

Chapter 2

MASTER OF LIFE BASICS

RESISTANCE

Man's isolation and problems result from his means of resisting life. There is a universal law of resistance that says: **"What you resist, you draw to yourself. As long as you resist something, you are locked into it and you perpetuate its influence in your life."**

The ancient teachings of Wu-Wei tell the secret of mastering circumstances without asserting oneself against them. Martial arts are based upon these concepts. The principle is to yield to an oncoming force in such a way as to render it harmless, and at the same time change its direction by pushing it from behind instead of resisting it from the front. Relating this to everyday living, the Master of Life doesn't oppose things; he doesn't attempt to change things by asserting himself against them. Instead, he goes with the flow, yielding to its full force and either pushing it slightly out of direct line or moving it around in the opposite direction without ever encountering its direct opposition. This is the principle of controlling life by going along with it.

The first thing to understand about resistance is not to resist "what is." Some things are facts. Income taxes exist...that's what is. Gravity exists ... that's what is. You can spend your time attempting to change what is, but there isn't much you're going to do about it. If you're married to a quiet, stubborn man, you can resist that fact and frustrate yourself, wanting him to be other than what he is, or you can accept what is and make your life easier. **Resistance is fear.**

FEAR

There is only one problem that exists between human beings: fear. Fear is responsible for all disturbances, large or small, international or interpersonal. Hatred, anger, possessiveness, tension, anxiety, greed, inhibition, stress, frustrations, hang-ups, phobias, insecurities ... all are fear-based emotions.

Example 1: Sally and John are having a fight. She is upset because he isn't willing to escort her to the ten-year reunion. Fear: Sally is fearful of going alone, probably because she fears what other people will "think" about her going alone. Anger is always fear and obviously she wants John to be something other than what he is. She is angry because he is not willing to conform to her idea of what he should be—a husband who takes his wife to the reunion. When we expect people to be other than what they are, we are resisting life.

Example 2: One country declares war on another country. Fear: The warring nation fears not having enough of something—land, resources or control ... or maybe it was the personal insecurity of the power-hungry leader.

Accepting that the only problem between people is fear, we can simplify even more. **There is only one fear: The fear of being unable to cope with a situation.** Do you

believe you fear rejection? It isn't the rejection that you fear; it's not being able to cope with it. Do you fear rattlesnakes? It isn't the snake you fear, but coping with such an encounter.

Another thing to be aware of in regard to fear: You never fear what is; you only fear the **future** possibility.

For example:

You're out in the desert and you're afraid of meeting a rattlesnake. You encounter a snake and then you're afraid it's going to bite you. It bites you and then you're afraid you're going to die. Each new aspect of fear relates to a future potential, not the situation of the moment.

Fear paralyzes us and keeps us from acting when we need to act. It can stop us from making a growth choice when it would be in our best interest. In accepting the fear and living with it, **you are imprisoned within the fear.**

Courage is a matter of being afraid and choosing to act anyway. The Master of Life would choose to fully experience his fear, while knowingly observing every internal reaction of his discomfort: **total experience.** By allowing the fear to be, it lets you be and you negate the law of resistance. You rise above the effects of the fear; it simply disappears.

When you choose not to act because of fear, you begin to avoid life, and life becomes nothing but what remains after all the avoidances. If you avoid enough of life and let it become very dull and boring, you can be sure that eventually your mind will do something to make life exciting. Maybe an illness—kidney stones will give you something to talk about. Or a tragic accident could stimulate you into awareness of living. **Remember, in resisting, you magnetize what you resist and draw it to you.**

Life is a game—a series of things to do. If you don't have things to do—a purpose and reason for living—**you die.** We need to take risks to live; for without risks there is no game, and without a game to play, there is no life.

The following quote by Helen Keller summarizes this concept: "Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men as a whole experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than out right exposure. Life is either a daring adventure or nothing."

LOVE

If fear is the problem, love is the solution. Love is the ultimate power. And since love is power, fear is weakness. With this in mind, let's look at love in regard to our primary relationships.

