

The
BOOK
of
EMOTIONS

Or — how it feels to feel

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Content

A HEART PROJECT & AN INVITATION Anna Linder	5
ANGER	
HELLO ANGER. HOW CAN I HELP YOU? Aimee DuFresne	9
WHAT'S THE COLOR OF ANGER?	13
ANGER Tracy Stamper	15
FREEDOM	
CHASING BIRDS Bretton Keating	21
FREEDOM Tracy Stamper	27
WERE IN THE BODY DOES FREEDOM LIVE?	31
SUPPORT	33
SUPPORT... A HAND IN NEED Patricia L. Atchison	35
SUPPORT Amy Barfield Martin	39
SUPPORT Kristina Johnson	45
A RECIPE FOR SUPPORT Tracy Stamper	51
SUPPORT - COMES FROM WITHIN Bretton Keating	59

LEARNING THE LANGUAGE OF EMOTION | **Lysa Black**

67

NEXT CHAPTER

73

THE AUTHORS

74

A heart project and an invitation

Sometimes we shut down, turn off our emotions. It might be our way to make it through. Our way to stay sane and keep some parts of ourselves safe.

Almost everybody do it, but some of us have felt the need to tune out for long periods, months or even years.

For me, it became years. The chaos around and within me was too complex to cope with. Without really noticing I pushed my feelings down and away and emotion after emotion was shut off.

And then the day came when I felt safe and secure enough to want to smile and I noticed that I lost the ability to freely feel.

THE BOOK OF EMOTIONS

My wish is to create a book on emotions and feelings. A guide to everybody or anybody who have shut down or lost their own system of navigation.

It would give me, personally, a greater knowledge and support in my journey and I hope it can be of help to others.

THE INVITATION

Each month during 2017 the door to explore one emotion will be opened. I will do it with my craft – graphic art and book design. But a books is nothing without words and I am not a writer.

My invitation goes out to all heart leaders, highly sensitives, empaths and survivors that feel called to write and contribute with their perspective on feelings and emotions.

Coming together we can create a small encyclopedia on emotions for anybody and everybody who needs guidance.

If you feel called to contribute you will find information on the website for the project: bookofemotions/annalinder.com

ANNA LINDER is a Swedish based graphic artist supporting heart leaders and soulful women to craft beautiful brands, books and web designs that align their vision and story. The Book of Emotions is her heart project. Website: annalinder.com



SUPPORT

Support... A Hand in Need

PATRICIA L. ATCHISON

Support... the word itself has a strong, clipped edge to it. Support by way of encouragement, or someone to lean on, comes to a person in many different ways, and for almost anything pertaining to a person's life.

You see physical support everywhere. A walking stick, cane, walker, and wheelchair are all personal means of support. There is also assistance from another when a hand or arm, or physical strength is offered. One example which touched me most was at a funeral. My Dad, Mom, family, and friends stood together at the gravesite of my sister-in-law's father. Her Mom, Maria stood close to the casket as it was lowered into the ground. The mourners each took their turn and time to pass by the open gravesite and to toss handfuls of bright red rose petals inside the area. Maria was left standing on her own, her body quaking with grief, leaning to one side ready to collapse. My Dad immediately moved to her side and placed a strong palm under her elbow to support her twisted body. She leaned onto the strength of my Dad's hand with an audible sigh. The scene continues to replay in my mind as the perfect example of physical support.

If not for a strong hand to hold individuals up at times when we want to crumble, our world would indeed suffer. Maria was ready to fall down

with grief, her body losing the strength to stand upright. Similar to a barn whose luster died years ago, and a gust of wind has almost collapsed it, except for the one beam that still stands strong carrying the weight of the complete structure against it. That is what support feels like to me. It's an encompassing strength which rises from deep within when we have the courage to support ourselves. If all is lost, and that internal strength is nowhere to be found, when we feel ourselves collapsing with pain, then we can accept external support from others to help stop us from falling.

Support comes both internally and externally. The feelings I have when supported differ depending what I seek. A person can receive aid on various levels and from many different people in their lives. A child or teenager's needs may differ from the types of support that an adult seeks. It all depends on the situation and who is offering assistance.

I've been my own best friend all my life. My experiences have taught me that the biggest supporter is myself. I am not saying this is good or bad, just that it works for me. My spiritual path has led me to believe in myself. Support rises from deep within me from my spirituality as a strength. I feel like I will be okay. It will all work out. I can do this. Like the single beam holding up the collapsed barn structure, I find that beam within myself and the feeling of strength rises, supporting my intentions. My body senses this and it too provides the strength I need.

Support from another is a gift. It can be the single stimulus that moves us forward. Besides help during periods of tragedy or grief, approval can come from others in regards to an idea, event, a business proposal, team

It's an encompassing strength which rises from deep within when we have the courage to support ourselves.

comradery, donation, patronage, sponsorship, and even by way of friendship. When another offers me support in my life happenings, it gives me the confidence to move forward. I might even feel euphoric, that I can do ‘it’.

No matter how support is received, it brings great light with it. I think of the help as (and forgive my clichés) ‘light at the end of the tunnel’, ‘finding the end of the rainbow’. When support fills and surround us, it creates comfort and light in addition to strength. The struggle or burden we face diminishes, even if only for a short time. It’s like falling in the deep end of the pool. You can’t catch a breath or you will drown. You struggle to make your way to the top. If you can’t find the internal strength, you could simply give up and let yourself go, floating amid the waters of despair. Suddenly though someone is there, hauling you out of the oxygen depleting pool, urging you to take a breath, pulling you from the depths, helping you succeed in whatever it is that you are struggling with. Supporting as needed during a particular incident.

