



*YOUR **EMOTIONAL** SELF*

Five Secrets for a Successful Emotional Life

BY PAMELA LEVIN

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1. Start with a Healthy Attitude



A fractal flame created by the [Electric Sheep](#). From

<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/3/35/Electricsheep-14156.jpg/300px-Electricsheep-14156.jpg>

There must be some reason why some people have successful, fulfilling emotional lives, while others do not.

In other words, why do some people go through life on a pretty even keel, responsive to their environment but not controlled by it, while others get thrown off balance by events that can seem to be relatively minor?

There must be some reason for the difference, right?

There is.

In fact, there is one big, primary, fundamental reason why that stands out from all the others.

Do you think it's because these even-keel people don't have problems?

That nothing bad ever happens to them? That they don't have to deal with emotional pain? That there are no surprises in their lives?

No, no, no and no. Wrong. Untrue.

Much more important than the events of their *outer* lives is what they're doing on the *inside*.

Every person who keeps a pretty even keel, who maintains good balance is a person who is *managing their emotional life*.

Does this mean they were born knowing how to do this? Or that they had great teachers and have a PhD in emotional life management?

Certainly not.

Is what they are doing a teachable skill? Is it easily learnable? Yes and yes!

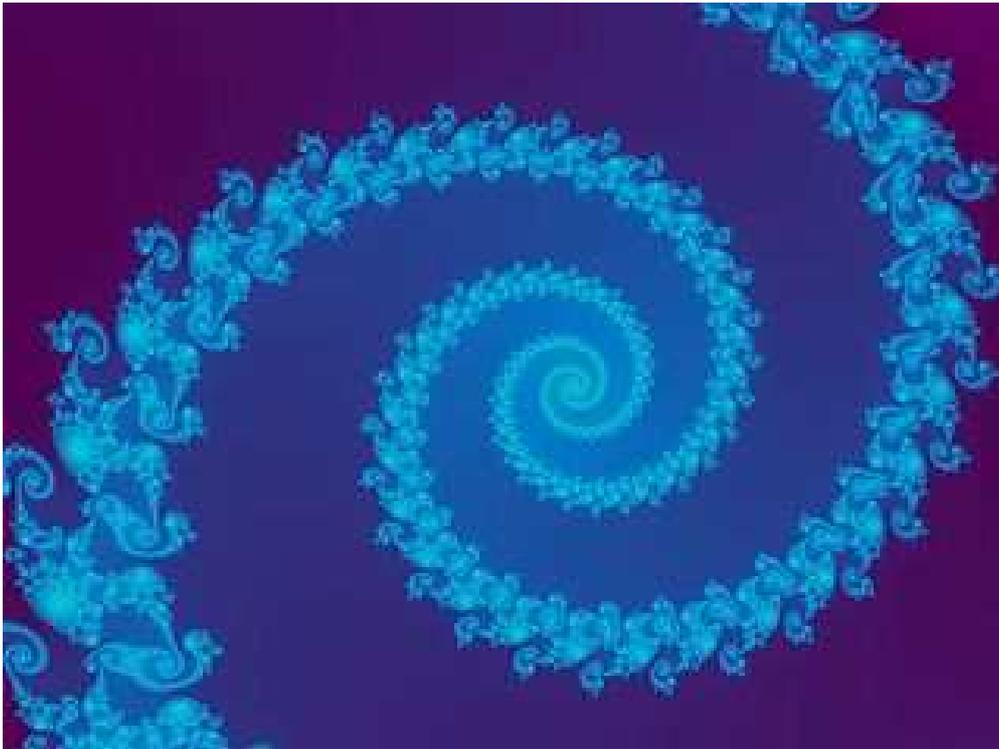
These well-balanced people might not be able to describe what they're doing, but nonetheless, every one of them is doing it. They may be doing it out of an intuitive sense, rather than one that they are conscious of and that they can articulate with just the right words, but nonetheless, they are doing it.