Most of us are jealous, possessive and envious, yet we call this love. Can a possessive or envious individual really love, or is he or she protecting his or her own pleasure and thus operating out of fear? Most of the love I've seen is fear, **the fear of losing.** In addition, where there is fear, there is aggression. Most "love" relationships then include a great deal of aggression.

Any love relationship based upon "**need**" is based upon **avoiding losing.** This obviously engages the law of resistance, so if you're resisting loss, you automatically begin to program that loss.

Being totally idealistic, what would "**unconditional love**" be like?

To begin with, it could not be diminished by anything the other person said or did. Your love would not be dependent upon being loved. You would give freely, without any expectation of return. In an environment of "real love," you would allow total freedom to your mate, expecting no more than the other could give. You would love for what the other is. You would not expect your mate to change, to be something he or she is not. You would find joy in the other's happiness. Only when there is love for oneself can there be love for others. To experience loving yourself, you need to know who you really are beneath your fears, and you need to accept yourself.

Then when you love someone, you can find joy in the positive aspects of your relationship and allow negatives to simply flow past you without affecting you.

What a beautiful relationship this involved detachment would be. By accepting and granting freedom, not out of indifference but out of tenderness and caring, a couple can overcome karma and evolve beyond the level of problems. Since you would no longer be affected by the problems, you would no longer have the problems. Karma would be balanced, and your own wisdom would have erased the need for further learning.

If fear is the problem, love is the solution. Universal love. A goal of everyone now living upon the earth is to rise above the effects fear and learn love. Most are unaware of this fact, but it is a reason why we are reborn, over and over. We all subconsciously seek love and its perfection. If we cannot remember what we've forgotten, we will be given another chance to learn, when we are together again.

POSSESSIVENESS

Man suffers because of his craving to possess and keep forever things which are essentially impermanent: his own person, loved ones and material things. All things are impermanent, and as soon as man tries to possess them, they slip away. As in trying to grasp water, the tighter you clutch, the faster it slips through your fingers.

Those who attempt to possess are themselves POSSESSED. They are slaves to their own illusions about life. Possessiveness is a denial of the right of people and things to live and change. Thus, the possessor loses.

By accepting the Master of Life philosophy, you will lose the need to possess. The Master of Life joins "self" and "life" into so close a unity and rhythm that the distinction between the two is forgotten. He or she abandons the desire to possess for they know that no one can possess and nothing can be possessed. He or she no longer grasps at things that flow by in the stream of life. Instead, they go with the flow of the current, becoming one with it, aware that all things are simply waves in the water and to try to clutch them will only make them disappear.

CONSCIOUS DETACHMENT

A problem doesn't need to be eliminated to be solved. Perspective or your personal viewpoint is the solution to most problems. Because when you are no longer affected by a problem, you no longer have a problem, although nothing about the problem situation may outwardly have changed.

For example:

You work with someone you dislike; every day he calls you names. He says, "You're a frog-faced son of a toad who eats bugs." Now you accept it and let it affect you. You get upset because you can't separate things in an enlightened way. First, you must realize that it isn't what someone says or does to you, short of physical violence, that affects you—it is only what **you think about what they say** that affects you. Why allow someone else's lack of balance to affect your balance? To do so is to hurt yourself. You can only hurt yourself by accepting what they said. Now project this thinking into all aspects of your life. The person closest to you is often warm and loving, and you enjoy these times, but this person can also be selfish and self-centered. So, during those times, you detach mentally and let the negativity flow past you without affecting you. It is that person's right to be grouchy, and it is your right not to be affected. Nothing about the situation has changed except the way you view it.

Another important item to remember is that what anyone says to you comes out of their past and past-life conditioning, from the memory banks of their computer. Thus it is their viewpoint and cannot directly relate to you. The way they relate to you, they would relate to anyone who represented to them what you represent.