Support is the color of light. It is also love, because behind every intention of help is the feeling of giving. One can’t honestly give to someone else if there isn’t some positive feeling there. Without compassion, I would find it nearly impossible to show support to someone if I didn’t care in some way, no matter how large or small. When we receive aid, we feel the generous love and light it is given with. On the receiving side, it too elicits feelings of love, light and joy. Support is strength, no matter whether receiving or giving. My body always becomes stronger when I feel supported. I think I even stand taller, allowing courage to fill my posture, leaving me with a ‘can do’ attitude.

I can’t end this passage without talking about the support that you want from others, perhaps need from others, but you aren’t sure if it’s right to ask for depending on the circumstance. Support for a dishonest situation leaves you feeling euphoric initially, but then disillusion seeps in because you know the encouragement shouldn’t have been given in the first place.

Could the feelings that support elicits also be ego-driven? What if I came up with a really great idea? I'm feeling pretty cheeky – that this is the best thing yet! Depending on how my previous ideas have been accepted, I feel proud to share with another. An example is the idea to start a small venture. I talk about it with a partner or family member. If my idea is accepted with approval and comradery, my chest expands and I feel elated. Yes! I've got this. Ego takes off thinking of all the positive outcomes that will be generated by the idea. I just needed a bit of support to validate everything. Eventually it becomes tangible, a goal to strive for. Ego feels in this moment that she has succeeded in creating a great plan. Not all ideas are ego-centered. We could look at why we are seeking support. Is it for validation, or because we really need it to move forward.

Support encompasses so many facets of life and living. I thrive on it, I need it to bolster me, to give me courage, to prop me up in the bad times, to help me soar in the good times. Something as simple as a smile can be supportive in a time of need. My internal beam keeps my body structure strong and supported. My external support comes from loved ones, friends, acquaintances and community, and even from a stranger offering a hand when I need it. Clutching that hand, or leaning into that palm is the strongest support there is. It touches our hearts, strikes a match and allows the light to glow, giving courage and joy to all parties involved. *Support...*

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Support

AMY BARFIELD MARTIN

Pain has a way of making one very uncomfortable. It often shows up in my body via an achy low back and tight hips. I hate how pain can show up out of nowhere and last for what seems forever. Sometimes a steamy hot shower or a couple of Tylenol are enough to save the day. Then there are those days where all I can do is cry for some much-needed relief.

“Seriously, stop with this already! Why can’t you leave me alone? Why must you be so needy?”

For awhile now I have been wishing my pain would magically go away. Persistent, unwavering, my body refused to give into my whiny demands. It was desperately crying out for some much-needed love and support.

“Alright! I give up! Tell me what it is you want. I can’t take this anymore.”

Gentle movement, deep breaths, chakra speak.

I manage to push myself away from my keyboard. Slip into soft yoga pants, roll out my mat, and melt onto the floor.

While on all fours, I begin to rock my hips. Moving forward, back, circling left and right, prying loose the knots that have been trying their damndest to strangle me.

Remember to breathe. *Inhale, Exhale, Release. Observe, Sense, Be.*

The pelvis and hips are the home of the second chakra, Svadhithana, which is closely associated with one's emotions and creativity. An imbalance in this chakra may show up as a feeling of insecurity and a lack of self-confidence. Creativity is our birthright, and pain in the second chakra area may indicate we are blocking its natural flow.

I roll over onto my back and draw my knees in towards my chest, then slowly proceed to lower their weight from side to side. After a few repetitions, I return my knees to center, content to lie there in stillness. As I sink deeper into silence, anxiety soon engulfs me. Feeling overwhelmed, I roll onto my side in an attempt to distance myself from its intensity.

I find myself wanting to cocoon and longing to hide. While simultaneously aching for a reassuring hug of nurturing love and support.

“Oh God, how I hate this. Make it go away. What do you want from me!”

I want you to listen. I want you to hear what I have been trying to tell you. I want you to stop trying to silence the flow of your creativity.

All creativity begins with desire, the wanting to experience something come to fruition. At the root of it, creativity is nothing but choice. I feel our lives are greatly influenced by choice. Choices in what we want, choices in what we do, along with choosing what we believe.

A memory from when I was around 4 years old surfaces. I am desperately wanting to tell my mom something. I remember fervently patting my hand against her arm trying to get her attention. I remember her turning her head toward me and screaming “What!” I remember being so utterly shocked and horrified at her reaction.

The adult me can look back at that moment and see my mom was having a bad day. The wise grownup in me knows not to take outbursts personally. The sensitive little girl in me though hadn't yet developed this skill and her world was shattered that day.

*I draw my little one into my arms
and lie there with her. I offer my
support through attentive listening,
while she shares everything she wasn't
able to back then. Eventually, our
bodies soften and rhythmic
breathing returns. I feel a warm
golden energy flow from my heart
and into my lower back and pelvis.*

In that moment my little girl determined it wasn't safe to want for anything. She wasn't sure who she could rely upon. She felt it wasn't safe to trust she had the support of others in getting her wants and desires met.

