

In a nutshell

This book's purpose is to show you how to learn to consciously enter the Now

This book stems from a very difficult experience. In 1982, my first wife, Claire, was diagnosed with a malignant melanoma in her right eye and was given only a few months to live. According to the medical science of that the time, no treatment could save her.

It made each day precious. The Present entered in our lives in an unavoidable way. And instead of a few months Claire, survived for 17 years, which allowed us to touch so many people's lives in our seminars.

Have you ever noticed that sometimes everything goes well, what you do works, you get what you need, and people appreciate you. You feel great. You experience enthusiasm, joy, and love. You are *truly* with other people. You are in a state of Creation, connected, and full of life.

And at other times it is the opposite. Few things work the way you want. You do not get what you need. You wish you were more appreciated, more loved, more acknowledged. You fear that others find you inadequate. You think that you are not enough--not smart, pretty, knowledgeable, funny, or articulate enough. You think that when you have money, a spouse, a home, fame you will be happy.

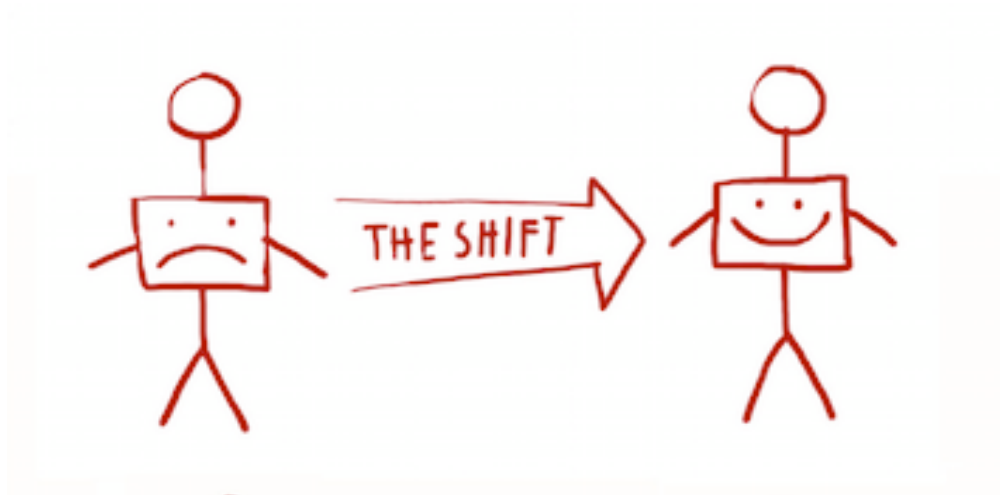
When you are in that state of being, all of these thoughts fill your minds and result in your not being *fully* present to the people you meet or the situations you encounter. The feelings they engender occupy your hearts. And so you often have a hard time truly listening to other people, truly being with them. You are in a state of Reaction, usually feeling alone, not understood.

Have you ever asked yourself why?

Our mentor taught us some things and we developed others. The first one is the awareness that these two sets of thoughts and feelings come from two different states of being. One is the state of fear and feelings of lack. The other is the state of love, presence, and connection.

Most of us make the mistake of thinking we are powerless to determine which state of being we experience. We think our state of being depends on something outside of ourselves. The opposite is true. Since our state of being is connected only indirectly with the circumstances in which we find ourselves, we can learn to choose it.

I refer to the change in state from fear and feelings of lack to one of love, presence, and connection as *the Shift*. It is a movement of the heart that our mind can produce.



State of Reaction
Fears and feelings of Lack

State of Creation
Love, Presence, and Connection

It took me 30 years to reach the point where I could describe simply the process of *the Shift*.

In a nutshell, creating *the Shift* requires three steps:

1. An understanding of the two states of being
2. An understanding of what the ego desires as opposed to what we really need
3. A goal that inspires us to make *the shift*

Step 1: Awareness of the two states of being

This clarity has been a revolution for me. I was not aware of the fact that there are only 2 states of being. I had the impression that there was an infinity of kinds of states of being. The sharpness of the distinction between the state of Reaction and that of Creation has been essential to my understanding of how to get out of the reactive state.

As soon as we have a fear, our automatic reaction is the need to seek reassurance, and this puts us in a reactive state. The reaction can be small or large or somewhere in between. Still it is a little bit like being pregnant either we are reacting from this fear or we are not. We are in a creative state only if we are not reacting to the fear.

The next step has been to learn which reactions indicate with certainty that we are in a state of reaction. When I insisted I was right, I caused a lot of damage while thinking I was in a creative state. This is the reason I suggest that you read carefully and ponder the chapter on that subject.

Mastering this clarity is a process; how to start?

In order to know in which state we are, we examine what I call "the fabric of the moment." Have we woven this moment from threads of fear and lack, or have we woven it from threads of love, presence, and connection? How do we feel? What is the nature of our thoughts?

Most of us think that the world or reality creates in us the fabric of the moment. This is not the case. We create it ourselves. The fabric of the moment is the lens through which we see and interpret all that we encounter. We take in data that confirm the thoughts and feelings we already have. So if we are in a state of fear and lack, we will feel alone, misunderstood, and unsupported. We will feel the need to defend ourselves, to prove ourselves, to perform, and to accumulate. And if we are in a state of love, presence, and connection, we create rather than react. We give rather than defend. And we express our natural empathy and compassion.

We all experience both states, usually without knowing how they came about. I have met very few people who can consciously shift from one to the other. The

first step is becoming aware of which state we're in: have we woven the fabric of the moment from threads of fear and lack or from threads of love, presence, and connection?

