

FIND OUT IF YOU ARE A “HEALTH HOSTAGE”™
A 7 Steps of Hope and Healing™ Exercise**
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1. **Awareness** is the first step because without awareness, you can't escape the Chronic Illness Thief!™ Becoming aware of how you *feel* (emotional level), what you *think* about (mental level) and if you have a *connection* with (spiritual level) your Higher Self, Spirit, or whatever name you use, is where your power comes from to hatch your escape route. You have to recognize where you are trapped and how that shows up in your life.

On an emotional level, for example, what changes have shifted, even slightly, about your general outlook on life? Do you feel “trapped” by the way you feel forced to live your life, given your health? Do you live “imprisoned in your body,” and perhaps find yourself not leaving the house as often to be out in the world?

This kind of contemplation—an inner assessment of your emotional world, in this example—opens your eyes to the effects of being held hostage by your body. Awareness is the first step to break through those chains (symptoms) that imprison you.

2. **So, Are You a Health Hostage?** Did you find out in your answers to question #1 that you do feel like a hostage to your health? Perhaps you have already described your life as feeling trapped. The next step is to deepen the power of your new awareness by making it more real, more defined, and hence, more understood by you.

You may want to spend time journaling, meditating, or connecting with others about the ways in which you feel trapped in your body, trapped in your diagnosis, in your physical condition, in your hopelessness. When you figure out the ways you behave like a Health Hostage, you can choose to apply that awareness and transform your relationship to your health. *THAT* is freedom.

3. **One Chain Link at a Time:** Choose to take off one link of those chains with this new awareness. Choice is the ultimate power, because if you only have awareness but take no action on it, awareness can bring you more angst, depression, and anxiety than what you experienced with your eyes wide shut. And that is not the intention here!

Evaluate your own responses to your expanded awareness. Is there one area of the three, (emotional, mental and spiritual,) which seems to make you feel more like a Health Hostage? WAIT! Don't start with that one! Start with the *easiest area* to make a choice, take a step, and *be successful*. What can you do *today* (which is just 24 hours) to take your "get outta jail" card and free yourself in the area you feel *least* like a prisoner?

For example, if the least affected area in your life is on the spiritual level, think about the ways you used to be more spiritual, more connected to your experience of spirituality, but somehow, sometime, gave those activities up because of your health. Did you stop going to a spiritual center on a Sunday, for example? Consider making a commitment to go to one service this week, or listen online to a live stream of your favorite spiritual teacher. Most spiritual centers offer live streaming of their services. Hey, that means you don't have to wait until Sunday. You can start any time, like the hours between 1-5 a.m. when you have insomnia!

- 4. Progress Not Perfection:** When you feel like a Health Hostage, it is often easy to give up, rather than take one chain link off at a time. But as the well-known philosopher, Lao Tzu, wisely said, "The journey of a 1,000 miles begins with one step."

After you have spent time on this exercise, wait a day or so, and review what you have written or thought about in this exercise. Think about what you have discovered. Think about how that *one step* you took will—or may have already—led to a second step.

- 5. Jail Break Payoff:** Reward yourself for making a new choice, for taking action, for making a difference in your own life. No matter how small or big, every step counts towards your escape!
- 6. Rinse and Repeat:** Follow the exercise steps #1-4 through each of the levels (emotional, mental and spiritual) at your own pace.
- 7. Break Out a friend!** Share your experience with someone and make a difference in *their* life.

**If you would like more information on this exercise or on transforming your health challenges into triumphs, please visit nancygordonglobal.com or

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