

Dan Stone

PHIL: Dan Stone is my guest tonight. Like I was telling you, somebody had forwarded me an email which had one of your blogs in it. We're going to get to that in a few minutes, but the title was "Don't Look Down". I read that blog and thought it was pretty good stuff, and I looked at where it came from, and I looked at the heading and it said "The Shower Channel," and I'm saying to myself, "What the hell is The Shower Channel?" So that, in and of itself, attracted my attention, so I went to the web site: www.theshowerchannel.com. Dan, what is The Shower Channel?

DAN: The Shower Channel is both a blog and the blogger. It's a term that I use to describe myself in a sort of playful way in terms of the questions that I'm asking, and the answers that I am receiving, and the forum in which I am sharing them with other people. So, obviously, a little bit of a play on words, but a reference to me and the work that's being published on the blog.

PHIL: Okay. This is what he says on his site: "This is the unfolding of me, learning to channel me, something that initially started happening for me in the shower – hence the name. These are my initial and ongoing experiences in Danneling, which is obviously a play on the word channeling." It's a word that used to wig him out, he says, but "now I'm learning that it's something that we all do on some level of being and expressing our best selves".

DAN: My relationship with that word has come a long way!

PHIL: Truthfully, mine has, too. Channeling, I think back a decade or so go, it kind of meant sitting down in a room with someone and they would kind of supposedly go into a trance, and the next thing you know, some dead person would come through and would use the person's body and vocal cords or whatever, as a means to communicate with whoever happened to be in the room or in the audience. People may be familiar with Ramtha. We also had a whole series of people who claimed they were channeling extraterrestrial beings, giving messages for us poor earthlings, and what was to be our future fate or doom, depending on who you were talking with and what galaxy they were from. I actually began to do some channeling, but it was a different kind, and I think it's more along the line of what you do, Dan. Tell me, define channeling for people.

DAN: Well, from my perspective, anyway, I tend to use the term somewhat more broadly than at least some of the examples that you've provided. For me, it really isn't that different from my experience, things that I done, ways that I have felt connected to a source of inspiration, or with them. Call it spirit, call it source, or call it divine wisdom. An experience that I have had off and on my entire life, and often the primary way that I have experienced that is as a writer. And I think most people, certainly people who have been involved in any kind of creative work - writers, artists, musicians, and others, even scientists, or anybody who's had the experience of feeling inspired; anyone who's had the experience of just sort of being plugged in, and having ideas or information, or understanding or perspective, just sort of flow through them, to them. That is the experience that I describe as channeling. Certainly, it is used in more specific ways, and even the process that I've become involved in as The Shower Channel probably has a more specific definition in some ways, but it's still not too far off. I think it's helped me to be able to make that connection to things that have been going on in my life for a very long time that I think are much more common than we let ourselves realize.

PHIL: By the way, I didn't mean to totally disparage channeling, at least as I initially presented it. Certainly I think there are some legitimate channels that come through, and there is some validity and, in many cases, there is a lot of garbage as well. You have to be discerning of what you accept and don't accept, but to me, what I've discovered is people are probably familiar with the term "the still voice within" or "the small voice within". Some people might even refer to it as your "consciousness speaking". To me, it's when that little voice becomes loud, and it comes through loud and clear. You say on your site that it's what you do when you write, when you connect with someone in an uplifting way. You understand something with sweeter clarity than you had before. It's just channeling Dan, but it's an elevated guided Dan, whose mind is clear, whose heart is open, whose eye is always on the wide horizon, and whose tongue is always slightly in his cheek. I definitely relate to that, and I

actually love that definition. Its kind of like that still, small voice within sort of breaks through all of the mind chatter that we have and says “Hey! Whoa! Wait a minute! I’ve got something to say here!” I don’t know, is that kind of the way you present this?

DAN: Yes. I think that you have alluded a couple of times to sort of the humor of that, the lighthearted aspect of this, and that’s been of real importance to me, to kind of maintain that approach and that way of thinking about it. I think I’ve learned, and I believe I am certainly not alone in this, but I’ve learned that the more I allow myself to experience that kind of connection, the more I allow myself to sort of tune in that way and receive from that source, the more I understand just what a funny place the universe is.

PHIL: It does have a sense of humor, absolutely.

