



# Chapter 2: HONESTY

## WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT REALITY?

Now that you have a clear and compelling vision, it's time to get honest about the distance between your vision and your *\*current reality*.

Our current reality is something that we can easily candy coat, be in denial about, and make excuses for; that is what makes honesty about it such an important resource, if we actually want our vision to become our future reality.

**Soren Kierkegaard says that, “We will find a level of despair we think we can tolerate and define it as happiness.”**

Deception is subtle and the easiest person for us to deceive is ourselves. An acronym for denial is:

***D - Don't***

***E - Even***

***N - Know***

***I - I***

***A - Am***

***L- Lying to myself***

This is where honesty comes in. As we get truthful with ourselves and notice what our day-to-day interactions, attitudes, relationships, challenges, frustrations, anger, sadness, longings, and thought processes are, we can open up an awareness of what is blocking us from experiencing our vision as our current reality.

Your lack of interest in being honest, up until now, is possibly a result of what honesty brings up for you. Honesty can create discomfort or pain as you allow awareness to help you to own the truth of your current reality and decide what you need to do about it.

Your vision (or the life that matters to you) is over there in the distant future. Your current reality is here in the present. The distance between them is called the creative tension.



The creative tension is like a rubber band that pulls you toward your vision. If there isn't enough creative tension between your vision and your current reality, then there will be little or no movement towards your vision.

If there is too much creative tension, there will be extreme stress, possibly burnout, and again you will make little movement toward your vision.



As you think about the rubber band analogy, if the band is stretched over two pegs and the tension is too loose, the rubber band will fall off. (Your vision won't become your reality). If the tension between the two pegs is too tight, the band will break. (Your vision won't become your reality.) When the tension between being taut enough to create action, but not so much it causes chaos, then it will move you toward the life that matters to you and you will begin to experience Your UnStoppable at work.

This doesn't mean that this process won't be uncomfortable, but it does mean your vision becomes possible.

Take a minute and think about your current reality. What are you struggling with? What have you been telling yourself you need to do day after day, but you continue to avoid doing it? What are you tolerating? What behaviors do you keep trying to change, but have no success with?

**Write down the first five things you are tolerating that come to your mind:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

What you have just written is a glimpse of your current reality. You probably don't like to think much about it because it is uncomfortable to think about what we don't like about ourselves. Working to change these things might create conflict or anger towards others or ourselves, or it might show us a way of doing things that we haven't tried before.

As humans, we like to look good, feel good, and be good. Anything that threatens that goal feels uncomfortable because we believe we might not have control over whatever happens. So, we would rather cover it up, act like it doesn't bother us, or ignore it.

Yet, remaining in comfort will not allow us to go to the next level in our life or experience our vision becoming our current reality. It is in the uncomfortable that we find what we are looking for, or as Joseph Campbell says, "The cave you fear to enter holds the treasure you seek."

Many times the cave we fear to enter is the reality that we have both good and evil within us and, to face our capacity for evil, means we risk seeing ourselves as bad or not being seen by others as good. This Cherokee parable expresses what the battle between comfort and the uncomfortable looks like.

## Cherokee Parable:

*An old Cherokee is teaching his grandson about life. “A fight is going on inside of me,” he said to the boy.*

*“It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is the black wolf - he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.”*

*He continued, “The other is the white wolf - he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith.*

*The same fight is going on inside you and inside every other person, too.”*

*The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, “Which wolf will win?”*

*The old Cherokee simply replied, “The one you feed.”*

How much of your vision for the future will require you to feed your white wolf?

How much will it require you to get to know the evil that functions in your thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors? We can actually feed the evil within us without even noticing it.

In order to feed the good in us, we are required to step into the uncomfortable and let go of trying to control what happens. We get to choose between:

*Momentary comfort for long-term pain*

*or*

*Momentary pain for long-term gain*

It's important to notice that the choice of momentary comfort is subtle. It allows us to feed the black wolf so subtly that we might be tempted to believe we didn't even have a choice. Let's unpack that a little and talk about hypothetical examples of what momentary comfort can look like.

## **MARRIAGE**

You are having another disagreement with your spouse and you are starting to feel once again that your voice or opinion doesn't matter. So, rather than enter into the momentary pain or the discomfort of fighting for love, truth, vulnerability, and intimacy, you settle for momentary comfort by using one of the five escape technique: Fight, Flight, Follow, Fool, or Freeze, to avoid being authentic.

## **CAREER**

You are in the middle of making an important sale with a client that you know would open up new doorways for the future you vision. The client challenges you on something and, as you are scrambling for a response to their question, you have two options:

- 1. Get curious about what is going on for the client or what is underneath their challenging you. (Enter the uncomfortable)*
- 2. Make it about you and decide that you have been here before and you don't know what to say, so you might as well give up on the sale and, ultimately, on your vision. (Momentary comfort)*



## **FINANCES**

You have had a rough day; it seems like every interaction has been uncomfortable. You know that sticking to your budget is the key that will UnLock the financial freedom you desire. However, you are aching from the pain of your day, and you just want to feel good for a moment. You need to stop by the convenience store to pick up one item, but you find such comfort in shopping like finances are endless. So, you head down the aisles and find random items that make you feel good. You get to the checkout and the bill is far beyond what you have available in the budget. You decide in that moment that your vision of financial freedom doesn't matter. You are enjoying the short-term comfort of indulging because it feels better than the momentary pain of unpacking your day. You don't want to get honest about how and what you contributed to your "rough day." It is much easier to numb the pain and make it everyone else's fault for making your day challenging.