For example:

Mary's father was very cruel to her mother. She grew up fearing him and developed the attitude that "all husbands are S.O.B's," as she stated in a counseling session after her third divorce. Her computer's viewpoint is that "all husbands are S.O.B's" and any man in the position of being her husband is going to be perceived in this way. Naturally, each man took it personally, and fights and conflicts ensued. In reality, it wasn't personal—any man Mary married would be an "S.O.B."

Don't take anyone else's reactions to you personally. They see you through their own veils of opinions and conclusions. Be aware that you also see others the same way. No one is capable of accurate perceptions. Others' reactions to you are nothing but statements of their viewpoints, having nothing to do with the facts or the way things actually are.

COMPASSION

Compassion: A feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another's suffering or misfortune, accompanied by a desire to alleviate the pain or remove its cause (Random House Dictionary).

Ideally, when you find yourself experiencing compassion for another human being, you will assist by creating conditions within which they can choose to alleviate their own pain. You can experience the anguish of another's suffering, but you must live with the helpless knowledge that you can do nothing to save them from their pain. Everyone is totally responsible for everything that happens to them, thus their pain is their choice and they are the only ones who can choose not to experience it.

The degrees of compassion you feel will depend upon how much you care for each person, and very likely, whether or not they accept responsibility for their condition. The question is, are they willing to do something to resolve the situation? If they are, you can assist by offering encouragement, creating a space for them to rise above the effects of their difficulty.

JUDGMENT/TRUTH/AWARENESS

We judge everything through our **viewpoint**. We call right, wrong, moral or immoral, ethical or unethical. Maybe several of us, or even the majority of us, agree to call it the same thing. That doesn't make it truth. That is only what it is to us: **our truth**. Our agreeing that it is moral doesn't make it moral; it simply makes it what we **CALL** moral, it cannot change what it actually is.

There is no such thing as truth. "Truth" exists only as it relates to you. "Truth is not what we discover, but what we create," according to Antoine de St. Exupery.

Let's assume we are in a seminar training in a large hotel ballroom. I think the temperature is perfect—that's **my** truth. When I ask for a show of hands, one third of the group thinks it is too cold in the room; that's **their** truth. Half the group thinks it is too warm in the room; that's **their** truth. Each person has his or her own truth...and it has nothing to do with the **fact**. The fact is that it is 74 degrees in the room.

Life is filled with philosophical truths which we all commonly accept and rarely challenge. Yet these outdated truths, notions, views and moralities restrict our lives. A good example is the idea that if you make a mistake or have a fault, you should feel guilty. Why should guilt be associated with making an honest mistake?

Let's look at the ultimate truth, the golden rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." How could anyone disagree with such a beautiful idea? Yet as any counselor will tell you, there are a lot of people out there who enjoy experiencing some pretty strange things. Sadomasochistic pleasures associated with the infliction of pain are only one extreme example. I certainly wouldn't want these people doing unto me as they would have done unto them. Remembering that we create in our lives exactly what we need to experience, look at how most of those around you experience their primary relationships. In how many do you see a self-inflicted source of anguish and anxiety? Do you want them to do unto you as they obviously want done unto them?

If you accept philosophical truths as valid, you accept restrictions ... **you accept traps**. A trap is an assumption, accepted without challenge, and it will keep you enslaved until you do challenge. In your life, you are probably accepting many truths that are holding you back.

Example 1: You work as a salesman for a company and you accept that you're a good salesman, yet not as good as the top man. That acceptance is a trap which will keep you from ever becoming the top salesman.

Example 2: You'd like to write a book, but feel that you don't have the perservance it will take to complete the project. Your belief becomes your reality.

Something else to remember about truth is that just because a concept is repeated over and over and over again doesn't make it the truth. There are numerous metaphysical organizations which claim to teach esoteric truths. They capitalize Truth and treat it as sacred. They may agree on the most general overview of reincarnation and karma, but beyond that, the moment they get into any of the details, there is no agreement. If you think otherwise, you haven't studied them very well. Each offers the "truth" of a man or woman or a group. **It is their truth, not yours ... unless you care to accept it. TRUTH ONLY EXISTS AS IT RELATES TO YOU.**

The Zen Master warns, "If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him." The meaning is that the only meaning in life is what we bring to our own life. Any philosophy, technique or truth that another might share with you is an empty ideal unless it relates to you. "To kill the Buddha" means to destroy the hope that anyone outside yourself could be your master.