I roll over onto my stomach and assume a protective posture.

“Wow, little one. I am so sorry. I am so, so, sorry that happened to you. Know I hear you and that you are safe. Please know that moment cannot hurt you now.”

I draw my little one into my arms and lie there with her. I offer my support through attentive listening, while she shares everything she wasn't able to back then. Eventually, our bodies soften and rhythmic breathing

returns. I feel a warm golden energy flow from my heart and into my lower back and pelvis.

Another memory from my childhood comes flowing to me. A memory where my mom is saying “*Corkers can do anything*”. I was her little Corker and she did her best to be supportive of me.

I find the contrast of these two memories interesting. “It isn’t safe to want” & “You can do anything”. It is no wonder I have many times found myself engaging in people pleasing behavior in an attempt to be receiving of their love, while at the same time doing everything I could to avoid the possibility of causing them disappointment. If by some chance a deep seated want or desire of my own did manage to make itself known, I was great at dismissing it. I would do this by telling myself it was unimportant and insignificant or what I want didn’t matter.

Though one deep desire from childhood never left me. This was the desire to have a romantic and deeply committed relationship. I am happy

I have come to realize what our dreams need most is to have our own love and support behind them. They need us choose, to commit, to believe. Without this, they can never come to be.

to say I have been married to my deeply devoted husband for almost nine years now. His unwavering love and support have greatly contributed to who I am today.

Yes, I was great at dreaming my ideal love relationship into being. I made it my life goal and I poured a countless amount of time and energy into making it happen. Sadly, though, I never gave myself full permission to dream big in other areas of my life, such as money, career, and creative endeavors. So many times I have found myself stuck, unwilling to move, fearful of making the wrong choice or some huge mistake.

Fortunately, I have come to realize what our dreams need most is to have our own love and support behind them. They need us choose, to commit, to believe. Without this, they can never come to be.

As I rise to my feet, I realize here was my opportunity to choose differently. I could choose to be fully supportive of myself by committing to getting clear on exactly what my deepest heartfelt wants and desires were in all areas of my life. I owe that much to both myself and my little girl. I could choose to believe the universe was 100 percent supportive in helping me make my dreams happen. Plus I could choose to rest in the safety of knowing its love would always be there to catch me.

So what about you? Is your body trying to tell you something that goes deeper than physical pain? I sense the pain in my back was symptomatic of my not being willing to trust that life supports me. While the pain in my hips was indicative of my unwillingness to move forward with allowing my creativity its full expression.

Are you willing to listen to your little one? Are you willing to let yourself dream? Do you believe? Are you ready to be the receiver of your own creation?

Please, please, please say “yes!” I am not saying it will always be easy. Sometimes we may need to let go and get down on our knees. Sometimes it may mean gathering the courage to rise and to greet the choice that

stands before you. It may require us to be present with any so-called messy emotions and to be willing to really listen to whatever they have to say.

Know the universe so loves and supports you, no matter what happens on any given day. Plus know it will always have your back, every step of the way.

AMY BARFIELD MARTIN is a dream seeker and truth creator, residing in the St. Louis area. She inspires others to live life on their terms through honoring and listening to the voice of body sensation, along with allowing the uncensored flow of one's true desires. Let's illuminate your heart's magic.

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Support

KRISTINA JOHNSON

I once read in a college psychology book that no matter what type of dysfunction or despair a child must go through in their life, if there can be found one person who can provide support, offer love and guidance, then that child will be saved. It does not take an army of teachers, therapists, neighbors or friends to cradle and embrace the wounded spirit. All it takes is one compassionate person standing by, holding the light, offering love and suggesting a different pathway to follow. In my young life, that person with the life vest was my grandmother, a woman with steel in her spine and a mountain of kindness in her overflowing heart, who through sheer determination loved the sadness out of a lost child and replaced that big gaping hole with unconditional love, support and hope for a better future. My wish for the world is that each of us, no matter our age or disposition, will find that special someone who sees your beauty and encourages you to find your way out of the darkness and into the light. Amidst the tragedy, I was blessed to have a grandmother who gave me wings, blew softly to lift me off the earth and send me on my way to pay it forward.

There are those of us who have been blessed with parents who saw our gifts and nourished our dreams, believing in the possibilities we might one

day achieve. Parents who stood by us with unconditional support, offering guidance when asked, while carrying a great big safety net when our world collapsed and came tumbling down to the ground. However, in my unofficial study of people I've encountered along the way, I find too many of them, like myself, just didn't fall into that blessed parent group. When my rock, my hero, my sole supporter passed away when I was 19 years old, I found myself floundering and in search of someone to help me bear the weight that life had settled onto my shoulders. My solution to this loss of support was to build a garden of friends, who would be there for me lending their own unique kind of support and guidance, holding me afloat when the tsunamis of life threatened the safety of my home. Quite simply, I took the time to find my tribe. Remember that your tribe does not need to be large, for as I've mentioned before, a single person can change your life, bring you comfort and ease, encouraging you to change your thoughts and inviting you to become the most true version of yourself.

