



LEARNING TREE

I Forgot

Bertie was a very good boy. He was kind, obedient, truthful, and unselfish. He had, however, one great fault, — he always forgot.

No matter how important the errand, his answer always was, "I forgot." When he was sent with a note to the dressmaker, his mother would find the note in his pocket at night. If he was sent to the store in a great hurry, to get something for tea, he would return late, without the article, but with his usual answer. His father and mother talked the matter over, and decided that something must be done to make the little boy remember. Christmas was near, and Bertie was busy making out a list of things which Santa Claus was to bring him. "Santa Claus may forget some of those things," said his mother.



"He cannot," replied Bertie; "for I shall write sled, and skates, and drum, and violin, and all the things on this paper. Then when Santa Claus goes to my stocking he will find the list. He can see it and put the things in as fast as he reads." Christmas morning came, and Bertie was up at dawn to see what was in his stocking. His mother kept away from him as long as she could, for she knew what Santa Claus had done.

Finally she heard him coming with slow steps to her room. Slowly he opened the door and came towards her. He held in his hand a list very much longer than the one he had made out. He put it in his mother's hand, while tears of disappointment fell from his eyes. "See what Santa Claus left for me; but I think he might have given me one thing besides." His mother opened the roll. It was a list of all the errands Bertie had been asked to do for six



months. At the end of all was written, in bold capitals, "I FORGOT." Bertie wept for an hour. Then his mother told him they were all going to Grandpa's. Perhaps something might be growing there for him, on the Christmas tree. Strangely, on grandpa's tree Bertie found everything he had written on his list. Was he cured of his bad habit? Not all at once; but when his mother saw that he was particularly heedless, she would say, "Remember, Santa Claus does not forget."

— M A Haley

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Things that were hard to bear are sweet to remember

— Seneca

# Remove Blockages

Is your mind getting swayed by emotions that arise from reactive thoughts, asks PAULA HORAN, American healer and Reiki master who spends most of her time in India

Blocks that arise in our physical and mental bodies are usually emotional blocks originally caused by our personal reactions to thought. Emotion follows thought, and once a thought has created a certain emotional reaction, and especially if it is repeated, the emotional energy crystallises within us. As a result, certain emotions become predominant and then determine which thoughts sway the mind. A stuck energy charge needs to be released or integrated — for you can't really let go of any energy, but you can transform it.

Once the negative energy is integrated, stored thoughts dissipate. We become more positive, and as a result, we tend to stop automatically resisting every discomfort that comes our way. Unconsciously, this helps negative thoughts to simply flow through us and not cause further energy blocks. It is our habit of resisting emotion that causes the charge in the first place, and this continues to accumulate over time. We can illustrate this with the example of anger. Every time we internally resist anger, we get angry or annoyed with ourselves for being angry.

### Thoughts Sway Us

The thoughts in our mind flow with the *prana* or *chi* which enters with the breath. Then our ego identifies with the thoughts passing through. These thoughts can be either positive or negative. Our identification with our thoughts creates further imbalance within us and this is what manifests as emotional reaction.

When we get embroiled in the emotional reaction as we further identify with our thoughts, the energy crystallises on a cellular level. As soon as this occurs, the energy cannot flow and we are thrown off bal-



### Embrace Your feelings

There are two main motivations for all actions in life. One is to feel good; the other is to avoid feeling bad. Naturally, if we experience uncomfortable thoughts and feelings, we tend to suppress whatever we don't want to feel. However, these suppressed experiences get stored in our *nadis* and

## Emotional Freedom Technique

1 EFT or Emotional Freedom Technique is an emotional healing technique that is capable of dramatically relieving many physical symptoms.

2 It is based on a revolutionary new discovery that violates most of the beliefs within conventional psychology. It contends that the cause of all negative emotions is a disruption in the body's energy system.

3 EFT works by tapping with the fingertips on various body locations. This tapping serves to balance energy meridians which become disrupted when a person thinks about or becomes involved in an emotionally disturbing circumstance.

