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Overcoming Self- Doubt and Perfectionism

AUGUST 8, 2019 BY [CARL GREER](#) — [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

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Striving for excellence can lead to very satisfying achievements, but when is enough enough? Do you really need more money, more praise, more attention, or a greater sense of control? When does perfectionism start to diminish your joy and distract you from the reason you chose a goal in the first place? Would being less driven give your soul greater pleasure than constantly pushing yourself to do more, be more, and produce more? And do you feel bad about yourself when you are unproductive or when the results of your efforts are dissatisfying?

Overcoming self-doubt and perfectionism is easier when you pay attention to the wisdom of nature. Nature can help you learn to be more accepting of what you have accomplished so far and where you are in your progress right now.

JUDGMENT

“ Judgment's gaze

withers, divides, rigidifies

contracts life

Acceptance allows

expansion and growth

Ice melting

returns home

to the lake's depth”

In nature, nothing stays the same except the essence of a thing. Take water: Ice melts and the water becomes liquid again only to evaporate into water vapor and clouds. These transformations require time as water slowly moves from lake to sky and cloud to soil in the form of rain. If you are feeling unproductive, perhaps you are focused too much on the stillness of the lake or the ice and snow that covers it. You may have forgotten that the water does move, and will, when it's time. Seeds will lay dormant until the conditions for growth are right. If you aren't achieving what you like, maybe you need to be dormant for a while—to rest and to sleep so you can dream of what else you might try to achieve. Maybe you need to change your goals and your course.



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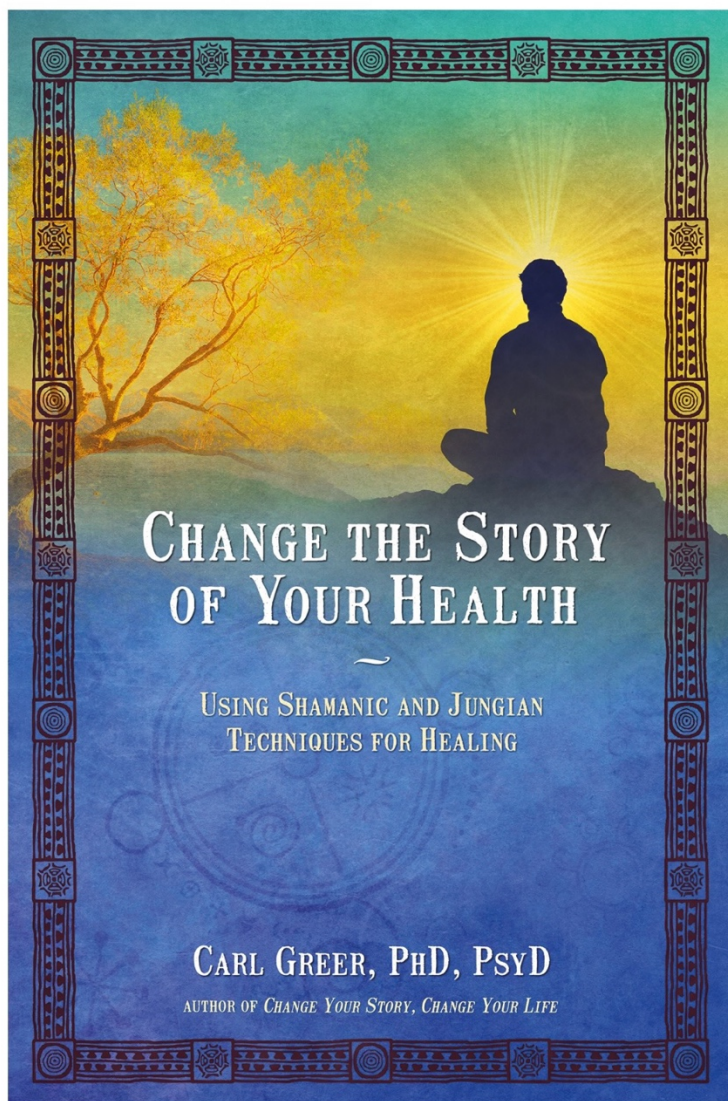
Carl Greer
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If the waters are flowing and you are able to accomplish what you set out to do, yet you feel anxious and yearn for more, maybe you need to slow down and experience the serenity of acceptance. Acceptance allows change and growth to happen. Notice what you have already produced. Generate a sense of satisfaction and gratitude. Acknowledge the work you have done to reach this point. Then the stress of perfectionism can give way to enthusiasm for building on your momentum.

Taking the time to let go of negative judgments about yourself and what you haven't accomplished and instead appreciate what you have achieved already might lead you to insights providing new direction. Maybe you have given short shrift to an achievement you can build on. Maybe you have accomplished something in an area of your life that you don't give much thought to—relationships, spirituality, or something else perhaps. Is it possible that you are ready for a positive change and new goals? Could you be dissatisfied because you are primed to set off on a new course and you just haven't realized it yet?

Self-doubt, judgment, and perfectionism can feel very constricting, but perhaps the tension they cause you is a sign that you need to shift your focus so that your efforts lead to more satisfying results. Stop striving, start living in the moment, and observe how you feel when you look at what your life is today. At any time, you can reframe what has happened in your life so far and begin writing a new story.

When you know only one way of being, it's hard to be open to the unknown of possibilities not yet explored. You might want to change your story but on some level you are holding yourself back. If you believe that another way of life is possible, release your self-judgments and allow yourself to take pleasure in stillness as you observe all that you might build on and all the resources you have. Is your self-doubt, judgment, and perfectionism telling you to stop and take stock before pushing yourself further? What can you do today to let yourself revel in your accomplishments and appreciate all you have brought into being? What can you do to simply take pleasure in what is instead of being driven to achieve more?



Carl Greer



Carl Greer, PhD, PsyD, is a practicing clinical psychologist, Jungian analyst and shamanic practitioner. He teaches at the C.G. Jung Institute of Chicago, is on staff at the Replogle Center for Counseling and Well-Being, and is involved in various charities. For more, visit CarlGreer.com

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