What is 'it'? In short, they have a healthy attitude toward their emotional life. They consider that an emotional life is part of the deal, so they take their emotional lives into account routinely, integrating it into everything else.

Some secrets they use are what I want to share with you now.



2. Embrace Your Emotional Self



<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/54/GalaxyOfGalaxies.jpg/320px-GalaxyOfGalaxies.jpg>

You may think that the stability you're looking for is best achieved by omitting your emotional life from your 'to do' list. After all, so many things call for your attention - the bills, the kids, the boss, the parents, the media and on and on. You might already feel like you're on some emotional treadmill that keeps speeding up, so you might reason, well, *why add yet another thing?*

But *this strategy actually can lead to horrendous results* down the road, because it means that you are building up a bigger and bigger 'to do' list of emotional tasks you didn't take care of when they showed their (sometimes

ugly) heads. This is exactly the kind of strategy that leads to emotional breakdowns, physical health breakdowns, break-ups of relationships you rely on for your emotional sustenance and connection and worse.

If you don't take care of your emotional business *as it comes up*, ultimately you are doomed to one or more of these negative life consequences.

Oh, yes, you might look around and see others using that tactic. And, yes, it does look good – at least for a while. It does mean that one's outer life *appears* to have that stability and even-keel façade. And façade it is, because on the *inside* these are the people who are becoming more and more brittle as they tie up more of their life energy in tamping down, even stomping down those emotional to-do's.

Follow their life over a longer period of time, and you'll find some kind of wreckage – getting fired, divorced, getting sick, exploding, becoming subject to the abuse of others and addictions of every kind.

So obviously, that's not a strategy to pursue – at least not if you want *the real deal* – real inner harmony and not just the *appearance* of it.

So what's the lesson here? It's short and simple:

Give your emotional life top priority!

No denial. No "I'll get around to it one of these days." Instead, make time and space for it. In fact, actively embrace it. *Welcome it* like the good friend and guide that it can be.

If you don't actively do that, it will eventually erupt so badly in one way or another that you'll wish you had.

Yes, *embrace*, don't deny *your emotional self*. OK, you might say, I'll do it. But then what? Well, that's what's next, so keep on reading!



3. Sink Your Roots

Deep Into Your Own Emotional Ground



A spiral galaxy, the [Pinwheel Galaxy](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/c/c5/M101_hires_STScI-PRC2006-10a.jpg/220px-M101_hires_STScI-PRC2006-10a.jpg) (also known as Messier 101 or NGC 5457) from http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/c/c5/M101_hires_STScI-PRC2006-10a.jpg/220px-M101_hires_STScI-PRC2006-10a.jpg

Well, OK, you might be saying. So I'm embracing my emotional life. But what a mess! I mean, this whole thing looks like nothing but chaos to me! It's like a dark cloud - thoughts, feelings, images, urges all mish-moshed together. How do I get a handle on *this*?

Before you panic, take a moment, have a deep breath and read on. Lots of people have started from that experience. In fact, probably everyone does (although it would be difficult to find studies that prove it.)

But the point is, *this is do-able*. Once you understand a fundamental point, I bet you'll be amazed at how much more manageable everything becomes.

Which brings us to why you keep seeing these spiral images throughout these pages.

To make this clear, hang on for a minute so I can give you an example. Suppose you had to do everything that you do throughout the various seasons of the year *all at the same time!* You had to buy holiday presents, shovel snow, plant bulbs, fix the air conditioner, prune the trees, prepare the ground for planting, clear the autumn leaves, etc.

Sounds absurd, yes? Has you feeling rather like you're in that same chaos we just talked about, right?

Well, happily, you *don't* have to carry out the tasks of all the seasons at the same time. In fact, that's what seasons are *for*. There are different activities that are appropriate to every season. You don't shovel snow in summer or put a vegetable garden into frozen ground. Instead, you do the activities appropriate to each season *during that season*.

It's the same with our emotional lives. They too, have seasons. To paraphrase the famous quote from Ecclesiastes, there's 'a time for every *emotional* purpose under Heaven.

