

An excerpt from

TRANSITIONS

*Pathways to the Life and World
Your Soul Desires*

by Bonnie Hutchinson

From the chapter
Befriend Barriers

**Why challenges and barriers are almost inevitable
when you're in a transition**

Hardwiring – our fears, beliefs and habits

It's almost inevitable that whenever we make a change, our old mental blocks and fears show up, as well as old unhelpful behaviours and thoughts. Maybe new blocks show up too.

Why is that?

I'm going to over-simplify one of the reasons. Some parts of our brains are hardwired to resist change. Since the time we were born (and some would say even before that), our brain has filed away every experience. Every sight, sound, touch, taste, smell, movement, emotion and thought we've ever had is still recorded somewhere in our brain.

With every experience we've had, we've come to conclusions about how the world works, what keeps us safe, what is

dangerous, what brings us pleasure and what brings us pain. We have developed techniques to protect ourselves from what we believe is dangerous or painful, and to increase our experiences of pleasure.

Our brains incorporate these techniques and create “systems” – recurring patterns of thoughts, words and actions – in order to protect us, avoid pain and seek pleasure. These recurring patterns create physical pathways in our brains. This is not just a metaphor. New imaging technology allows us actually to see those brain pathways in action.

As soon as we experience something new – or sometimes as soon as we even *think* about something new – all those old beliefs and habits and coping mechanisms get stirred up. With every new situation, our old coping or protection mechanisms, useful or not, are quite likely to show up, ready to be of service to keep us alive and safe.

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*The chapter goes on to give examples, and several other reasons why inner barriers are almost inevitable when we're in transition*  
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Three techniques to move through inner barriers

Okay, by now you might be thinking, “Yeah, I understand there are reasons for inner barriers. So what? I just want to get rid of them.” You’ll be glad to know that though inner resistance to transition is highly likely, it need not stop you. You can dissolve those blocks or even transform them into friends and allies.

You probably have your own ways to motivate yourself or get help for yourself when you need to move through one of your inner challenges. Following are some suggestions.

Have an accountability partner – if you know you have to report to someone, you’ll get it done.

Ask someone to be with you as you do something scary that you've been resisting.

Get help to do what you don't love to do.

Power through – just do it! Use discipline and will power to get you through.

Set a timer and refuse to be distracted from a task until the timer rings.

Set up rewards for when you accomplish something you don't want to do.

Those are useful tactics for lots of inner barriers. All of the tactics are variations of building support for yourself, or in some way manipulating yourself to do what's good for you. However, for some deeper inner blocks, those techniques only work for a short while, or may not work at all. Some inner blocks are connected to beliefs and fears that simply cannot be cajoled or manipulated away.

Here are three techniques to add to your repertoire:

...Make friends with your inner blocks

...Change the symbol, change the reality

...Clear the energy of fear.

All three techniques deal with the *energy* of the block or barrier and not with the *content* of the barrier. After a quarter century of using techniques like these, I continue to be amazed and awed by their power.¹

Technique #1: Make friends with your inner blocks

A story. For months this chapter was the most difficult one to write. I'd start and stop, and think I was going to hunker down

¹ I first learned the approach of working with *energy* rather than the *content* from Jeanie Marshall. She has a wealth of resources on her website <http://www.janiemarshall.com/>

and concentrate. Then I'd find myself making a snack or possibly doing a puzzle. The irony did not escape me. I had barriers to writing about barriers.

One week I was able to block off four consecutive days for non-stop writing. My husband was away and I had no appointments or other commitments – four glorious days to focus on writing. I looked forward to entire chapters pouring out my fingers. By the end of the second day, I had accomplished many tasks and felt very productive, except for one thing – I had not written one word.

I sat in my meditation chair and asked, “Am I avoiding writing?” “Yes.” Another question: “Is there fear?” “Yes.” I asked (thinking I knew what the answer would be), “What’s the fear?” A crystal clear voice in my mind said, “I don’t want to be left behind.”

That is not the answer I was expecting.

“Who are you?” I asked. The voice in my mind belonged to a little girl (me) about three years old who said, “Daddy went away to war and left me behind.”

I asked, “Were you afraid of Daddy?” “Yes,” she said, “but I didn’t want him to go away. Mommy was sad and I didn’t want Mommy to be sad.”

I asked, “What do you need from me?” and we had a conversation about what the little-girl-me needed in order not to be afraid that adult-me would leave her behind.

Okay, this was all a conversation in my mind with parts of myself that might be figments of my imagination. It felt real. One other thing. The next day, as agreed, I spent a little time imagining that the little girl me and the adult me were playing together. Writing started to flow. I wrote more book sections in two weeks

than I'd completed in the previous six months, and those two weeks included numerous other events and commitments.

Here's the key point. Some of our inner blocks come from parts of ourselves that need healing and reassurance, not manipulation and coaxing. When I suggest, "Make friends with your inner blocks," I am not speaking figuratively. Those blocks are trying to protect something precious. Honour them. Treat them kindly as you would any frightened person or animal that you cherish.

You may also want to consult a professional counsellor or therapist to help you work through these blocks.

A process. I debated whether to include the story you just read or the process I'm about to describe, because some people might think it's flaky or inappropriate. I chose to include the process because I know it will be valuable for many people. If you're not comfortable with the ideas or the technique, then don't accept them. Skip to the next technique.

If you are comfortable to learn more about the "befriending" process, continue reading. Of course, if you feel even a speck of uneasiness about using the process, don't. I'm so comfortable with it and have had such positive experiences that I love splashing around in it. That may not be true for you. Honour your preferences.

You may already know the basic process from reading the story. Here are the steps:

1. Get into a quiet reflective state. Before going on, ask, "Is it for my highest good to follow this process?" If the answer is "no," do not proceed. If the answer is "yes," continue.

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*The chapter goes on to explain the remaining steps for this process, and explains two other methods to move through inner barriers.*

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