Over the years, I've worked to build this community of forever friends, which oddly enough includes complete strangers whose names I do not recall, who have slipped into my life at just the right moment to deliver a message of hope and support that encouraged me to change and improve my life. Deep thoughtful messages delivered by strangers have left imprints on my soul that will last a lifetime and beyond. Many of these thoughts and ideas about life I've shared with friends or family, and sometimes other strangers, who've gratefully commented that the words I'd spoken were exactly what they needed to hear to help them heal. Somehow these shared words of comfort have taken on a life of their own and made their way out into the universe creating miracles and spreading their wisdom to those who've lost their way and are sorely in need of guidance or raising up. What a precious gift these conversations have become.

How does the dictionary define support? As a verb, it means to "bear all or part of the weight of; to hold up." As a noun, "a thing that bears the

I was blessed to have a grandmother who gave me wings, blew softly to lift me off the earth and send me on my way to pay it forward.

weight of something or keeps it upright.” Find the people who are willing to do this for you. Finding your tribe can save your life.

My tribe is filled with remarkable big hearted women of strength and courage. Tribe members who I can call at a moments notice to bemoan the injustices of life or cry on their shoulders. Women who honor my emotions, encouraging me to let those feelings rumble like thunder and crash like lightening, reminding me that every emotion we feel has purpose, should be fully and completely felt and sat with, until it softens, quiets and eventually evaporates. These people are the rocks that ground me and the wind that lifts my wings and encourages me to fly. Without them I would be a crumpled puddle on a cold hard floor, but with their assistance, help, aid, encouragement, approval, comfort, reassurance, backing, confirmation, and solace I am able maintain my sanity and move through the dark places until I once again reach the light. They are the support beams that help me hold this house together.

For those who are currently feeling unsupported. I suggest that you consider an aquatic therapy called Watsu. This form of therapy is often

called The Water Breath Dance, for during a session the body surrenders to the rhythm of the breath as it gently moves in the water, while supported by a therapist, who holds you close to her heart. All sound disappears with the wave of the water, inviting the nervous system to quiet as well. The purpose of this therapy is to drop into the emptiness at the bottom of the breath. Doing nothing again and again, until the body, mind and spirit drift away into nothingness. The treatment allows emotions to rise up and be released. The secret to this release is the fact that the whole body is so contained, so supported by the therapist and the water, that the floater finds it safe to access every level of emotional trauma and set it free. I recently was gifted with this healing water dance by a dear member of my tribe. The beauty of this treatment is that the support felt during this session can be reimagined and relived within the body's memory when the weight of daily life threatens the safety of your own home.

Open yourself up to the possibility of receiving a rare gem of knowledge, a sacred pause where healing begins and grows through the body. The very act of being human means that rock slides of difficulties and overwhelming challenges will sometimes block our path, steal our breath or knock us to the ground, but deep within we all possess the inner

*Deep within we all possess the
inner strength required to regain
our roots and sprout our wings
to fly towards freedom.*

strength required to regain our roots and sprout our wings to fly towards freedom. It is essential to keep a life boat near your shores that will allow you to float in the healing waters whenever a storm surges. Go in search of forever friends who understand these truths. Fill your life with friends who raise you up, who sing your praises and who are willing to shoulder some of your burdens if the need arises. Tribe members who know when to ground you, when to set you free and when to remind you what it means to be unconditionally loved and supported. Seek friends and special strangers who stir sensations of comfort and ease, who warm your heart and who always give you the freedom to be your wild and crazy authentic self. Find your support beams.

KRISTINA JOHNSON is a lover of all things that inspire creativity and invite happiness. In addition to teaching Vinyasa Yoga and whirling her cares away on the dance floor, she makes time to travel the world, create art, do cartwheels in the grass and make play and laughter a priority.



WHAT IS THE OPPOSITE TO FEELING SUPPORTED?

ignorance *free falling*
fear *vulnerability*
forsaken *unhelpful*
worthlessness *coldly abandoned*
defeat *vertigo*
confusion *alone*
loneliness *crash*
capsize *discard*

*To stand alone, hoping that I
have power within myself.*

GILL



A Recipe for Support

TRACY STAMPER

Support is a beloved who believes in you, cheering you up and on when you falter.

Support is the sensation of being held in a grandmother's ample Love as she wipes away tears and fears.

Support is resting into a nest feathered just for you by someone holding the space for you when your heart feels bruised.

Support is that nudge stretching you to dream bigger, aim higher, and fly.

Support is a friend asking that magical question: "*How can I best Support you?*"

We all long for and need Support.

"I've got your back."

"We're behind you all the way."

"I'm holding you in my heart."

"We're by your side."

"I'm with you every step of the way."

A shoulder to lean on.

A hand to hold.

In good hands.

Someone to catch you if you fall.

When we have it and allow ourselves to rest into it, Support can be such an obvious, palpable, tangible entity. It can also be slippery and elusive. Since it is essential both for survival and for well-being, Support is something well worth understanding.

As a young teenager, I received a lesson about Support that continues to unfold for me now, decades later. My classmates and I participated in the much-anticipated ‘Trust Fall’ teambuilding exercise. As one who is not overly fond of heights, I was not very trusting of this impending Trust Fall.

My wobbly knees, butterfly belly and I were anxious. When it was my turn, I climbed up to the platform above the heads of my classmates whose interlocked arms formed a safety net. And I did it! I fell into the Support of my teammates. And when it my turn to Support, I interlocked arms and helped catch my peers.

As relieved as I am that the literal Trust Fall is (hopefully) a once-in-a-lifetime experience, I have since discovered that Life seems to be a series of one figurative Trust Fall after another.

