

## **INSIDE OUT**

### ***The Overview***

By Diane Altomare

“If you get the inside right, the outside will fall into place.” Eckhart Tolle

We are a society that values outer beauty, the perfect exterior, the “happy” life. The world of social media has only exacerbated our celebration of the façade. You can paint a beautiful picture on Facebook and Instagram, a false life and persona, when what is really going on in your home or in your heart may be devastating. Most of us feel like we can cover up how we are truly feeling inside by what we wear, the make up we put on, the way we do our hair or the cars we drive. The truth is that you have to feel amazing inside first if you want to not only create amazing things in your life but also feel fulfilled, peaceful and joyful at the same time.

*From the Inside Out* goes against everything our society worships and teaches.

Look at Hollywood. Celebrities are some of the most outwardly successful, beautiful people in the world, and yet inwardly they're often struggling in a deep way, sometimes more so than an average person because of their pressure to cover up "how they feel inside" and the daily struggle with how un-aligned their inner experience is (in other words, how they feel) with what their outward life looks like (their appearance, their wealth, status, etc.)

We saw this all too well with the recent death of Robin Williams.

*From the Inside Out* is a call to stop pretending, to put aside the façade, and to recognize that you will never feel complete, powerful, and fulfilled if you ignore the world inside. It doesn't matter how much outer success you have if it isn't aligned with who you are and want you truly want. In fact, it is only by living from the inside out that you will be able to let go of whatever's holding you back.

All too often when we feel stuck in life, we tackle the problem from the outside. We start a new exercise program or diet, we start taking a class, or we look for a new job. But where we should really start is with what we're feeling. With what's going on inside.

In this book, life coach Diane Altomare reveals the ten steps you need to take to start living life from the inside out. And it starts with learning to feel.

That's right. This book will explore our tendency to suppress our emotions. It is a fact. It is a cultural hazard. You are not alone. We are all hardwired to do this. But we don't realize how many issues we are creating for ourselves by avoiding a simple emotion like sadness or anger. Emotions are there for a reason. They are not the enemy; they are actually helpful guides to let you know something is off. If we learn to feel our negative emotions, if we can practice and get used to using our negative emotions as the insightful guides they are, these negative emotions can support us in understanding what changes we need to make to create an amazing life. The emotions you experience often can lead you to the answers you most need.

Diane then explores how incidents from the past that go unhealed or unprocessed lead to you repeating the same pattern over and over in life. That's what life will do until you learn the lesson. It's something Sigmund Freud called transference and it happens in all sorts of areas of our life. The woman driving like a maniac with road rage? She's transferring her frustrations from her life onto those other drivers on the road. When you blow up at your spouse after a stressful day at work? It's those pesky feelings looking for a safe place to erupt.

These are the ways our inner life is preventing us from achieving all that we desire. Our inner life sabotages everything we are trying to create on the outside. It is crying out to be listened to.

Stop trying to white knuckle it, muscle through the pain you really feel and cover up what's truly going on. Give yourself the freedom to make a huge shift in your life right now and stop doing the same thing over and over again. You must bring the right energy to everything that you're doing or it doesn't matter what actions you take or the success you create. Let's begin by getting your inner world – the way you feel, think and see to be totally lined up with what you want to create and have in your life. This is the beginning of the rest of your life.

***INSIDE OUT***  
***Chapter Two***

By Diane Altomare ©

## STEP TWO: WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON?

Imagine walking into your favorite coffee shop to meet one of your friends and as you sit down, you lift a large heavy sack over your shoulder and fling it onto the table. This sack is old, extremely worn and outdated. When your friend arrives, she slumps into the chair next to you and her oversized, antiquated bag lands at her feet. As you both share the events of your week, you begin to take things out of your bag and give them to each other. You begin to transfer your fears, worries, concerns and limitations from the past into your current experience. Without even noticing, you both transfer all of this “baggage” into your conversation.

Your conversation sounds something like this. "I think my husband is cheating," you say. Although you aren't certain he's having an affair, you go into a long explanation about the signs you've seen and how you feel. "I'm not sure he is, but something just doesn't feel right. He's just not interested in anything I say anymore and he's making excuses to stay out after work a lot lately and I noticed, he's changed the password on his phone." Being both an empathetic friend and the compassionate person she is, your friend wants to be able to relate to your experience and share her “wisdom” with you. So she reaches into her bag of relationships, as coincidentally she has had this exact experience and knows what it feels like. She takes it out of her bag and shares her wound with you, “Oh Gina, you better be careful. I went through that and it was awful! That's exactly how I found out too- I saw her name on his phone.”

