

THE BIG IDEAS

Love

Is inclusive.

It's Time

To look w/in ourselves.

Let's Make a List

And find the gifts.

The Gold

Is in the dark.

Time to Uncover

Own and embrace.

Seeing the Gift

In the pain.

Freedom

Is being able to choose.

Does This Interpretation

Empower me?

The Fingers

Watch 'em.

Attend

Your own lectures.

The Dark Side of the Light Chasers

Reclaiming Your Power, Creativity, Brilliance, and Dreams

BY DEBBIE FORD · RIVERHEAD BOOKS © 1998 · 184 PAGES

“Jung first gave us the term ‘shadow’ to refer to those parts of our personality that have been rejected out of fear, ignorance, shame, or lack of love. His basic notion of the shadow was simple: ‘the shadow is the person you would rather not be.’ He believed that integrating the shadow would have a profound impact, enabling us to rediscover a deeper source of our own spiritual life. ‘To do this,’ Jung said, ‘we are obliged to struggle with evil, confront the shadow, to integrate the devil. There is no other choice.’”

~ Debbie Ford from *The Dark Side of the Light Chasers*

This book rocks.

We’ve talked about our “shadow” in many of these Notes. If you want an incredible overview of it, this is the book to get. It’s a short, quick read packed with *REALLY* powerful exercises to help discover and embrace those aspects of ourselves we’d rather ignore. Highly recommend it! (And, if you’d like to learn more, check out Debbie’s new film “The Shadow Effect” at TheShadowEffect.com!)

Like many of my favorites, this book is basically one long quote. I literally could have written the Note with Big Ideas from Chapter 1 alone. So, let’s jump in. :)

LOVE IS INCLUSIVE

“Each of us possess every existing human quality. There is nothing we can see or conceive that we are not, and the purpose of our journey is to restore ourselves to this wholeness.”

~ Debbie Ford

“We need to revisit the experience of our innocence that allows us to accept all of who we are at every moment. This is where we need to be in order to have a healthy, happy, complete human existence. This is the path. In Neale Donald Walsche’s book *Conversations with God*, God says:

Perfect love is to feeling what perfect white is to color. Many think that white is the absence of color. It is not. It is the inclusion of all color. White is every other color that exists combined. So, too, is love not the absence of emotion (hatred, anger, lust, jealousy, covertness), but the summation of all feeling? It is the sum total. The aggregate amount. The everything.’

Love is inclusive: it accepts the full range of human emotion—the emotions we hide, the emotions we fear. Jung once said, ‘I’d rather be whole than good.’ How many of us have sold ourselves out in order to be good, to be liked, to be accepted.”

Brilliant.

We talked about something similar in the Note on Ayn Rand’s *The Fountainhead* where she says: “She knew she could not have reached this white serenity except as the sum of all the colors, of all the violence she had known.”

The (very) Big Idea here (and the underlying theme of the book) is the fact that to be true to ourselves and manifest as our highest, most loving, creative selves, we’ve GOTTA integrate ALL of our emotions and experiences into one beautiful whole.

"Whether you like it or not, if you're human, you have a shadow. If you can't see it, just ask the people in your family, or the people you work with. They'll point it out to you. We think our masks keep our inner selves hidden, but whatever we refuse to recognize about ourselves has a way of rearing its head and making itself known when we least expect it."

~ Debbie Ford

"The reason for doing shadow work is to become whole."

~ Debbie Ford

And remember, just as white is the sum of all colors, black is the ABSENCE of color. So, when we're not integrating parts of ourselves, think of the shadow as that black ick that gets projected into the world. :)

IT'S TIME TO LOOK WITHIN OURSELVES

"The saintly and the cynical, the divine and the diabolical, the courageous and the cowardly: all these aspects lie dormant in us and will act out if they are not recognized and integrated into our psyches. Many of us are frightened to look within ourselves, and fear has us put up walls so thick we no longer remember who we are."