4 EFT is a meridian energy therapy, just like acupuncture

and works directly on the meridian system in the body. But instead of needles, you stimulate the major meridian lines by tapping on them. By analogy, think of the meridians as rivers. Upsets in emotional or physical health lead to the equivalent of blockages or overflows in the rivers. EFT is a mind-body healing technique because it combines the physical effects of meridian treatments with the mental effects of focusing on the pain or problem at the same time.



Tapping on the meridian points sends kinetic energy down the energy system clearing the blockages allowing the energy to flow freely again.

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to ignore discomfort. Instead, we must bring our automatic resistance mode into conscious awareness so that we avoid denying or repressing these thoughts, and instead acknowledge their presence. This is a key belief of tantric practice. Rather than automatically repressing or subduing our feelings and sensations, we must, instead embrace them and transform our otherwise unconscious reactions into actions that we are fully aware of.

### A Powerful Tool

An important tool everyone can benefit from is the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), introduced by Gary Craig. This powerful tool takes only minutes to literally tap away physical as well as emotional pain which could have gripped you for years. It is often used to relieve numerous phobias as well as severe trauma in as short a period of treatment as an hour — which normal therapy done over 20 to 30 years cannot get rid of.

Through EFT, we can develop the ability to see the world as it is, neither good nor bad, but as Buddha saw the world, simply a matter of inter-dependent arising. What might seem evil to you, could just be an expression of our dense ignorance. With time and practice, we can learn to develop greater love and the ability to be in awe of all that life brings our way. This openness will help us release the heavy jadedness and the bitterness that people's actions, our own included, can evoke in us. ■

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HEAL YOURSELF

LAUGHING TREE

### The Bridge

A man walking along a California beach was deep in prayer. Suddenly the sky clouded above his head and, in a booming voice, the Lord said, "Because you have tried to be faithful to me in all ways, I will grant you one wish."

The man said, "Build a bridge to Hawaii so I can drive over any time I want."

The Lord said, "Your request is very materialistic. Think of the enormous challenges for that kind of undertaking. The supports



required to reach the bottom of the Pacific! The concrete and steel it would take! It will nearly exhaust several natural resources. I can do it, but it is hard for me to justify your desire for worldly things. Take a little more time and think of something that would honour and glorify me."

The man thought about it for a long time. Finally he said, "Lord, I wish that I could understand and my wife. I want to know how she feels inside, what she's thinking when she gives me the silent treatment, why she cries, what she means when she says nothing's wrong, and how I can make a woman truly happy."

The Lord replied, "You want two lanes or four on that bridge?"



SACRED OBJECT

# Circle Of Hope

The wreath is central to Christmas, writes SONAL SRIVASTAVA

As church bells tolled on a cold, misty December evening, Sister Dorothy placed a beautiful and decorative green wreath on the table at the convent's chapel. The circlet was a mark of respect, a harbinger of hope and joy, welcoming Baby Jesus. The choir sang, "Joy to the world the Lord has come, let earth receive her King." Sister Dorothy lit four candles in the centre of the wreath in celebration of the Advent season. The ring of flowers, boughs and leaves, is an inseparable part of Christmas festivities in the Catholic tradition.

### Advent Season

Made with the leaves of evergreen trees, a wreath symbolises warmth, hope and continuity of life. Its circular shape indicates that there is no beginning and no end, representing the omnipresent God. Traditionally, a wreath is made of laurels, pine, holly and yew. Laurels stand for victory over suffering, whereas pine, holly and yew are symbols of immortality. Cedar is for strength and healing, while holly signifies the crown of thorns. Sea pods and cones used as decorations are symbolic of resurrection.

The wreath can be used in a church, chapel or home. Mumbai-based organisational consultant and personal growth coach Marguerite Theophil says, "It is often placed on the dining table and the candles are lit before meal time on Sundays, when the family sits together. The circle symbolises God's eternity and endless mercy, and the green leaves speak of the hope we have in God, of newness, renewal, and eternal life. The can-

dles represent the light of God."

