



**Michele Lisenbury Christensen's
Success Guru Interviews
Interview with Alan Cohen author of “A Deep Breath of Life”**

Recorded September 10, 2003

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Michele:

Welcome to the success guru interview series. I’m Michele Christensen and this call is being recorded on September 10th, 2003. My beloved guest is Alan Cohen, one of my favorite authors. He is the author of “A deep breath of life, I had it all the time” and many more fantastic books that provide a powerful spiritual message that the world is abundant, that living from our hearts is a wise thing to do and that we can truly live in concert with Spirit, so I hope that’s an adequate paraphrase of your message Alan and I’d love to hear more from you.

Alan:

I couldn’t have said it better myself.

Michele:

Good. Well, I’m hoping through our dialogue that people will get more of a taste of you that I’ve had over the years and a sense of what you’re up to now, so one of the things that I was wondering about was “do you get to go back and read, like “A deep breath of life” is something that I read most days, I won’t say every day but I’ve given it to other people also and they say years later, they didn’t just read it through once but it’s a continual gift. This 365 day duly inspiration for heart centered living. To start out, that’s what I wanted to ask Alan, do you read it?

Alan:

Occasionally I do and I’m always impressed only because when I write I come from Spirit and I’m in the moment and just flowing and allowing what wants to come through and it may sound silly but a lot of the stuff I wrote, I don’t remember that well because I was in a slightly altered state as I wrote it and I go back and I read and I go, “that’s good stuff” and not to be egotistical but it’s more of a complement to Spirit, for its ability to just flow.

Michele:

Well, good I’m glad I got out of the way enough for you to say that. Thanks, Spirit!

Alan:

Sure.



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Michele:

I would love to hear it in your voice. I was thinking I might read today’s entry just because I think it speaks to the kind of audience that Michael and I have in our community. We have about seven thousand people and they’re dedicated to success made fun. Today is about turning on everything. Do you have that in front of you?

Alan:

It’s one of my favorites.

Michele:

So, would you read it or shall I?

Alan:

How about if I just tell it, you want me to just tell it?

Michele:

Even better. Which is along the line of story, right?

Alan:

A number of years ago I had a hot tub in my home and I also built a sauna and I noticed that when the sauna was on and the hot tub were on it would start to, it would turn the circuit breaker down, it would overload the system. So I just decided that I was asking for much too much pleasure for one man and I decided I had over done my comfort quotient and so I made a rule for myself and any of my guests as family that we could only have one on at a time. So either you put the hot tub on or the sauna on, but you never have the both on at the same time and I kind of lived like that for a couple of years and then one day I had an electrician friend come over and I said “would you please check this out” and he said “okay, turn on the hot tub”. I turned on the hot tub and he said, “turn on the sauna” and I turned on the sauna. Then he said, “turn on the oven” and I said, “you’re crazy, I’m going to blow up the house”, he said, “just trust me”. So, he goes to the electric box and he’s playing around and he said, “I think I can see what your problem is”. Well finally, he said, “turn on everything” and I said “you’re nuts, but I’ll do it”. And so he said, “I can see what your problem is” and I said, “what’s my problem”? He says, “you have a screw loose”. And I said “well, I’ve been told that before but never about my electrical system”. And he said “come over here” and he showed me, he said “there’s a little,

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2



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the wire has loosened from the screw here and it's creating an arc of electricity and when that arc goes across, it kind of heats up the system and it thinks it's overloading and it shuts down", so he says, "I'll just tighten this screw" and he said, "you have the capacity to use your hot tub, sauna, oven and a lot more things at once" and he said, now you can just have it all". And I felt, my god, what a metaphor. Am I sensing guilt, unworthiness or who knows what. I just decided that one good thing at a time was enough. But he proved to me through that experience that really it's not an either/or universe, it's an either/and universe and we can often have a lot more than we expect just by virtue of the fact that we're willing to let it in rather than setting these limiting standards upon our self.

Michele:

Gorgeous. I love that story and I love how you got to be right for as long as you believed that you only had the capacity to hold sauna or hot tub that was true. And sometimes it takes a teacher to point out

Alan:

I'm involved in an election now. I ask people these questions in my workshops and maybe I'll ask the folks who are listening on the line and you can just kind of think to yourself.

Michele:

Please.

