

# The Funky Monkey



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One of my favorite stories about change, and our resistance to it, is the parable of the monkey trap. In West India, the villagers have developed a way to trap the small monkeys that run rampant in their village. They take a hollowed out coconut and chain it to a stake. Then they put a hole in the side of the coconut and place some rice inside. The hole is just big enough for the monkey to reach its hand into. Once all is in place, they wait. A monkey comes along and puts his hand into the coconut and grabs onto the rice. Now his hand (holding the rice) is too large to fit back through the hole. So what does he do? Let go of the rice and run away to freedom? No. He sits down by the box, still holding his handful of rice and waits... The people who want to catch him come by and pick him up. Just like that. His unwillingness to let go trapped him just as much as the villagers did.

How often are you in a situation where you know that all you have to do is let go – let go of your position, your righteousness, your stand, your ego -- and be free? Yet you sit there and wait with your sweaty little hand gripped tightly around the rice? Refusing to concede. Refusing to budge. Refusing to yield.

And yet, all you have to do is... let go! Simply let go and be free. *Just change.*

Change, like everything else, comes down to a choice. You have to decide you are willing to try something different. That you are going to approach this transformation with a beginner's mind, and with a spirit that is open to new possibilities and to more good than you have ever created before. If you want a different outcome than you have ever gotten, you'll need to be willing to do something different than you have ever done. Are you willing to commit to that now?

If you are ready to make the commitment, congratulations! If you are resisting it, you are in good company. Our resistance to change comes from a few main contributors. Let's look at a few of those now to help you get present to which ball and chain you may be dragging along with you.

### **It's Not Me, It's *Them***

We often have the idea that the things that are wrong in our world are the fault of someone else. We blame others for the things that are not going well in our lives, and we placate ourselves by keeping such an outward focus that we don't stop to look at our own contribution to our situation.

We have the idea that if our husbands would just do more with the kids, we wouldn't be so overworked and could be more patient and loving to him and the children.

If our mother-in-law weren't so nosey and meddlesome we could show up as more open and pleasant at family gatherings.

If our kids would just listen to what we tell them we could yell less and play more.

If our partners did more around the house, we could be less bossy and irritable and show up as appreciative and kind.

Of course it is easier to find fault than to look internally, but we want you to get present to a truth that will make your life a whole lot easier and much more powerful, if you just get it right up front.

*You have no power to change anyone but yourself.*

You hold tightly to the belief that you can and you will. You punish and withhold and threaten and cajole the people in your life, and still you get the same results. Why not try something you have never done? Why not decide you are willing to take responsibility for the one thing in your life that is entirely within your control – you?!

If you are brave enough to look within, you will find that by changing what is going on inside of you, miraculous things will begin to show up on the outside. Every single thing that is part of your life right now, you have created. Is what you have created up until now, *worthy of you?*

### **Blame vs. Responsibility**

Often people are resistant to the idea of taking responsibility for *every single thing*. We are so addicted to the negativity associated with blaming others that it can be a tough habit to break. When we first ask our coaching clients to take on the idea that they are responsible for everything in their lives, they don't want to believe it.

I admit it can be a little daunting at first. After all, there have been many times in my life when bad (and sometimes *very bad*) things have happened to me. I certainly didn't intend for those things to happen. I didn't wake up one morning and say, "I'd like to be hit by a car today" or "I want to get audited by my corporate office" or "Getting a \$10,000 bill from the IRS would be a great way to spend the afternoon..." However, even though I didn't *consciously* intend for those things to happen, I was still responsible for them. Let me explain.

There is a difference between blame and responsibility. Blame implies wrongness. It means to find fault or disapprove. It is a practice that is draining and vibration lowering. There is no place for it in your transformation.

Responsibility, on the other hand, is *empowering*. Responsibility implies control. It speaks of dependability, initiative, and authority. Taking responsibility for everything that shows up in your life allows you to operate under the reality that whatever you have created (good or bad) is up to you, and if you don't like what you see... you can change it. Now *that* is a powerful place to be!

Let's revisit Jill's situation with the potential retailer from the last chapter. Jill had become aware of the fact she had attracted the exact situation she had feared. Now all she had to do was let go of it. It turned out Jill had a tough time doing that. She was all hung up on who was right and who was wrong. She wanted to defend why she had acted the way she did, and how she had been very cordial and had tried to give Mary the best possible service (which I am sure she did). When we discussed the idea of responsibility versus blame, it was difficult for her to feel the difference.