### Kiss And Tell

Many use the wreath as a decoration piece outside their homes during the Christmas season, and it is hung on doors. The decorative wreath is made of tinsel, with berries and lights. The ring is also made of mistletoe, a hemi-parasitic plant native to Europe. "A popular tradition is placing the mistletoe wreath on the threshold



of the house as a goodwill gesture. When the couple kiss under the mistletoe, it is believed to bring abundance into the house," says social worker Arlene Peter Singh. In cultures across pre-Christian Europe, mistletoe represented divine male essence, romance, fertility and vitality.

### Plenty Of Folklore

Although it has been around since Greek and Roman civilisations, the wreath's association with Christmas dates back to the 19th century. In 1839, German theologian and educator Johann Wichern

built a wooden ring out of a cartwheel; he added 19 small red and 4 big white candles to it. "He did this because during the Advent season, children would ask him daily if Christmas had arrived. This way, they could keep track themselves, as a small red candle was lit every week-day, while a large white candle was lit on subsequent Sundays. This eventually got adapted to the modern Advent wreath of five candles," says Theophil.

In ancient Greece and Rome, wreaths were used to represent a person's occupation, rank and social status. The ringlet was made of the laurel plant and worn as a headdress. A fable links the laurel wreath to Apollo, the Greek god of light and life. Apollo fell in love with the nymph Daphne, who fled and asked the river god Peneus to help her hide from Apollo. Peneus turned her into a laurel tree. Apollo was so saddened to see his love interest turned into a tree, that he began wearing a laurel wreath on his head from that day onwards.

The laurel wreath also symbolises achievement in ancient Greece and Rome and was presented as a crown to victors at the Pythian Games in the sixth century, the forerunner of the Olympic Games. Later, they were used in the Olympics as well.

### Symbol Of Sympathy

The wreath is also used for expressing condolence. It's placed on gravesites and coffins as a mark of sympathy. Interestingly, the floral rings in smaller sizes are also worn as headdress in several cultures across the world. ■

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INBOX

### Giving Back

With reference to 'Heartfelt Action' by Reena Singh (Dec 12, pg 1), it's inspiring to see top corporate trailblazers investing in the country's development. I can't think of a better way of giving back to society. Education for all is essential. You can build schools and fill classrooms with students but the quality of education will suffer if teachers are not motivated.

Brandy Leitch via [speakingtree.in](http://speakingtree.in)

The article brought to light the difference between charity and philanthropy. It would be nice to know about a school — if there is one — where cultural education is also a regular part of the curriculum.

Babubhai Thakker Mumbai

### Understanding Islam

'The Battle of Karbala' by Sakina Yusuf Khan (Dec 12, pg 4) was informative. People don't know much about Islam, hence there is a lot of misunderstanding. Such articles help readers understand the religion better. Please feature more of these, creating awareness of the different aspects of Islam.

Savio Mumbai

### Unholy Abbreviation

This is with reference to 'Get High On LSD' by Devdutt Pattanaik (Dec 12, pg 4). The article was well written, but I was disappointed with the headline. Why abbreviate the names



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of the three goddesses, Lakshmi, Saraswati and Durga to LSD, no matter how clever it may sound?

Shivam via email

It is often believed that Saraswati and Lakshmi do not like to stay in the same house. However, every individual desires that they should stay together in his house so that he can receive the benefits of both learning and wealth.

Blessings of Durga are also needed if one wants to be safe and secure. Let us all pray to the Trinity so that they shower their blessings on us if not in unison, at least individually, at frequent intervals!

KVenkataraman Delhi

You And Yourself I agree with Sonal Srivastava ('Time to Contemplate,' Dec 12, pg 6) that meditation helps to combat stress in daily life. Meditation can work miracles; it's better than medication.

The most wonderful aspect of meditation is that it is completely non-denominational — it is not bound to any particular religion. That is, you don't have to follow a religion to be able to meditate. It's between you and yourself.

Oswald Pereira via [speakingtree.in](http://speakingtree.in)

### Satsang In Print

Speaking Tree, dated Dec 12 was a real treat; it was a beautiful satsang in itself.

Aruna Jethwani via email

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