DAN: Absolutely. And you know, it’s interesting, I’ve been hearing my whole life, people telling me to lighten up, and it used to really bug me, that I heard that from so many people. But I’ve come to see that as a message that the universe has been sending me for quite some time, and I just finally started to pay attention to it.

PHIL: I think too, Dan, that people need to realize that anybody/everybody, actually, in some manner, shape, or form probably does channel, even though they may not recognize it as such; that it’s not some kind of mystical experience reserved only for the few, or something that is beyond the reach of the average person. It’s suddenly when you could be faced with a particular situation or something going on in your life. It could be something dramatic or traumatic, and it seems out of the clear blue, some sense of clarity comes through that says “No, make a right hand turn, don’t go left”. Then you find out if you had gone left, you might have ended up in a traffic jam. You might have gone off a bridge that was washed out. So it is something that is within each and every one of us if we can simply slow down the massive amount of thoughts that we process and listen to that voice that’s inside of us and let it come through and let it provide some level of guidance.

DAN: Yes. I agree completely, and I would also say it is no more or less mystical than any other aspect of life. I think we create a lot of very arbitrary distinctions along those lines. We describe certain kinds of experiences as spiritual or mystical and others as not. In my case, unless you consider lathering up to be a mystical experience, it certainly didn’t begin for me in any particularly mystical or esoteric way.

PHIL: You have a wonderful quote on your page. It says, “If I listen, I can hear myself calling out to me.” That to me is great. I think that’s really what it’s all about, listening to that little voice that’s on the inside. If we do stop and listen, we can really get a better handle on what we are all about, where we’re going and what might be the most appropriate way to live our lives and to handle situations.

DAN: Absolutely.

PHIL: I want to start right in. The blog that’s currently up on www.theshowerchannel.com, the blog that’s up now, I believe its title is “The Past That Has No Power”.

DAN: “The Past: It Has No Power Here”. That’s right.

PHIL: In a way, it kind of deals with dreams and looking for partners. Can you guide us, if you will, through that particular blog and let us know what that was all about? What do you mean by “The Past: It Has No Power Here”?

DAN: Well, that particular post came about from a couple of different ideas. One had to do with a dream that I had where someone from my past appeared pretty prominently and in an intense way. I think I say a little bit about the dream in the blog, involving a former partner, a former significant other, who, in the dream, showed up as being demon possessed. I mean, it was a pretty disturbing dream. I don’t hold that perception of this particular person, so it was out of character, and it certainly had an impact on me as I thought about it. And then, around the same time, I had a conversation with a friend of mine who was asking me about my take on the

idea of past lives and reincarnation, and what did I think about the extent to which past lives may have some impact or some bearing on our experience in the current lifetime and the things that happen to us. The blog came about as I began to reflect on those two things, and there seemed to be a connection there for me. I was just kind of asking, really, about the impact of the past on us in general, be it our past in terms of years gone by, or past in terms of lifetimes gone by, things that show up from the past, reminders of the past and so forth.

PHIL: What was the conclusion?

DAN: Well, the conclusion really was that the past only has the power over us that we give it. We have such a tendency to dwell on the past, to really spend a lot of time there, to spend a lot of energy, to give a lot our attention to that. We have health providers trying to help us live better lives. The part of the process that they often use is to take us back into our past and help us gain some clarity or some understanding or insight about things that have happened previously and how that is still affecting us. So, in a way, we have this way of really kind of facing, dealing with, confronting ghosts. Or, in some cases, as in the case of my dream, demons from the past, and we can often find ourselves really haunted by our past or worse. In some cases, we are held prisoner by it or terrorized by it in some way. So, the message around that was to kind of encourage us to see that power that the past has over us is power that we're choosing to give it. And while it can be very helpful, certainly, to have greater understanding about what it is in our past that is holding us back in some way, or creating some kind of obstacle for us, or really getting in the way of living our lives more fully and in a more satisfying way, that there can be a diminishing point of return with regard to how much focus we continue to put in the past. And so there was also a pretty strong indication in this message to kind of limit the time that we spend visiting with ghosts, goblins, and demons, and sort of limit our excursions backward in time and really focus more on where we stand now and less on how we got here, and more on where we want to go from here.

