One of the biggest issues humans have is dealing effectively with pain, especially emotional pain. That’s not surprising given we are not really taught how to cope with pain, other than to suppress it.

Thankfully, processing our emotions effectively is easier than you ever imagined.

Drain the Pain is a creative visualization that enables you to quickly and easily release suppressed emotional pain and in some cases even physical pain. By quickly, I mean in less than a minute. Seriously.

As I describe how to Drain the Pain, take an opportunity to actually use it to release a difficult emotion you are experiencing now. What is bothering, upsetting, or worrying you? Choose a moderate upset until you gain confidence, and then move on to the really big stuff.
I teach this technique to every one of my clients. Most of these senior executives have no experience with visualizations, yet they have all been able to do it successfully. They are almost universally surprised and delighted at the startling difference it makes in such a short time. I predict you will too!

If you are suppressing an emotion, you will feel it in your body somewhere (it has nowhere else to go.) You might feel it as a tension, pressure, or literally as a pain. As you think about something upsetting to you, the physical sensations will often become more intense and easier for you to locate.

We will imagine the emotion is bottled up and can’t get out—like it’s in a container under pressure. We use water as a metaphor for the emotion. The water (emotion) is trying to drain out but can’t because it’s blocked.

**How to Drain the Pain**

In Drain the Pain, you will visualize a faucet, spigot, or similar way to drain the “container,” and then open it to empty the container. It is crucial you use as many senses as you can—vividly see it, hear it, and feel it.

1. Begin by breathing and centering. Breathe deeply from the abdomen. Take several slow deep breaths: in through the nose for 8 counts, hold for 4 counts, and out through the mouth for 8 counts. Repeat at least 3 times, more if needed. This releases tension and increases the clarity of your thoughts.
2. Notice where you feel the emotions in your body. They will feel like a pressure or tension.

3. Imagine a “container” in this area holding a lot of water under pressure (representing your emotions). You might visualize this container as a big cylindrical water tank. Add a clear gauge spanning the container’s length so you can monitor the fluid level as it drops. Once you have mastered using the container, you might choose instead to visualize a jug on a water cooler, a beer keg, a teapot, a bathtub or anything else that works well for you.

4. Visualize a “faucet” at the bottom of this container. Mentally reach out and open the faucet, allowing the water to pour out, run through your body and be absorbed into the earth. Watch the gauge to track the water level as it drops all the way down to empty.

• It is vital to richly visualize the experience. This engages the whole brain and is much more convincing to the subconscious. You may want to close your eyes to intensify the experience.

• Feel your hand turning the faucet. What is the texture? Is it smooth or rough? Does it have a temperature, cool or warm to the touch? Is it easy or difficult to turn? Does it vibrate when the water rushes out? Feel the pressure being released as the water drains out, becoming lighter and lighter until it is all gone.

• See it happening. See the color, shape, and size of the container. See the faucet; see the
water draining out and being absorbed into the ground. What color is the water? Is it just fluid or is there “dirt” or “debris” being released as well? Let your imagination surprise you!

• Hear the liquid gurgling and splashing as it is released, and maybe even the squeak of the faucet as you open it.

5. Continue until all the sensation of the emotion is relieved.

Notice how much clearer and centered you feel!

Wasn’t that amazing? I’m always astounded at how much better I feel after I release the harmful energy.

Drain the Pain is an essential element of *emotional hygiene*. You practice physical hygiene every day, and certain aspects such as hand washing and teeth brushing multiple times each day. I urge you to practice emotional hygiene with the same daily discipline. This is my #1 practice for keeping myself emotionally clean and clear throughout the day.

I recommend you use Drain the Pain every day, even multiple times per day.

• Use it any time you are feeling upset, even if the matter seems minor.
• Use it before bed and you will likely sleep better and feel more rested in the morning.
• Use it on your drive home to let go of your work day and prepare yourself for family time.
• When you feel tension from stress, use Drain the Pain to release the emotions bottled up in your tight muscles.

Sometimes a client reports feeling better, but the release doesn’t feel complete. This usually indicates another layer of suppressed emotion, and sometimes multiple layers. My advice is to look further and find where you feel a deeper level of emotion. These might be your personal black sheep emotions. Then repeat the drain. Continue until you feel complete, which is when you feel light and open and can’t access the emotions from the event any more.

Drain the Pain can even be used to release emotions you have been holding onto for years. Maybe you still feel anger or resentment over a business deal gone bad, or a bad breakup or divorce. When you release the associated emotions, you will find it easier to move past those traumas, to let them go and move on with your life.

**Applying Drain the Pain**

Many months after being passed over for a promotion, Akeela still felt angry and resentful. So she used my helpful technique to release those emotions.

She started by locating where she felt the emotions in her body. She found them in two areas, in her heart and also a little higher in her chest. The heart area felt heavy, like a weight was on it, while higher in her chest she felt a burning sensation.
She elected to perform the clearing in two steps, starting with the burning sensation. She visualized this as a steam kettle with steam whistling out the top. She tipped it over and poured the steaming water out: seeing, hearing, and feeling it drain out into the earth. As the process completed, the area in her chest cooled off and she felt an expansive sensation instead. This took about 40 seconds.

