
THE GOLDEN PATH LIBRARY

- 2026 -

Automatic, Conscious, Simple

Three Ways of Meeting the Moment



What if we allowed for another orientation — one that served our hearts and our relationships in a deeper way?



Introduction

At the beginning of our journey we spoke of Survival Strategies (Fight, Flight, Freeze and Fawn) and the powerful role Meaning Making has had in developing our strategies, when and why we engage them, how we perceive ourselves, the world and so on.

Last week we spoke of Accepting What Is...and our Resistance therein.

As you have probably already noticed, Resistance and Meaning-Making are close cousins.

They are often fueled by the same forces:

- ◆ Fear (of threat or danger – real or imagined)
- ◆ Attachment
- ◆ Expectation
- ◆ Control

And they are driven by the same underlying intention: To keep us safe.

Both Resistance and Meaning-Making tend to come online very quickly. The mind rushes in to make sense of what has happened, reduce uncertainty, and restore a feeling of safety or control.

Even if the meaning we create is frightening or painful, the system is still attempting to answer questions like:

- ◆ What just happened?
- ◆ What does it mean?
- ◆ How do I avoid this in the future?

This process is incredibly fast and often happens before we even realize it.

But what if we approached these moments differently?

What if we allowed for another orientation – one that served our hearts and our relationships in a deeper way?



Example 1 — The Automatic Pattern

An event occurs. (Reality.)

We immediately interpret the event and assign it a meaning.

If we do not like the meaning we have assigned, our system often moves into

Resistance. From there we may begin to ruminate, analyze, or create stories about the past, present and future.

We then respond to the event — and to the people involved — based on the meaning we created and the resistance we feel toward our own meaning.

Example 2 — Conscious Inquiry

An event occurs. (Reality.)

We notice that something has happened that we do not prefer. Based on our history, needs, or desires, there is a reaction inside of us.

Instead of immediately believing the interpretation that arises within us, we become curious.

We recognize that there may be more to understand — about what is happening within us and what may be happening for the other person.

This allows us to lean back, take our seat, and move into 80/20.

From this orientation, there is space for:

- ◆ clearer understanding
- ◆ deeper listening
- ◆ greater coherence
- ◆ the possibility of attunement and connection

Consciousness becomes primary.



Example 3 — Simple Awareness

An event occurs. (Reality.)

We notice that something has happened.

There is no meaning-making assigned. Nothing to resist.

There is simply awareness that an event has occurred.

From this place, a choice point naturally emerges.

We may choose to engage with the event, explore it, communicate about it, or simply allow it to be.

There is no internal requirement to:

- ◆ explain
- ◆ prove
- ◆ defend
- ◆ fix
- ◆ provide a response

Consciousness remains primary.

By leaning back from fear, control, attachment, and expectation, we create space for:

- ◆ taking our seat
- ◆ returning to 80/20
- ◆ accepting what is

And from that place, we allow life — and the other hearts involved — to unfold into a space of possibility, free of burdensome assumptions, expectations, judgements, needs.

Inquiries For Your Consideration

As you reflect on these examples:

- ◆ Which of the three examples feels most like your default?
- ◆ Is there one you prefer or feel drawn toward? What about it resonates with you?
- ◆ Is there one that feels uncomfortable, unrealistic, or difficult to imagine living from?



If so, what about it feels challenging?

- ◆ Is there a combination of examples or something entirely different that you prefer? If so, what is it?

A PRACTICE TO PLAY WITH Can you think of a real-life scenario that you can place into each of these examples to observe how they play out within your internal world?

Bonus points:

1) What Survival Strategy might play out for you if you were engaging in the Automatic Pattern?

2) What Survival Strategy could be playing it out in the Conscious Inquiry or Simple Awareness examples, if you don't remain aware and conscious.

Below are a few scenarios to get your engines going...



Scenario #1

REALITY: Your partner does not respond to a text message you sent several hours ago.

Example #1 — The Automatic Pattern I assume they are ignoring me, upset with me, or losing interest.

My mind begins creating stories about what it means.

I start feeling anxious or irritated and may send another message, withdraw, or confront them later.

Example #2 — Conscious Inquiry I notice the impulse to interpret the silence.

I pause, lean back into 80/20, and remember I do not yet know why they haven't responded.

If it matters, I may ask later:

“Hey, I noticed you didn't respond earlier — everything okay?”

Example #3 — Simple Awareness

A message was sent. A response has not yet come.

That is the only reality available.

I remain present with my day without assigning meaning to the delay.



Scenario #2

REALITY: A friend cancels plans with you shortly before you were supposed to meet.

Example #1 — The Automatic Pattern I assume I am not important to them.

Maybe they didn't really want to see me.

I feel hurt or rejected and begin pulling away.

Example #2 — Conscious Inquiry I notice disappointment arise.

I acknowledge my feeling while remaining open to the fact that I don't yet know why they canceled.

I might respond:

"Thanks for letting me know — hope everything is okay. If there's anything you need/want to talk about, I'm available. I notice in the absence of not knowing, I can make up stories or wonder."

Example #3 — Simple Awareness

Plans changed. My friend canceled.

That is the reality.

I allow the moment to be what it is and move forward with my evening. Perhaps even find joy and beauty in the moments that unfold in the new unexpected space.