PHIL: Several weeks back, I had a guest on my show, Steven Mayber. He is the head of an operation call Global Healing Solutions, and he was indicating that a lot of what ails us stems from our focus, and usually this is subconsciously, on the past. I mean, granted, people will go through their everyday lives thinking about what happened last week or last year, you know, some kind of experience that appears at the conscious level, but there is so much hidden at the subconscious level, something like 98% of our brain power is devoted to thoughts we don't think about consciously, and that those various experiences have a major controlling influence on our current health; that if you actually trace back whatever illness you may have, you will probably find somewhere back, some place in your life, that there was some kind of past experience that blocked the flow of energy in the body, and, over time, it jams things up. And particularly if you keep thinking about it or worrying about it or throwing energy at it in terms of having a personal concern, that the past is always going to be with you and you can't change it; that it guides your future, that it's going to control your life; that all kinds of diseases and ailments, and so forth can spring from that kind of focus on things that have gone by and no longer exist.

DAN: Yes, and it's actually been a bit of a paradigm shift for me, because my educational background is in counseling psychology, and I have been sort of historically coming from the perspective of believing in the value of going back and looking at where our issues originate and trying to understand as clearly as possible the ways we have been affected by what's gone before or what we've done before. So it's been a real shift for me in my perspective, but I think if you believe as I certainly do now, that really, whatever you - kind of what you were just saying - whatever you focus on gets bigger.

PHIL: Right.

DAN: You know, whatever you're giving your attention to is what you tend to get more and more of. And so, if you are stuck in that place, as we all often can be, of really kind of focusing on, or hung up on, where we've been, what's happened to us, what's been done to us, what we've struggled with before, it can be very difficult to get anything else going.

PHIL: It makes me wonder, Dan, if psychoanalysis isn't probably – I probably shouldn't say this – but might be one of the worst things you can do, because all you're doing is dredging up your past, throwing energy at those problems and issues from your past, and they become your predominant focus. There is a healer in Hawaii and he practices an ancient art, called "Ho'oponopono". I believe some of the healing work he does he totally does at a distance without even talking to anybody. He doesn't dredge up the past. He doesn't try to find out, you know, what is basically creating your mental insanity or your criminality, but he really just sits there and actually focuses on himself, and his healing technique is basically to say that I forgive myself for seeing that you have these conditions. In the process of not forgiving himself, and not seeing others clearly, he, and all of us, actually create poor health conditions. In other words, the vision that is more appropriate is to see everybody happy, healthy, wealthy, and wise, more or less, that by seeing the conditions that other people place labels on in terms of being mental ill or whatever, that that will actually feed the process and provide energy to it, and thereby exacerbate the person's condition. Apparently, he has had amazing success in healing in that way.

DAN: Well, the past is certainly a kind of tricky business, I think, and I would also add to that, from my perspective, that sometimes I do believe that it can be very helpful to people who don't have a lot of awareness, perhaps, around the nature of their struggle. They don't really have clues about what it is that is creating the difficulty for them. Or maybe another way of putting it is they haven't even figured out whom to forgive. And, Phil, I do think sometimes that spending some time looking back, gaining some clarity around some of the issues from the past that affect us, can still be constructive work. But I do like the message that was given to me about that in terms of keeping an eye on how much time you spend there, and remembering that your most constructive focus and your real point of power is in the present, always.

PHIL: Yes, it's one thing to know where the problem arises, and certainly not to spend your whole life worrying about it, because that will simply add to the problem in the first place. Okay, the next blog is – and I love this. It's been something in my mind ever since I was a young kid. I believe the title is "Neither Here Nor There". You have an absolutely wonderful outlook at the beginning of that dialogue, if you will, where basically it is saying that Heaven is boring. The reason I had to chuckle was because even as a young kid, early teens, I remember sitting down one time on Cape Cod on some of the stones that jut out to the ocean, kind of one of my favorite ways of sitting down and thinking and channeling myself, if you will. I remember sitting there and saying, "You know, who wants perfection?" I mean, a Walgreen's commercial where everything is absolutely perfect, to me, is kind of like the Stepford Wives, totally boring. Who would want everything to run so perfect that there is really no challenge, nothing to look forward to, no problems that you have to solve, nothing new to think about, no new places to explore. To me, it's no wonder people keep reincarnating, because they get bored wherever you go when you die!