Now remember because of the specific experience she had in the past, your friend is assuming that your husband is definitely being unfaithful and that you're going to experience the exact same pain and hurt she did. In this moment, her past, her wounds and her limitations are being transferred to you. At the same time, this conversation may be bringing up the unresolved feelings she has about her past relationship. So when she talks to you about your experience, she doesn't have the ability to see your situation differently than hers. In this very moment, her past may cloud your future, if you are unaware of what is taking place.

What is actually happening is a form of transference, which was first described by psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud and is the basis of what we will be exploring in this chapter. Transference is simply the continuation of some way of being from our past, often from our childhood relationships, into our current situation and relationships. It is literally the way we transfer the past into our current experiences month after month and year after year.

Conversations like this happen every day. We sit down with our friend for a cup of tea and she casually shares something she's struggling with. Then without thinking, we dive into our own expertise to offer advice, comfort, and support. Although we may mean well, if we haven't fully healed from something that wounded us in the past, we won't be able to view her situation with clear eyes. Whatever emotional wounds we have that aren't healed skew the way we see and interpret new situations. They are literally the lenses through which we view what is possible. The end result of this is that we transfer our wounds and fears onto other people without even noticing what's going on.

Transference showed up in this coffee shop story in two ways. The first way is that your friend transferred her unresolved hurt, wounds and feelings from the breakup of her marriage to the way she interpreted your relationship issues. And secondly, she allowed her feelings around being abandoned by her ex-husband and her difficulty trusting others to ultimately affect the advice she gave you.

The obvious problem with this friend-to-friend exchange and transference, in general, is that it has the potential to limit our possibilities. In order to follow our own path and grow into who we are meant to be, it is essential to acknowledge that we each have our own journey. Your reasons for being in your relationship as well as the lessons you need to learn, will be different than hers, even if they have some similarities. The one glaring difference, however, is that you have to work through your relationship and it has nothing to do with her past, what she experienced or how her relationship ended up.

Think about all the times that you sit down with this friend or she sits down with you. You start a somewhat innocent conversation about what's happening in your life. And before long, the stories of the past are being transferred back and forth. And worse, the limitations from the past are being projected into the future through a casual conversation, just like this one.

In the last chapter, we learned how our inability to feel and express our emotions keeps us from being open to new experiences and possibilities for our life. Fortunately with the tools you've learned, you are now beginning to honor and embrace those difficult emotions so that you can learn from them and move on. However we still have work to do with the experiences from the past that are holding us back from what we desire. Those unhealed wounds often reappear when we are faced with an experience that feels similar to something that happened in the past. Avoiding or denying the emotions that are connected with that past event keeps us from seeing ourselves and what we are currently experiencing in the proper light. Those previous experiences are still with us and worse, are

tainting our ability to embrace the uniqueness of what is happening now. Like when your friend used her painful experience as a point of reference and potentially changed the way you viewed the challenge with your husband. We do this to ourselves all the time in different ways without recognizing that it's happening. You now have the opportunity to move beyond limiting yourself in this way.

## THE SECOND STEP IN THE PROCESS

The second step in the process of living from the inside out is to identify what's REALLY going on and understand what experience from your past is causing you to react, respond or act in ways that don't serve you. After reading this chapter, you will understand how you are transferring the past into your present experience and relationships. We will also look at why we as human beings re-create the same situations and circumstances in our lives year after year, even though we so desperately want to create something different. And most importantly, we will identify what you need to do to heal the past so you can create what you truly desire. Before we continue, I would like to invite you to explore a whole new possibility for yourself. Healing the past doesn't have to be an excruciating or difficult experience. Yes, that's right, I said it. Healing the past can actually be eye opening, freeing and even, exciting at moments. How is this possible? By realizing that it's often more difficult to carry these ineffective or destructive ways of being around year after year, desperately wanting something different and not being able to create it.

Even so, you may still be feeling uneasy about going into your past. I so understand why. Many times, I hear people say "I don't want to go back there or deal with what happened that long ago." But it is essential to understand how we are continuing patterns and ways of being in our life that we learned early on. Because we can't change what we don't acknowledge. We may think we are furious with our spouse and try to fix our marriage or relationship, but often times this very relationship is mirroring a relationship we had in childhood with a parent or sibling. The true healing then is in the recognizing, healing and making peace with the 'original' relationship that caused us pain. Fortunately, we can do this without the other person being involved. And once we do this, we can then make peace with our current circumstances and have the freedom to make the changes we desire.