In his great book, *The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem* ([see Notes](#)), Nathaniel Branden talks about the importance of Self-Acceptance. In fact, it's the second pillar of self-esteem—right behind Living Consciously and before Self-Responsibility, Self-Assertiveness, Living Purposefully, and Personal Integrity.

He tells us: *"As a psychotherapist I see nothing does as much for an individual's self-esteem as becoming aware of and accepting disowned parts of the self. The first steps of healing and growth are awareness and acceptance—consciousness and integration."*

And Branden also reminds us that it's not just our darkness, but our light that can frighten us: *"We can run not only from our dark side but also from our bright side—from anything that threatens to make us stand out or stand alone, or that calls for the awakening of the hero within us, or that asks that we break through to a higher level of consciousness and reach a higher ground of integrity. The greatest crime we commit against ourselves is not that we may deny or disown our shortcomings but that we deny and disown our greatness—because it frightens us. If a fully realized self-acceptance does not evade the worst within us, neither does it evade the best."*

And all that reminds me of the brilliant passage from Marianne Williamson's *A Return to Love* (see Notes) where she says: *"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We are born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."*

All that begs the question: What's lying dormant within you that needs to be recognized and integrated? To help: Let's make a list! :)

LET'S MAKE A LIST

"This process seemed miraculous to me. So I made a list of all the parts of myself I didn't like, and worked on finding the gifts in them. As soon as I was able to see the positive and the negative value of each aspect of myself, I was able to drop my defensiveness and allow these parts to exist freely. It became clear that the process was not about getting rid of things we dislike in ourselves, but about finding the positive side of these aspects and integrating it into our lives."

You'll want to get the book to go through the beautifully powerful exercises that conclude each chapter. For now, let's make a quick list of some of the stuff you may not like in yourself and see if we can find the gifts inherent to those qualities, shall we?!? :)

" Because I had worked so hard to shut myself down, I had no patience for others who might be exposing their imperfections."

~ Debbie Ford

These aren't my favorite attributes (maybe you get angry or jealous or ...):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

And these are the gifts I can see in those attributes (maybe your anger helps you set appropriate boundaries and...):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Play with it and let's be alchemists transmuting lead into gold!

THE GOLD IS IN THE DARK

"We live under the pretense that in order for something to be divine it has to be perfect. We are mistaken. In fact, the exact opposite is true. To be divine is to be whole and to be whole is to be everything: the positive and the negative, the good and the bad, the holy and the devil. When we take the time to discover our shadow and its gifts we will understand what Jung meant by, 'The gold is in the dark.' Each of us needs to find that gold in order to reunite with our sacred self."

Ah. Love it.

Maslow and Nietzsche come to mind.

First, Maslow ([see Notes](#) on *Motivation and Personality*): "There are no perfect human beings! Persons can be found who are good, very good indeed, in fact, great. There do in fact exist creators, seers, sages, saints, shakers, and movers...even if they are uncommon and do not come by the dozen. And yet these very same people can at times be boring, irritating, petulant, selfish, angry, or depressed. To avoid disillusionment with human nature, we must first give up our illusions about it."

I don't know about you, but there's something REALLY liberating about NOT needing to be perfect (ALL. THE. TIME.) in order to feel good about myself. How 'bout you? :)

And Nietzsche ([see Notes](#) on *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*) says: "The great epochs of our life come when we gain the courage to rechristen our evil as what is best in us."

He also says: "Whence come the highest mountains? I once asked. Then I learned that they came out of the sea. The evidence is written in their rocks and in the walls of their peaks. It is out of the deepest depth that the highest must come to its height."

Translation: "The gold is in the dark."

Time to do some mining? :)

" As Oprah Winfrey once said in a commencement speech, ' Turn your wounds into wisdom.'"