DAN: I think there may be more truth to that than what's even realized. But, yes, you're right. I had the same experience. I grew up in a fairly conservative Christian environment, and my father was a minister. So from the time I was a baby, I was hearing all about Heaven, and the descriptions were always the same. I mean, pearly gates, mansions and harps and angels singing in streets of gold, and it sounded lovely, but no one was ever able to give me a very satisfactory answer about what we were going to do for the rest of eternity. I remember as a child kind of sitting there, kind of feeling uneasy, or not thrilled about what I was hearing that was in store for me.

PHIL: I love the concept where I think part of what the blog was saying that when you get to the end, basically you have another end to strive for. That point keeps shifting further and further and further, and you never actually get to "the end".

DAN: Right, exactly. That end point does continue to shift. If I had to give a one-word description of the message in that post, I think it would probably be expansion. It's a key word that our experience, that the Heaven we are really experiencing, even if we are not understanding it, is just this continual expansion of who we are, of what we are inviting into our experience, of what we are allowing ourselves to become. Whether you believe specifically in reincarnation or not, I think that that idea of becoming more through life experience is the closest and most satisfying way of thinking about Heaven that anyone has ever presented to me.

PHIL: I think the other major point that you talk about is that it's the journey that matters.

DAN: Yes, yes. There is no there, there.

PHIL: Yes, there is no there, there. I mean, how often just on the mundane level do we get all excited about going some place, and you take the trip, and you have various experiences. You stop and stay at different places, you eat at different places, and you run into different people. And when you get to where you're going, you kind of settle yourself down and say "Okay, I'm here, now what?"

DAN: Yes, well, we're always talking ourselves into this idea that we are going to be happy "when." Or we're going to be happy "if," and we really do convince ourselves that there is some set of circumstances or some condition or some event or some achievement out there for us, and that's going to be it, you know, if we can just get there, that's going to be it. And then, when we get there, of course, what we realize pretty quickly is, well, now what? So again, it's getting back to the idea of always becoming more, always wanting more, always being stimulated to desire more and to reach for more, and that being about as heavenly as it gets.

PHIL: Right. There has to be something beyond Disneyland. I mean, how many times can you go, until you reach a point where you go "Okay, now I'm ready for something new and different". I've gone on all the rides; I've seen all of the attractions.

DAN: Even Disneyland keeps expanding!

PHIL: There you go! Here's another one on the list. Tell me about the little parable about not looking down, don't look down, that began with walking on water.

DAN: Walking on water, that's straight out of the Bible. I mean, it's the story of Jesus, or, actually, his disciple being out on a boat on rough water, a storm came up or something. So the water was kind of rough, and they were beginning to get a little worried, and then they looked across this body of water and saw Christ coming toward them on the water, walking toward them. As he got closer, he called out to one of the disciples, Peter, who was in the boat, and he called to Peter to get out of boat and come to him. And in the Bible story, Peter did, he stepped out of the boat and he started walking on the water, his eyes were fixed on Christ, actually walking on the waves over to Jesus, and then, he looked down and saw a sort of stormy sea at his feet and panicked, and started to sink like a stone.

So, the idea, the message of that being what I often certainly find myself doing in many situations, is taking my eyes off of what I want, or where I'm trying to be, or what I am trying to achieve, or the direction that I am heading, paying attention to what is, and, particularly, when what is sucks. When what's going on in your present, and all around you, when your circumstances or situations are really unpleasant, really uncomfortable, it gets back to that idea of what you're focusing on gets bigger, you get more of that. So you really lose that connection with that point on the horizon calling to you, and you get stuck and fixated on the bad stuff happening to you.

Another way that I've heard that described that I think is very elegant is you become more about observation than about imagination. When you are looking at where you want to be, you're allowing yourself to really experience that. You've got your eyes locked on that point ahead that's calling to you, whatever it is. I mean, theoretically, it's calling to you, it appeals to you, it's attractive, there's something about it that you love the idea of. You love to think about it; you love how it feels to think about it. It's really calling you forward, and as long as you're looking at that and experiencing the feelings that are part of that point that you're moving toward, you're fine. You feel good, you're moving right along, you're making progress, and you're not thinking about, you're not focused on, you're not really feeling the things that you feel when you take your attention off that point and put it back on whatever it is that's going on in your "reality".

PHIL: Like you say in the article, in the blog, you never get rich by focusing on poverty.