When Kathryn arrived at our first coaching session, I could tell right off the bat that she was in a state of desperation. As we began exploring why she might be feeling this way, she quickly identified the frustration she felt about how much time she spent focused on making other people happy. What upset her most about this was that she had little to show for it. She was in a marriage that wasn't working, had a job she didn't like and felt unfulfilled and miserable most of the time. Although she

had many people who loved her and loved that she shared her time, focus and attention with them, at the end of the day she felt very alone and unfulfilled.

Kathryn shared that she never had time for herself and was always rushing to be by someone's side, whether it was for a spur of the moment shopping trip or to support a friend in "need". I knew that it was likely that Kathryn had developed this pattern much earlier in life. As we talked, she began to open up about what her childhood was like. She shared that as a result of her parents' divorce, she spent many days after school by herself in an empty, quiet house. As she continued to share, she voiced, "Even though I feel like we are onto something, I am hesitant and uncomfortable revisiting the memories of being home alone. It is something I have worked hard to forget."

I assured her that it would be highly beneficial for her to do this and would open up a whole new way of looking at her life. Hesitantly, Kathryn allowed herself to identify with and connect with that little girl and view her life through this little girl's eyes. As she did, she began to see that it was this very past that was causing her to react in ways that were leaving her exhausted and unfulfilled. She was beginning to understand why she would drop her own needs and run to someone else's rescue when they needed something. And why even the smallest requests from other people became more important than tending to her own needs.

She recognized that her need to do anything to be with people and take care of them was present because she didn't want to be alone and more significantly, "feel" alone, like she did as a child. Kathryn was initially shocked that her fear of being alone as a child was still present in her adulthood and how significantly, it was controlling her decisions. But as she began to connect more deeply with her feelings and the little girl that was home alone every day after school, she began to connect the dots and understand why her past was still present in her life.

Over the course of our time together, Kathryn made great strides in learning how to stop letting the fear of being alone direct her future. She learned to put her needs first and realized that she could say no to people and would even be okay if she were alone.

When Kathryn first came to me, she couldn't understand why she was so exhausted and unfulfilled in her life. She felt that if other people would just stop demanding so much from her, she would feel better. But through the course of our work together, she saw that it wasn't other people creating her reality and that the changes she needed to make could only come from within.

By identifying, acknowledging and owning that we play a significant part in all of our relationships and in any situation in our life, we take our power back and have the energy to make the changes we desire. Even though it is often easier to blame others or make them wrong for the way they are reacting or responding to us, the only person we can change is ourselves. The work of digging deep, often into the uncomfortable experiences of our past, helps us understand why we act the way we do and opens us up to new possibilities for our future.

It is important to clarify that taking responsibility for or looking at our part in the co-creation of our life, doesn't always mean it was our fault. This is an important distinction to make. You may have had traumatic things occur in your past that left wounds in place that are causing you to attract negative energy or recreate painful experiences over and over again. But there is one important realization we all must come to at some point in our lives, if we are going to change our future circumstances. Regardless of how difficult our past experiences have been, we are the only ones that can heal the wounds of our past and create something new. The greatest gift we can give ourselves is to look at how any patterns or reoccurring situations in our relationships are similar to the ones of the past so we can face them and heal them once and for all. Rather than allowing ourselves to just simply suffer from the pain of a breakup or a relationship that isn't working, we can use each relationship to guide us to a place of healing and ultimately, to a deeper relationship with ourselves and others. The end result is a feeling of being more in control of our current experiences and having more freedom to create what we desire in our life.

There are many ways that we transfer our childhood experiences into our adult life. One of them is from a parent or sibling to our spouse. But we also transfer these experiences or "play out" our wounds from childhood with our in laws, co-workers, friends and children.

This next story illustrates how I struggled for an entire decade with the same issue before being able to heal my hurt and pain.