You may relate to her struggle. These are new concepts and you are just learning to flex these muscles. Be patient with yourself and don't force it. Just be with it and think about it and play with it in your mind. We don't want you to sit around beating yourself up if you are in a difficult relationship, if your children are having personal problems, or if you hate your job. There is never a productive function of blame (of yourself or others). However, when you move to a position of responsibility for any of those things, you become ready for action and are empowered to take steps to create something that feels better.

Still resisting the idea? Think about this: Anytime in your life when things were not going well, who has been there? When you were in the relationship with that one abusive guy, and then you were in that relationship with the other guy who constantly cheated on you, and when you married the guy who was emotionally unavailable... who was always there?

Now think about the times in your life when things were amazing. Who has always been there for that? Who was there when you walked across the stage at your college commencement or when you nailed that tough job interview and waltzed into an amazing new career? And who signed on the dotted line to secure that mortgage on your beautiful new home? Always...you.

You are responsible for what you create and attract to yourself whether you are aware of it or not. You have the choice of walking your path asleep or awake, powerful or powerless. Don't let yourself be paralyzed by your obstinacy. Drop your resistance and embrace your possibilities.

### **The Funky Monkey**

"Monkey mind" is a phrase Buddhists use to describe a mind that is not in the present moment. A mind that jumps from thought to thought the way a monkey jumps from tree to tree, tasting different fruits without staying put on a particular

tree. In reality, your monkey mind is really the ego part of your personality. It is the intellect that does the everyday thinking, planning, judging, assessing, and worrying.

The ego is a more primitive part of our brain. It was designed to protect us and to keep us alive back when we had to worry about being eaten by wild animals or kidnapped by other tribes. It is always on the lookout for things that might cause us harm or create a problem for us, and it is vigilant in its “protection.”

There are some useful daily functions of this part of our brain. It makes sure we get enough food to eat, pay attention while driving our car, put on clothes before leaving the house, and so on. However, this is where its usefulness stops. The monkey mind is constantly on duty and is so overly concerned with our material existence that it hinders our attempts to become enlightened. It keeps us from enjoying the present moment, because it is always chiming in with its endless chatter of protective thought. “What if that deal doesn’t close? Did you lock the back door? It’s probably a tumor. What if this is something really serious?” Blah, blah, blah...

If we let our monkey mind run free, it will end up spinning us into a dark black hole every time. When the darkness holds on, it will turn into a prolonged negative mood you would recognize as a funk.

Hence, we affectionately term our mind, the *Funky Monkey*.

It is fun to joke about your mind because it avoids blame and keeps things light. You will never be able to stop your mind from thinking. It will do what it is designed to do; however, you can get better at ignoring what it tells you, distracting yourself from focusing on it, and tuning into the alternative parts of yourself that are designed for helping you live your greater good.

Your Funky Monkey is opposed to your evolving. It is comfortable with what it knows and what it has experienced before. It is where resistance lives and thrives.

When you decide to make a positive change in your life only to hear your Funky Monkey begin to shriek in the background, realize it is just your ego after its own survival. It will naturally focus on things related to lack, fear, anger, and protection, which are all negative, lower level vibrations. It will try to avoid positive changes that relate to connection, gratitude, love or joy.

The Funky Monkey is a major force in all of our lives and whenever you are in the middle of creating a story that doesn’t feel good, you will know that the monkey has the upper hand.

If you are allowing it to stand at the podium and tell you:

- You shouldn't share the details of your new project with anyone because they might steal your ideas
- Your spouse probably is not helping you because he knows if he just sits there and stares at the TV, you will go ahead and clean up the dishes
- Your boss has it out for you and is just looking for a reason to fire you

-- then you will react to the people in those situations in a self-protecting manner. You will have let your Funky Monkey create a situation that doesn't really exist, and it will lead you down some of the dark paths with which you are undoubtedly familiar.

Learn to quiet the monkey. Learn to be present in the moment and to watch situations unfold as they actually are happening, with the clarity and openness of the objective observer. When you are able to stifle the babbling creature that is your mind and peacefully listen to the other parts of you that have a story to tell, you will be able to discern the still, whispering voice of your feminine intuition. You will be able to hear your heart singing its song of joy and wonder, and you will be able to distinguish between your body's messages of unease or alignment.

