



Essential for Wellbeing publishes stories, essays, and reflections that explore the quiet truths beneath modern life. We address the sensitive subjects that polite conversation avoids—loneliness, purpose, fear—and offer pathways back to real connection. While culture teaches us to chase pleasure, escape pain, and manage appearances, many feel lost in a game that never ends. The “separate self” keeps striving and performing, yet something deeper in us whispers for home. *Essential for Wellbeing* speaks to that part in each of us. Each month is an invitation to pause, reflect, and remember that we're not the frightened reflex trying to control life—we are life. Our goal is to restore human understanding, conversation, and authenticity where they've been lost. We are produced locally in SARNIA, ON CANADA.

Story at a Glance. Awareness is the background of all life and emotions. When we focus only on our own points-of-view, awareness becomes the foreground and we tend to control life with respect to our likes and dislikes. We forget that awareness includes all points-of-view, and this separates us from: self, others and peace. We can willingly allow awareness into our thorny emotions, as a form of love unto ourselves, until its repeated so many times that it becomes natural and less thorny. **Content.** awareness, feelings **Ages.** mature teens and adults

THE SILENT ARCHITECTURE BEHIND THE MASK

The apartment was quiet, the kind of silence that felt heavy, like an unspoken agreement between two people who no longer knew how to speak. Billy sat in the armchair, his gaze fixed on the dust particles dancing in a sliver of afternoon light. Across the room, Mila was meticulously folding laundry, her movements precise, almost mechanical.

For years, Billy had viewed their relationship as a fortress—a structure he'd built to keep out the chaotic, indifferent world, and now was trying to keep the feeling of ‘falling in love’. He'd convinced himself that if he played his role perfectly—with a steady and joyful hand—his inner feeling of ‘home’ would naturally remain.

But the fortress had become a prison. He watched Mila realising he didn't actually see her. He was only looking for the version he needed to maintain his own sense of inner order.

"You're doing it again," Mila said, her voice thin, not looking up from a shirt.

"Doing what?"

"Watching me like I'm a problem to be solved. Like I'm a variable in an equation that isn't balancing."

Billy felt the familiar prickle of irritation—the defensive robot within him preparing a counter-argument to protect his ego. He wanted to blame her for the widening distance between them. Her anxiety, her constant fears, the way she seemed to retreat into the shadow of herself whenever things got difficult, to point to their mutual withdrawal. He couldn't see his own self, as this was his childhood program running his perception of the way life should be. It was easier to see she was the one who needed help—who was married to her anxieties—rather than focus purely on himself.

But then, he paused. He remembered how they both felt prior to their first few months together. That desperate, hungry grasping, willing to move far away to find someone suitable, the relief they both found each other—they had both tried to seize love, as if it were a life raft. He realized they hadn't been building a relationship to meet each other's needs; they had been performing a mutual rescue mission to cover up their own insecurities, and dependencies that troubled their worlds.

He stood up, the chair creaking in the stillness. This time, he didn't offer a defense, he didn't offer another list of ways they could try to "fix" the issue. He simply walked over and stood near her, not to hold her, but to be present. *"I think I've been unknowingly using you."*

Billy then said quietly, the words feeling strange and heavy in his throat. *"I feel I've been using you to feel whole because I didn't know how to look at my own difficulties of fitting in and feeling my own emptiness. I couldn't find myself until I felt accepted by you."*

Mila froze. The shirt fell from her hands. For the first time in years, the mask of the *'everything's just fine partner'*, who had been trying to control her anxieties, slipped. She turned, her eyes wide, raw, and terrifyingly honest. The barrier of her own anxiety—that paralyzing fear of being truly seen—began to flicker.

She wasn't an uncaring woman, and he hadn't become a cold distant man. They were just two people protecting their own separate, terrified realities, waiting for the other to drop their guard first.

In that silence, his fortress didn't fall; the mirage just disappeared. There was no grand resolution, no burst of cinematic passion. There was only the uncomfortable and beautiful weight of two people finally

standing in the same room, in complete honesty, without the armour of expectation or defense—just as it was when they met and felt accepted.

Now they realised that it was not the other person that *gave* them love, it was the dropping of their own guards to see themselves and the other, as they truly are that maintained their natural human essence of love.

The End—or maybe, for your heart, *just the beginning*.



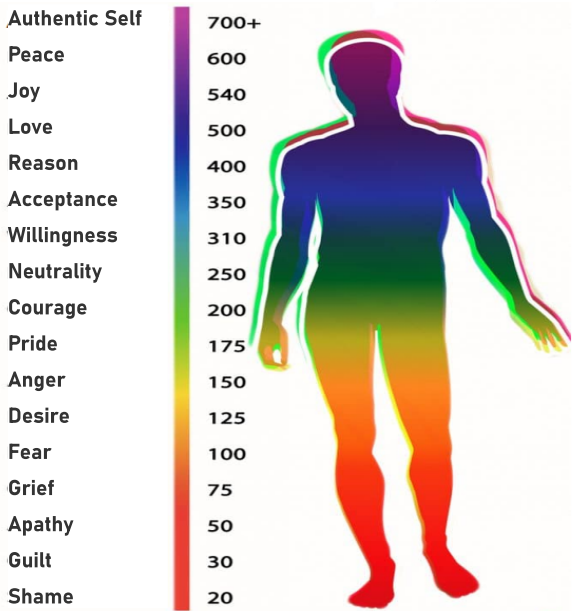
Reflection. In my own perception, this story illustrates the profound inner-shift from *conditional attachment* to *conscious acceptance*.