Step 2: Understanding the needs of the ego versus those of the actual self

This step took me much more time. The model I created is meant for you to use as a shortcut. I refer to it in this book as the Cohen's Ego Model.

Do you sometimes feel the need to be appreciated and, acknowledged? Do you sometimes feel the need to be perceived intelligent and, knowledgeable? Do you at times desire that others cannot do without you?

If you recognize that these are ego needs, you may still find them important to you. How to not be at their mercy? Is it possible?

My experience has shown that it is possible. But, we have to change our perspective, and that begins with an understanding of our ego.

The ego consists of three elements: the images we want others to have of us (our "projected self"), the ideas and evaluations we have of ourselves (our "conceptual self"), and the extraordinary being we would like to be (our "ideal self"). The interaction of these elements creates apparent needs. For example, if your ideal self believes you should be perfect or the best and your conceptual self tells you that you are less than perfect or the best, there is a gap that creates pain and generates the need to overwork or avoid situations where you might fail.

This awareness allows the final step.

Step 3: Choosing a goal not stemming from our ego needs

This is the key. The choice of the goal will induces *the Shift*. It allows the movement of the heart.

When we are in a state of fear and lack, our goals tend to involve getting. We want to receive praise, acknowledgement, admiration, and appreciation. This

drive comes from the needs of our ego, not from the expression of our true Self. The third step in *the shift* is to choose goals that do not involve a personal expectation. They entail giving, exploring, and contributing... rather than taking, imposing, and being right

If our "ideal self" expects us to be perfect or smart and our "conceptual self" does not measure up to these expectations, we feel in danger. The key then is to recognize that these are needs of your ego system, not of your actual or authentic Self. Our Actual Self does not need to prove that we are better, smarter, or more successful than others. Those are needs of the ego. This recognition can help us to see how we have put ourselves into a state of fear and lack. That's why we cannot expect a sincere movement of the heart without sincerely *willing* to change our goals, which is the third step in *the Shift*..

The conscious Shift allows us to enter the Present

- First, we pause to consider the fabric of the moment.
- Second, if it consists of fear and lack, we acknowledge that we have fallen prey to our ego, to the gap between what we think of ourselves and how we want to appear to ourselves or to others.
- Third, we change our lack-based goals of getting to generative goals of giving, , exploring... goals that do not stem from our egos.

Making the conscious shift requires acknowledging the fabric of the moment, recognizing when our ego system has put us in a state of reactivity, and letting go of our ego goal and choosing instead a goal that comes from our real being--a goal of contribution, exploration, or giving. When we do that, we enter the Present. That is why this book is called "an invitation to enter the now."

Joy, love, presence, and connection exist only in the now. And each time you enter the present, you *truly* connect with the people around you. *You are there for them, not for the needs of your ego.*

An example of *Shift* at a micro level, new perspectives, new emotions

A man riding a subway is shoved from behind. His immediate reaction is one of anger. He notices a seemingly careless young man hurrying past him. As he turns to confront the young man, he realizes that the person who actually bumped into him is blind. His feelings shift immediately and compassion fills his heart.

You can see in this example how the three steps of *the Shift* unfolded unconsciously. Anger was the fabric of the moment. It came from the ego's sense of having been violated. His state of being was reactive and his goal was to be right ("taking"). Then he (unconsciously) changed his goal to compassion, to "giving" love. His state of being instantly *Shifted* to Creation.

He could have just as easily seen the blind man and remained angry, but he didn't. His whole inner world shifted, and he was no longer at the mercy of that event. He moved out of the state of Reaction.

An example of *shift* at a higher level, new perspectives, new possibilities

The subway scenario describes a *shift* at a micro level. Let's examine a more profound macro-level *shift*.

Dr. Frei is a pediatric surgeon. In the eyes of many, he is a rising star. He manages the only pediatric surgery department in his area. His patients, his colleagues, and, through the media, the public at large, recognize him as an exceptionally dedicated physician.

Dr. Frei's dream is to ensure all children in his region get the best possible treatment. Pediatric surgery is different from surgery for adults in many ways. For the past several years, Dr. Frei has tried to convince all of the hospitals in the area to refer to him all the children who need surgery to his service.

This rubbed other surgeons the wrong way. Some of them felt their competence, not to mention their livelihood, was under attack. Some surgeons also argued that if they never did surgery on children, they would never improve their skills. The managing directors of other hospitals also did not want to lose the business that pediatric surgery represented.

Dr. Frei tried to win other hospitals over to his side by showing them that several cases would have had better results if performed by his service. An operation of four hours, for example, would take only two if performed by his team.

He gave lectures and and met with his colleagues, but nothing worked. The situation was very unpleasant for Dr. Frei and seemed inextricable.

He grew increasingly preoccupied and frustrated. On top of that he felt personally hurt because of the aggressive attitude the other surgeons displayed toward him.

How did Dr. Frei and his fellow surgeons come to a compromise for the sake of their patients? What made the surgeons let go of their egos in this situation? How did Dr Frei find a solution in which everyone felt fulfilled?

The short answer is that his understanding of the model allowed him to find a new goal in which there is no "taking" from the other surgeons. This, in turn, allowed most of the surgeons to naturally "give".

Again we can see the three steps of *the Shift*. Dr Frei wanted the children to be operated in his department; he was in a reactive state of being right. His understanding of the model helped him decide to look for a new goal, one that did not arise from his ego. This new goal made him shift immediately. His new state of being allowed most of the surgeons to change theirs.

This book includes many examples of people who have followed these steps and made *the Shift*. But there is no precise recipe or formula. The process is as much art as science. And every shift requires a new movement of the mind and the heart.