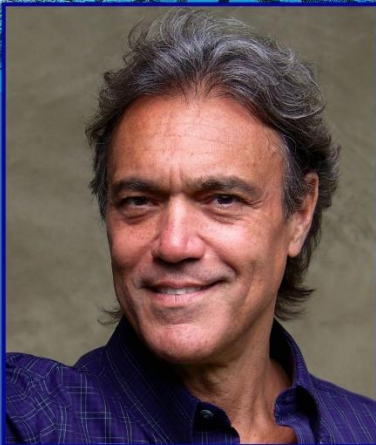


# Emotional Martial Arts™

eBook Series

*Tools for Creating a Healthy Life of  
Balance, Joy and Empowerment*

## *Intersection of Ego and Spirit*



Howard E. Richmond, MD

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*Disclaimer: While journaling prompts and guided meditations are excellent tools for helping to relieve stress and encourage creativity and life balance, they are not substitutes for medical advice or professional counseling and support for depression or other conditions you might be experiencing. Please seek assistance if you need it.*

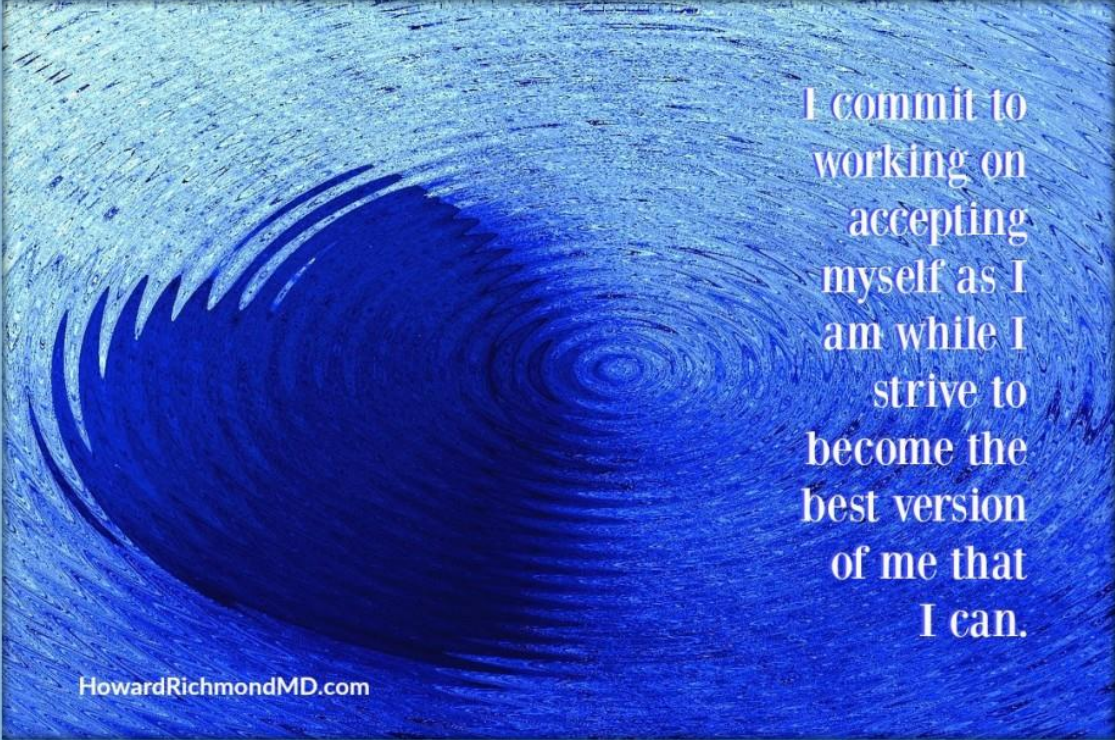
***Howard Richmond, MD** is a transformational psychiatrist, award-winning author, and a Black Belt in Emotional Martial Arts™. He shows you the keys to unlock hidden emotions and limiting beliefs to increase your capacity for joy, creativity, empowerment, and ultimately, inner peace.*



*With storytelling and humor, Dr. H shares practical wisdom teachings about emotions, reality and perception that you can use immediately in your daily life to effect positive change.*



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## *The Intersection of Ego and Spirit*

The topic tonight is the Intersection of Ego and Spirit. The intersection of ego and spirit, what the heck does that mean? So I'm going to try to simplify that right away. When I talk about ego, I talk about the committee. Those of you who have been here before know about the committee of three. The vulnerable approval-seeking child - heh, huh huh, of the angry rebellious adolescent, and the critical parent or the judge.