Alan:

Would you rather have a job that you enjoy or one that pays? And then I ask would you rather be in a relationship or free? And then I ask would you rather have personal freedom or financial freedom? Would you rather be sexual or spiritual? And usually a bunch of people raise their hands to one or the other until they start saying, well both and then I say well, that's the whole trick here that we make these little limits in our brain of sex or spirit, or creativity or money and it's not an either/or universe, it's neither/and universe and so it really behooves us to go for the whole pot of gold rather than just a piece of it.

Michele:

Great! Now tell me how we do that? When we've got something, the electrical constraint appeared real at that time. I know from my husband, he's a construction engineer and he thinks

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3



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it's either get rid of the stress and get rid of the money or keep the money and keep the stress. So what happens when your constraints appear real? How do you go for the whole pot?

Alan:

Well, there's two ways you change your experience. One is by manipulating conditions and the other is by changing your mind and we can sometimes change conditions but we can always change minds. So, the trick is to keep going and trying on scenarios for size until you hit the way it really feels peaceful. So, if you can live without one and just take the other and enjoy it, great, so live with that. But if you're still itching to have it all, I wouldn't stop there. I'm never a teacher or fan of tolerance or toleration. Toleration means you put up with something less than you truly want and hope that things will change one day, that's not a masterful approach. One of my lectures is called, "Think big, settle for more" and so I refuse to stop until there's a win-win scenario, either between me and the other person or within me and myself, and really the truth is if you're not at peace, you can't afford to stop there because there is something else that Spirit is wanting you to know, so keep asking and you'll get the guidance, it always comes.

Michele:

So if you're not at peace, you can't stop because there's something else Spirit wants you to know. Did I play that back right?

Alan:

Right. Exactly.

Michele:

So you're saying that lack of peace or some struggle in your experience is a signal?

Alan:

Struggle is a sign; I'm a teacher of non-struggle. One of my lessons in my master training is called "Let it be easy, struggle is not required" and I don't know if I call struggle is a sickness but I would say that we've been taught to settle for a lot less than we deserve.

Michele:

Yeah, I'm sorry the word I was trying to say is signal.



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Alan:

Oh, signal, I'm sorry.

Michele:

Sign from Spirit.

Alan:

Absolutely, yes. Well said. When you sense you're in struggle, immediately stop and step back and say, "if I were willing to let it be easy, how would I be approaching this differently"? And the bottom line is that struggle is not it and as long as we accept that it stays with us, but as soon as we refuse to settle for it, it dissipates.

Michele:

How come you think we're not willing to let it be easy?

Alan:

Because we've been brainwashed and we see a society that thrives on struggle. We see, we grew up with parents who struggled over money, we grew up with parents who were fighting over their marriage, we go to work with people who don't want to be there and it's almost like an excepted "norm". A) Struggle is a way of life and B) you can't really justify having what you want unless you struggle for it. It's sort of an offshoot of the peer tenet chi, that nothing is worthwhile unless you work hard and bust your butt for it. But really that's an archaic belief system and those of us who've experimented with ease are having a lot more fun and success.

Michele:

We couldn't have said that better our self. So, to bring that together, I see that. People get kind of at the edge of their willingness for it to be easy. I could let it be this easy but I couldn't let it be easier than that or it can be this easy at this income level but I can't make twice this much at this level of ease. So how do you encourage people to stretch? I know you have both your mastery training; I also want to weave in letting people know about what you do, to go to the mastery training and then you also have a year long program?

Alan:



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Yes, I also have a personal mentorship program I'm starting next year for one year. And the mastery training is a one-week intensive in Hawaii with the same principles.

Michele:

Cool. So what do you teach those people if you could just give us sort of a glimpse of what you teach about how we expand our comfort zone with regard to comfort? How easy can it be?

Alan:

Well, the thing is you have to tell the impeccable truth about how everything you're doing feels. And that's a big one. You have to tell the impeccable truth about how everything you're doing feels because we all have fantastic inner guidance that says this matches you, this doesn't. This relationship belongs to you, this doesn't. This job is empowering to you, this job is debilitating and that signal speaks to us through our heart or through our gut as a voice of joy or the voice of frustration, the voice of aliveness and empowerment or the voice of debilitation and stuckness and darkness and coldness. And so, you have to try everything on for size like a garment you might buy in a store and say this really fits me or no, it doesn't quite fit. It's like the old hot and cold game; you go warmer, warmer, warmer, hotter, hotter, hotter, colder, colder, colder, freezing, freezing. The problem is not that we don't have the guidance, which is always issuing from us twenty four hours a day, the problem is that we don't believe in it or listen to it and once you start listening to it, you get very clear signals, you act on them and then your life shifts dramatically, sometimes in a short time.