From another perspective, when you tell your truth, when you are straight and honest with other people, you will not tie up energy in unproductive, unpleasant ways. Telling the truth releases you; it sets you free.

If you lie and hide something, it takes a lot of energy to retain the lie. You always cover for it and the "Babbler," that notorious windbag that chatters incessantly in the back of your mind, always remembers the lie and dwells upon it. This sort of programming of your computer is self-destructive in many ways.

Truth also directly relates to your **awareness**. Awareness amounts to **how much you let yourself know of your own truth**. Many of your truths remain buried in the memory banks of your subconscious. The subconscious may contain knowledge, forgotten understanding, talents or abilities, but it will also contain those events of which you are ashamed, feel guilty or fearful. You do not consciously know about them, so you lack that awareness, while at the same time, you experience the programming effects.

PROBLEM/OPPORTUNITY

Some people see their problems as PROBLEMS! They whine and worry and verbalize them over and over as the soap operas of their lives. The more they repeat them, the more they program the negative reality into their computer, resulting in compounded problems.

Others see their problems as opportunities. They use them as the basis of learning or reverse them into positive opportunity situations. Thus the resulting computer programming is only positive, begetting future positive potentials.

The only difference between problem-oriented people and opportunity-oriented people is **attitude** ... and it makes **all** the difference. Obviously, if you see your problems only as opportunities, you will no longer have any problems.

Extensive research testing has shown that 15 percent of success is attributable to talent, IQ or ability, and 85 percent of success is attributable to **attitude**. Attitude is the difference between the high achievers in life and all others.

NOW

We exist NOW and NOW is all that is. Now is outside of time. There is no past in which you were incomplete and there will never be a future in which you will become complete. Until you accept that you can only exist **NOW**, you will believe that fulfillment awaits you in an illusory future if you take the proper actions. This belief destroys the experience of **NOW** and you continually live in illusion.

This very moment is it. Nothing is hidden. All of your calculating and hoping and planning about how it will be someday...all your dreams and plans ... **THIS IS HOW IT ALL TURNED OUT**. This is all there is. You've been planning all your life for the future, but you will never be aware of the future in the future ... you will only be aware of it in the **NOW**. We do not exist in time. We exist in self.

A Master of Life uses the time component, but never accepts it as a reality that entraps him in actions to achieve fulfillment in an illusory future. A Master of Life is always, at this moment, fulfilled, perfect, at peace and in balance.

DO WHAT YOU DO WHEN YOU DO IT

There is a Zen story about a man who stayed for a while in a small temple. He got up at 4:30 AM every day to clean the temple, but the monks all remained in bed until 7:00 or 8:00 AM. He cursed them as he swept, and despised them as he washed the floor. He hoped that the Master would get up and catch them slacking, but it never happened. The Master was in bed himself. The man judged the monks to be indifferent to their duties. He thought of nothing but their idleness and begrudged both his own labor and their slumbers.

Upon hearing of this, the Master asked, "For whose sake do you clean the temple?" Then he answered it himself. "For your own sake. When you work, work for yourself, not for other people."

If you want your life to work better, when you work, just work; don't worry about whether others are working, or whether the temple will be burned down next week or not. When you write a book, don't worry about whether it will be published or whether anyone will ever read it. Everything we do in life, directly or indirectly, we do for ourselves.

We get in the way of experiencing our lives. All we have is this moment. **NOW**. That's it. You can't touch the past or the future. All that exists is this moment and we seem incapable of enjoying it. When we make love we fantasize about making love to someone else or we recall some past episode, making it impossible to fully experience the moment. We plan something and have great fantasies about how it is going to be. Then when reality doesn't align with our preconceived ideas, we don't enjoy the situation, for we are attempting to mentally manipulate it.