### **The "Right" Stuff**

The ego likes things just the way they are. It is comfortable operating in the known and avoids the unknown at all costs; therefore, your ego (a.k.a. the Funky Monkey) thrives on being "right." It constantly will be searching for and predicting circumstances that will occur in your life, and then it will do a victory dance when "proven" right. As you begin to understand the way the Universe actually functions (which we get to in the next chapter), you will understand this is a false and destructive tendency.

You see, the Funky Monkey, in its effort to protect itself (i.e. you), is always on the lookout for circumstances similar to those it has experienced before. That way, it can make generalizations that seem to predict the future. For example, you may be introduced to a new potential customer in your business. As you begin to talk with this person, the Funky Monkey perks up and reminds you this person acts a lot like Joe, who you used to work with at your prior job, and remember how Joe seemed nice at first, but eventually stabbed you in the back?

This story causes you to give off a vibration to this new person of being guarded and closed. The interaction continues, but because of your new mode of interaction the relationship never really gels, and the person decides not to do business with you. Immediately, your Funky Monkey leaps to the top of the tallest tree in your mind and shouts, "See, *I told you!* I was *right!* That person was a jerk just like Joe. I *knew* it!"

You will experience this type of situation numerous times every day until you learn to tame the monkey. Begin to pay attention when you start telling yourself a story about something that is really just a generalization about past events. Remind yourself you can't predict the future and that you will close yourself off to new possibilities if you are always trying to recreate and validate experiences from your past.

If you are looking for the worst, you will find it. If you are open to connection and creation and possibility, you will find that too. Instead of dismissing what is possible in order to be "right," what are you willing to accept so you can grow?

## **Fear**

Most of us live our lives in a state of constant fear. We are afraid of change. We are afraid of staying the same. We are afraid of not being accepted and of being wrong and of being alone. We are afraid of dying and afraid of really living. Nearly all the choices made in an unenlightened life are motivated by fear, and who is responsible for that? Your constant companion -- the Funky Monkey.

You see, without fear there is no need for protection. Therefore, the louder the Funky Monkey screeches, the more likely you are to operate from fear. When you are fearful, you attract situations, people and events that justify your fear.

On the other hand, when you can get yourself into the present moment and find a pocket of peace, you will be able to choose to operate from a more empowered perspective. When you get yourself really excited or inspired, you will automatically attract people, situations, and events that fuel your excitement and help it to grow. I want that for you. Don't you?

Begin to replace the chattering of your monkey with the calm voice of your inner self. Prophesize about the future you want to have and intend to create -- not the one you predict will happen or worry will occur. You have the power to direct your thoughts and, therefore, to direct your experience.

Be brave. Imagine the possibilities of a life lived in the space of no fear. It is available to you anytime you choose it, and if you don't have the courage or the energy to choose it just now, I understand. You will have many opportunities to choose again. One day the fear you feel in your current circumstance will outweigh your fear of change, and you will be ready to take the first step in faith. When you are ready, we will be here to support you.

## **Resistance**

The struggle or fight you put up against change is known as resistance. It is your Funky Monkey trying to keep you safe. You are already beginning to realize that resistance is actually just a form of self-protection, and holding onto it doesn't

serve you. You have this idea that resistance is somewhere outside of yourself, but in truth, it is only inside of you. Resistance is a product of your opinions and fears. It does not live in the world. It lives in you.

If you find yourself resisting a new idea or a new person, you can simply become aware of that resistance. You can politely thank your Funky Monkey for working so hard to keep you safe, and then you can make a conscious choice to drop your resistance.

Be open to allowing new possibilities to bloom in your life and see if they resonate with you. Remember, you are not under attack. Stop resisting things that are unfamiliar and stop letting a monkey rule your life. You were meant for a life of connection. A life of the miraculous. It will be available to you the moment you let it in.

### **Carpe Diem**

Sometimes you will find you just aren't ready to let go of something. You are getting some kind of a payoff from staying angry with someone, from remaining in inaction, or from wallowing in your self-pity or funk. If you find this is the case for you, don't worry. It happens to all of us.