Yes, your emotional life has its seasons just as everything in nature has its seasons. And those seasons evolve in a cycle, just as spring-summer-fall-winter do. In this respect your inner nature mirrors outer nature.

This is the nature's pattern with respect to your *inner emotional ground*. It evolves, it repeats, it presents different issues and tasks as it cycles through, but it's basic order, its content, its categories, its seasons remain the same and always evolve in the same order.

This is the secret of the people who have that emotional stability and grounding that looks so enticing and inspiring. They have planted their emotional roots deep into the ground of their inner emotional cycle of seasons. And they attend to the tasks of each season *during that season*.

This is the place, then to sink the taproot of your life, and the deeper you sink it, the more stable you will become.

So, what does this natural cycle look like? We'll look at that next.



4. Work WITH Your Cyclic Pattern - Not Against It



Spiral galaxy [NGC 6384](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/a/a4/NGC_6384_HST.jpg/220px-NGC_6384_HST.jpg) taken by [Hubble Space Telescope](#). From http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/a/a4/NGC_6384_HST.jpg/220px-NGC_6384_HST.jpg

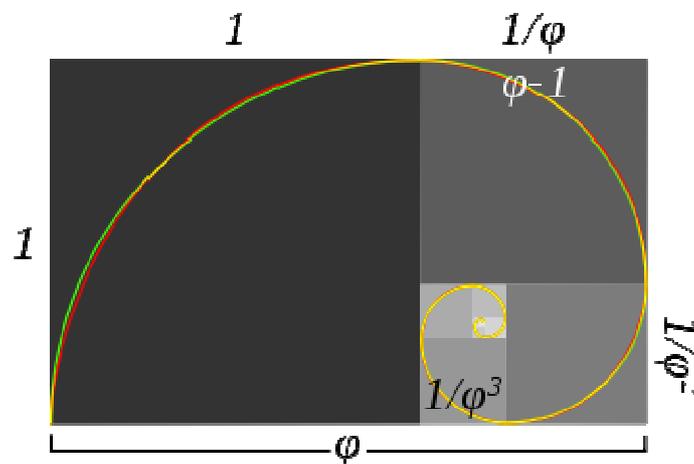
You may have heard that folk saying advising you not to fight Mother Nature because she always wins. That always seems like good advice, but never so true as when it applies to embracing and learning to manage your emotional life.

That's one of the reasons these spiral galaxy images appear in this text - to stress the point that absolutely everything that exists - from the smallest tiny molecule to the largest galaxy - is governed by a cyclic, rotating structure or pattern. The point being, that this structure is so fundamental that it governs everything in the universe. And that includes you!

There are various fancy words that are applied to parts of it – like:

- Golden section
- Fractal universe
- Mandelbrot series
- Chaos theory
- The law of proportion

It's been found represented on ancient cave walls in the same way that modern physicists and mathematicians now symbolize it :



Approximate and true [golden spirals](#). The [green](#) spiral is made from quarter-circles tangent to the interior of each square, while the [red](#) spiral is a Golden Spiral, a special type of [logarithmic spiral](#). Overlapping portions appear [yellow](#). The length of the side of one square divided by that of the next smaller square is the golden ratio.

<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/2/29/FakeRealLogSprial.svg/350px-FakeRealLogSprial.svg.png>

The meaning here is that this evolving pattern of inner seasons – which mirrors the outer evolving pattern of seasons – is much bigger than you can possibly change.

You'll never win out over it.

You'll never grow beyond it.

It is one of the most fundamental truths about life there is – right up there with knowing that to live you have to breathe.

People who try to ignore this pattern or fight it or rise above it are only going to get a major case of exhaustion. Or worse.

Do you think that, by an act of will, you can cause the sun not to rise?

Or the Earth to stop revolving around the sun?

Or the moon to stop revolving around the Earth?

That's the kind of force we're talking about here.