DAN: Right. You don't get well by focusing on sickness or find the mate of your dreams by focusing on how lonely you are, et cetera.

PHIL: How many people do you know or come across where their whole lives are about how ill they are or how miserable their lives are, they can't do this or they can't do that, they are so surrounded by negative thoughts and negative energy that there is just no way they are going to get out of it with that type of thought process. I think, unfortunately, all too many people tend to be that way, and they do focus on a particular issue that is confronting them rather than seeing the issue leading to a wonderful, joyous conclusion.

DAN: Well, you know, it's no wonder, because we are all pretty much trained to think that way. I mean, we get continual messages from many, many different sources all of the time, urging us to face the facts, you know? To "get real," to "pay attention" to what is, with the premise of that being that that's what we need to do, what we should do, it's the problem-solving approach of addressing what's in front of you, and we don't get nearly as much, I think, encouragement or support around the idea of kind of ignoring all of that, really keeping our focus on the desire.

PHIL: Sure. I mean, just by definition of what you said, it's the problem-solving approach. So, what is your focus on? It's focused on we have a problem. If form goes where your thought goes, then that problem will always exist, and throughout humanity's entire history, people have been so focused on solving the problems and yet none of the problems ever get solved. Even though they try to come up with solutions, I understand that, there will be people that will say "Well, here's the problem, here's what we need to do about it". But, for some reason, the mind set stays on "We have the problem", rather than seeing past the problem to actually living in the solution to the point where the solution becomes the new reality, and we just don't seem to progress that far because of that.

DAN: Exactly. You keep focusing on the problem and you just get more problem.

PHIL: Yes, it kind of goes back to The Secret, you know, the book and the movie "The Secret." They say the same thing there, and it goes back to the book I have coming out in a couple of weeks, "Jesus Taught It, Too: The Early Roots of the Law of Attraction." It goes back there and it even goes back further than that. I mean, it goes back to ancient Egypt in some of the philosophies that they had, and for some reason, people don't want to hear that. That comes up in one of your writings a little bit down the road with respect to responsibility, but we'll get to that in a moment. "Perils of Progress: a Fear of Nothing Changing." At first I had to think about that. What do you think was coming across there? How can you be at peace when you want change?

DAN: That's a tough one!

PHIL: It is!

DAN: It really is. I still find myself often pondering that whole idea. You know, you tied in with another topic that I think is addressed in the blog, making peace with where you are. You know, it's hard, because, again, we're so conditioned, so sort of wired in some ways to approach things in terms of "I will be happy when", "I'll be happy if." We believe that what has to change are the conditions. What's got to change are the circumstances. You know, the situation has got to be different, and when the situation is different, then I'll feel okay or I'll feel better.

The message that keeps coming through, in ways feels very counterintuitive to that, because the message in the blog and the message that I keep getting about this is feel better now and things will change. Feel better where you are and things will get better in your experience. Instead of postponing or delaying what you really want, which is to feel better, I mean, that's kind of what we are always going for no matter what the specifics are of the situation. What we're really going for is to feel good. We want what we want, whatever it is, because we think the having of it is going to make us feel good.

PHIL: It's kind of like the old saying "act as if". If you're sitting in a situation and you're not particularly happy and not particularly comfortable, and you condition your achieving happiness and peace of mind on some event or some person or something that's going to happen in your life, then it always becomes elusive. It's always something way ahead of you rather than saying "Wait a minute. I can be happy right now. I don't have to wait for that condition to exist". And it's almost as if by accepting the happiness in the now, you create the condition where whatever it is you're looking for will happen.

DAN: Yes. When you stop and think about it, it's a very empowering perspective that is being offered in this sort of counterintuitive way. As difficult as it can be to wrap our heads around it, much less try to implement it, the idea that wherever we are, no matter what the conditions may be, no matter what the situation may be, no matter what the facts are in that situation or in that present, wherever we are standing, we can choose how we feel. We can choose that; we can choose our perspective. We can choose our point of view. We do it all the time, sort of by default, or unconsciously. I mean, there are all kinds of examples of that. You know, the situation we find ourselves in that one minute we're devastated and one minute we're depressed, angry or upset, in one sense or another, and then something comes along and distracts us from it completely, and it's gone. The situation didn't change. The "facts" didn't change. What changed was our point of view. But then everything changed in terms of how we felt.