I was so thrilled to have been nominated for Homecoming Court senior year in high school. Each member of this Homecoming Court was vying for the one spot of Homecoming Queen. Back in high school, being the Homecoming Queen was a very big deal. And the events leading up to the whole school voting for homecoming queen was also a big deal. One of those events was being announced as one of the members of the Homecoming Court on the loudspeaker in the gym during a school assembly. I still remember the dress I wore on that day. It was a silk green dress and I proudly displayed the sash across me that said, "Homecoming Court". As my name was called and I walked



through the middle of the gym with the whole school watching, a few girls booed at what seemed to me, like the top of their lungs. If there was anyone in the gym clapping, I certainly couldn't hear it. Although I knew there were many people who were rooting for me, the only ones I heard that day in the gymnasium were the girls who hated me- the girls who were booing. I thought I was going to die. Although I knew who the girls were because they used to be my best friends and I understood that they were booing me because we had been battling superficial teenage girl stuff for months, it didn't lessen the impact that moment had on me for a whole decade.

From that moment forward, the shame I felt in that gym coupled with other unresolved issues I was holding onto caused me to hide and disappear in my life. I turned to many different vices to numb my pain and to hide the feeling that there was "something wrong with me" and that it wasn't safe to "shine my light".

That one moment of shame in that high school gymnasium stayed with me for years and I transferred it into my life from that point forward, in many ways. One was to diminish my greatness and gifts. But the one I want to highlight here is how it affected all my relationships with female friends and female family members from that point on. I decided in that moment that women weren't to be trusted. That even if they were once your friends, they would always turn on you. And so I became the girl who loved to have guy friends. I became the girl who didn't have many close girlfriends and who certainly didn't trust women in a work setting or in any other place.

Although I avoided closeness in relationships for many years before finally dealing with this pain, there came a point in my life when I chose to no longer hide behind it. It became more painful to hide than to deal with the feelings I was avoiding and move past them. By finally facing the hurt that occurred that day and working through my feelings, I was able to open up to healing that wound and experiencing something new. It wasn't easy and took years to embrace the shame and embarrassment I felt about it and to discover how to make peace with it. However, when I was truly able to feel those feelings as they were and love myself through it, I was able to let go of all that I had attached to that experience and set myself free. By doing this inner work and healing, I no longer had to hide, avoid female friendships or re-create that past. I was now free to choose differently by assuring myself it was safe to trust again. As a result, today I am able to create and have relationships with female friends again.

Now, if I feel insecure with one of my girlfriends, I know that this past event is simply rearing its head. The power and freedom I have in knowing what is happening is amazing. It means that I don't need to create drama or chaos in my current female friendships because of a past hurt. Instead,

I know how to honor myself and my feelings and have compassion for the pain I experienced at the age of 17. I have the confidence now to take care of myself in any situation where that old hurt may re-appear. I am now self aware and confident enough to understand how and what to do to care for myself and not allow the negative opinions of a few outweigh how I feel about myself.

My best friend knows all about this experience and because I'm ok with it now, we can joke about it. She'll say, "Don't go high school on me" which I always laugh at and interpret as her love for me, because she has the same fear. She has her own version of "the fear of being rejected" by someone she loves. And she has experienced how that fear shows up in her current relationships. Because we have this understanding of each other's pain, past and experiences, we have a great depth of compassion and love present in our friendship.

With this one tool, you can create so much freedom in your relationships and your life. Both in the freedom you will have to be who you are with all your strengths, talents, fears and doubts and the space you can create for everyone else in your life to be all of who they are. In Chapter 4, we will expand our conversation of transference and you will learn how to specifically identify how the past may still be present in your romantic relationships. It is by far, one of the most powerful tools you can embrace. By being conscious in your relationships and knowing when you are transferring the wounds of your past, you can consciously create a deeper connection and share a greater depth of who you are with the people in your life.

#### THE DEEP ROOTS OF THE PAST

Samantha grew up in an alcoholic family. As alcoholics often do, her father drank during the day and into the night. As we explored her experience, she shared that she remembered it as if it was just yesterday even though almost two decades had past. What she most remembers as a little girl is hearing the bar door creak open in the middle of the night. What always followed the creaking of that door was the sound of ice cubes clinking in the glass. She remembers feeling immediate terror and fear knowing what those sounds meant. Those sounds began the change in her father from a loving, caring man to a distant, distracted person who rejected her and her needs. As a result, she felt insecure and felt a lack of safety when he was drinking.

Fast-forward 25 years to her current life with her husband who likes to drink a few times during the week. Although he doesn't display the signs of alcoholism or the intensity of her alcoholic father, he has similar behavior. The important part of this connection is not that her husband is exactly like her father. But that when her husband does certain things, it reminds Samantha of her Dad and her childhood. More importantly, because these wounds haven't been healed completely, it

brings up the feelings of insecurity and fear she had as a child. It unconsciously brings her right back to the age of eight years old.

