



**4 STEPS TO LETTING
GO OF CHRONIC
DISSATISFACTION**

BY LYNDA HOFFMAN



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When you wake up every morning feeling like nothing is working, you may be suffering from chronic dissatisfaction. It's the persistent whisper in the back of your mind that nothing feels quite right in your life: there's not enough love, inspiration, money, connection, success, fun, clarity or respect – just to name a few.

Sometimes it's hard to know what exactly is 'not enough'. But you DO know in your gut that something is off. And you yearn for the feeling that everything really is OK.

You're not alone.

Our culture reinforces the idea that we SHOULD have it all. It can feel like it's "on us" if we don't have a good work/life balance, a six-figure income, or excellent health – even in the time of a pandemic!

This is a rabbit hole of thinking that leads only to one place: a state of unhappiness and deep dissatisfaction.

But there is a way out. Your yearning for something more is a sign that you're ready to grow. Recognize it. Let it happen. Discover the freedom and increased energy that comes from seeing possibilities that already exist – and those that might yet be.

ARE YOU FEEDING YOUR CHRONIC DISSATISFACTION?

Which of these resonates for you?

Perfectionism:

Striving for just the “right” result as if there is some objective idea of perfection puts you into a cycle of striving and failing, striving and failing. Perfection is the Muzak in your life that plays a depressing repertoire of “not good enough” or “I have to get this right” songs.

Self-judgment:

Holding the belief that you are not good enough creates a perspective that causes you to see all your efforts as inadequate. You can't possibly feel satisfied when you believe you are fundamentally flawed.

Ever-moving goal posts:

Having to reorient yourself around an ever-changing project can deprive you of the sense of accomplishment that is vital to your well-being. Studies in Positive Psychology have proven that accomplishment is a core need, not to be overlooked.

Successful entrepreneurs are especially vulnerable as their business goals are always evolving in a fast-paced environment.

Not celebrating your achievements:

You may feel that celebrating your achievements is unnecessary and self-indulgent. But actually, it's a golden opportunity to build a repertoire of successes into your consciousness. It forms a reservoir to tap into when things feel difficult.

Avoiding stillness:

When you meet your ambitious targets and the adrenaline finally settles, you may notice a hollowness that can feel like a little death. You may find yourself wanting to avoid this discomfort by immediately launching into another project. But sitting still to experience the transition is a way to make better, more mindful choices. The ones you will feel good about.

Being future-oriented:

Long-term goals are fine and necessary for success in life and business. After all, the “wanting mind” is part of our evolutionary survival pattern and has led to great innovations. But perpetual wanting can mean your focus is on what does not yet exist to the exclusion of all the beautiful things that are already here.



WHAT IF NOTHING IS ACTUALLY WRONG?

Did you know that these particular feelings of discomfort and dissatisfaction aren't caused by the hard circumstances of your life, but by the way you perceive your agency in them?

The reality is that you get to choose how you respond to every situation. This is where your power is. Imagine seeing every one of the circumstances in your life as an opportunity to grow. Deepen. You simply need to choose whether you want to be a victim, or whether you want to take the opportunity to grow and become stronger.

I find it deeply liberating to know that my life circumstances are not personal. They simply exist. I hope that you, too, choose not to confuse your problems with who you are at your core.

So, if life's challenges are not personal, then why do we focus on negativity as much as we do?

We Are Hardwired for Negativity!

We dwell on negativity because our brains look for all the potentially nasty outcomes we need to avoid. This negativity bias is actually what keeps us safe and cues us to change future behaviour. For example, the last time you had a conflict with your partner, chances are you decided to set healthier boundaries or learned how to communicate more effectively. You learned from it.

This bias also explains why the memories of hurts and insults tend to persist with us for days. Negativity sticks! But it doesn't have to be the super glue in your life.



We are also Hardwired to Choose!

Your brain works best when you use all of its resources – not just fear- based thinking. It can help you take different perspectives, think flexibly and learn new habits. Best news of all is that what you practice does change your brain! Science shows that each of us can train our brains to make smarter and more adaptive choices.

