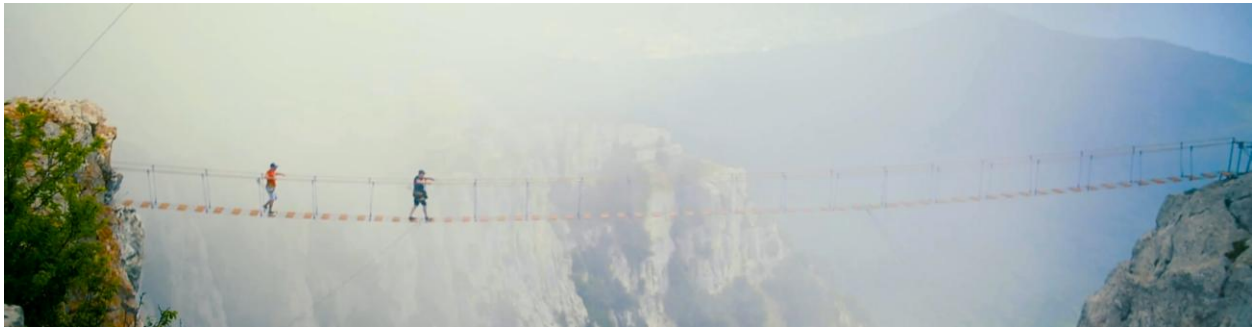




The Tao Of Untrolling



A workbook companion to the
Untrolling America series



The Tao of Untrolling

This manual is in your hands because you watched the first episode of Untrolling America. The episode demonstrates why you have to untroll yourself. This manual shows you how to do it.

You begin by answering a series of questions.

Your answers become the exercise that lets you enter into conversation with your whole self. And with others who undertake these exercises with you.

Untrolling you becomes your liberation story written by you.

Why?

Your journey to the place where only you can go, find what you lost, and return renewed.

You put your emotions on the couch and record what you discover.

This book is the record of your discoveries and the history of your recovery.

The journey draws on 2500 years of ancient Taoist practices in China as you untroll your life right here and right now—today.

Dr. Zhenbao Jin taught me where this powerful practice begins.

You follow your breath rising up your back as you inhale and down the front of your body as you exhale. This is the way you encircle yourself with the breath of life.

From Dr. Zhenbao Jin: “You sit on your chair in an upright and relaxed way, stop thinking and focus your consciousness on your breathing, follow the natural rhythm of the inhalation and the exhalation, give the process of your breathing full time without interrupting it with any thoughts. Each time when your mind drifts away from the breathing, you tenderly and patiently bring it back to your breathing. At the same time when you’re focused, you stay relaxed so that you can be aware of any sensory change in any part of your body.”

Try it right now.

Inhale and follow your breath up your back to the crown of your head.

Exhale and follow your breath as it moves down the front of your body.

Write down what you felt.

The more you practice this simple way of focusing on your breathing, the more you experience the amazing energy flow in you, the cosmos encircling and nourishing you.

What does this practice of meditation have to do with your emotions?

Let's find out.

We can make only one promise to you: as you answer the questions posed to you, you might feel loved back into life.

Why?

The exercises become a spiritual experience liberating you without religious beliefs or creeds, faith traditions or codes. The exercises illuminate you.

The Tao affirmed here isn't religious.

It's Untrolling work liberating you back into your life as the cosmos unfolding itself in you as one of its stars.

There is nothing mysterious about this process—as you will discover as you do the exercises.

The process isn't a good read. It's a real feeling. This real feeling is The Tao.

Three definitions frame the exercises you are about to undertake.

The Tao as defined by Dr. Zhenbao Jin: Tao can be experienced, but cannot be captured in words. It's the ceaseless force that drives the evolution of the cosmos, as well as the evolution of our life. It's the ultimate source of life. It's the generative emptiness of absence, out of which all things come into being. It can be experienced as the inherent circulation of energy in each of us. The blockage of the inherent circulation of energy reduces our experience of ourselves as well as the outer world, and accordingly weakens our connection with ourselves, with other people, with nature and with the cosmos. It's because of this weakening of experience and connection that we suffer from fear and rage, as well as depression and disease.

Trolls: Trolls are images of your fear and rage created by your imagination. These images depict the movements of rage and fear in your body, which are emotions more than 200 hundred million years older than you are. Their plotlines as they course through your body become narratives, fantasies, social constructions. But what these stories refer to are real: your actual feelings, your own experiences of fear and rage.