Michele:

Could we take somebody through, or take the people listening either live or listening to the recording, can we take them through kind of an experience of connecting to what I hear you saying and what I would agree they do already know about a particular situation

Alan:

Okay. I'll give you an example through my own life, which usually works as an authentic model. A couple of months ago, I met some people who had a fabulous book that I got really excited about and I made an unusual offer to them that I wanted to help them publish it. I rarely do that, in fact, I never do that but this particular book excited me. We started to work together and the material of the book was really awesome, it was very high quality material and the people I was working with were not the author but his reps. It was actually a translation of a

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6



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Russian book and as we got into this process of my potentially publishing it, I was having a very difficult time working with them. I made them a very deal, a very generous deal, I really had a hundred percent enthusiasm about getting this book out but they were not familiar with the publishing industry and they were actually rather demanding and had a lot of emotional charge on things and I really wanted to basically call the shots on things that were quite counter productive to the success of the book. And the truth is it wasn't fun working with them at all. This one lady basically was on a, every time I talked to her she would give me an hour sermon on this or that. I pursued this for a week or two and had a lot of conversations and my energy was going down, down, down, down and I would get off the phone and my partner would say, what happened to you? It was a horrible conversation and I said, what do you think? And she said well it doesn't look like you're having much fun. And I said, no, not at all and suddenly I realized that even though this was an excellent book the process of publishing it was not fun at all for me, in fact, I was losing my spirit doing it. So at that point, I politely told then I don't think I'm your publisher and perhaps you could hook up with somebody else who could work with you. They were fine with it. The point is that struggle to get, struggle to keep. In other words, if you have to fight and hassle and bleed over getting somewhere, when you get there is probably not going to be anymore fun and I envision down the road that this was just the initial stages of this project. If this book became successful and there were all kinds of executive decisions to be made, I figured it would be quite hell to hang in there with these people.

Michele:

Yeah.

Alan:

So I politely cut bait. So the idea was, I've been down that road before and I've sort of forced the issue, and then down the road you look back and say, gosh why the heck did I ever get involved with that because it wasn't a match to me. Not to say that they were wrong and I was right or anything like that, but there are other people who could probably work with them more successfully. So, I had to tell the truth about how I was feeling about that process which gave me impeccable guidance that this doesn't belong to me and the moment that said no, I felt this huge weight lift off my shoulders and I was free again, I was back to square one which is where I wanted to be. So, kind of a long story but I think perhaps some of the listeners could identify because we all have these decisions that don't feel right as we step into them and then it only gets worse. So, why not tell the truth? Now the other side of this is sometimes something feels

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7



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impeccably right and we're really afraid to do it but there's something inside us that says, just do it because it feels good and of course that's also quite indicated.

Michele:

How do you feel the difference between that kind of, that kind of fear even though something feels like a good idea and foreboding, that something feels like a bad idea?

Alan:

Right. If something doesn't feel good to think about it's probably not going to feel better to do it. And if something feels good to think about, it's probably going to feel even better to do it.

Michele:

Okay. I want to take people into that experience themselves. I loved the phrase that you said Alan. "Fight to get is going to mean fight to keep".

Alan:

Right, right.

Michele:

I want to cross that a lot of times in coaching business people when they're fighting to get business and then those people turn out to be their least favorite customers. They don't really want to work with those companies after all and it's like still whispering in their ears the whole time, sweetie, no, I have better things in store for you and someone else who can serve these people better. It's not that you're better than the people you're not a match with, it's just that you're not a match.

Alan:

Exactly. Very well said.

Michele:

So let's give people a moment. I just want to invite you to close your eyes, take a deep breath and call to mind an area where you would like to have more or an area where there's something happening that you would like to get rid of. A place where your energy is moving, a place where you would like to intuit, what feels good for you to kind of try on Alan's universal game of hot

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8



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and cold, I remember that from years and years ago. It's one of my favorite metaphors. The universe whispers to us, warmer, warmer warmer or cold, cold, cold, turn around and go the other way. I've got something wonderful in store for you but it's not here. So feel into this area that you're holding in mind. What about it feels like the universe is saying warmer, warmer. Is there something you're moving toward? Is there an idea, even if it sounds crazy that just sounds like, that feels like a good idea, I don't know why logically but it makes sense to me. And is there something about the process you're involved in that feels like, colder, I need to make a change here, move away from this, back off. Take this time now to give yourself an experience of listening to the universe telling you hot, cold, warmer, cooler. It would be great to hear from a couple of you if you would like to share what you're discovering and/or ask a question about this of Alan. Anyone? The person who was doing their dishes stopped and I appreciate that. If you've got something going on in the background please either use your mute button or use *6 to mute yourself on the line or better yet, just relax and give yourself the gift of presence in this hour.