After deeply struggling for a spell with having felt unsupported in one area of my life, I have been examining and untangling what Support is, where it comes from and what is required to reliably feel it. Due to its

We must choose to allow ourselves to be supported. Without our willingness, Support cannot fully and dynamically express itself.

sometimes elusive nature, I wish to understand the secret of Support so as to be able to call on it when needed.

What I discovered is that Support involves a recipe with three essential ingredients: the presence of Support, willingness and ability to be supported, and knowing where to look.

THE PRESENCE OF SUPPORT

The Supporter must show up and be present. Without my classmates standing below me with arms woven together, falling ‘timber’-style from a platform would have been mighty unwise. My classmates showed up.

A friend of mine recently lost her husband. She is surrounded by Support. Our community brainstormed as to how to best Support her: donating in her husband’s memory to a meaningful cause, meeting for coffee, treating her to a pampering day, etc. Our arms are interlocked. Her Support is present.

WILLINGNESS & ABILITY TO BE SUPPORTED

Being and feeling supported is not merely a passive experience of being surrounded by would-be Supporters. The mere presence of a safety net doesn’t automatically translate into being supported.

Our participation is key: we must choose to allow ourselves to be supported. Without our willingness, Support cannot fully and dynamically express itself. Therein lies the relational nature of Support. It involves an energy exchange between Supporter and Supported.

Imagine if I had stood on the platform and simply stood there until opting out and climbing back down the ladder. Had I not chosen to fall, I would not have had the somatic experience of landing in my peers’ Support.

The friend grieving her husband knows that her Support net is there. In order for her to actually feel supported, she can either take us up on offers or she can simply feel supported in knowing that we are here for her.

Sometimes, Support is around us and we don't have eyes to see it. If we are unable to let it in, we won't feel supported.

Seeing Support as a two-way street involving engagement on both sides of the equation allowed me to become more adept at accepting Support's invitation.

KNOWING WHERE TO LOOK FOR SUPPORT

This ingredient stumped me for years, despite its seeming obviousness.

I struggled with this in a specific area of my life in which I was deeply invested. Within a circle of peers, I hoped to see our community up the ante on Support. I was eager to discover how far we could all lift one another when Support was shared in a free-flowing exchange.

I poured myself into this equation with gusto. And I felt... frustrated. Disappointed. Unseen. Exhausted. Hurt. No matter how enthusiastically I showed up as a Supporter for the whole, I didn't feel the Support fully reciprocated.

I was looking in the wrong direction.

Plugging this into the Trust Fall scenario, I was standing on the platform looking for a community safety net. Some peers were off in a cluster of their own. Some were busy doing their individual thing wholeheartedly. Some didn't offer up their arms into a safety net. And then a small few made noise while kicking up dirt, adding confusion and drama. Although there absolutely were community members offering and receiving Support elegantly and beautifully, it became increasingly difficult to see or hear that dynamic given the dusty, limited visibility and noisy distractions.

Holding too tight to the platform, I kept seeking Support in the form

of all arms interlocked. Not seeing it, I kept spinning my wheels, trying to elicit reciprocity by pouring more of myself into a supporting role. (An often-cited definition of insanity is “*doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.*”)

Finally acknowledging that I was stuck on a platform without all the ingredients for a fully intact safety net, I climbed down.

I walked to a clearing, built another platform, and energetically called in supportive community. I asked, and I received. New faces showed up, as well as familiar faces that had also distanced themselves from the swirling dust. In this fresh air, I clearly saw Support. And my peers saw me when they stood on the platform and I interlocked arms below them.

We were on the right platform looking in the right direction.

Knowing where to look is clear and obvious in the example of the Trust Fall. Life’s lessons, however, don’t always reveal themselves in such straightforward ways. To be supported, we must get clear on where the Support is.

Understanding the interplay of these ingredients sheds light on what to tweak when not feeling supported.

Since not all directions in which we gaze are bound to provide the Support we seek, it is up to us to pursue that Support.

What if we climb onto that metaphoric platform and teammates are nowhere to be found? Support is still there. I must reframe the direction in which I’m looking.

There are times when we must look within and rely on self for Support. We become our own Supporter.

The tactile languaging of Support (shoulder to lean on, feet to stand on, etc.) reveals its physicality. Our bodies can feed us Support in those times when we stand alone. This Trust Fall involves believing that we come equipped with the tools to source our own Support. Thankfully, we do.

TO FEEL SUPPORTED:

Stand, sensing your feet. Rest into the Support of the floor beneath you. Mother Earth is always there to Support you. All you have to do is trust her Support.

Scan your body. Which muscles and joints are holding unnecessary tension? Melt shoulders. Belly. Jaw. Engage only the muscles needed to stand relaxed. Settle into the bones and muscles supporting you. Inhale gratitude for your spine's structural and energetic Support, the conduit for brain and body communication. No conscious effort is required.

Peel away layers of effort. Listen for that audible sigh telling you that you feel supported. Imprint your memory with this sensation. Allow yourself the Support.

The stardust you are made of is the very essence of Support. Your cells exist to Support you. Your body is brilliantly designed to Support you. Simply by existing in your body, you are supported, just as sure as the sun shines. Trust the Support of your body and of the ones who show up wanting to Support you.