Trauma: Trauma is your brain's **response** to harm.

The **response** is both a physical and a psychological **expression** of the injury you felt.

The **expression** triggers your brain to manage the injury—the harm—and secure the survival of the rest of your body by any means necessary.

A bear, for example, will gnaw off a paw to escape a hunter's trap.

Similarly, Aron Ralston—the “canyoneering” hiker—cut off his forearm to free himself from a dislodged boulder in a Utah canyon.

Both the bear and Ralston did the same thing: they tore off a part of themselves to save the rest.

Their brains at this primal level of their evolutionary history share the same brain program for all mammals—including all of us.

Your brain predicts what has to be done to keep you alive and prompts you to do it.

So your brain's survival instincts (fear and rage, for example) make you not only cut off parts of yourself—like the bear tore off his paw and Ralston sawed off his forearm; but they also make you cut off contact with sensations and emotions that if recalled would prevent you from living in settings that abuse you—settings in which you persistently feel fear and rage.

When you persistently feel fear and rage, your brain creates **Trauma Trolls**. They block you from feeling what you felt—so you can continue to operate in the harmful environments in which you must live.

In the Untrolling America series, we track down some of the trolls and their narratives so you can find your own trolls and untroll them. Untrolling them is the Tao.

Let's begin.

Recall a time when you bit your tongue, stifled yourself, went along to get along. Describe what you did, how you felt, and whether you recovered from your self-injury.

How did this experience become a troll story?

What did you or could you now do to untroll it?

Episode 1
Set 1

Why is it important to know that Max's rage in *Where The Wild Things Are*—is older than Max by more than 200 million years? Does it make sense to you to think of these emotions as the reference for what religious people call demonic forces or sacred entities?

Keep in mind that in traditional societies, the handlers and shapers of human emotions were thought of as mythic beings and demonic forces: trolls.

Carl Jung (1875-1961), the Swiss founder of analytical psychology, described mythic beings and sacred entities as primal instincts developed to ensure the survival and thriving of the human organism in good times and bad.

Jung called the place where these neural systems reside in the subcortical regions of the brain: the psyche.

He believed these "preformed patterns" broke into consciousness and produced the fantasy-images of children's dreams, the delusions of schizophrenics, the content of dreams of normal people and neurotics, and, at an ethnological level, the myths, rites, and rituals of a particular people (*The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* 64-66).

"Cerberus," for Thandeka, appeared as a real primordial entity, namely, as something verging on life: her emotional life. A psychological truth: trauma, denial, disavowal, transference, fear and trembling.

Max managed his trolls: his rage. Recall a time when you felt enraged or afraid but not overwhelmed. What happened?

How does Thandeka’s own story make the point that Untrolling isn’t child’s play or a fairytale?

What feelings came up when Thandeka mentioned her mother's love of books outweighed the needs of her baby?

What did the “grouch bag” routine do? Did your guardians have a similar way to manage emotions? Was there an emotional rule in your household?

What kept on trying to push out spontaneously in Thandeka and why did she conclude she must kill her emotions?

Why did she decide to live?

Why did she feel free?

Cerberus is a 3000-year-old Vedic beast, the ancient Greek “hound of Hades,” who in Greek mythology guards the gates of the Underworld and locks dead souls in hell. Why was Thandeka’s troll in the form of Cerberus? What did he symbolize that was real in Thandeka’s life, but she denied?

Why was Cerberus in the Student Counselling office with Thandeka?

What do you think is out there that makes so many kids who grow up in Pleasantville USA feel so fearful and enraged?

Have you discovered any of your own personal trolls? If so, what were they hiding?

Set 2

Write a letter to yourself in conversation with one of your troubling emotions: fear or rage.

Begin the letter this way:

Dear (name the emotion: fear, rage, separation distress, loneliness, for example):

Ask it a lot of questions.

Once you have completed this letter, write a second letter but this time one addressed to you sent by the emotion you queried.

Let the emotion say whatever it wants to say.

Now write a third letter—one from you again. Thank your emotion for speaking so frankly and honestly to you to help you understand how you felt.

Set 3

Now let's do meditation for 10/15 minutes. Set a timer so you do not have to worry about how long you have been sitting. Let's be more present, empty our mind and experience the energy circulation in us. Follow the breath up the back of your body as you inhale and down the front of your body as you exhale. This circle of energy cares for you. Let it care for you.

Finally say: Thank you circle of life.

You have just thanked/felt the Tao untrolling you.