Michael:

I've got a question. This is Michael. One of the distinctions that I have always enjoyed is the difference between being a thermometer and a thermostat. Where as a thermometer is picking up on what's going on and just sensing it and just going with oh, this feels good, this doesn't feel good. A thermostat actually has some degree of temperature control.

Alan:

Well said.

Michael:

So, I'm just wondering for you, because obviously a thermostat has to have a thermometer built within it in order to sense what the temperature is before it changes it, but I just wonder, one of your books "Joy is my compass", before I came across the book a phrase that I had always loved was navigating by job but one of the things that I found actually attempting to live that way, was there are times where I just wonder if I could bring more joy to it as opposed to looking for it outside of myself. It's one of those things that is not terribly resolved in me so I would just love to hear if you have any thoughts on it.

Alan:



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Yes. It's a wonderful question. It sort of goes back to the issue that we have two ways to change our world; one is by manipulating outer world and one is by looking at it differently and truly perspective is the mark of mastery because one of the key principles is reframing, which means you can take any situation and find a way to look at it that brings empowerment and joy, in fact, that's the whole name of the spiritual path. Once my partner made us some dinner and she burned the fish and kind of came to me sheepishly and said I burnt the fish and I said no, that's fine we're having Cajun tonight.

Michele:

Like when I make whole-wheat cookies.

Alan:

Yeah. And there's an old poem, two men looked out through prison bars, one saw mud, the other stars and so, there's always a way to look at something. As spiritual beings we have a direct pipeline to the voice of joy at all times and if you're not feeling joy, it's only because you're choosing a perspective that doesn't match that joy voice, so the thing to do in that moment would be to take a deep breath, and just get quiet for a moment and ask it is there a joyful perspective that I can find to look at this from and there always is. You just have to be sort of release your investment to what's going wrong so you can get off of it because if you're sort of hell bent on about being right about what's not working you can keep finding reasons for it not to work but the moment you say, this can't be it, I refuse to keep looking at it like this, then suddenly doors open and you have new perspective.

Michael:

Let me follow up one step.

Michele:

Go for it.

Michael:

I'm thinking about a situation where I've got the sort of cooler signal from the universe.

Alan:

Yes.



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Michael:

And the part of me that really wants the money, is saying you know you could find a joyful perspective, and hang out anyways.

Alan:

Right. Well you have the unfortunate predicament of knowing too much! I mean that in the sense that probably due to your level of spiritual evolution, Michael, you probably can't kid yourself about where the real joy voice lives. Like me with this book deal. I probably could have made a lot of money on this book and that was one of my motivations, but the truth is that my internal sensors said, no I have a value that goes far deeper than just making money. It's actually enjoying the ride and being true to my spirit as I go and once you know that voice and live with that voice and feel the depth and power and aware of that voice, little things like money or power or sex or media or fame, you can't really turn your head. So too late buddy, you know too much. It was worth a try.

Michael:

Thank you.

Michele:

"Please Mr. Cohen, won't you teach me how to regress."

Alan:

There are times when we can go back to sleep, don't we, but we're ahead of the game at this point.

Michele:

I think that's another interesting topic. What are the challenges of spiritual advancement?

Alan:

Yeah, yeah. Well whatever they are, they're not as heavy as the challenges of spiritual non-advancement.

Michele:



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Avidya (or ignorance) being the heaviest burden of all.

Alan:

Well, you know, we might address that because it can be a difficult thing to live in a world where a lot of people are living unconsciously and running off after things that bring suffering and fighting over little things to hold your head high and walk your own path anyway. It takes a lot of guts and integrity and self-belief to say, no this is who I am regardless of who you want me to be and most people face that when they go home for Thanksgiving or Christmas.

Michele:

Yes. Or even just out on the street and in the political times that's a challenge as well and the other thing that I see in people, you spoke of courage and strength. There's also just not enough stamina of just being able to continue to maintain perspective. How do you do that for yourself?