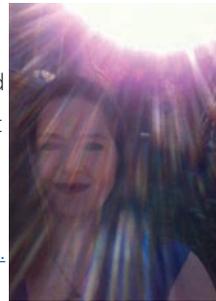
*The stardust you are made of is
the very essence of Support.
Your cells exist to Support you.*

*“You closing your eyes on a sunny day
doesn’t mean that the sun isn’t shining.
It still shines.
It’s whether or not you
will be able to embrace it and see it.
That’s really the trick.
Open your eyes....
maybe even just one eye....
maybe just squint a little bit....
and let it in.
You deserve to feel that love.
You deserve to feel that warmth.”*

~ Aziza Binti

You deserve to feel that Support.

TRACY STAMPER is a dancer at heart, in mind, of body, and with words. Her writing has been featured in *Rebelle Society* and *Elephant Journal*. Her current favorite colors are purple, orange and glitter. She likes her chocolate dark, her inspiration flowing and her car dances to be uninhibited. Website: [facebook.com/shinesistarshine/](https://www.facebook.com/shinesistarshine/)



A person with long, dark, wavy hair is shown from the back, wearing a white jacket. A dark, horizontal band is placed across their face, completely obscuring their eyes and nose. The background is a soft, out-of-focus landscape, possibly a beach or a field, with a light sky. The overall mood is contemplative and somewhat somber.

"I can show you the gleaming skin of anxiety, the perfectly-placed dimple of depression. Sometimes we smile on the outside because it's all we have."

BRETTON KEATING

Support – Comes from Within

BRETTON KEATING

I believe others can meet us only as deeply as we've met ourselves. So for many years, this meant I largely felt alone. Perhaps for this reason, support was a sentiment that, for this chapter of my life, felt nearly impossible to find.

I was living a life of falsity. I lay frozen in a river of rushing colors I refused to see. My eyes were closed wide shut. My ears blocked from the outside in.

And in the pinnacle of falsehood, the universe conspired, as it does, to set me out alone. I moved into my own place against intuitive warnings that I would not be happy doing so, and no less than a week later, felt my heart ripped out from under me and shred to pieces. I lay broken on a stone-cold floor, among cracks of black mold lining tiles bleached a starking white.

I had been living a future life, with blatant disregard for my present state of blindness. And when the fairy tale came crashing down, I had no choice but to find myself again.

In order to do so, I needed to distance myself from nearly everyone.

I remember realizing one night that many of my relationships were

one-sided. I was exhausted from crossing the river, feeling as though I was forever travelling upstream. I felt so lonely, so unsupported, so unseen. Because deep down, I wasn't supporting myself. That evening I opted for a different route. Floating the other direction, I wandered around an art store in a state of lostness.

I found myself amid the chaos of untapped potential.

As soon as I stopped seeking support outside myself, I found a deep-seated strength to support myself within.

I remember reaching a point where I was so happy being alone in my messy studio-slash-apartment, covered in paint and cooking five things at once, that I opted to spend days upon nights on my own. In the past, I had lived a never-ending quest for distraction. Now, I began to recognize what I was truly seeking, and my actions started to support that internal quest.

As I grew in my relationship with myself, which, up to then, I had mostly disregarded, I gained clarity on who I am, what gives me life, and how I feel supported.

Today the level of support in my life amazes me. Yes, sometimes I experience dark moments. But I am getting better at communicating with others how they can support me both inside and out of the darkness. It's a constant practice. And in order to communicate outwardly, I need to consistently come back within, asking myself—what feels supportive in this moment? And then again, in this next one?

Perhaps the most interesting thing about support is how it changes. What feels supportive in one instance becomes a hindrance in another. It boils down not to what shape or form the support takes, but rather the feeling beneath. When somebody offers support from love, we can sense it deeply. And ultimately, this is the truest form of support available.

Sometimes we think we act from love, but really our ego holds other surface-level intentions. I want to keep you close, because I'm afraid of what may happen when you leave. She helps me because it makes her

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look a certain way. He likes the attention he receives when he plays the role of knight in shining armor.

There's always the involvement of ego; it's impossible to live without it. But it's trying to offer support from a deeper place, regardless of what the ego wants or says or does, that's what matters. It's the showing up, fully raw and present and available to the person in front of you and their respective rawness. It's holding each other up, even when it means you may be dragged down.

My pastor spoke recently about selfless love, and how it means to give part of yourself for another's wellbeing. And how *challenging* is this, especially in the new age world of pseudo spirituality and all its emphasis on boundaries and filling your own cup first. Healthy boundaries are important, don't get me wrong, but there's a certain magic that happens when we reach over the wall to someone in need. We often have no idea the impact doing so can have on another person.

I know people who only talk to me when I'm happy. When I'm smiling, they flock.

Truth is, I've battled depression on and off throughout my life, often

hidden behind a smile. I've always felt deeply, living primarily through my emotional body, except for in the moments when I numbed myself because all the feeling became too much.

Many people often have no idea what or how much we're feeling.

I can show you the gleaming skin of anxiety, the perfectly-placed dimple of depression. Sometimes we smile on the outside because it's all we have.

Last year, I experienced perhaps my deepest bout of depression yet. I reached a point where I no longer wanted to live. I didn't actively consider suicide, yet I didn't see how I could possibly fit in the world. I wanted out.

The day my puppy and I found each other, that changed. I wanted to live again.

