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Four Steps to A Grace Called Awareness

The **first step** you need to take is to get in touch with negative feelings that you're not even aware that you have. What negative feelings? Gloominess, for instance. You're feeling gloomy and moody. You feel self-hatred or guilt. You feel that life is pointless, that it makes no sense. You've got hurt feelings, or you're feeling stressed and tense. Get in touch with those feelings first.



The **second step** is to understand that the feeling is in you, not in reality. To see this truth clearly, no reaction, no defect, no neurosis you observe is to be judged or condemned. Understand that while your negative feelings are in you, they are not you, as you mistakenly think. They come from your programming. Honest non-judgmental awareness leads to a better understanding that leads to love and forgiveness.

The **third step** is not to identify with the negative feeling. Don't define your essential self in terms of that feeling. Don't say, "I am depressed." If you want to say, "My experience is depression" or "Depression is there," that's fine. It's similar to throwing black paint in the air; the sky remains uncontaminated. You never color the sky black. No matter what happens within you, the blue sky of the essential "I" remains uncontaminated.

The **fourth step** is the recognition that although there is distress and reactivity right now, it will pass if you let it be, if you leave it alone. Everything passes. Your upsets and your thrills have nothing to do with happiness. Those are the swings of the pendulum. They have nothing to do with the essential "I."

Awareness releases reality to change you, but you have to experience it. Step by step, let whatever happens happen. Real change will come when it is brought about—not by your ego, but by reality. Do it, and to your joy, you will discover that you are being transformed by a strangely loving attitude that arises within you toward yourself and moves out through you to every living creature.

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