Alan:

Well it's very important, I believe for everyone to have a period of time each day when you consciously connect with spirit. Now I do it in the form of meditation, I do a course in miracles, I do yoga, everybody has their own methods. It could be journaling, tai chi, walking in the woods, affirmations, whatever, but I think it's pretty much imperative to start the day by hooking up with your higher power, however you know it and then using that as a keynote or a touch stone to keep your energy alive throughout the day. You have to have an internal retreat that you go to on a regular basis otherwise, you get sucked in and dragged around and pulled in every direction. I would recommend everyone that twenty minutes at least in the morning of meditation or prayer, in some kind of an intense in sitting for your day and then whenever possible during the day even if a little snatches of a minute or five minutes to kind of step back and breathe, close your eyes and get tuned in and then take a step from that point on.

Michele:

Michael and I have meetings almost every day that's our first agenda item is centering together and it's tremendously powerful, not only for us as individuals but for us, as business partners. It's a great way to start even like sales call, any meeting with anybody, giving people an opportunity themselves, inviting others to join you in being centered.

Alan:



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I have a friend who is a wonderful elementary school counselor in the Barrio district of L.A., a tough district. Most of the kids come from single parent homes and a lot of drug addiction and so forth and they had a team of the psychologists and counselor and school staff, they were trying to figure out what to do with this little girl who had been sexually abused and couldn't find a home in her family and they just went round and round. They seemed to be stuck and finally my friend said, well why don't we just pray and they did, it sounds strange for a public school but they just stopped and they held hands and they said, we just love this little girl and we want the best for her and we know there's a spirit behind this thing and let's just have some help here. I actually haven't heard the results since then but I'm sure that something good had become of that because you turn your challenges over to a higher power and it has to take it to the next level.

Michele:

I think do I have this right, somewhere in the your work; you talk about prayer as kind of a first resort rather than a last resort.

Alan:

Yeah. I mean usually when all else fails, you pray but why not try God first, before you go through all your options?

Michele:

Start at the top of the list of possible resources that might have some bearing on the situation.

Alan:

Who can I call now? Duh.

Michele:

Every alphabetical section of your Rolodex, God, oh God again.

Alan:

Very good, very good.

Michele:



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So having come out of the mastery training about a week or two ago, I imagine every time you do that your thinking and personal experience of mastery grows. Tell us what's on the cutting edge of your thinking right now.

Alan:

Well you know it's an amazing thing. We take about twenty five people for that training and we just create a very safe space for people to be who they are and some people come in not quite knowing what the training's about, but you know it's amazing, that in that space there's unconditional support and love and willingness and yes ness without me even trying the best comes forth. We had a guy come from Australia, he's a corporate lawyer from Australia, around the middle of the end of the week, he made a confession, well I have to tell you this, he said, I made a big mistake coming here he said, your not going to believe this, he said, I thought this was an Andrew Cohen retreat. There's a meditation named Andrew Cohen, he does intensive meditation program.

Michele:

"What is enlightenment?" and all that.

Alan:

He said I signed up for this and I thought that you were Andrew and I got all your literature and I thought, oh my god, this is the wrong guy. And he said, well it looked okay so I decided to come anyway. Anyway this guy had a major, major, major, major life transformation, he actually really needed to come into a heart space, he didn't know it but he was looking for a heart and love and something told him to sign up. It was just amazing to me in quote" had an erroneous intention", by the time he got there Spiritknew what his real intention was and in that space of love everything just unfolded naturally and organically.

Michele:

I always think of that what Joseph said to his brothers when they found him in Egypt: "you meant it for evil, you thought it was a mistake, but God was actually in control."

Alan:

Yeah, "God meant it for good," that's true.



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Michele:

It's great to remember when we find ourselves at the wrong bus stop or having missed an important appointment. I was in the right place without even knowing it.

Alan:

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we were always in the right place, we need to remember it, that's all?

Michele:

We are always in the right place. It's our attachment to being the one who says what we're supposed to be and it's difficult.

Alan:

Right. Sometimes what I ask people in my programs, would you be willing to be wrong about what you think isn't working, so Spirit could be right about what is.

Michele:

Could you ask that again?

Alan:

Would you be willing to be wrong about your limits let us say so that Spirit or love or God could show you what's right about what's happening and what's available? Because you can't be right about your problems and find the solution and the same time.