Sometimes you are enjoying the charge of being "right" so much that you don't immediately feel like taking a look at where your responsibility lies in the matter. You might be relishing your role as a martyr and don't want to say goodbye to it yet. All of that is fine. As long as you are aware of it, you are still in a more powerful position than you have been while you had no idea what was going on.

The good news is that at some point, the negative situation in which you are stuck will suddenly begin to feel worse than the letting go of it, and that is when you make your move. Keep watching. If you continue to ask yourself if you are ready, the opportunity will show itself and then you will be ready to jump.

At times it will be easier to let go of the negative (thoughts, feelings, or situations) than at other times.

One morning I had been flowing along in a great mood when all of a sudden I walked past the living room and noticed the kids had completely wrecked it. Pillows were off the couch, cards were strewn all over the place, and videos were on the floor. It had been perfectly clean the night before and now it was destroyed. I allowed myself to be knocked out of my flow and began to entertain quiet, irksome thoughts in the back of my mind. As I went into the laundry room, I noticed all of the piles of laundry no one had picked up and put away from three days ago... With a heavy sigh, I picked up a stack of sheets and carried them into my closet. As I went to put them up on the shelf, I tripped on my husband's shoe, which was lying in the middle of the floor... because he *never puts*

*anything away.* As I tripped, I hit my head on the shelf and dumped all of the nicely folded sheets into a heap on the floor.

On some days, that sequence of events would be enough to propel me into a day-long tirade of how nobody does anything and if people would just put stuff away, my life would be a lot easier, etc. However, since I had been in a great flow just a half hour before, it was easier to catch a whiff of where I wanted to be. I immediately began to chuckle as I bent down and gathered the sheets. I made the conscious decision to let go of the martyr role and to focus on all of the things that were going well in my home that very minute. I seized the opportunity to make a change and put myself on a course that was more in alignment with who I want to be. Other days, this choice may not feel as accessible.

Remember the day Kelly showed up in a mood about the “negative energy” she was experiencing? Well, when we first discovered the essence of the events, she was enlightened and intrigued, but she was not ready to give it up yet. She half-heartedly tried to let go a couple of times, but she still felt stuck. She felt justified in her anger, so she continued to focus on and talk about the things that weren’t working. Just as she was in the midst of doing that, she received a call from another realtor. A potential buyer was at a showing of one of her listings, and the seller had forgotten to leave the keys so they could get in. Frustrated, Kelly told them she would work on it and get back to them. She hung up the phone and said, “OK, *now* I am ready to let go of this. I don’t want this anymore.”

You see, the pain she felt from so many things going wrong was finally enough to tip the scales toward being willing to stop being a martyr and move back to the comfort of alignment. We checked out the essence of this latest event. Sure enough, it fit the essence of the others we had already identified: “No logical explanation, more work, and more difficult than it had to be.”

As soon as Kelly made the choice to let it go, I could see her mood soften. I could see and hear her open up, and we began to focus on all of the things that were going right with each of the difficult situations she was facing. She was grateful she had buyers showing up to look at her listings. She appreciated the fact that technology normally makes her life much easier. She was thankful she had a supplier that makes such a great product and so on.

Within 30 minutes, things started to turn around. Her daughter was able to take care of the “no keys” scenario, the computer people were able to fix the computers, the supplier e-mailed with a potential resolution, and a brand new customer called to ask Kelly to list her home.

Because she was mindful of the situation she was in and knew there was an alternative way to be, Kelly was able to position herself so that when her emotional tide turned, she could reach out and grab the “Feel Good” solution that was waiting for her. By being willing to change, she was able to save a lot of

misery for herself and for those involved with her (her clients, coworkers, and employees). What a powerful option to take!

### **Step by Step**

Your personal transformation ignited the moment you started to *think about* making a change. You have already begun down a road that can lead anywhere you want. Keep in mind it may not be as quick or as easy as you would like, but as Louise Hay says, *“We all have lessons to learn. The things that are so difficult for us are only the lessons we have chosen for ourselves. If things are easy for us, then they are not lessons, but things we already know.”*

Be patient with yourself and be easy about all of this. You can't run a marathon by standing at the starting gate and demanding to be at the finish line. You will only get there by putting one foot in front of the other again and again until you move yourself in the direction you want to go. The starting pistol has sounded. Get moving!