PHIL: Exactly. Speaking of conditions, you mentioned in this particular blog conditional love versus unconditional love. Do you have a definition in your mind of what conditional love and unconditional love is?

DAN: Probably the best way that I would describe that is to say that conditional love is sort of what we've been talking about. I'll frame it this way, "I'll love myself when" or "I'll love myself if," "I will love me, I will care about me, I will appreciate me, I will think the best of me when this happens or that happens". And unconditional love, obviously, is choosing to have that perspective of one's self, or someone else, for that matter, without that stipulation.

PHIL: Which people really have a hard time doing.

DAN: Oh yes. We all have our issues with that.

PHIL: Now, because of that concept, organized religion is one of my pet peeves. I can be open and honest about it in my books and the things that I write, but I never understood how religious institutions say, well, God loves you, but here are the conditions under which you may have eternal bliss, and if you don't do these things, you'll have eternal damnation and burn forever in hell or something. I could never grasp that concept. I cannot conceive that a true God would place conditions on the things that it created in order to make them happy and have them have a happy life. It never made any sense to me.

DAN: Don't you think it really is, in a sense, a power issue? And, in a sense, it's all about whom you are giving your power to or what you're giving your power to. You just gave one well known common example of that in organized religion. But it's true in so many ways, and there are so many examples of even very simple or minor circumstances or situations or people who we completely surrender that control to.

PHIL: You say in one of your other writings "keep the keys in your pocket," and I believe that's about relationships and giving up power.

DAN: You're right, exactly, same idea.

PHIL: I work with high school kids, and you have your usual fights and name calling and kids will get depressed or whatever, and you ask them and you talk to them about it, and you find out that so and so said this, or this person is spreading a rumor or whatever. I really try to push on them "Hey, guys, by getting this upset or getting this depressed or getting this angry and wanting to go out and express that anger, literally what you have done

is you have given your power to those people to control your life". They kind of look at me and say "huh". I tell them obviously if they're doing this, if you look at the reaction you have to it, they are basically controlling the way you feel and what you're going to do. Now, this person that is causing this particular issue, do you want them to have power over your life? And it's like "Well, no, of course not". Okay, guys, and then don't let them have that kind of control. You take control of your own life, and if they say something that isn't true, just ignore it. If you jump all over it, you have basically given them authority over you. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't, but at least they are trying to get the message anyway.

DAN: We all do it all the time. I mean, it's pretty much what we say to this person or that person or even this situation or that situation. You are now officially in charge of my happiness. Please be good to me.

PHIL: Yes, that's exactly what you do, and, obviously, if you go through life that way, I'm not sure you'll ever be happy.

DAN: We certainly don't make it easy on ourselves.

PHIL: Tell me about the "tricks your mother taught you."

DAN: That's the one about how my sister used to wake up in the morning for school. She'd wake up groaning about not feeling very well and thinking that maybe she should stay home, and my mother's approach to that almost all of the time, not in every case, but more often than not, my mother's approach to that was to say to my sister, "Well, just get up and take a shower and see how you feel". And so, nine times out of ten, when my sister dragged herself out of bed and took a shower and washed her hair, and started moving through her routine in the morning, then she started to feel her energy moving. She obviously wasn't ill, and ended up, more often than not, on her way to school. I think that is a lesson that I got from observing my mother in that situation was the way we have of talking ourselves into feeling bad.

PHIL: Right.

DAN: We are just so good at amplifying what is sometimes a fairly small matter, that may not feel all that pleasant or all that comfortable, and we can get really stuck in it, because we're, again, mostly focusing on it. Whereas if we will kind of get ourselves going on to something else, I think there is a certain power and distraction from whatever is bringing us down, or worrying us, or causing frustration and so forth. Anything that gets the attention off of that and gets you onto something at least more neutral, if not more positive, has a way of allowing our own energy to move in a more positive, or at least more neutral, sort of way. We can often find ourselves – again – moving with the flow.