Michele:

Wow. As I ask that on an intellectual level, it's a rhetorical question of course but then even asking a little deeper if I think very personally about things I've decided are limits, but I believe in, so these things are real Alan. Then emotionally then there is some attachment, that's my identity there you're messing with.

Alan:



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We had a woman come to one of my programs, this is all great stuff, and maybe give me the information after we get off the air sometime about your recording because I like to, can we have other people listen to this?

Michele:

Absolutely. It can be available from your website.

Alan:

Because I also do a tele-seminar and perhaps I can shove people to this recording because I think the material you're calling forth is really excellent. We had a woman come to one of my retreats many years ago and the first night we had people walk around and introduce yourself and she walked around and said, hi, my name is Barbara; I'm a survivor of child sexual abuse. Hi, my name is Barbara, I'm a survivor of child sexual abuse and she went around introducing herself to everyone as Barbara, I'm a survivor of child sexual abuse and I was glad that she was working with her issue and working on healing it, but it also occurred to me that if you make an identity out of your history, you have a harder time getting to your destiny that if you build your life around something that has happened that is limiting or painful, you basically tend to perpetuate it and of course we're not minimizing the trauma of child sexual abuse and we certainly encourage people to work through it in a healthy way, but this particular woman had made a whole identity out of it such that she brought it to everything she did and my sense was that she was blocking herself from moving on from it, so let's be careful with how we identify ourselves because that's who you get to keep being.

Michele:

Yeah. Sounds great. So, it's almost like the healing process, if it becomes the end of the line then you never get to your destiny because you're so busy wrapped up in your history. I love the linguistic turn of phrase there. I see it in more subtle ways with people who are further along the spiritual path myself included, so I think I identify more with my destiny than with my history but there 's still story there. So how do you sweep out just those cobwebs, those last cobwebs in the corners, but when you get to a subtler level, unplugging from those little, playing smaller identity.

Alan:



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Meditation, aren't we? I think the deepest; I teach many forms of meditation and contemplation, including visualization, affirmation and all kinds of cool things.

Michele:

Lots of other "-ations." Affirmation, visualization.

Alan:

Yeah, all the ations. But real mediation and the deepest meditation, is just to release all thought of yourself, period. Including your identities, your positive identities, your negative identities, just to basically sit quietly and rest in the light and be the light and be pure spirit and be pure energy and even saying those words kind of is tainted with a slight energy, but we're all words or boxes, but real meditation goes beyond words and in fact, in the course of miracles, one of the lessons says today just sit quietly and go beyond the spirit. It's a Meta course where you're invited to transcend even the form that's taking to you, that's taking you to the edge.

Michele:

Yeah. There's a Zen story about a raft that you have to build a raft to get across the river but then once you've gotten across the river, do you carry the raft on your shoulders or do you set it down and go where you're going. So your healing journey, your competence, your beauty, your youth, your intelligence, your strength are all things you can set down every morning and remember the source of who you are, the truth about who you really are and the essence of what life is about and that makes it easier that when you get up that you don't have to pick up all of those other identities before you go back into the day. That's definitely been my experience. They like to come along like little burrs you pick up in the woods when you're walking.

Alan:

I mean the truth is as long as we walk in this world in form we're going to have some thoughts and some identities and some self-images. Surely if we escape them all, we would just ascend and not even be here so until that point we're going to have identities so at least pick some that you like and some that feel good and some that are empowering and some that serve but then everyday take some time to move beyond them so you have some leverage and perspective.

Michele:



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And I heard a double edge sword in what you just said. Pick some that serve, that's a first filter on your identity. Does this one serve me or not? Like this identity of myself as pudgy, is that helpful? Or this identity of myself as lazy is that helpful? But then also the identity of oh I'm brilliant, recognizing that that's an identity as well and can I have a little less attachment to it. So choose those that serve and remember that they to are not pointing to who you really are.

Alan:

Right. The thing you're pointing at the moon is not the same as the moon. It's another Zen affirmation.

Michele:

Yeah, remember that. So one of the things, one of the reasons that I really wanted to share your work with people, Alan is because you have a magical, not only the message but your style of writing. The way that you're able to condense a little zenafism or a quote from the course in miracles or a bible story or something as simple as your baby parrot looking at her own reflection in a reflective little envelope. You take the stuff of everyday life and the stuff of the wisdom traditions and distill it into very readable, very digestible pieces that can provide a deep breath of life truly as the title says at anytime and I wanted people to have a taste of that and I'd also love to hear how that process works for you, whether you think is that a great way to be learning spiritual things, do we need a supplement to that. Can you speak to that?

