

THE BLUE LOYAL GUARDIAN

Living in the Now

Lesson Two

THE OUTER LAYER OF THE MAP

YOUR PERSONALITY TRAITS

Let's be clear here. Learning to Live the in the Now is learning to FEEL! Or more accurately it is *remembering* how to feel. This programme is about learning to feel the immediacy of life. ALL of it. Not just the good bits. The problem is that long ago you decided that this was not a safe way to live and you closed down your contact with the present moment. Developing awareness of the ways you avoid feeling your everyday experience is the first important step to living in the now. One of the biggest problems in our modern society is that we think our everyday ways of existing are normal, to be expected, are as good as it gets. They are not. When we develop mindful awareness of our immediate experience, we get back to who we were before the world got its hands on us and remember what we long ago forgot, who we really are.

In this session, we are exploring the outer layer of your map. Your personality traits. Your aim is to learn to recognise how these traits have become conditioned patterns of closure to living in the now. Your traits developed because you do not want to feel your own depths and taste life directly. Unconsciously you believe it is not safe and you would rather be safe than be happy. Eventually, your traits became ways of being that increasingly distanced you from the immediacy of life so that you gradually lost intimacy with it. This is why you feel so much dissatisfaction with yourself and your life. Is that normal? No, of course not.

The more you flee the present moment, the smaller and more isolated you become. You experience what I think of as an 'inner shrivelling'. You become dogmatic, inflexible and self-protective, and you become a victim of fear, anger, distrust, and neediness. You lose your sense of delight in life and instead of feeling full, alive, and energetic you feel depleted, empty, and dissatisfied. When you are not in the moment, you are in a reacting and avoiding mode of living. Even though you may not be aware of it, when you are acting out your habitual patterns of behaviour, thought, and emotions, most of the time your breathing becomes tight and muscles become armoured. You become tense and have negative feelings. At such times you have dropped out of the present moment and are likely to think reactively, behave poorly and make bad decisions.

THE OUTER LAYER OF THE MAP

WHAT THE PRESENT MOMENT FEELS LIKE

So what does the present moment feel like? Present moment awareness is experienced and recognised through your three centres. Your head centre, your heart centre, and your body centre.

Present moment awareness or nowness is experienced in the head centre when your mind is clear and spacious, and is free from clutter and busyness. You feel an unmistakable lightness of mind that feels clear, responsive and agile. Remember how your mind feels when you are on holiday, like you have left the cares of the world behind? That's it!

Present moment awareness or nowness is experienced in the heart centre when your heart is open and warm. You experience an outpouring of love for everyone and everything and there is an absence of tightness and defensiveness. When your heart is open there are no barriers or walls of protection. Remember how you feel when you look at someone you love or cuddle your pet? That's it!

Present moment awareness or nowness is experienced in the body centre when your body is grounded and centred. You were gifted with life and it is your birth right to feel its immediacy, to feel the humming vibrance of your body and the exquisite joy that exists within every moment. Remember when you FELT fully alive? That's it!

When these three centres are operating in the present moment you will recognise it as feeling relaxed, peaceful, and joyful. Anytime you are not feeling these things you have abandoned the present moment. (Which for most of us is most of the time!)

So, let's explore your everyday experience starting with the outer layer of your map. Your aim with this is to directly experience the ways you leave the present moment through your habitual patterns of behaving. We will do this through an inquiry exercise at the end of this lesson. But first, let's get familiar with your personality traits. Read the description of your personality traits on the next two pages. These are describing what is detailed on the outer layer of your map. Do not be discouraged if you do not recognise ALL the traits described. It often takes some time to own all aspects of yourself. Once you have read the description and had some time to digest it all move on to the inquiry exercise.

THE OUTER LAYER: YOUR PERSONALITY & DESIRE FOR SECURITY

As a Blue Loyal Guardian, your core value is security. You believe that if you stay safe from everything then you will be happy. The ways that you ensure you stay secure is by fitting in and belonging. More importantly, your basic desire for certainty and security means you put your faith in trusted authority, belief systems or traditions.

You see yourself as loyal, friendly, conservative and/or cautious. You would like others to see you as trustworthy, dedicated and reliable. Your idealised image is that you are supportive, responsible and dutiful. You are diligent, prepared and systematic and are valued by others for your dependable, committed and hardworking attitude. You look for security in long-standing relationships, groups, unions, military, or family traditions. You tend to follow the rules and boundaries and to go along with the status quo in terms of rules, dress and social norms. Your sense of tradition and systematic way of thinking makes you a stabilising force in any organisation. As a consummate fix-it type, you will look for things to improve in your environment, often seeking to make your world a safer place by vigilantly anticipating and trouble-shooting problems.

