delete the beliefs based in fear and limitation. You can choose new beliefs that make you happy. If your mind was programmed once, you can program it again—your way. We can instead learn to dream a new dream of love and acceptance for ourselves, our mates, our parents, our children, for every religious, political and cultural expression, and all of creation.

After all, if you are dreaming, why choose a nightmare?

Start with your own mind. Listen to the voices arguing to be right, making other parts of you wrong. Do not believe them! Begin by knowing that you are a perfect expression of Life in this universe—the same life that animates every being and event and all space in creation. Life is in the trees, the oceans, the exploding novas far out in space, the air molecules, and Life is in your mind and body. There is no place or time that Life ends and something else (like you) begins. You are Life. See creation through the eyes of Life. See the perfection. See the mysterious unfolding of something so big and so infinitely small that it is incomprehensible to the human mind.

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Determine to clean out the old distorting light so that you can perceive the beauty and mystery of life with clarity. Risk the unknown.

I want to offer you a process you can use to examine and clean old programming and distortions from your channels of perception. Approach this exercise as though you are a curious computer programmer, tracking down the faulty parts of a program that cause the printouts of your life to be distorted. Find the glitches that cause you to suffer, and rewrite a program that makes you happy. Do not judge what you find. Simple enough?

Make three vertical columns on a piece of paper. Label the one on the left “The Event,” and the one on the right “My Reaction.” With the center column blank, notice that there is no direct connection between an event in Creation and your reaction to it. What connects them is how you dream the event. Now label the center column “My Dream” or “My Story.”

If something makes you angry, depressed, hurt, sad, jealous, frustrated, scared, annoyed, or afraid, write that emotional reaction in the “My Reaction” column. Now put the event that “caused” the reaction in the “Event” column. Maybe someone was late to meet you, a pet died, you dented a fender, lost a love, or your child disobeyed *and* spilled the milk again. Perhaps you read about a war or natural disaster, lost a job or were ignored for a promotion, felt disrespected by a co-worker, or suffered another paper cut.

Use your chart to demonstrate to yourself that your emotional reactions to the events in your life result from how you dream them, not from the events themselves. As the curious programmer, see if you can find the old programs in your dream that cre-

ate any reaction you do not want. If you change any story in that program, it has to change the reaction. Same event, new reaction. It may take some practice, and it won't always happen in the heat of the moment, but I guarantee that if you work with this, you can change your programming, your dream, and your reactions to creation.

It is important to note that Creation itself has no emotional content. The universe itself does not know good and bad, right and wrong, or beautiful and ugly. All judgment, categorizing, and the resulting emotional content is added by the human mind. What we add is different for each individual, each religion, each gender, and each culture or nationality. It is all a dream.

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Here is an example: Imagine you are driving on the freeway, and an aggressive driver cuts in front of you, narrowly missing your car. Perhaps you react with fear and anger, you yell at him, flash your lights, maybe even tailgate him to teach him a lesson. Did the event cause your reaction? What stories are you telling yourself about this event? How are you dreaming it? "Crazy damn people, somebody should get them off the road. I could have been killed! Where are the cops when you need them?" If you decide that you would prefer to not react with fear and anger, you can change the story. Since you know you are dreaming, pick a story that makes you feel good.

How about dreaming that the driver is a man rushing his wife to the hospital? She is laying in the back seat, about to have a baby. He is desperate. He cuts you off. Same event, new story, new reaction: "Wow, be careful, and good luck! I will get out of your way. God bless the mom and baby!" Do you see that your reactions come from your dreaming mind, from the habits and programming from the past—*not* the event? And do you see that you have the power to reprogram your mind and give yourself choices about your emotional reactions? And if you have a choice, won't you choose to be happy and at peace with the world?

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Now try the process I described to explore your emotional reactions to wars, teenagers, inconsiderate neighbors, an enemy, terrorists, a boss, your mate or lover, the weather, abortion, the death penalty, global warming, species extinction, or anyone or anything that upsets you in any way. Especially, use this process with yourself. Clear the old programming that causes you to be upset or angry with yourself. Explore how you are distorting yourself, and how your distortions and stories make you feel. You *can*

free yourself from your old dream of yourself, and all of creation. It is worth the effort.

The Gift of Freedom

There is an exciting freedom available to you in your new dream. You will dream acceptance of what is, the way it is, without resistance, anger, hurt, or fear. You will be free to choose a new dream of acceptance and love for your body, mind, and spirit.

In this freedom is complete peace. Your inner voices will no longer make you wrong for how you act, talk, eat, dress, sing, dance, think, or feel. Nor will you make others wrong for their politics, habits, beliefs, or actions. You experience an inner peace that no person or event can take away from you.

You will know that everyone else is dreaming, and nothing they say or do has anything to do with you. If they are angry at you, judging you, or in awe of you, it will be clear to you that they are describing a virtual reality of you in their own mind. You will know not to believe them! You will know that they are dreaming just like you, and it is not personal. You are free to be you.

In your new dream the acceptance you feel for yourself extends to every person, creature, politician, war, natural disaster, love lost and love found, and all of Creation. You see and know the perfection.

In this clarity and freedom a great love for life radiates out from you, touching all of Creation. Your life becomes effortless, and the abundance of Life is offered to you in response to your love. Your heart is always open to give and to receive.

A Plan For Peace

As this understanding spreads throughout the evolving human consciousness, more and more people are taking responsibility for their personal dream, and the distortions that create it. In time, perennial enemies will awaken from their nightmares to discover that the reason they perceive their neighbors as an enemy is because they are distorting them with old beliefs programmed into their minds by someone else.

Imagine what will happen in this world when the Israelis and the Palestinians, the Irish Protestants and Catholics, the Hutus and Tutsis, the factions of Iraq, and fundamentalists of all kinds, realize that the only reason they are in conflict is the result of how they are dreaming themselves and each other—and their dream is not real.

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This is my peace plan for the world; for the Middle East, for the North, South, East and Westernmost parts of this Earth. This is my peace plan for couples in relationship, for parents with teenagers, for all races and religions, and for governments and their soldiers. And this is my plan for peace in the mind of each individual in the world: *Know you are dreaming.*

Know you are dreaming and change your dream. With a new dream, we create a new world.