Alan:

Well, I mean some people call this the tantric method, not so much in the sexual sense but true tantric is about taking the things in the world and lifting them to the divine. It's not about escaping to the world and making the world wrong, it's about finding God and beauty in every step of the path. It's almost like karma yoga, you might say.

Michele:

The householder's path, right?

Alan:

The householders path, yes. All paths work but if you happen to be in the world and have a job, have a family, have sex and have money and do all these things, if you're doing these you might as well, find the divine in that. I always have my antenna up for cool things that are happening



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in daily life and the cool thing is that very often if we're not careful we can just gloss over them but meanwhile there might be an angel crossing your path that you don't even realize. Awhile back some friends and I were going to a tollbooth at the Chicago airport and there was a long line of cars waiting and we were wondering what was going on and we finally got to the tollbooth and there was a handsome Italian white haired man giving the change and as he gave us our change, he sung us two verses of La Traviata, he just burst out and sung it, he was actually pretty good and he was into it. Of course the women in the car swooned and we all laughed and thanked him. We took off and I felt well, there was this hunk of God just right there, here was this guy in a very boring, mundane job, smelling gas fumes and dealing with probably annoyed people all day and he just lifted that tollbooth into the greatest opera hall.

Michele:

He decided "I'm a hunk."

Alan:

And this happened actually a couple of years ago and I'm still talking about him. So, that was the effect of shifting his perspective of what he was doing and turning it into a temple rather than a little fummy place.

Michele:

Yes! A great way to move from a sense that one might get of a toll collector; nobody appreciates what I do to giving him something that everyone is going to appreciate on a powerful level.

Alan:

Exactly, yeah.

Michele:

Ummm! So it's really about wherever you are. Looking for the angels. Looking for the miracles. Looking for the blessings. A lot of people in this community feel they have a message and would like to convey that more and almost as a writing mentor. What could you share with people who would like to be able to pull, as you seem to, from everyday experience, and convey that wisdom to others?

Alan:



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Well, people often ask me about my method of writing or the secret of writing and what I always tell them is, the more authentic you are about what's living inside of you and what you really want to say from your heart, the more successful you'll be because here's the trick, when people read meaningful material, they're reading not just some information, but they're picking up the feeling, they're picking up the essence that you've imbued in your writing and it's very little about the words, but the words are cups that hold the energy. Your delivering an energy to people so, feeling is the key. They will feel what you are feeling while you are writing it so make sure you're feeling what you want to be feeling. I wrote the Dragon doesn't live here, my first book back in 81 or so, I was blissfully naïve about writing, I knew nothing about writing and nothing about the book industry and I just wrote this book because it was fun to write these ideas and I wasn't try to sell a book or become rich or famous or anything, I just had all these exciting ideas and I wanted to record them. It was like giving birth to a baby, it's the closest thing I can understand to having a child, although I understand the labor is a little more difficult with a physical child, anyway I just published this book myself just for fun and with not attachment to what happened after that. And then it just caught on without any real promotion or business savvy. People started buying it and word of mouth and I started getting invitations to speak and before I was selling ten thousands of copies and being paid money to fly around and speak and then I went back to the bookstore and I saw all these books by all these famous authors; Chopra and Dyer and all these bigwigs who were saying almost essentially similar to me and I thought how did my book get on that shelf and I realized that I said what I had to say in my own unique way, that I had a corner on the market of one particular form of expression and that was interesting to people and that was unique to people and it was real. So, there's really room for many many books for the same subject matters to be on the same shelf but the uniqueness and authenticity and heart that one imbues in it is the thing that makes one stand out, as different or special from the others.

Michele:

Thank you for that. That was beautifully put and it's inspiring and that's something that people often do get hung up on. "Well, my message just isn't unique enough" yet nobody can say it the way you can. Nobody has had your unique set of experiences and if anybody is nearly as slow as I am, they need to hear the same message from Alan Cohen and Wayne Dyer and Deepak Chopra, before it gets through, so we need all three books.

Alan:

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20



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We could have a million. Here's the fun thing and we're seeing this as people can publish their own book on their own laser jet at home and anybody can make their own CD in their bedroom. It's really an unlimited universe now that really if there's six and a half billion people on the planet then there's six and a half billion different valuable books or six and a half billion valuable CD's and everybody is a walking book or CD or poem or dance and there's literally room at the top for everyone and everyone can be equally successful just by sharing their unique gifts.