~ Debbie Ford

TIME TO UNCOVER, OWN AND EMBRACE

"Within ourselves, we possess every trait and its polar opposite, every human emotion and impulse. We have to uncover, own and embrace all of who we are, the good and bad, dark and light, strong and weak, and honest and dishonest. If you believe you are weak, then you must seek out its opposite, and find your strength. If you are ruled by fear, you must go within

*"What you don't own,
owns you."*

~ Debbie Ford

and find your courage. If you are a victim you must find the victimizer within you. It is your birthright to be whole: to have it all. It only takes a shift in your perception, an opening of your heart. When you can say, 'I am that' to the deepest, darkest aspect of yourself, then you can reach true enlightenment. It's not until we fully embrace the dark that we can embrace the light. I've heard it said that shadow work is the path of the heart warrior. It takes us to a new place in our consciousness where we have to open our hearts to all of ourselves, and to all of humanity."

Wow. That's beautiful.

One of my most powerful practices over the last several months has been this game called "How am I that?" I learned from the great book *The Power of Full Engagement* ([see Notes](#)) where Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz tell us: "Difficult and unpleasant as it may be to accept, we often feel most hostile to those who remind us of aspects of ourselves that we prefer not to see. 'Ask someone to give a description of the personality type which he finds most despicable, most unbearable and hateful, and most impossible to get along with,' writes Edward Whitmont, 'and he will produce a description of his own repressed characteristics... These very qualities are so unacceptable to him precisely because they represent his own repressed side; only that which we cannot accept within ourselves do we find impossible to live with in others.' Think for a moment of someone you actively dislike. What quality in that person do you find most objectionable? Now ask yourself, 'How am I that?'"

*"What I discovered was
my potential to act like the
people I had been most
harshly judging. It became
clear that I had to be on
the lookout for the traits
that most bothered me
in others."*

~ Debbie Ford

Powerful. So, what annoys you the most in other people? Can you think of the last time you were super triggered? Take a moment to think about what it was the person was doing and then ask yourself, "How am I that?!?" How do YOU do the exact same thing?!? OR, how do you NOT do it and *wish* you did?

It's a *REALLY* powerful and, for me, surprisingly fun practice to see how I *TOTALLY* do the things that annoy me most in others/wish I did them more. When I have the presence of mind to pause and see what's going on, I literally often find myself laughing. :)

Try it out the next time you're triggered!

SEEING THE GIFT IN THE PAIN

"One day, twin boys went off with their grandfather on an outing. They walked through the woods until they came upon an old barn. When the boys and their grandfather stepped inside to explore, one of the boys immediately started complaining: 'Grampa, let's get out of here. The old barn stinks like horse manure.' The boy stood near the door, angry because he now had manure on his new shoes. Before the old man could respond he saw his other grandson running happily through the barn's many stalls. 'What are you looking for?' he asked the second little boy. 'Why are you so happy?' The boy looked up and said, 'With all that horse manure in here there must be a pony somewhere.'"

Hah! How great is that?!?

That fantastic story is told in the context of the importance of seeing the gift in our pain and in the attributes of ourselves that we'd rather ignore. It's an incredibly powerful process—as we integrate our shadow and as we simply learn to consciously choose our response to any given situation, looking for the pony in the midst of the manure. :)

So... where's the manure in your life? ... And the pony? :)

FREEDOM IS BEING ABLE TO CHOOSE

"Freedom is being able to choose whoever and whatever you want to be at any moment in your life."

I love that.

*"Our indignation over the
behavior of others is
usually about an unresolved
aspect of ourselves."*

~ Debbie Ford

"Once the shadow is embraced, it can be healed. When it is healed it becomes love."

~ Debbie Ford

While discussing the power of true compassion vs. what he calls "idiot compassion" Genpo Roshi also describes this type of freedom in his great book *Big Mind Big Heart* ([see Notes](#)) where he says: "I am always compassionate, but sometimes in a very feminine, gentle way, nurturing and supportive, and sometimes in a very masculine way, ruthless and decisive. But I always have in my arsenal what is necessary to get the job done. I am totally integrated."