Don't fight Mother Nature – she always wins. That piece of wisdom applies every bit as much to your inner emotional life as it does to your outer one. To have the emotional stability and satisfaction you want to have, you need to learn to work *with* the turning of your cycle of seasons, not against it.

And there is every reason you should work *with* it. After all, it's a natural source of energy. And it's a natural sorting system – it tells you what your emotional priorities need to be during each of the seasons within it.

Working with this natural pattern, you can move from being totally overwhelmed emotionally to being on top of things and back in charge.

Seems worth it to me!

Before we get too far into physics, mathematics and astronomy, let's come back to how this plays out in the ground of our emotional lives.

Let's look at the seasons that make up the cyclic spiral of our emotional lives, because they are what tell us what we need to be doing to take care of our emotional business as it comes up.



5. Make Friends with Each Stage as You Attend to Its Tasks



Original Watercolor by Lee Mothes, Copyright © 2010, All Rights Reserved.

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This watercolor image is an artist's rendering of our inner cyclic world. Starting with red, each color represents an inner season – each a part of the cycle. Each color appears in relation to the others in the same order that they emerge when light breaks into the colors of the rainbow.

You began the cycle in childhood, and you have already grown through each of the stages at least once (depending on your age).

In fact, during childhood, you created the foundation layers of your emotional life. Then as an adult, you continue to repeat *these same stages* in more sophisticated form (well, usually anyway!) until you draw your last breath.

So you needn't worry that you're going to have to learn something you know nothing about, because in fact you know them very well.

Plus, you didn't fret about how you were going to attend to them in childhood, you just grew through them. In fact growing through these stages is child's play!

Here they are:

- I. When you were in *Stage One* initially, you were an infant and you learned to do things to support your survival and wellbeing, like sleep, eat, eliminate, tell the world what you needed, connect. And they are the same tasks you need to carry out as an adult, because this stage is all about establishing, maintaining or improving *The Ground of Your Existence*.
- II. When you were in Stage Two as a child, you were learning to control your body, to sit up, crawl, then walk and eventually talk. You were actively operating through your senses and perceptions. These are the same tasks you need to carry out as an adult in this stage, because it is all about organizing or revamping or updating your knowledge of *The World of Senses and Action*.
- III. When you were in Stage Three as a child, you were learning to become a separate individual, different than your caregivers. To do that you related in an oppositional way, contrary to what

others were doing. And you made some kind of peace with the fact that other people were in the world too, and you needed to accommodate that (your social contract). You need to do the same tasks as an adult, because this stage is all about entering into Thinking, *Independence and The Conceptual Realm*.

- IV. When you were in Stage Four as a child, you were busy creating your sense of self - figuring out who you were and who were all these other people and what was your relationship to them. In other words, where did you fit in this social world, and what did it mean to be a boy or girl. You need to do these same tasks as an adult each time you rework your *Identity - Your Ever-Evolving Self*.
- V. When you were in Stage Five as a child, your life was all about gathering the skills together that you needed to make it in your tribe. In some tribes this would mean learning to shoot a bow and arrow or ride a horse or a camel; in others it would mean learning to negotiate a city clogged with traffic. These are the same tasks you need to carry out as an adult each time you revisit this stage, because it's all about your *Skillfulness and The "How-To's" of Your Life*.
- VI. When you were in Stage Six as a child you were entering the transition world of adolescence. You were not quite a child but not yet an adult. You had to learn about becoming a sexual person and the implications of others' sexuality, all the while attempting to integrate your personality into one cohesive whole. The same is true when you repeat this stage as an adult, because it is all about *Regeneration, Creation and Procreation*.
- VII. One of the gifts of adulthood is the opportunity to shift from building the foundation for your inner life to finding out what

you can do as an adult. You are in a state of constant learning to use Recycling – repeating the stages you grew through initially in childhood to *Manifest the Promise of Life*.

To summarize, then, do the following:

1. Start with a Healthy Attitude
2. Embrace Your Emotional Self
3. Sink Your Roots Deep Into Your Own Emotional Ground
4. Work WITH Your Cyclic Pattern – Not Against It
5. Make Friends with Each Stage as You Attend to Its Tasks

After all, as the sage Rumi put it,

“Worldly power means nothing.