Unless you can fully experience the moment, enjoying what you are experiencing for what it is, then you are not living your life. You are simply wandering through your fantasies and probably experiencing a good deal of anxiety as you trod along. **Do what you do when you do it!** See what a phenomenal difference it makes in the way you experience what you are doing. At your next meal, don't carry on a conversation and eat. Simply eat. **Feel** what it feels like to chew the food. **Taste** what the food really tastes like instead of gulping it down and rushing the next forkful to your mouth. It could be that you will **experience** eating for the first time in your life. Then relate the concept to other areas of your life and you may find that you are **experiencing** your life for the first time. Wisdom grows out of experience.

*The most that you
can give
to another
human being*

*Is to be all of
who you are.*

THE BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS

The basic human rights allow for expression as opposed to repression. A Master of Life grants them to all others while demanding them for himself.

1.

**IT IS YOUR RIGHT
TO DO ANYTHING
AS LONG AS YOU DO
NOT PURPOSELY HURT
SOMEONE ELSE
AND YOU ARE WILLING
TO ACCEPT
THE CONSEQUENCES.**

This ancient axiom is considered by many to be the one commandment. You were born free, you are free and only fear or value judgments will keep you from exercising this right.

2.

**IT IS YOUR RIGHT
TO MAINTAIN YOUR SELF-RESPECT
BY ANSWERING HONESTLY EVEN
IF IT DOES HURT SOMEONE ELSE,
AS LONG AS YOU ARE BEING
ASSERTIVE OPPOSED TO AGGRESSIVE.**

For a moment, imagine yourself in the following situation:

Your mother: "I have a big dinner planned for the entire family this Sunday, so you, John, and the children come over about one."

You: "We can't do that, Mother. We are going to rent a cabin in the woods this weekend."

Mother: "Well, I have this all planned. You can rent the cabin another weekend."

You: "We could rent the cabin another weekend, but I want to go this weekend."

Mother: "You mean you'd rather go to an old cabin in the woods than make your mother happy by coming over to her house for dinner?"

You: "This weekend I would rather go to the woods. Another weekend I might prefer to have dinner with you Mother."

Your mother is now hurt because she put her self in a "choose between me and something else" contest, and you chose something else. It was a manipulative attempt to guilt. You handled it in a kind way, even offering the compromise of coming for dinner on another weekend, so you have nothing to feel bad about. If your mother feels badly, it is her own doing and she will simply have to learn that you aren't going to fall for her old tricks anymore.

The key words in this particular right are "self-respect." A phony excuse or an unfelt apology will cause you to lose your self-respect and that is never acceptable.

3.

**IT IS YOUR RIGHT TO
BE WHAT YOU ARE
WITHOUT CHANGING YOUR IDEAS
OR BEHAVIOR
TO SATISFY SOMEONE ELSE.**

No one can change another person, nor should they expect another person to become anything other than what that person is. This is faulty thinking, for it is impossible to successfully repress anything. Any forced change will not last or will result in new eruptions of unsatisfactory behavior. Do you predicate your behavior on what another person wants you to be? Of course not. So how can you expect that person to change for you? We are all free human beings and should be respected for what we are, not for what someone else wants us to be. If your behavior makes another person uncomfortable, he or she has the right to leave. The same goes for you.

If you decide to remain in somebody's environment, and since you realize that you couldn't change him if you wanted to, doesn't it make sense to accept him as he is? Basic, simple logic. Now, if you accept him as he is, then he is perfect from your perspective. You can't accept him and not accept him at the same time. Also, you need to respect him for what he is. That doesn't mean to respect him on a comparison scale with others, for that would be your evaluation, your judgment of how you want him to be. That's not it. You simply respect that he is what he is.

Now, if you can accept another as being perfect **the way he is** and you respect him for **what he is**, you must give up all your anger, hostility and blame for that person. This will naturally result from your realization that you had no right to feel the negative emotions in the first place.

4.
**IT IS YOUR RIGHT
TO STRIVE
FOR SELF-ACTUALIZATION
(TO BECOME A MASTER OF LIFE.)**

You have the right to become all that you are capable of being in all areas of your life.