So when Samantha hears her husband in the kitchen in the evening and hears the ice cubes clinking in the glass, the little eight-year-old girl inside of her immediately goes to a place of panic and fear. Until Samantha can heal this little girl's fears and insecurities, she will continue to transfer her childhood feelings onto her husband and her marriage. The problem with doing this is that she gets upset with her husband for drinking. Even though, his drinking is triggering something from her past, getting upset with him and trying to handle her wounds with him, won't resolve the problem or help her heal. What Samantha needs to focus on is using this as an opportunity to acknowledge that the little eight year old girl needs healing. The little girl within her needs to be acknowledged for her fears and insecurity. She needs to understand that she is no longer eight years old and can learn new ways to take care of herself, unlike she could when she was a child.

Once that healing is done, she won't need to transfer or project the feelings of insecurity and fear on her adult relationship with her husband. She will instead be able to comfort that little girl and know that she can take care of herself even if her husband is drinking. And even if, his behavior reminds her of her childhood experience with her Dad.

#### THE LITTLE CHILD WITHIN

You may have noticed that in both Kathryn and Samantha's stories, they had to learn to connect with the little girl from the past who was still controlling the actions of their grown women selves. The fact is that much of transference comes from childhood wounds. Now that you are taking the time to identify what is REALLY going on in each situation, in the next chapter, you will learn how to connect with the little child within you who so desperately wants to be heard.

But first, use the exercise below to identify what from the past may still be limiting you.

#### THE PAST & PRESENT EXERCISE

Find a quiet place to do this exercise. Close your eyes and take a couple of slow deep breaths. As you follow your breath inside, observe any thoughts or emotions that may want to get in the way of this simple connection to your breath. Just gently refocus your attention and as you breathe in again, allow yourself to hear the answers to these questions.

- 1) Allow yourself to identify an area of your life that you don't feel good about. For example – your

career, your home life, your relationship, your weight or health, etc.

2) Take a deep breath and allow yourself to connect with the feelings that you are feeling about this part of your life or about an event that recently occurred. Just breathe into those feelings. For example – I feel angry, sad, frustrated, out of control or powerless.

3) Take a deep breath and allow yourself to see the event before you as if you are the observer- you are observing it outside of yourself. Notice what your role in this interaction was. Did you feel out of control or were you trying to control something? Did you sit back and let the other person control the situation? Did you hold back expressing yourself and then blow up in anger and frustration? Or maybe you don't like being alone and are acting needy or always bringing attention to other peoples' opinions or views of you. As you observe this, how does it feel to you?

4) Take a deep inhale and allow yourself to notice if this is a familiar feeling or experience for you. Have you felt this before and when? In your adult life or as a teenager or child? Was there another time in your life that you felt this out of control, sad or powerless? How old were you?

5) Notice on your next breath, what from the past you may be transferring into this situation, event or relationship. For example if you felt out-of-control as a child, you may be trying to control everything and everyone around you. Or if your needs weren't met or you weren't heard as a child, you may be transferring your need to be heard and honored into what you're experiencing. Maybe you felt alone as a teenager, and it's showing up now as you being needy or always bringing attention to other peoples opinions or views of you. Just acknowledge whatever you may be seeing as a result of this exercise.

6) Take a moment now to visualize that child or teenager and the age they were when they felt those feelings. Connect with this child who has been and is still showing up in your life by transferring these feelings into your current experience. Tell this child that you are here now, as the adult, to protect them, listen to them and keep them safe. As you begin to develop this relationship with this child, they will trust you to take care of their needs instead of feeling they have to handle everything with their immature approach. Let this child know that you are going to walk with them, hold their hand and check in with them often this week.

7) Finally, ask yourself, "What action can I take this week to find peace within myself regardless of what is happening? What is one thing I can do to nurture myself and acknowledge how I am growing as a result of this very experience? Or one thing I can say to myself to remind myself of this growth?"

Make sure to schedule your actions in your calendar.

**BITE-SIZE EXERCISE:** Use what you learned in the previous exercise during your week. Notice how you are transferring the past into your current experiences by observing when you feel these same feelings. Then honor yourself by simply acknowledging what from the past is coming up. And affirm for yourself that you won't always feel like this, as you are in the process of learning new ways of experiencing your life.