Only the unsayable, jeweled inner life matters.”

If you would like to know more about the stages of *your* emotional development and how to navigate them, go to

www.emotionaldevelopment101.com.

This 10-week, online course is taught periodically by Pamela Levin, and Continuing Education credits are available.



RESOURCES:

*for Better Health of Body, Mind, Spirit,
Emotions and Relationships*



M51's spiral arms and dust lanes clearly sweep in front of its companion galaxy.

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/0/02/M51_Hubble_Remix.jpg/220px-M51_Hubble_Remix.jpg



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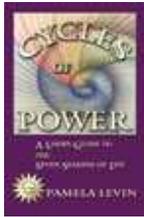
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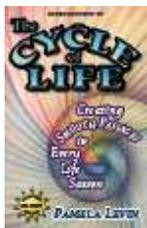


Cycles of Power: A Users Guide to the Seven Seasons of Life

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The cycle and its stages begin at the very beginnings of our lives and continue until our last breath, with each repetition built on the foundation of previous ones.

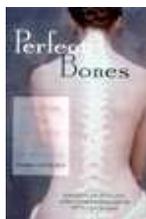
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The Cycle of Life: Creating Smooth Passages in Every Life Season

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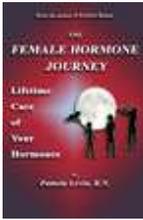
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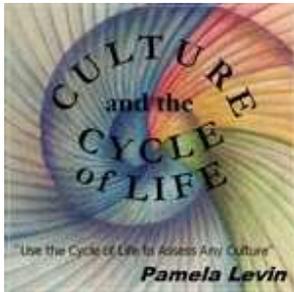
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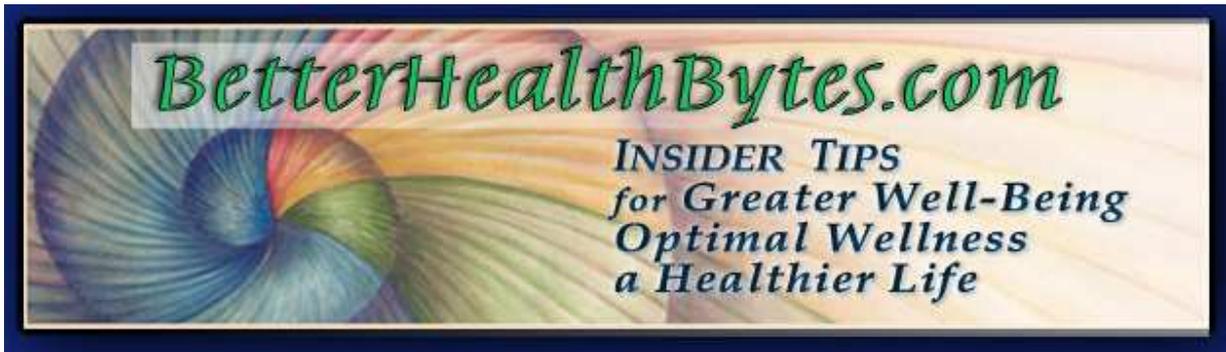


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About the Author

Pamela Levin is a Teaching and Supervising Transactional Analyst. For more than 40 years, she has counseled people privately and trained therapists, counselors, teachers, organizational consultants and parents around the world.

She began studying with Eric Berne, M.D., founder of Transactional Analysis in 1966, and became the first nurse and first woman to be awarded Clinical Membership and then also Teaching Membership in the International Transactional Analysis Association.

For her work on the *Cycle of Development*, she received the ITAA's prestigious Eric Berne Award.

She is a graduate of the University of Illinois and a Registered Nurse with experience in a wide range of hospital and clinical settings.

Additionally, she has 500+ hours post-graduate training in clinical nutrition, herbology and applied kinesiology.

She is the mother of two and grandmother of two.