## **HEALTH**

Your body is communicating to you that something isn't working well. The doctor has let you know that your body isn't tolerating wheat, and it would be best for you to limit it or eliminate it completely from your diet. Your friends call and invite you to go to dinner at a new pizza place. You know that your vision calls you to give your body food that heals it, rather than irritates it, and you know you need to make a request of your friends to either choose a different restaurant or give you a few minutes to see if the restaurant has wheat-free options on their menu. You feel uncomfortable making that request, so you choose momentary comfort by telling yourself it doesn't matter. You get to the restaurant and find there are no wheat-free options. You are presented again with a "painful" opportunity to make a request that you go somewhere else. Instead, you choose the momentary comfort of saying nothing and going against your vision.



As you can see, the choice between momentary comfort and momentary pain occurs most often in your conversations with yourself and with others. In these conversations, you tolerate things that take you away from your vision rather than towards it. You choose what feels comfortable in the moment and decide it doesn't really matter after all. You can pursue your vision tomorrow. All the while each of these tolerations are adding up and creating your current reality day after day.

**\*Tolerations** are those small, seemingly insignificant, moments when we settle for the status quo or move away from our vision. They can be small physical things, like the cup sitting in your car's cup holder that you have been telling yourself for days you need to throw away. Or, they may be larger, heart issues where you take yourself out of opportunities that have the power to impact you and the person you are with in that moment.

As you start to get clear about what you are tolerating, notice how many of them will require a difficult or uncomfortable conversation with yourself or others, a conversation that you haven't been willing to have, up until now. As humans, we make the best choice we see available to us according to how life occurs to us. What if your current reality is made up of many, seemingly small, tolerations where you choose the momentary comfort as the best choice you see available to you?



This is where the creative tension or the momentary pain of interrupting what you are currently tolerating becomes the key that can unlock your vision and the life you say matters to you.

For example, let's say John is longing for a deeper connection with his wife as he knows they are slowly becoming roommates who live in the same house, rather than partners growing in love and intimacy.

**John's vision** is to grow in relationship with his wife by choosing time to be present with her each day of the week.

One of his **action steps** is to leave work at 5:00 p.m., so they can have dinner together.

His **\*current reality** is his wife works from 6 a.m. - 3 p.m. and has no flexibility in her hours. John arrives at the office at 9 a.m. and leaves at 8:00 p.m. Nightly, he eats his dinner alone in front of the TV as his wife heads to bed to rest for her early morning. He loves his job and has flexibility as long as he gets his work done. He used to work 8-hour days, but a year ago he started working more hours each day until an 11-hour daily became typical. Without noticing, he began tolerating the longer days, eating dinner alone, and experiencing lack of intimacy with his wife.

His creative tension or momentary pain is found in his need to have some difficult conversations with himself, his wife, and, possibly, his boss. The conversations he may need to have in order to step into the creative tension are: (green boxes represents the response to his question)

## ***WHAT OCCURRED A YEAR AGO THAT BROUGHT ME TO TOLERATE WORKING 11-HOUR DAYS?***

I think that was about the time my wife and I found out that we couldn't have children, and I struggled with not being able to fix it. We often argued, and it seemed easier to stay at the office than to be in the conflict at home.

## ***WHO AM I BLAMING FOR OUR LACK OF ABILITY TO HAVE CHILDREN?***

The test results showed I was the bigger contributor to the reproductive issues, due to an illness in my childhood.

## ***WHAT AM I TELLING MYSELF IN THE BLAME?***

- I am not a man if I can't offer my wife the children she desires.
- I can't ever make her happy.
- She would be better off without me.

***WHAT DOES MY WIFE FEEL? DOES SHE BLAME ME? WHAT DOES SHE THINK ABOUT ME NOW THAT I CAN'T OFFER HER CHILDREN? (HE HAD QUESTIONED ALL THESE THINGS A YEAR AGO BUT HAD BEEN TOO SCARED TO ACTUALLY ASK HER.)***

John enters the creative tension and asks his wife these questions and she responds as follows:

- “John, I want children badly, but I love you more than my desire to have children. When we got the news from the doctor, you got angry and pulled away from me. I was grieving the loss of being able to have children and you weren’t able to be with me in that pain. You made the pain so much worse.
- “I don’t blame you, and I know it isn’t your fault. I did blame you in the beginning because I needed someone to blame. Now, I realize you had no control over the illness, and you wish it could be different.”
- “I don’t think any less of you because we can’t have children of our own. I know you will make a great father, and I would like to explore other options for that.”

It comes back to another difficult conversation John gets to have with himself.

### ***AM I WILLING TO FORGIVE MYSELF FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO HAVE CHILDREN?***

I don't know how to forgive myself yet, but I am willing to.

### ***WHERE AM I WASTING TIME AT WORK THAT I COULD ELIMINATE AND, THEREBY, LESSEN MY HOURS?***

- I am taking a 1-hour lunch, and I could take 30 minutes instead.
- I waste the first 15 minutes on my calls with clients, chitchatting rather than getting to the point.
- I waste time on social media when I am not sure what I need to be doing, because I haven't organized my tasks.

### ***HOW COULD I START ORGANIZING MY TASKS?***

I could end my workday at 4:45 p.m., and use the last 15 minutes to prioritize my work tasks for the next day. That way, when I start my day, I am clear about what I need to do, and I can get right to work.



### ***WHAT ELSE IS POSSIBLE?***

I could start my workday earlier.

While the story of John and his wife is a hypothetical situation, it is very realistic as to what you can experience as you allow the creative tension to create the energy to be honest and dig below the surface, or enter the cave of what, up until now, you have been afraid of.

Now, it is your opportunity to enter into the creative tension that lies between your current reality and your powerful vision which is calling you to the life that matters to you. This week's Journaling and Work Pages will walk you through the process.





**HONESTY IS**

*the highest form of intimacy*