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Liberate Yourself from Dissatisfaction

You can begin to reclaim your life from chronic dissatisfaction by recognizing when the negativity bias has taken over. Slow down and listen to what you're actually saying to yourself. Here are three mental habits to watch for:

Self-blame:

Habitually seeing the negative in everything can lead you to think YOU are to blame. The story goes like this – “If everything is a mess in my life, surely I am responsible for it. Either I made a lot of mistakes or I AM the mistake.” This misunderstanding can lead you to feel helpless and hopeless.

“If only” mindset:

Do you catch yourself saying, “If only this wasn’t happening to me! If only...” This gives your power away. You can’t change your life if you believe that something you have no control over is the reason you can’t succeed. It’s a way to give up and prevents you from seeing the possibilities that actually

“Yes-but”:

Do you hear yourself saying, “Yes, BUT” a lot? “Yes, I do want to deepen my leadership in my business BUT I am not confident enough.” Or, “Yes, I do want to stop this chaos in my life BUT I can’t control everyone else.” The “but” is a signal you are in fear and blocking possibilities.

4 STEPS

TO LETTING GO OF CHRONIC DISSATISFACTION

Now that you have heard your inner voice cueing you to blame yourself, others, or the perceived obstacles in your way, commit to doing something different. The practices below will build the muscle of personal agency you need to create what you most want in your life.



1. HEAL YOUR SELF-BLAME

This is a practice of noticing, gently inquiring, and forgiving – with compassion and non-judgment – whatever limiting belief you are holding.

a) Inquire gently what you believe about yourself. Resist the urge to filter your thoughts. Ask:

“What am I believing about myself in this situation? Do I believe that I’m failing? That I am not smart enough?”

If you’re having a hard time articulating the belief, look for the feeling you’re experiencing. Find the place in your body where you experience the feeling. Once you locate where you feel it, bring it into your face and allow it to express through your face.

“Can I know if this is true?”

You may notice that even if there is no objective truth to the belief, you may still believe it. This is okay. Simply go to the next step.

“What would I do if this were not true?”

Experience the freedom that would come from releasing this belief that – even if only in your imagination – can help you feel the utter untruth of it, especially when facts are not enough to convince you.

b) Practice compassionate self-forgiveness:

This refers to treating yourself with compassion and forgiving yourself for believing anything that diminishes your value. Give yourself time, not just five minutes. Be prepared to go deeply. This is by far the most important step in liberating yourself from chronic dissatisfaction – and perhaps the most difficult to do.

- If you have difficulty feeling compassion for yourself, here’s a practice ([link to limiting beliefs.](#)) that will support you.



2. SWITCH YOUR FOCUS FROM “IF ONLY” TO “WHAT’S CAN I LEARN?”

Resist complaining about what’s not working and switch your focus to what can be learned from this situation.

Ways to practice this skill:

- Accept that reciting problems in your head does nothing to solve them.
- Forgive yourself for having fearful thoughts about the situation.
- Identify one thing you have learned about yourself from this situation.
- Be grateful for this growth opportunity. Truly.

3. CHOOSE ‘RIGHT ACTION’

The Buddhist concept of ‘right action’ refers to making mindful choices that line up with your values and goals.

Ways to practice this skill:

- Slow down and become centered. You can do this by creating a ritual for receiving the insight you desire. Breathe deeply to let go and become more fully present. The point is not to do anything, but instead to receive
- Inquire if there is urgency behind the choice you want to make. If so, do the opposite.
- Ask yourself, “In all the busyness of my life, what am I not doing?” This is likely the step that will be most fulfilling to you. Listen for it. There is something inside you waiting to be honoured.



4. FIND A GUIDE AND/OR MENTOR

This could be in the form of a book, a person you admire or a beloved teacher. We learn from one another, and the inspiration and guidance we receive are invaluable to our growth. In my own journey, when I needed to see things differently, I found Tara Brach’s book, “Radical Acceptance,” to be deeply supportive.

Don’t waste your one precious life on a mindset of dissatisfaction, reacting to a handful of powerful misbeliefs. Instead, take the time to delve deeply, heal yourself and recover the energy you need to create the life you truly want.

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