For the emotion she felt in her heart area, she imagined a big cylinder, like a large water tank. As she started to drain this, she was startled to find the “water” was a dirty dark brown and kind of thick. It took a little longer—about 90 seconds to complete—and while it was processing she started to feel the anger again.

This occasionally happens for me too. Most of the time I don’t feel any emotions during the process, which is one of the real benefits. But sometimes I feel anywhere from a tinge to a strong wave of emotion. It’s always brief and never too much for me to handle.

Afterwards, Akeela felt great. I noticed a definite change in her energy, which seemed brighter. Her face had better color and her eyes seemed more open. The muscles in her face were softer and more relaxed and she seemed more comfortable and at ease.

When I asked her to think about the original event—getting passed over for the promotion—she didn’t feel anything. She said she was neutral about it. In addition, she surprised both of us when she admitted for the first time she probably hadn’t been ready to take on the bigger role! As often happens when we release suppressed

*Drain the Pain is an essential element of emotional hygiene.*
emotions, she viewed the situation quite differently, and saw it in a more mature and effective light. We will explore this phenomenon again when we discuss Max the Moment in Chapter 13.

Akeela introduced Drain the Pain to her family over the next couple of weeks. She had no success in getting her husband Tom to try it out. He laughed at her and ridiculed her suggestion. To understand his reaction, you have to put it into perspective. Due to his lack of employment, Tom is constantly in a highly reactive state. This causes him to be in survival mode—a form of high fear alert and emotional flooding—all the time. Getting someone to try a strange new technique requires enough emotional flexibility to be open-minded and to take a risk. Tom simply did not have that capacity.

Happily, the technique was easy for her son James, who applied it to his anxiety about an upcoming science exam and felt immediate relief. Sophie had an easy time too. She used the technique to let go of the hurt she felt over a girlfriend who betrayed her and then stopped being her friend. After using Drain the Pain, Sophie was delighted to look back on the event and realize she could just let the friendship go and move on.

Younger children—even as young as 6 or 7 years old—have a much easier time with visualizations because they are much more creative and open-minded than most adults.

Akeela’s oldest daughter Zuri’s efforts were only partially successful. She used the technique to help her prepare for a job interview. Although the feelings of fear, frustration, and self-doubt that had accumulated over the
past year from her unsuccessful job-hunting were diminished, they were not completely eliminated. I suggested to Akeela that Zuri might want to try additional “change-work” approaches such as Consoling Yourself, which we will discuss in Chapter 12.

Rescuing Yourself from Emotional Hijack

There is a difference between being emotionally “hooked” and being emotionally “hijacked.” Emotional flooding is called an amygdala hijack. The amygdala is the gland in your midbrain responsible for your fight or flight survival instincts. It can respond to a perceived threat in as little as 12 thousandths of a second—which is practically instantaneous—and long before your neocortex has even realized something is happening. An amygdala hijack occurs when the fear reaction is so strong you feel overwhelmed.

When you are emotionally hooked you can still restore yourself to the pilot seat. Your pilot abandons the driver’s seat temporarily but soon returns. However, when hijacked, the emotion is SO strong it completely takes you over and you can’t influence the reaction at all. Your subconscious takes over the driver’s seat and locks you out.

You can tell you have been hijacked because you can’t get out of your drama story and you feel panicky. You might also feel like you are about to completely lose control and do something you will regret.

When this happens, create some space for yourself to allow your emotions to cool down. If you continue to try to work through the issue, you are going to do serious
emotional and potentially physical damage to yourself, the other party, and the relationship.

So, call a timeout on yourself and walk away. Get away from the situation and give yourself time to calm down. You can say things like:

- I need a minute to collect myself.
- I need some time to cool off.
- I need some time to think things over.
- We both need to walk away and calm down.

A few of those phrases would be effective in a work setting, but you could also say something like, “Before things get out of hand, I think we should take a break and clear our heads.”

Once you walk away, it’s essential for you to quit dwelling on the drama story since it is the source of your upset in the first place. You have to use every practice you have at your disposal to think about other things, or to clear your mind completely. You especially need to practice deep breathing and Drain the Pain, and it’s a great time to use your power phrases.

Once you calm down enough to think more clearly, work the Max the Moment process for yourself before re-engaging with the other party. You will be much more successful in making the Pivot to Power to enable a positive resolution.

My father was often angry, and when he disciplined me it was a violent whipping that left welts for days. These were terrifying and agonizing experiences. Later
on as an adult, when someone became really angry with
me, I would freeze up and panic. Then I would either
attack verbally to drive them away or say anything to pla-
cate them to get them to calm down and quit being angry.
Neither action was a powerful response to the situation.
These amygdala hijacks were an obvious result of my
childhood experiences.

Once I developed the Inner Mastery system, I was able
to recognize what was happening. I would breathe to calm
down my panicky feelings and resist acting out in any way.
Then I would tell the other person I needed some time
to myself. After I calmed down, I was able to go back and
work through the issue so that both of us achieved a pos-
itive resolution.