To manage anxiety, you seek comic relief. However, you are a complex personality type and this is apparent in the way that you handle fear. You can be phobic, meaning fearful, cautious, indecisive and paralysed into inaction but can also be counter-phobic and be uncomfortable with fear and choose not to dwell on it, being careless, reckless or imprudent with no thought for the consequences. Counterphobes impulsively jump in headfirst. Because of this, you are a bundle of contradictions; you can be wary and cautious one minute and rebellious and courageous the next. Depending on the situation you can be friendly and outgoing, or reserved and sceptical and, overall, you tend to be detail oriented, cautious and meticulous. Blue Loyal Guardians choose a variety of career paths but tend to take very traditional or mainstream jobs. Phobic Blue Guardians tend to have jobs like craftsman, technician, safety inspector, banker, or paralegal that do not require high risk-taking behaviour. Counter-phobic Blue Guardians may focus on the danger element and choose professions in the military, or as firemen, security guards or police. Your greatest strengths are your abilities to test for the truth and to recognize and challenge a bad authority. Loyal and dedicated, you understand the value of making sacrifices for the group and are willing to enforce society's rules to ensure safety and security for all. A hero at heart, you are capable of great acts of loyalty and courage.

OUTER LAYER: YOUR PERSONALITY & AVOIDANCE OF INSECURITY

As a Blue Loyal Guardian, your struggles with remaining present and living in the now are all connected with your fear of insecurity and uncertainty. You believe that if your world becomes uncertain you will be overwhelmed and unhappy. Because of this your weaknesses and negative tendencies relate to the ways you ensure you remain secure, and your fear that you will not be able to support yourself. This insecurity leads to a heavy reliance on structures, systems and traditions. While seeking the security of an external system or authority for guidance, you are at the same time suspicious of that authority. You worry that the source of your support will abandon you. This manifests in generalised paranoia, suspicion and scepticism. Blue Loyal Guardians may unconsciously put people's support to the test by lashing out at colleagues or loved ones. At times this defensive attitude can be so ugly and opinionated that its blaming nature isolates you from your loved ones or puts you in danger of being fired from your job. The lack of confidence you have in your inner guidance means you are unable to make quick decisions without others' opinions.

Lack of faith in your own authority can cause you to overly submit to or challenge others. You are highly motivated to avoid disappointing friends or authority figures and may find yourself proceeding with so much caution that progress is too slow or ineffective.

Fear and judgement undermine your sense of safety so you avoid deviance, uncertainty and anything that is different from any group or idea to which you subscribe. Afraid of fear, submission and cowardice, you vacillate between loyalty and rebelliousness by puffing up and backing down. You fear anything unproven or radical. You also are afraid of deviating from the norm or being different from your peers. Your greatest fear, however, is of being alone and unprotected. Your vice is fear. This manifests as an excessive judgement and playing the Devil's advocate. When you are afraid, you doubt your own authority and can become provocative and undermining. Seeking security, you try to control others by ensnaring them in your fears and judgements. Your attention naturally goes to feelings of fear and judgement and you scan for danger, hidden motives or agendas. Your judgement and fear can keep you from taking action and make it hard for you to trust yourself and others. You tend to focus on the worst-case scenario and may at times be overly phobic and at other times overly counter-phobic. Your drive for security can cause you to envision a dangerous and divisive world in which you feel persecuted and may then persecute those who deviate from the rules or the norm.

EXERCISE

Congratulations, you are now ready to begin your first exercise.

- Give yourself some quiet time, have your map open in front of you and bring yourself into a state of mindful awareness with a few deep breaths.
- Choose one personality trait from the outer layer of the map it can be a 'good' trait or a 'negative' trait.
- Using the trait you have chosen, 'answer' the three inquiry questions below.
- For one, or even two of the questions you may get the answer "It doesn't." That is fine, move on to the next question
- Avoid rushing through these questions with your thinking mind. Mindful Awareness is needed here.
 - **How does this trait create distraction and busyness? (meaning I lose contact with my feelings and the immediacy of my body)**
 - **How does this trait create overthinking? (meaning my mind is cluttered and full)**
 - **How does this trait create avoidance and withdrawal? (meaning I feel closed off and unavailable.)**

Remember, anytime your mind is not clear, your heart is not open, and your body is not grounded you are avoiding or fleeing the present moment.

You may not always find this inquiry easy because your traits have become so normalised. Simply remain with your mindful awareness and notice whatever arises into the space of inquiry. It is important that you stay open and curious and not judge what arises. **It is also important that you do not do anything or try to change yourself.** People often think they have the change their behaviour, do things differently, nothing could be further from the truth...**there is nothing to do but simply hold the space of mindful awareness.**

Spend a week or two doing this exercise **choosing a different trait each time.** Choose traits that you have noticed popping up in your day. When you choose traits that you notice in your everyday life you are learning to catch yourself in the act of fleeing or avoiding the present moment. The more you do this the faster your awareness grows, the more spontaneous and authentic you become, the more you develop a growing connection to the present moment.

Listen to the guided meditation called 'Your Traits'. It will support you with this exercise.