She was so *small* when she came to me, I could fit her in the crook of my arm. I was afraid to sleep with her in the bed because I thought I might roll over and crush her.

Her mother had rejected her on the streets of India. She came with bite marks on her head and the biggest appetite for life. She still lives this way. I've volunteered at an animal shelter, and I notice this pattern with

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To see.*

the runts of the litters. The smallest of the batch often have these feisty, unstoppable spirits. They give life their all with every ounce they've got.

And so my 2-kilo puppy supported me back to life. I had to become a fighter. People could no longer stampede over me, because now it wasn't just me, there was another creature involved, and it was the two of us together. I decided I would no longer accept the toxic situations I had lived with in the past. I would fight for a life in which she I could live, healthily, together.

It hasn't been easy. Travelling with a puppy is one of the more difficult paths I've tread. For six weeks, we lived in a seaside village on the west coast of India. I didn't know anyone; the only friend I had there left after a couple of days. Regardless, I still found the universe offers exactly the support that I need in each moment.

One night, after spending weeks trying to figure out how my puppy and I would get to the next place, which involved piles of documentation and a wild goose chase through ambiguously specific rules...not my forté, I broke down sobbing when puppy wouldn't listen to me and come inside. I had just spent an hour pulling ticks off her body, after chasing two giant spiders off the wall. All I wanted was to sleep. I was afraid to leave her outside because of leopard attacks on dogs in the neighborhood.

While screaming my head off at a scared pup who understands human emotion on a deeper level than I can comprehend, my neighbors, a Ukrainian couple, came outside, sat me down, gave me warm lemon water, and rubbed my back. I kept apologizing for the scene I had caused. Throughout my life, I have been taught to apologize for my emotional outbursts. Feeling as deeply as I do is unacceptable. Unless it's happiness, of course. Anything else best be swept away with the spiders on the wall.

After my third or fourth apology, my neighbor turned to me and said, "So, you're emotional. Many talented people are." And that was it. No trying to change me. No telling me I needed to get a handle on the highs

and lows. No sending me links to articles on emotional balance, anxiety and depression. She offered none of the responses I've been conditioned to receive. Instead, she sat with me and my messiness. And in that simple gesture, she showed me the beauty and ability of support. To see.

Love means seeing another person, as he or she really is, and then walking alongside him or her on their respective journey. It means being intuitively in tune with the level of support that person needs, moment to moment.

When we're seen, our true selves shine through. And these true selves, they can overcome anything. From spiders on the wall and a tick-covered fur ball, to the depths of depression and heartbreak.

When we support one another with love we become unstoppable.

BRETTON KEATING is a yoga instructor for adults and children, barre instructor, Reiki healer, writer, and artist. For her heart-centered writings, please visit her blog (brettonkeating.com). For creative work, including poetry and your fairy tale within, here is her website (whitecottonrose.com).



EMOTIONS

Learning the Language of Emotion

LYSA BLACK

Learning the language of emotion allows us to hear and learn from our own soul within. The part of us that existed before life on earth and the part of us that will go on after our physical body has died. Tuning into our feelings and interpreting the language of your soul can become the single most powerful act to return to the sovereign authority on your truth, identity and purpose. This language is intended to allow us to know our own soul. This powerful language of emotion can communicate to us the most valuable, accurate and reliable information that we need to feel guided, supported and safe in this world. If we do not know who we are, then we cannot authentically respond from our truth in the myriad of situations that arise in life.

For me, emotions are the language of the soul. A language I was never taught... a language I never heard and a language I never saw anyone else speaking when I was growing up. For me it was attention-demanding internal pain that I could not define which invited me to learn this unknown language.

I started with: *pain* which I now know means — Pay attention. Pain was the first ‘word’ I learnt within the language of emotion. This pain I

was introduced to was initially a bit like screaming, I realise now that when the strange whispers and unknown dialogue within remained unheard for too long the volume increases until by sheer force it captivated my attention! I was captivated by this new language and sought through experience to uncover the meaning behind every emotion.

Fast forward ten years and I now know that emotion is the language of the soul. While it's easy to be captivated by the voices outside of us that subtly or overtly intend to: teach, dictate and compel us to their own set of rules and instructions... Our emotions are the sacred language of our own soul, offering us guidance on the truth of who we are, what we are here to do and how we can respond to each moment living from our truth.

We have been unconsciously taught through the behaviour of everyone around us that our feelings are meant to be stopped, shut-off, disregarded, hidden or ignored. Feelings are feared in modern society. We fear being seen as vulnerable, weak or insecure if we allow ourselves to display our feelings through our face, words or body. So a necessary social facade has been erected; where we train the muscles in our faces to stay still despite the deep surging and movement of our emotions within us. Under such repressed conditions our private emotional expression can become more volatile and explosive. Many have used this experience to confirm the 'danger' of emotion and our need to 'control' and 'repress' them at any cost. We live in a society that is compulsively driven by emotion altering choices that lead to addiction: coffee, alcohol, media, food, sex and spending are all tools we have been taught to use to alter our emotional state. As Dallin H. Oakes says "You can never get enough of what you don't need."

When we do not know what we feel, why we feel it we feel compelled to control our own emotional state using any one of the many methods listed above. This means that we can end up masking our ability to

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actually know ourselves on a soul level. I believe every emotion carries sacred information from our soul that we can learn how to interpret for ourselves. Here are my personal interpretations for you to reflect on and consider. Please tune into yourself to perceive if these are accurate and relevant for you?

