

# **Deep Healing and Rebirth of Life**

## **— Critical expression at the critical moment**

By Ren-Jou Liu

Many people encounter catastrophic problems in life – an unhappy marriage, a broken family, unrealized dreams or physical disability..... Life has become so painful, vulnerable, and hopeless.

They ask: “How has my life come to this? Is it possible for me to get out of this trouble?” For 30 years I have worked to care for people and help them change their lives. In fulfilling my mission, I have been running self-development programs for more than a decade, with the aim of inspiring and enabling individuals to overcome personal challenges in life. And I have indeed witnessed encouraging transformation and healing in many lives over the years. Recently I have come to realize that there seems to be a more direct, fast and deeper way of life-changing – let’s call it “critical expression at the critical moment”.

The happiness of a person hinges directly on his or her self-esteem. The higher regard you have for yourself, it seems to me, the more positive elements you will possess in your character. For example – optimism, motivation, emotional intelligence, looking into yourself, maturity, courage to encounter obstacles and problem-solving ability, to name a few. As such, you are more likely to feel good about life and happier. In contrast, a person who has low self-esteem is the very opposite, and naturally, the feeling of joy and happiness is absent.

One of the determining factors for a person’s self-esteem comes from the upbringing received from the primary carers when a child– and this often centers around the quality of the parents’ lives. Parents who have low self esteem are more likely to be critical and mean, restrictive of their children’s behavior and negligent of their feelings and needs, and demanding absolute obedience to the value and behavior yardsticks of adults. A child brought up by such parents may be polite, meek and obedient, and may even do well at school, but his boundaries of behavior are blurred or distorted. Such a child, when growing up, is likely to be an arrogant and self-centered person, or in contrast, a self-deprecating pleaser with a deep sense of inferiority. Either way, he has very low self-esteem.

In early childhood, a child learns to suppress himself to accommodate oppressive or submissive parents by obeying or conforming to the parents’ expectations. As a

result, much of his potential and his abilities is likely to be locked up. It is no wonder that his life becomes so powerless and helpless in his adult years. In the early part of life if a person has ever had the opportunity to speak up courageously about his feelings and needs for his sense of value, dignity and right, and learnt to communicate with his parents patiently in a non-antagonizing and insulting way, life in later years would certainly be very different.

We cannot ask people to start all over again, but we can change our perception and interpretation of the past so as to allow ourselves to release our long locked energy and potential. I have come to discover a simple but effective way to do so – write to our parents.

This is not a letter to condemn, to blame or to criticize, but to express our depressed feelings and unsatisfied needs. We all have certain unforgettable experiences in the course of our upbringing. And on each occasion when such an unhappy moment comes back into our memory, our hearts ache. We may feel distressed, ashamed, angry, or fearful. When we were small, we did not have the chance, nor did we have the courage to tell our parents. Now, as a grown-up, we have learnt to strike a balance between respecting others and valuing our own importance, and know how to speak respectfully, yet without belittling ourselves. By writing these letters, we help ourselves to speak the words we should have spoken long ago when we were kids.

You don't need to actually post the letters to your parents. You may simply keep them. I would suggest you write five letters to each of your parents and write one letter every few days for about 40 to 60 minutes each time. When you have finished writing the letters, share them with a person you trust – who may be your spouse, an adult son or daughter, or your best friend. Read the letters to your confidant who may be able to give you some feedback.

Look at yourself after writing these 10 letters and ask: “Do I feel better, do I have better interpersonal relationships, do I work more efficiently and am more capable of resolving difficulties?” If you have made significant progress, try to write more letters to your parents at an interval of a few weeks to two months. You will soon discover a continuous stream of energy running through yourself, empowering you to lead a life full of color and zest, and you will have the ability to make an influential contribution in all you do.

Don't be miserly about your discoveries. Share them with the people you really care about !

**Below are some extracts from letters written by adult children to their parents.**

<Letter 1>

**Dear Mom,**

***I just discovered I have so much anger in myself..... when I was small, you never allowed me to express my anger.... You always said “kids shouldn’t show ill-temper”..... many times I could only sob in the corner behind the door.***

***For a long time I believed I was punished for good reasons – I was disobedient, I was bad, I did wrong things..... It was not until now that I realized and accepted that I was physically abused regardless of whether I had really done wrong or not ..... Mom, I know you have forgotten many of these incidents, though they are still in my memories.***

***Mom, I understand you have already done your best to bring me up. Amid all the suffering you bore in your unhappy marriage with dad, you never failed to feed me. Amid all the tension in your relationship with grandma, you took all the trouble to look after me. Your parents were unable to take care of you, but you have given me your greatest protection. Mom, I just want to let you know these painful little things that had happened to that vulnerable little child. I’m just doing this for the little inner child of me to set him free.***

<Letter 2>

**Dear Dad,**

***I felt a great fear of being pressurized by time as I was growing up. You always hurried me – “Come on, quick, we’re missing the train”, “Hurry up, otherwise your teacher will ....”.***

***In the past, I completed each task under your pressure, but I was unhappy and had a lot of grievances because I felt I still have a lot of time.***

***As it goes on, I have allowed quick temper to take control of my life, as if I were always chased after by time. I start to worry about the next thing even before I start with the one at hand, always fearing that I have not done well or completed something.***

***As a mother now, I’ve come to realize that I’m doing exactly the same to my son, “Hurry up, we’re getting late... I’ve already waited you for a long time...”. Dad, I’m glad to have discovered this now, and I just want to tell you, “I’ve grown up now, and I’m mature enough to be responsible for my own life and my own things. You don’t need to hurry me any more.”***

<Letter 3>

Dear Mom,

*I hated going to the park with you and dad when we were kids. I did not go there to play but ..... behind the trees in the dark I heard you say, "let's divorce". Dad usually didn't answer you. I was afraid each time we went to the park, that we might never come home as a family.....*

*I still remember that night you had a big row with dad. I was crouching alone on the staircase for the whole night, feeling very sad, until dad came and told me to go to sleep and not to worry..... I was perplexed – why did you marry each other but hate each other so much? Why did you bring us into this world but give us a broken home?..... It was then that I resolved one day I must leave this home. At last, I did.... And now I've come to realize that my attitude to marriage and the way I treat my husband are so deeply affected by how you and dad treated each other.*

<Letter 4>

Dear Dad,

*I couldn't remember why we had this big quarrel. You were so angry with me that you threw my tape recorder from the third floor. It was my most cherished possession. I was absolutely devastated and I shouted at you .....*

*Later you bought me a new tape recorder. You said nothing; neither did I as I took it from you, just with a small smile.*

*I'm no longer angry about it now after so many years. But as I wrote this incident down, tears rolled down my face. I thought then my heart must be really broken. So, dad, I want to tell you: you destroyed my most treasured thing. I was really angry. But I also want to say thank you. You bought me a new one.*

*Dad, you've gone for so many years now. I used to feel you were so distant. I still do. You always looked so upright, as if I could never get any closer to you like a spoiled little child. But dad, I'm trying to do it now – and I can feel your smile.*