5.
**IT IS YOUR RIGHT
TO USE YOUR OWN JUDGMENT
AS TO THE NEEDS AND PRIORITIES
OF YOURSELF AND OTHERS
IF YOU DECIDE TO ACCEPT ANY
RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANOTHER'S PROBLEM.**

Ask your mate, children, parents, in-laws and friends what they feel your priorities should be and I'm sure you'll get many different answers. No one else can relate to your position and know what is best for you or what you should do. It is your value judgment as to what you will do with your time and in what order you choose to accomplish your tasks. It is also your right to choose whether or not to accept any responsibility for another's problem.

6.
**IT IS YOUR RIGHT
NOT TO BE SUBJECTED
TO NEGATIVITY.**

Negativity programs your computer in the wrong way and this is very detrimental to you. The long-term effects of negative programming amount to a more negative life for you. Now combine that knowledge with the fact that humoring people and listening to their "soap operas" doesn't help them. From a programming perspective, it is equally

detrimental to them. People can only help themselves if and when they are ready. Many are never ready. They thrive on the attention they get because of their problems. If that's their game, let them play it by themselves.

7.
**IT IS YOUR RIGHT
TO OFFER NO EXCUSES OR JUSTIFICATIONS
FOR YOUR
DECISIONS OR BEHAVIOR.**

You may want to explain why you feel or act a certain way to those with whom you share a close relationship, but it is your right not to. In interacting with people who are not close to you personally, explanations and excuses weaken your statements and position.

We all find ourselves in positions in which others imply that we owe them an explanation. Most of us are so well-trained that we react automatically and comply with their wishes without thinking. Also, all too often, we explain ourselves even when no one has asked "why?"

8.
**IT IS YOUR RIGHT
NOT TO CARE.**

Life is filled with "you shoulds." You *should* improve yourself. You *should* care about the charity operation in your city. You *should* care about banning the bomb and ecology and pollution and planned parenthood and Aunt Nellie's broken leg. Your mother is getting old and is worrying about it so she thinks you should be concerned about old people in general. The PTA thinks you should attend monthly meetings and the FCC wants you to be concerned about violence on television. Your husband thinks you should roll his socks in pairs instead of just dumping them all in a heap in the dresser drawer. There are so many "you shoulds" that if you did them all, you would have no time left for anything else. DON'T "SHOULD" ON YOURSELF. You, and you alone, decide what to care about.

9.
**IT IS YOUR RIGHT
TO BE
ILLOGICAL.**

Logic usually works well in science, but it is never very predictable in human relationships and coping with people's desires, motivations and feelings. It is implied that logic indicates superior judgment but between two people, more often than not, it is simply used as a manipulative ploy.

As an example, your wife responds to your suggestion that you go to a movie this evening with: "We can't go to a movie tonight because we have to get up early tomorrow." That sounds logical, but from your perspective, missing an hour of sleep won't stop you from getting up early.

10.
**IT IS YOUR RIGHT
TO CHANGE YOUR MIND.**

People simply change their minds, and thank goodness they do. Otherwise, we would be a very rigid society and all the men would still be wearing crew cuts. What works for us today may not work tomorrow. What you liked last year may not fit with the more aware you of today. Or maybe you just got tired of living that lifestyle and changed. Changing your mind is healthy and normal, but other people may resist by challenging your right to do so. They will want explanations and the admission that your first choice was a mistake. "How can you change your mind after you committed yourself? You're irresponsible and will probably make a faulty decision next time."

You must be aware of their limited viewpoint and let their communications flow past you without affecting you.

11.
IT IS YOUR RIGHT
TO DEFEND YOURSELF.

Obviously, it is your right to defend yourself from any threat of physical violence. If the threat is verbal, however, it might be wise to hold back in your immediate response until you see whether what you're defending is your need to be right. In that case, you may get to be right ... and lose the game. You always have the right to respond to verbal aggression with assertiveness techniques.