Michele:

Your presence certainly affirms that and it's delightful to be in your presence and having this recording as a way of sharing you with other people. I'd like to take a couple of minutes now to welcome any questions. Often Alan, I have to warn you people just like listening so they may not ask questions but I'll open that up right now.

Alan:

Can I put a question out for people to answer? I do a tele-seminar as well and sometimes we put out these little sentences to invite people to speak so I am wondering if anybody out there would like to complete the sentence, if I really loved and believed in myself more, I would – what would you be doing differently if you really had the guts to follow up on that still small voice? Where's that guy from England, are you still on the line?

Geoff:

Yes, I'm hiding on the dark side of the world.

Alan:

I'm calling on you only because I heard your voice before. I appreciate you getting on from such a big distance. What is your name sir?

Geoff:

It's Geoff. Oddly enough it's not really a very big distance at all.

Alan:

Not spiritually. Would you be interested in sharing what you might be doing if you had a little more oomph and courage to put your gifts out there as your heart called you?



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Geoff:

You know that's such a big question because what I get here is just, you kind of manifest or course quite, but if you put in front of me the big lump which is kind of in my way, so that's the kind of first thing that's happened just by contemplating the question for a second or two. So now, I guess what it might mean to me is how do I get over that or round it, and which means that if I were to do that, what would I do and you know it's kind of that lump has been there for such a big long time that I'm not even quite sure what's on the other side of it.

Alan:

Could you be a little more specific about what this thing you might like to do would actually be?

Geoff:

I'm just struggling with that just for a moment. I guess it's to be more in ease and happy I suppose with going about my business and enjoying what I'm doing, not that I'm not enjoying what I'm doing, but sometimes it can get pretty hard.

Alan:

Yes. So you'd like to have a greater sense of ease as you go through your regular activities?

Geoff:

And I guess knowing that actually things could be a lot easier without this pervading, imaginary block that's kind of sitting in the way, so I think if I really loved and believed in myself more, I would dissolve this block having just be able to catapult into these and really just shifts.

Alan:

May I give you two brief suggestions that come to mind as you share that?

Geoff:

I'd be delighted, thank you.



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Alan:

Okay, good thank you. One would be to forget about dissolving the block and shift your attention to the joy of the vision of actually moving with ease, in other words, sometimes we get, we get into a allopathic method of thinking that we have to fight off everything that's bad before we can have what's good but often if we just hold our vision consistently and clearly and joyfully on the goal, the obstacles tend to dissolve or we tend to figure out how to make them dissolve without fighting our way through them. So let your sense of the vision be so big and exciting that the obstacles take a second place to them. Someone said the obstacles is what you see when you take your mind off of the goal and the goal is what you see when you take your mind off the obstacles. The other suggestion I might give you is to think of somebody you might know who is a role model of ease or delight or flow, if somebody is living successfully.

Geoff:

I think there are at least three of those on the call right now.

Alan:

And who is the number one? What person comes to mind who you'd like to be, in that dimension?

Geoff:

Well, there's a couple of people. I'm sure Mike and Michele wouldn't mind me saying that at least from this side of the world they look as if they're pretty much in ease and success.

Alan:

Good. Michael and Michele, yes?

Geoff:

We'll go through them first of all.

Alan:

You might want to next time you find yourself kind of balled up or struggling in any way is just stop for a moment, think well how would I expect Michael and/or Michele would handle that if they were approaching the situation, what tact would they take? And even the moment of just holding that vision or thinking of that possibility will key you into that energy and you'll



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discover you actually have that energy available to you even at this moment so they're not better than you, they're just a representation of the best within you and as you came to that, you bring it forth.

Geoff:
Fabulous.

Alan:
Thank you for sharing that, we appreciate it.

Geoff:
Thank you very much.

Michele:
Thank you both and I'm sure that the osmosis coaching that others get by hearing that will be powerful as well. So, thanks for your courage Geoff. It is time to wrap up so what I want to do is thank you Alan very much for being here and bless you and your work. I want to send people to Alancohen.com, not to be confused with Andrew Cohen. Of course unless your mean to go to Andrew Cohen. You can find out more about me, my coaching and Michael and his coaching and our business, Success made Fun at successmadefun.com. thank you all for being here.