So, that's our committee in a nutshell in reactive mode. When we are in reaction we get the committee lit up. So, we have the critic or the judge and we have the story, and then we have the teen and the child, sometimes in the basement with the duct tape on, that has the emotions. Those mind emotions we are going to talk about with the child its fierce sadness, guilt, shame, worthlessness. So, fear and sadness are the primary emotions of the child in the committee. We all have the capacity for fear and sadness, whether we recognize it or not. With the adolescent it's anger, anger, resentment, jealousy, betrayal, when we are charged and with the critic it's just judgment, judgment, judgment.

So, most of you know that I was in the hospital for ten days, got released last week, on Labor Day. And so I'm going to talk about my experience and integrate it with the intersection of ego and spirit. So briefly what happened to me a couple of Fridays ago, I was in the office and about



mid-day I got this abdominal pain and I felt well maybe it was something that I eat, the doctors took for lunch. And it kind of didn't go away and it kind of got worst and worst. And it accelerated to nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, sweating and chills. I also cancelled the rest of my day and I went home and it felt like I was either being tased with a taser or somebody punched me in the stomach but they didn't stop.

You know, when you get hit in the belly and you say, huh, and then there is relief, well there was no relief so I was consumed by pain and I noticed my committee and I am very familiar with my committee and that's one of the things that I like to teach to everybody. Be familiar with your committee because if you don't they are going to take you hostage.

The child is going to be fearful, sad, guilty, shameful and feeling worthless, the teen is going to be angry, resentful, jealous and feeling betrayed and the critic is going to have a ton of stories. So, I know my committee pretty well and they were amping up a little bit but I talked to the committee and I said, okay, [inaudible] well actually when you have trouble breathing there is very little else you can concentrate on so for a while it was just breathing because I had the hiccups and I just couldn't get still sitting, laying down, walking, or going in the tub.

I tried everything like ten times so finally, Elana said let's go to the emergency room and so I got into the back of the SUV and I just laid down there distracting myself until I got some relief with intravenous dilaudid which became my friend because when you have pain you need a friend. So yeah, that was helpful and so this journey started, this unexpected journey of, okay, I'm not in control, no, no, no, I'm out. I'm being tased.

I feel like I am giving birth without a womb and I need help and I surrender. And so I was admitted to the hospital and I fortunately got a single which is always nice not to have a roommate when you're in pain.

I had the fortune of having Elana as my roommate for ten days and nine nights – she barely left my side.

So, I am really grateful for you, for her because that helps on the journey of life, particularly when you are in pain, perhaps somebody who cares about you, who loves you, who has your back. So, that was really helpful and also helpful was Johnny because Johnny was like the quarter back in the field bringing us supplies to the hospital because you have all been in a hospital room. It looks like that wall behind you, it's just stark white and bland so we kind of decorated, when we decorated our room. So, we had the mesh up there behind my bed. We had a culprit. We had aroma therapy. We had some music, candles...battered candles. So, when the nurses came into the room they are like, ahh, what's that smell? And usually it was lavender, and they are like, oh, wow!

So, every time the nurses came in the room they like being there. So, that was comforting. And it's also talking about the intersection of the ego and spirit. When we get back to that we integrate that. So, when we talk about ego we talk about the three committee members. So, my scared child, I had to calm my scared child, my angry teen, I had to say, look just let it go, and the critic of judgments about what was happening, surrender.

So, I was able to get my committee to release their usual activity and opposition so that's what I mean by ego or the egoic committee, it's the three committee members, the child, the teen and the parent with the critic.

Now I'm emphasizing this because those of you who have been here to emotional martial arts before and after we do the talk we do the meditation where we can...where we could sit with some of these principles as we enter spirit...and what do I mean by spirit? What I mean by spirit is simply, it's simply complex. It's that...those of you who apparently use the term, non-judgmental observer. So we talk about

the committee, when we are in reaction mode, bum, we get charged. When we are in conflict, when we are in stress or distress we react and our reaction is reflexive. So, we have psychological and emotional reactions that we usually don't pay attention to until we do and when we do that's when we can cultivate and develop the NJO, the non-judgmental observer because we all have the capacity or a space inside us even if it starts out to be a really tiny small space.

In doing the meditation I hope you cultivate that space of non-judgmental observer as you observe some reactions that you might be having or have had in the past. So, when we develop a non-judgmental observer, one I talk about the Namaste, that space inside of you and inside of me, that one heart, you know that space? When we are in that space, it's like, wow!

The fabulous, you'll just hear, it's simple and it's love. And what a commodity, what a precious commodity love is and how contaminated love can be when we don't get to have our way. When our committee tries to grab or control it or have more of it. It contaminates that space of love, of being present.

