

# HOW TO ESCAPE FROM THE BOX TRAP

BY BILL HARRIS, DIRECTOR

Many people who come to Centerpointe for help feel trapped in their situation, and have a lot of trouble with the idea that they can create their own reality, or that it is possible to get out of the situation they find themselves in.

When what you are creating is being generated unconsciously rather than consciously, it always looks as if you have little or no control. When your internal map of reality is operating outside of your awareness, the results it creates seem as if they come from outside of you, and it often seems as if you have little control over what is happening.

## FEELING HELPLESS

Such people often feel as if they are trapped in a box, with no escape. The box could be an uncomfortable situation they feel trapped in, like an unhappy relationship or an

unfulfilling job. It could be a way of responding emotionally, such as always withdrawing, always getting angry, or being anxious or depressed. It could be a lack of prosperity, or continuing to create one bad relationship after another. Or, it could be a negative health situation.

When you feel trapped, you're telling yourself that the situation is something you can't do anything about, and that it must be accepted. While I am totally in favor of emotionally letting whatever happens be okay, I also think there is always something you can do to create a different reality for yourself.

Here's another way to think about these situations: Consider that there is a price that must be paid for everything. You pay a price if things stay the same, and you will have to pay a price if you are to create some sort of change. The price might be time, effort, money, emotional turmoil, physical



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discomfort, or something else, but in every case, there is a price.

A box, then, is any situation or way of being that keeps you from being happy, peaceful, or from getting what you want in life. You're in such a box if you assume that there is no alternative to the way things are now.

## **HOW TO GET OUT OF THE BOX**

There is, however, ALWAYS a way to get out of a box. Here's how to do it:

**1. Recognize that there is a price to pay for every moment you remain in the box you're in, whatever it is. In many cases, you may have been paying this price for a very long time.**

2. Acknowledge that there IS a way out (there is a price that, once paid, will get you out).

**3. Become clear about both the price for staying in the box and the price for getting out. With that information, you can make a choice about what to do.**

So, here is what I suggest you do if there is some area of your life that is not working the way you want it to.

First, find a quiet place where you can be alone and relax, undisturbed, to think things over.

Then, identify the situation that is causing you discomfort. Get clear on exactly what the discomfort is. Write it down, just to make SURE you are clear about it. (Remember, by the way, that it is your resistance to things being the way they are that creates the discomfort. You can always eliminate the discomfort by ending your resistance, but in this case we are talking about how to change the situation.)

Then, think of what you would do if you weren't in this box. At first, you may only think of wanting the discomfort to be gone or the situation to end, but there are probably many things you could do, be, or have if you weren't in the box. Imagine what you could and would do if the box were gone.

## **WHAT IS THE PRICE?**

Next, identify the price you must pay to get out of the box.

If the box is a job you dislike, the price may be looking for a new and better job. It might involve being out of

work for a short time, or even taking a cut in pay (though it certainly doesn't have to involve either of these things—there's almost always a way to get exactly what you want, IF you're willing to pay the price).

If the box is a relationship that isn't working, the price might involve a discussion (or even a confrontation) where you express your displeasure and ask for what you want. Or, it might involve getting out of the relationship altogether, which will have its own price.

If the box is being overweight, the price might be changing your eating habits and establishing an exercise program—or, some other price.

On a deeper level, the price might involve identifying and changing beliefs that have helped create the situation. It might involve rearranging your values structure to make something more important or less important in your life. It might involve looking at your strategies for choosing a job, a relationship, what you eat, etc. In some way, your Internal Map of Reality is creating your internal response, and your external results, and the price of changing things—if you really want permanent change—will probably involve figuring out what changes need to be made to various parts of your internal map.

(For help with boxes caused by beliefs, values, strategies, and other aspects of your Internal Map of Reality, please take my Life Principles Integration Process online courses. You can listen to a free preview lesson by clicking to here.

## **DECIDE TO PAY THE PRICE**

Once you are clear about the price you're currently paying and the price you'd have to pay to make a change, picture yourself paying the price. Try to think

of unexpected things that may come up while you're paying it, and how you might deal with them. Think "what if..." and be prepared for as many "what if's" as you can think of.

Go through the entire experience in your mind. If it is the least bit painful, mentally go through the process a second time. You will find that each time you imagine paying the price, any pain you associate with doing so will diminish. For some changes, one time will do it. For others, you may have to imagine paying the price several times to get to the point where you feel okay doing so.

At this point, you will have identified the three things you need to know to get yourself out of the box:

1. the price you are currently paying for staying in the

# The Box Trap **continued...**

box

## **2. the price you will have to pay to get out, and...**

3. what new and better results you could have once you're out.

And, you've mentally practiced paying the price, which will make doing so much easier. Often the anticipation of paying the price is much more difficult than actually paying it, which keeps people from taking action. By imagining yourself paying the price, you keep this from happening.

Finally, pay the price and be done with it. No matter what the discomfort, there's always a price you could pay to end it, if you're willing to pay it. Usually, the price to change is less than the price to stay the same. Cultivate the ability to look for a price to pay whenever you want to create a change.

Remember, there is always a price that can be paid. If the price seems too big, think about it some more. Perhaps there is an easier way that you haven't thought of. If you focus on getting what you want and achieving a possible solution, your mind will create one.

And, in some situations, you may conclude you just want to leave things the way they are (though my belief is that there is no reason to ever be in a situation you don't like, unless for some reason you want to).

## **RESISTANCE**

Sometimes part of the price is to drop your resistance to whatever is happening, to people being the way they are, or to the world being the way it is. Usually, in addition, there is a price you can pay to also change the situation itself, but you might as well not be resisting "what is" while you're making the change.

If you're in a marriage in which you aren't happy, you may think you have no alternatives. Perhaps your spouse is the breadwinner, and you have few skills, and that keeps you where you are despite the fact that you are unhappy. But, no matter what your situation, there IS a price that would get you out of it, and if you were willing to pay that price, you COULD leave.

The price might be learning new job skills, being alone for a while, moving, or one of a number of other things. Or, it could be to resolve the problems that make the relationship unworkable. You might find that as you set

out to pay this price it turns out to be a tremendously transformative positive experience, rather than whatever you feared it would be.

The point is, there is ALWAYS a price, and the only way to know whether you want to stay in the current situation or make a change is to evaluate the relative prices of the various options. In any case, it's good to know that you are not stuck and without options.

And, remember, in most cases the price to be paid involves making some changes to your Internal Map of Reality, since this is ultimately where your entire internal and external experience of life is generated.

## **PAY IN ADVANCE**

Two more important points:

1. The sooner you pay a price, the less it costs you. Waiting to pay always raises the price.

2. When making a change, always look for direct alternatives—things YOU can do, as opposed to alternatives involving getting someone else to change.

You can make changes in yourself without anyone's permission or help, while changing other people or the world is always a very iffy proposition.

You always have choice. Nothing is without price, so you have to evaluate what is valuable to you and what isn't. But it's all up to you.

Be well.



Bill