PHIL: Right. I can recount a good number of times where I would wake up in the morning and think "I have to fix a fence for the horses, or I have to repair a stall" or something like that, and I would sit there over my coffee and say "I don't feel too well. It's hot and muggy; I think my sinuses are clogging up." I started imagining all these reasons why I didn't want to do that particular task, and, fortunately, either my wife or some other higher power would essentially kick me in the butt, and I'd get up and I'd do it. I found that once I got into the project, everything was fine. I really did feel okay, and I would actually enjoy some of the tasks. So much of it is mindset. I had a guest on last week, Ken MacLean, and he indicated that when he has a problem, he ignores it. At first, that seems like a cavalier attitude, but he further explained that it's not a function of, hey, you've got bills to pay and you don't sit there and say "I'm going to ignore these bills and not pay them". But you don't put all your energy and attention into making yourself sick over it. You look beyond the immediate concern of paying the bill, and you focus on whatever it would take or what would be required in order to get it done, and you go out and do it. The next thing you know, the problem is gone. All too often, we sort of fall into that inertia trap where objects at rest tend to stay at rest unless acted upon a stronger force. In most cases, or probably in many cases, the stronger force is actually our own willpower and our own mind.

DAN: Well, I think you hit on something really important, and that is the impact of what we say to ourselves. In any situation that we find ourselves in, good or bad, good feeling or bad feeling, we're always saying something to ourselves about it, and what happens so often is that we end up really saying things to ourselves that only amplify the bad feeling of what we are observing, what we are noticing. And so, using the simple example of my sister not wanting to get out of bed in the morning, or how we all can feel when we first wake up in the morning, especially on a school or a work day, it's pretty easy to lie there and say to yourself, "I don't feel like it, I can't face this, I'm tired, I didn't rest well", you know, maybe something is aching and, you know, the more you lie there saying those things to yourself, the more you amplify whatever that is, the bigger it's getting, the worse you feel.

And yet if we could stop ourselves by trying to be aware of that, and hear ourselves, and find a way to more easily, more quickly sort of gently shift that focus, that perspective, start saying kinder, gentler things to ourselves, then I think we would often be very, very surprised at how quickly and how easily our energy does get moving, and in a better feeling direction.

PHIL: Absolutely. The concept of "you want to be loved by you" was something that you wrote, and in that blog it discussed why is love so elusive, looking for love in all the wrong places, and loving yourself. I think a lot of people have issues with loving yourself. Why is that so important, and are there ways in which people can open up to love themselves?

DAN: Well, I agree that it's a struggle for a lot of us, and I think it's even compounded in ways by how almost sort of trite it has come to sound to us. You know, it's become sort of a buzz phrase or buzz word, falling in and out of favor, and so much has been said and written on that topic.

And, you know, I think the real message that was coming through in that particular post was the way that we so often seem to be looking to anyone else but ourselves to reflect back to us our lovability. It just seems like we all sort of need to see ourselves as loveable, as worthy of love, and the only way to see that is to see that in someone else's eyes. We are almost always on the prowl, always searching, always looking for the someone who can send that back to us in some way, and it creates a sort of needy basis for relationships, among other implications of that. It also, I think, perpetuates a lie in a way, and the lie is that anyone else really can give that to us. We approach relationships, we approach our lives so often with that premise, proceeding with that assumption that love is something that we can, that we must, that we will find in some other person's response to us.

It kind of goes back to the whole power thing, too, of saying to someone else that my happiness is yours to give. My sense of myself as loveable, my sense of myself as being worthy of love is yours to give, and I sure hope you'll give it to me, and if you won't, I'll just keep looking until I find someone who will. Believing this lie that that really can come from anybody else when, in fact, it never can. If we are going to experience that, really experience that, we're going to have to find a way, each and every one of us, to somehow see, hear, feel, understand, and believe that we are ultimately the only source of that for ourselves.

PHIL: I would definitely agree. I think if you can't wake up in the morning and think "Wow, I feel good. I feel good about myself. I feel happy inside, I'm going to have a wonderful day," then you will have a problem. If instead, you wake up and go "Well, maybe today I will find that person. Maybe today I will find that thing. Maybe today I'll buy something". That all of these things, that if I get them, I will be happy. Then I think happiness will always be elusive, because if you can't wake up and be happy with yourself, like you say, you're not going to find it in somebody else, and relationships, I think, will always be doomed to conflict if that's your approach, "This person will make me happy", because the first time they do something to piss you off, you're going to say, "Oh, what happened?" This person isn't making me happy anymore, and the illusion or delusion goes down the drain, and the next thing you know, you're in divorce court, or you buy a particular thing, you buy that brand new car, and that's going to make me happy, and the first time it has a breakdown, you say, "Oh, geez, I guess that didn't really make me happy after all." You will always be in search for that thing outside yourself if you can't get up in the morning and say "Hey! I feel really good that I'm me."