When my mask was dissolving in marriage, I was trying to save it because I wasn't ready to see or share all of my own internal deficiencies, and neither was my partner. I picked the easier ‘fixes’ and prodded my partner to do the same. My physical world fell. But now, I imagine this story's ending after finding the *willingness, acceptance, and reason* to see it, which allowed love and peace back into my body.

We are conditioned by a culture that treats love as a commodity—as a solution to our internal deficiencies. When we enter relationships with this ‘hunger’, we are seeing only the mirror of our mind—seeking the person that tolerates our unknown projections, rather than a human being who has their own reality. Yet, as we find our self falling into love, we unknowingly discard our judgments and programming until we feel the need to protect our self again. But, who are we protecting?

When we blame someone, we are invariably operating from a state of fear. Where our subconscious "robots"—defensive programs designed to protect us from past trauma—are steering the ship. We see our partner not as they are, but as ‘who we are’ and how our fears dictate.

True intimacy requires the courage to find and surrender ‘false pretenses’ or to listen to our partner's calm description of how they see and accept our own illusory robot's. We hear their preferences, not



Body's Vibrational Scale (Hz)

their demands. This is a way to move beyond a marriage contract into a relationship of understanding and generosity.

As noted by our internal assessments, our emotional state dictates what our senses see, hear and think (*see Vibrational map above*).

When operating from Fear or Anger, we are biologically incapable of perceiving the truth. We find Willingness (openness) to become reasonable (able to Reason), which is the space where Love blossoms.

If our partner refuses to hear our calm undemanding preferences, there may only be withdrawal to save you from animating the robot you’ve awakened from. Robots may adapt, but they always exhibit tension and addictive-demands that others must satisfy.

We cannot demand another do inner-work for us. And we can’t do it for them. We can only hold a preference for their own growth, while focusing entirely on our own inner-architecture with a whole brain and two hands (July Issue 3). The moment we stop trying to control the other, we create space where love can actually be shared—the space of non-judgmental acceptance (not indifference).

We’re not here to be completed by another. We’re here to discover our true Self, using the challenges of our world as the friction required to burn away the mirage of our masks.

Try these two awareness games to learn a bit about yourself: **Fact or Fiction** (solo) and **Noticing the Elephant** (solo or with a partner)

Game 1. Fact or Fiction. Under **Fiction**, write down what you believe to be true about your partner that she/he doesn’t want to see; after taking a few breaths (and trying to understand her/him better) come up with likely **Facts** that you missed, being in your prior states of fear or anger. The example below illustrates both sides:

	Fiction	Fact
1.	It’s all Fred’s fault that he lost his job and upset my Mum.	Fred told me about his stressful job loss; yet I chose not to give him any emotional support.
2.	Fred hates my Mum because he tried to prevent her seeing our baby the first week she was born.	Fred asked for a brief space to heal from the job loss, and wanted to focus on the joy of our baby’s birth together without any visitors.
3.	Fred is an angry man.	Fred requires that he is not ignored when he asks calmly to talk. He needs to be heard to feel accepted & respected
4.	Wilma doesn’t listen to me.	Wilma doesn’t handle anxiety very well. This causes listening and understanding barriers.
5.	Wilma doesn’t love or care about me.	Wilma cannot show understanding, empathy or love, when she’s anxious.
6.	Wilma’s married to her Mum and her anxieties, not me.	Wilma cannot risk upsetting her Mum without creating paralyzing feelings of anxiety.

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Game 2. Noticing the Elephant. Instead of steering away from uncomfortable energy, we create an inner-awareness space to witness it. You identify something in your experience by sharing the sensations you notice in your body, the emotions coming up, or things you notice about the other person.

Start with, **“I am noticing...”**. Do not to speak your thoughts that you don’t know to be true—stick to describing your feelings as a nonjudgmental witness. Be honest and respectful. The other person responds, **“Hearing that, I notice...”**, and expresses their experiences (not thoughts) **or** what they notice (not think) about the other person.

The point is to create moments of awareness of yourself. Take your time and try for 5 minutes, back and forth. Give each person enough silence to find their own words. You can do this for fun, and also during upsetting moments, if the other partner agrees. It tunes you into body awareness, and helps you let-go of mind, being the witness.

Example: (after one partner seems to avoid the other)

Fred: I’m noticing tightness in my throat and buzzing in my head

Wilma: Hearing that I notice my feet and legs are ready to run

Fred: I’m noticing my head feels exhaustively heavy

Wilma: Hearing that I notice my body saying that I avoid my feelings

Fred: I noticed you touching your throat when talking

Wilma: Hearing that I notice I feel like I may choke on my feelings

Fred: I am noticing a desire to better understand you

Wilma: Hearing that I notice I can feel—even if just for a moment

Repeat or switch roles... until you feel a sense of resting in awareness.

The unbiased witness is the right brain (present moment). Deeper breathing informs awareness of a broader present moment. Rational thinking is the left-brain, often tied to past and future, and desired outcomes.

It’s good to keep your thoughts out of this game and only speak your experience of feelings, whatever they are. Sit comfy and take slightly deeper breaths while playing. Take your time and rest in awareness.

Noticing the Elephant is not trying to solve issues, it’s meant to help you rest as awareness. Be accepting and non-judgmental of self and other.

May you find something to love in each day.

Essential for Wellbeing

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The Sarnia Chess Club



ANDY BRUZIEWICZ

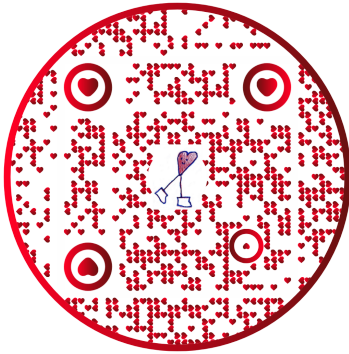


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