So, the intersection of ego and spirit, and I got the lesson again because I think this is a life lesson when something happens that's unexpected or that we don't like or that's difficult or challenging. Well, I'd say, have your reaction, everybody is entitled to a reaction. The problem is if we stay in reaction then we are a part of the problem. When we get out of reaction then we are in the solution because we get out of the committees, ahh, I don't like this! No, something different! And just surrender to acceptance, to the what is.

Because we all know when we do that there is a space and the grace and ease. And sometimes that's a commodity that seems to be very elusive so love, teaching and talking and practicing about this, how to wage inner peace because you have a right to wage inner or outer war. So



again to make it simple that intersection of ego and spirit is when the observer, the non-judgmental observer show up at the same time, even if we are having a reaction about whatever is happening. And the more our non-judgmental observer shows up the less the rest of the committee needs to react and then we have that space of grace and ease, even if we are in pain, even if we don't like the situation we are [inaudible] we accept and we surrender.

That's the intersection of ego and spirit and we saw it many times in the hospital. When the nurses came in and they had that, huhh, they got a little break to their day and we all benefited from that. So, we share that space and our committee, the other side of our committee, when the committee is not in reaction mode the committee can be joyful and playful. So Elana looked...we looked at each other and we're like, yes. The committee felt like, yeah, this is good, they like the room, they like the room.

And then we had one nurse come in, I call her Nurse Ratchet. She was different from all of the other nurses, she came in, the first thing she saw was the carpet, she said, that's not good, that's not good. You can slip, you can slip on the carpet plus you don't know how many people come in here with feces and blood and urine.

Like, wow! Our committee silently got activated, though I talked to my committee and said, you don't say anything that's going to piss her off because she cannot hurt you. So, I sort of nodded and acknowledged her words and then she saw that and she said [inaudible]. I said, no but I like the message of compassion and love and she was like, oh, okay.

So, we had our Nurse Ratchet along with all the other Nurse Ratchets and what else happened in the hospital? Oh, somebody came to draw my blood and she said, hello, my name is Sheva. Oh, hello Sheva, that's a big responsibility that you have and that that must be [interruption of

chiming - second person: that's Sheva calling] Sheva calling, time for my blood draw [laughter].

So it was another opportunity as life brings to us to meet that intersection of ego and spirit that space where we can show up as observer as well as participant. Because if we are just in participant mode we tend to be in chronic reaction mode and we react and then we don't react and then we react again and when we can cultivate the non-judgmental observer. Our reactions become less intense, less frequent, and the duration of our reaction will shorter, we developed emotional resiliency and that's really a big part of emotional martial arts, developing emotional resiliency.

Because otherwise, you know, we all have our judge. We all have our critic. We all have our story maker, our story teller. It's that thing right behind our forehead and the prefrontal cortex right here, your thoughts, beliefs, judgments, conclusion, story and we pay attention to it as if its truth or fact but mostly its ego fiction, it's just story, story, story, you know.

The story that goes, he, she, it, they, them did something to me and I have the details to prove it. You know, and if you are my friend you will listen to all my details. So, that's what is in our heads most of the time, he, she, it, their, them. Story, story, story, details, details, details. Let me tell you the details, show you the details and the details, they change and after a while they need to be rolled up because, thank you, they get boring, they get boring and then it's a re-run and I like to call ego fiction because like a movie it's very seductive.

You know we can get drawn into a movie and it's usually real and our senses get triggered. We identify with the characters and we forget that there is a movie projector twenty-four full frames per second and it's our EEL, no, our EAL we get seduced. We all have a mental movie

projector inside our head and it's much more of an R E E L if we think about it, no, R E A L. So you look like you have a question.

**Question:** I couldn't get the acronym so...

Okay, thank you for asking. So when we are watching a movie it's really an R E E L so it's a movie reel and I love the play on words because we get seduced, our senses get seduced as if it's R E A L, as if it's real. Intellectually we know it's a movie so the parallel is just like that, that banner there, we get caught up in story when we are in reaction mode and we love the details and we love sharing the details with our friends and then after a while it can really get boring. Because what we miss is on the emotions that are driving our perception and shaping our reality, the emotions that can hide. You know, if we are angry, sometimes we know we are angry. We might not know we are scared and we might not know we feel worth-less or shameful and when we start to identify emotions without judgment, then we are the none judgmental observer, then we are in that space of heart, then we are in that space of now, we are here now.