DAN: Well, I'm convinced that we all really do want to be loved by ourselves. That is all we really want. We just don't often let ourselves believe we can, or we don't know how to. What we're always searching for so often in someone else is something we really do want to be able to give ourselves. It's just that we struggle a lot with understanding how to do that, or believing that we can.

PHIL: You know, even if you have to wake up in the morning and pretend and say the words, I think eventually it will actually start hitting home and you will feel better about yourself. Some people are just miserable. If they wake up and say "Oh, boy, I love myself, I feel great, what a wonderful day I'm going to have, I'm me, I'm glad I exist. I'm glad the universe created me" or whatever, even if they don't believe it initially, I think if you do that every day, it may start to hit home, and the next thing you know, you may wake up feeling good about yourself.

DAN: Well, I think you're really on to something there, and I would say in addition to that how much it would help us if we could allow ourselves to experience or to remember moments of real peace, or moments of real contentment, or moments of real satisfaction. I think most of us, if we really look hard enough, we can find those experiences or those memories in our lives. We can think of times that we just felt great. We just felt so alive, so content, so fulfilled, and particularly the moment of that kind of experience that we're just us. Not necessarily moments where we were with another person or receiving something from another person. I can think of times in my life that were absolutely sublime moments where there was nobody around. It was just me sitting out in nature somewhere, or just me having an experience, maybe reading a book or listening to music, or just thinking about something wonderful, and just feeling amazingly well. If you can identify those moments, and recognize that you have them, those moments are you loving you. That's what they are.

PHIL: I think the more that you remember them, the more it will become a more frequent occurrence. I want to end the show on this one last topic. The last thing, we'll end on this, are we supposed to be resigned to our lot or place in life?

DAN: Are we supposed to be resigned to our lot or our place in life?

PHIL: It was from "Making Peace With Where You Are."

DAN: No, I would never use the word resignation or being resigned as a way of being at peace with where you are, because I think the idea of being at peace with where you are, making peace with where you are is such a dynamically joyful place to be. When you are able to make the choice to feel good, to be happy where you are, that's anything but resignation. That's anything but being resigned or some sort of tragic acceptance of your lot in life. That's about joy; that's about choosing to give your attention to the truly positive satisfying, pleasing aspects of who you are and what you are. And to me, that is a place from which all kinds of powerful, positive change can occur, growth occurs, expansion occurs, movement starts there. The feeling of that, when we are able to do it, is the opposite of what I would call resignation.

PHIL: I think a lot of people are used to being told "Hey, that's your condition, that's your life, accept what you got and call it good. You're not going to do anything better."

DAN: See, the idea behind this is you make peace with where you are and it just gets better, because it can't not get better.

PHIL: Right. In a way, for a lot of people, I think it's a subtle difference and makes all the difference in the world. And those things that do make you peaceful and that do make you happy are usually those things that drive you on to bigger and better and greater things. They emerge from your imagination, and it's the joy of planning the trip and thinking about the kind of things, places, and activities that you want to do, even though you're still sitting here in the now, but those kinds of thoughts stir a sense of happiness and harmony inside of you. And, like you say, it's not saying, "Oh, I'm always only going to be doing this, so, therefore, I need to be happy with what I'm doing." There is a difference.

DAN: It's important to believe what you're saying to yourself. Something that you mentioned earlier, the sort of acting as if, or pretending that things are better than maybe you're observing them to be, that's a little tricky, because we can spot that lie, and once we spot the lie, then we're just sabotaging ourselves further by continuing to tell ourselves something that as soon as it's out of your mouth, you're turning around and saying that's a load of crap. So you've got to be able to say things to yourself that you agree with, that you actually believe, and to begin to identify where you stand, wherever you are, whatever is going on around you, to begin to identify the positive aspects of that that are truly positive. That may take a little effort and may take some work for you to be where you stand and to find things that you can genuinely identify and agree with as positive aspects of where you are. But if you look for them, you can find them. They are always there.

PHIL: Being at peace certainly doesn't mean being complacent, by any stretch of the imagination.

DAN: No, not at all.