PAIN = PAY ATTENTION WITHIN

When we use our pain to tune in and listen within, we are heeding the call to listen. This allows the pain to soften and commences our inner tutoring (Awakening our *in-tuition*).

ANGER = I HAVE BEEN DISRESPECTED

Learning to interpret the message of anger from our soul supports us to comprehend the boundaries we require. The limitations of what others

can and cannot do to us. Anger guides us to the precise clarity we need to know about ourselves personally so that we can freely communicate ‘this’ is OK and ‘this’ is not to everyone we encounter. The communication of our boundaries allow us to self-honor; and the outcome of sharing these boundaries with those around us is an opening to new levels of being honoured (or removing ourselves from those who cannot honor us).

SADNESS = I HAVE LOST SOMETHING OF GREAT VALUE TO ME

Learning how to interpret the message of sadness from our soul supports us to comprehend what is of true value. We only feel genuine sadness when something that was genuinely precious to us becomes lost, taken or otherwise becomes inaccessible. Sometimes we think something is precious and it’s actually not, and vice versa... we can be careless towards people, experiences and things that we are surprised to find actually do hold tremendous value to us. Sadness is the emotion which communicates such value – although it will only be felt once an item, person or experience has gone.

Sadness can be one of the most repressed emotions because the common societal assumption is that ‘what’s gone is gone’ and we need to just ‘get over it’. Unfortunately this perspective actually causes these ‘sad’ feelings to sink deeper within us and become embedded in our experience — meaning we will actually feel increasingly more sad because we refuse to acknowledge our sadness. Eventually the feeling then becomes more pronounced and loud as it is seeking to be heard, understood and deliver its message. The actual benefit of truly acknowledging what we have lost is that we can clarify and confirm within ourselves what is actually really valuable to ourselves on a soul level. We can release the societal expectations of what we’re suppose to value and surrender the expectations of trying to live up to having or enjoying what others appear to enjoy and get into alignment with our own truth. Sadness allows us to uncover what

is truly valuable to us so that we can seek to fill our lives with everything that is of true worth.

JEALOUSY = I SEE SOMEONE GIVING THEMSELVES SOMETHING I WANT THAT I WON'T LET MYSELF HAVE YET

Learning how to interpret the message of jealousy from our soul supports us to comprehend what we truly desire. Seeing someone else experiencing something we do not have alerts us to a remembrance that we may be forgetting a sacred desire within ourselves. When desires arise in our hearts, it is not always the ideal time to bring them to life, so it's common for us to shelve these desires and wait for a more ideal time to bring them into fruition. Unfortunately in shelving some of these desires we can mistakenly forget them, and they can become forgotten. When the feeling of jealousy emerges, it is a kind and loving reminder from our soul that we have a desire that wants our attention.

GRIEF = A DEEP LOSS OF SOMETHING THAT I TRULY LOVE WHICH IS IRREPLACEABLE

Learning how to interpret the message of grief from our soul supports us to comprehend that love is eternal. We only feel grief when we have truly loved another soul. The truth about grief is that it represents the equal component of the love and devotion we felt for our beloved. The depth to which we have loved another soul marks the depth to which our grief needs to be expressed and felt.

FEAR = I AM ENCOUNTERING SOMETHING THAT IS UNKNOWN

Learning how to interpret the message of fear from our soul supports us to comprehend what we do not know. As we progress, age and expand, we always reach an element of non-knowingness that many shy away from. Fear can be so uncomfortable for some that they try to avoid it by

staying within their ‘knowingness’. The value of fear is that we can recognise that we are touching the edge of our knowingness, which means from that point onward we can encounter newness, opening and expansion that we have not previously known.

Our souls speak to us through emotion, inviting us home. Home to a land where you can belong, where you are the sovereign Monarch.

I hope that you can be willing to learn this new language and give yourself permission to tune out the voices of must, should, now, here as we learn how to turn within and listen to our own souls.

LYSA BLACK is a Heart Healer who uses her gifts to help you return to the magic of your own heart. The more we can trust ourselves the more we can trust our gifts: the gut knowing, inner wisdom or intuitive guidance we all receive. If we listen, our hearts will help us to find the clarity, calm and magical healing shifts we need.

Lysa has been coaching and teaching women to remember the magic of their own hearts for eight years now. Healing her own heart allowed her to overcome anxiety, binge eating and a series of romantic break ups. Lysa believes that we all have magical hearts that want to guide us to experience more peace, love and joy!



Next chapter

The Book of Emotions is an ongoing project and every month will be focused around one feeling and become one chapter in the upcoming book. Each month a digital sneak peak of each chapter will be released – free for everyone to share with the world.

UPCOMING EMOTIONS

Anger and freedom was the focus for January and February. March had Support in focus. The feelings for the upcoming months are:

April: Vulnerability

May: Trust

June: Hope

CONTRIBUTE

If you feel called to contribute you will find information on the website for the project: bookofemotions/annalinder.com

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KRISTINA JOHNSON is a lover of all things that inspire creativity and invite happiness. In addition to teaching Vinyasa Yoga and whirling her cares away on the dance floor, she makes time to travel the world, create art, do cartwheels in the grass and make play and laughter a priority.

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