

## Conflicted Souls Create a Conflicted World

Cheryl Roth  
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Have you ever heard the saying, “*thoughts become things*”? This is a phrase coined by author and motivational speaker Mike Dooley. His work brings insight as to how our thought processes and feelings create the path we walk in life. If we don’t like the results we’re getting or the direction we’re going we simply need to uncover the thoughts and feelings that got us to that place.

Probably 99.9% of human beings walk around with conflicting beliefs, thoughts and feelings within

themselves. We are often blind to our own shortcomings because it’s too painful to examine the contradictions within. However, the contradictions will manifest themselves through our choices one way or another. This is the human condition.

### Life is a Struggle for Peace

From the time we are born we struggle to learn how to survive and fit into the complex systems of life. Our greatest asset in this process is the love of our parents because only by feeling truly loved and valued do we find peace, security and identity. Yet all of us are born into a complicated and messy world and from parents who have their own struggles, some more than others. No one is born into an ideal circumstance, yet whatever we are born into is what we have to deal with.

In this complicated mess we are born into there are two general directions we can choose to take in life. One is the way of blaming, accusing and complaining about our lot in life, looking at everything from a “me” centered perspective. The other is the way of taking responsibility to do the best we can with the lot we’ve been given. The latter is the hard way, but it is the only way to find peace and uncover your true self.

### Layers of Conflict

One simple example of this problem can be seen in the obesity epidemic in America. Why do we have this problem and how do we solve it? If you have the genetic disposition to be thin and can generally eat anything you want then you might not even think about this problem, or you might have the tendency to accuse overweight people as being lazy overeaters. Overweight people may blame their genes, but the problem is not that simple.



Most overweight people feel desperate to lose weight because they know that excess fat is not good for their health. This need to restore our health drives the diet, food and health industries to create more and more solutions for our weight problems. Yet none of those solutions have reduced the obesity epidemic and some of them have even made it worse. Many overweight people just give up because the struggle is too great.

No one thinks “I want to be fat”, that’s not how our thoughts become things usually. Our thoughts, powered by emotions, cause us to make certain

choices. Sometimes we have conflicting thoughts, sometimes we have conflicting emotions, and sometimes we have inadequate information or experience.

### Uncovering damaging thoughts and feelings

I’m currently participating in a Dartmouth study about motivation and healthy lifestyle choices. It’s challenged me to look at my beliefs and examine where they come from, as well as examining what motivates me.

For example, this week I had to do a walking test and I borrowed my daughters sneakers because I don't own a pair. As I put the shoes on I asked myself why I don't own a pair of sneakers. There were 2 answers that came to me. The first is because I always feel that there are more important things to spend the money on, and money is always tight. The second reason is because when I was a child I had to have surgery on my foot. After the surgery the doctor told me to avoid sneakers because they create an environment for bacteria that would cause an infection.



The first reason is a conscious choice I'm accustomed to making over and over again because of my personality and value system. I had forgotten about the childhood experience with the foot doctor but it remained as a sub-conscious emotion because of the trauma connected to having surgery. Now that I've uncovered these thoughts and emotions that conflict with my desire to be more healthy I can change them. I'm going to buy a pair of sneakers today.

**To thine own self be true**

There's some wisdom in Shakespeare's plays. However, it's hard to be true to yourself when we don't really know who we are. That is the root of human conflict, not feeling from the depth of our soul that we are valuable, that we are loved, and that we have the power to manifest goodness.

We are often driven in circles by our thoughts and feelings, not understanding our hidden motivations and where they come from, so we feel powerless to change them. The allegory of the *Fall of Man* in the Bible shows us that there were choices from the beginning of humankind that set the pattern for the historical conflicts we see today.

- A choice to seek God's viewpoint, or to follow our own conflicted thoughts and feelings
- A choice to love as God loves, or to dwell on self-pity, anger and jealousy
- A choice to seek truth and true love, or to seek immediate gratification
- A choice to fulfill our Divine potential, or to follow the bad advice of others
- A choice to forgive and take responsibility, or to blame, accuse and develop resentment
- A choice to multiply goodness, or to add to the conflict and prolong the suffering

We have these same choices today in all aspects of life no matter who we are or what our situation is. Whatever we focus on or hold onto internally, whether we are aware of it or not, is what we end up manifesting in life. Each person's choices do affect others, but individually we have the ability to control how we react and how we move forward in a positive way. When we learn to react with compassion, understanding, forgiveness and the ability to find the silver lining in the clouds, we'll be contributing to the creation of a better world.

The best choice you can make is to discover who you are as a child of God, and to dwell in the fullness of your ability to love as God loves – without conflict or resentment.