The basic idea here is simple: Are you FREE to choose how you respond to a situation or are you *stuck* in a stimulus-response mode?

As ALL the great teachers advise us, we want to be "response-able." To be free, we need to be able to *choose* our response. How about a couple questions to check in on where we're at?

How are you more free than ever before? What triggers no longer fire you up you quite the same way as they did in the past?

And, how can you become even more free to consciously express the totality of your being? Have you removed certain potential responses from your repertoire that you might wanna bring back?

DOES THIS INTERPRETATION EMPOWER ME?

"I always ask myself, 'Does this interpretation empower me or disempower me? Does this interpretation make me feel weak or strong?' If you have an inner dialogue that disempowers you, it won't change until you replace it with a positive, powerful, internal conversation. But some of us are very strong-willed, and our addiction to pain and suffering won't allow a new interpretation. This is why it's so important to write things out and look at every single way you might perceive a particular incident. Just the act of writing down the words shakes loose the emotions that are tied to the incident. When we're willing to have some fun and play with our interpretations we can reexamine our choices. When we bring them out of the darkness and into the light, they can be healed."

This is huge. Psychologists call these disempowering thoughts "barrier thoughts" and Sonja Lyubomirsky says the same thing in her GREAT book *The How of Happiness* ([see Notes](#)). She says: "Write down your barrier thoughts, and then consider ways to reinterpret the situation. In the process, ask yourself questions like... What else could this situation or experience mean? Can anything good come from it? Does it present any opportunities for me? What lessons can I learn and apply to the future? Did I develop any strengths as a result?"

So, are your thoughts empowering or disempowering you today?!? Check 'em out and create an empowered perspective!! (Pretty, please! :)

WATCH THE FINGERS

"I realized that I only judged people when they displayed a quality I could not accept in myself. If someone was a show-off, I no longer judged them because I knew that I, too, was a show-off. Only when I had completely convinced myself that I was not capable of a certain behavior would I get upset and point my finger at the other person. Hold your hand straight out in front of you and point at someone. Notice that you have one finger pointing at that them and three fingers pointing back at yourself. This can serve as a reminder that when we are blaming others we are only denying an aspect of ourselves."

You might've heard of this finger thing before but go ahead and try it now.

Hold your hand straight out and point at someone. You've got one finger pointed at them and three more right back at yourself.

This is another GREAT way to remember that ANYTHING that triggers us in others is a wonderful sign of what we've yet to fully integrate within ourselves!

"Most of us are living with a narrow vision of what it is to be human. When we allow our humanity to embrace our universality, we can easily become whatever it is we desire."

~ Debbie Ford

(The trick works with both positive and negative stuff, btw. As Debbie says: “If you admire greatness in another human being, it is your own greatness you are seeing.” So, when you point at someone and see all their brilliance count how many fingers are pointing back to you and know that you’re only seeing in them what you have within yourself. So own it and rock it, yo! :)

ATTEND YOUR OWN LECTURES

“This is why I often say, ‘Attend your own lectures.’”

—> “Attend your own lectures.” That’s awesome.

So... What are you lecturing on that YOU may wanna pay more attention to?

Next time you find yourself putting on your professor’s cap and lecturing a loved one or co-worker or whatever, pause for a moment and imagine another version of yourself diligently taking notes on your wonderful lecture.

And then DO whatever it is you’re lecturing people about because you might just notice that the only time we tend to get all emotionally up in our stuff about someone else’s shortcomings is when WE aren’t living the truths we’re so enthusiastically sharing!

Here’s to dancing with our shadow and shining brightly!

B

Brian Johnson,
Heroic Philosopher CEO

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About the Author of This Note

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Brian Johnson is the Founder + CEO of Heroic. He’s spent half of the last 25 years as a Founder/CEO and the other half as a Philosopher. Brian loves integrating ancient wisdom and modern science to help YOU become the best, most heroic version of yourself so we can create a world in which 51% of humanity is flourishing by 2051. Learn more at heroic.us.