## *Heckles from the Darkness: An Introduction to the 3 Committee Members*

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| <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #ADD8E6; padding: 5px;"><b>The 3 Committee Members<br/>in <math>\Rightarrow</math> REACTION <math>\Leftarrow</math> Mode</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="width: 30%;">  <p><b>CHILD</b><br/><i>vulnerable, approval-seeking</i></p> </div> <div style="width: 35%; text-align: center; background-color: #FFFF00; padding: 10px;"> <p><b>FEAR, SADNESS</b><br/><i>Guilt, Shame</i><br/><i>Worthless-ness</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p><b>ANGER</b><br/><i>Resentment, Jealousy</i><br/><i>Betrayal</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>Thoughts, Beliefs</i><br/><b>JUDGMENTS</b><br/><i>Conclusions, Story</i></p> </div> <div style="width: 30%;">  <p><b>ADOLESCENT</b><br/><i>angry, rebellious</i></p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="width: 30%;">  <p><b>PARENT</b><br/><i>critical, judgmental</i></p> </div> <div style="width: 35%; text-align: center; background-color: #FFFF00; padding: 10px;"> <p><b>Joyful</b></p> <p><b>Loving</b></p> <p><b>Accepting</b></p> <p><b>Aligned</b></p> <p><b>Integrated</b></p> <p><b>Present</b></p> <p><b>Creative</b></p> <p><b>Compassionate</b></p> </div> <div style="width: 30%;">  <p><b>CHILD</b><br/><i>wondrous, creative, playful</i></p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="width: 30%;">  <p><b>ADOLESCENT</b><br/><i>engaged, enthusiastic</i></p> </div> <div style="width: 30%;">  <p><b>PARENT</b><br/><i>unconditionally loving</i></p> </div> </div> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small; margin-top: 5px;">Copyright © 2015 by Howard E Richmond, MD</p> | <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #FFDAB9; padding: 5px;"><b>The 3 Committee Members<br/>in <math>\Rightarrow</math> CREATION <math>\Leftarrow</math> Mode</b></p> |
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You may know that I learned to do stand-up comedy in the mid 1990's. I graduated from an eight-week comedy course and immediately performed my first set. I got a bunch of laughs and I was hooked for about two years until December 10<sup>th</sup>, a Wednesday evening, 1997.

There was a Make-a-Wish-Foundation, charity comedy event at the Comedy Store in La Jolla. I was number 11 in the line-up and still very

much a rookie. The guy before me was the kind of comedian that picked on the blond in the front row. It was sort of what I'd call vulture humor.

When I got up, I just started into my routine and people weren't paying attention to me...the worst thing that could happen.

Now, if I were more experienced, I would have gone up to the blond in the front row and said, "I'm a psychiatrist, are you okay? How are you feeling? That bad comedian really beat you up. We're not going to do that now."

I didn't know how to do that then.

So, instead, I'm on stage and people are chatting, and I'm getting a few heckles from the darkness. I'm saying to myself, *oh no, this is the worst thing*. I hurried my set and got off the stage.

That event is what helped me to crystalize "the committee" – the Three Committee Members that we all have. One committee member is the child, another committee member is the teen and the third is the parent.

**The child**, I assign five emotions...fear, sadness, guilt, shame and worthlessness.

**The teen**...anger, resentment, jealousy, betrayal...those four emotions.

And then, **the critic** or the parent, are pre-frontal cortex, thoughts, beliefs, judgments, conclusions, story.

So, I got to know my committee really well, particularly on that night. My child was feeling hurt, guilty, shameful, worthless. My teen was feeling anger and resentment, jealousy and betrayal. I was jealous the

other comics got laughs and I didn't. I was angry at the crowd for not laughing. And my critic said, *Howard, who do you think you are? You're not a comedian. You're a doctor.*

I listened to my critic.

For about two years, I quit comedy. I quit it altogether. Then I got my footing a couple of years later. Comedy has really helped me to walk through fear, to disentangle judgement to get to know my committee better.

Because this is the committee that's reactive, that's not feeling safe or heard, or understood.

We've all got this scared child, the angry teen and the critic. Now, when we're feeling good, the child can be the one who is the creative playful child, the teen can be the enthusiastic, engaged, adventurous adolescent, and the critical parent can become the unconditional loving parent.

Conceptually this is very sound; experientially it can be challenging to do. That's why I want to continue to help, share and show what I've learned from not only comedy, but also my other great teacher – my most challenging patients. They taught me I didn't know caca (the Spanish word for crap), because they weren't getting better. That challenged me!

That invited me to learn how to convert caca to Holy caca. From manure to fertilizer, and fertilizer to rocket fuel.

Deepak Chopra might say, "You cannot plant positive thought seeds in garbage...because nothing will grow." But if you convert your emotional garbage to compost, everything will bloom.



So, that's the pay off when we put our focus and our energy on shifting out of reaction mode, shifting out of survival, fear-driven mode, and into a space where we can stand in our truth.

It takes awareness and practice and it's so worth the effort.