

## Living A Life Without Armor

### De-Armoring

Yesterday a friend sent me an email and used the word 'de-armoring.' Previously I wasn't aware of the word de-armoring as a concept. Within minutes after reading the word, I knew that de-armoring is an accurate way to describe the work that we do in the Thursday group, and an accurate way to describe the work that I've done with my teacher.

Very soon after reading her email five ideas formed about armor. The rest of this article will address these five aspects of armor and about de-armoring. *De-armoring is lessening the already formed armor.* The five aspects of armor in this article are physical armor, mental armor, emotional armor, armor formed in the past and armor that we're forming in the present moment.

### What Is Armor?

Armor is a hard substance that protects whatever it covers. In war, people have worn armor. In the past, the armor was made of metal. Metal armor is bulky, heavy and inflexible. Currently armor for war is made of a material called kevlar which is, pound for pound, five times stronger than steel.

### Mental And Emotional Armor

*Mental and emotional armor is when a person's thoughts and emotions are hardened; having a toughness and having an edge to them. Mental and emotional armor can be protective-internal or aggressive-external.*

### Two Types Of Mental Armor

Protective-internal mental armor is having hardened thoughts about someone, e.g. the person is a jerk. Aggressive-external mental armor is telling the person that they're a jerk.

### Two Types Of Emotional Armor

An example of protective-internal emotional armor is feeling hurt or betrayed by what someone said or did. Aggressive-external emotional armor is sending a tirade to the person who you felt hurt by.

## Physical Armor

*Physical armor is the tightening reaction-response by the body every time we have a hard edge to our thoughts or a hard edge to our emotions.*

Physical armor are the areas or spots in our body that are hardened, thick, over-energized or under-energized. *The repeated hardness and edginess of our thoughts and of our emotions creates an increasing hardness in our body.* This increasing body hardness may not be that noticeable; just as fingernails growing each day are not noticeable day by day; though over many days and many weeks, the growth of our fingernails is very noticeable.

Our physical armor increases from the hard and edgy thoughts and emotions that we repeatedly have each day. Different articles have addressed what I call physical anchor points.<sup>1</sup> Physical anchors points and physical armor are the same. Physical armor-anchor points sustain the mental and emotional energy from our hard and edgy thoughts and emotions; just as an anchor will keep a ship held in place when the anchor is set on the ocean floor.

## The Creation Of Physical Armor

Go back to a time when you were angry, fearful or judgemental. Do you remember your body changing when these emotions and thoughts were active? Do you remember your body tightening?

The next time you're angry, fearful or judgemental, find if you can have more attention to where your body is specifically tightening. This exercise is best done when you're by yourself. (It's harder to be aware of the precise tensions in your body when another person is there when anger, fear or judgement are active.)

*Once you find the spot or spots in your body that tighten and you do this exercise many times, you'll probably notice that you can have the same spot/s tightening each time the same type of anger, fear or judgement is there. You may also notice a change in your breathing pattern when you're angry, fearful or judgemental.*

## Going To The Gym

When I go to the gym, there are four types of people that I notice who work out with weights. First is the person who is new to exercising in the gym and they're working out with very light weights. The second type are the people that have developed some muscle and they're working out with more than light weight. Then come the people that have been to the gym regularly and are working out with the heavier weights.

Lastly, there are the few people that have big muscles and are working out with very heavy weight. Every person in this last group of people have spent many, many hours over many years consistently working out. None of these people have gotten huge muscles by doing nothing. They have earned every bit of the big muscles that they have (unless they take steroids).

### Coming Back To Creating Physical Armor

Every hardened and edgy thought and emotion creates a corresponding tension in our body. Every hardened thought and emotion creates tension in specific places in our body.

Just as the very muscular person that goes to the gym has incredibly big muscles, the more that we're angry, fearful and judgemental, the more physical tension we create in specific areas of our body, and the more that these areas become hardened and armored.

Physical armor doesn't develop just in our muscles. Physical armor can be located in our organs. This is when people develop heart problems, asthma, ulcers and many forms of digestive-intestinal problems from their mental and emotional hard-armored thoughts and emotions. These organs are not as tough as muscles. When the physical tension-stress from our anger, fear and judgement go into these (and other) organs, the organs become damaged and diseased.

### Every Muscle Tension Is Not Physical Armor

Some tensions in our muscles are just plain-old-garden-variety tension from our daily movement and from exercising. We don't have to get new age or metaphysical that every tension is some stored emotion or thought.

### Physical Armor Anchors Our Anger, Fear And Judgement

When a boat is anchored in the water, it cannot move and float away. It will remain there for as long as the anchor stays in place on the bottom of the ocean.

*Our anger, fear and judgement will continue to stay with us, and not drift away, for as long as the physical armor-anchor exists.* There are ways to break up physical armor-anchors. Yoga and conscious breathing are two ways to break up and clear physical armor-anchor points. Counseling therapy and journaling can also help break up physical anchor-armor points. All of the above ways listed can be helpful in breaking up physical anchor-armor points. And yet, many people do these things and still have very established physical armor-anchor points.<sup>2</sup>

The physical armor-anchor points make it easier for us to react mentally and emotionally. *The more that the anchor points are lessened, the more free we can be to not again go into our reactive anger, fear and judgement patterns.* These armored areas don't have to totally dissolve. Just as an anchor for a boat can weigh too little to hold the boat in place, the physical armor needs to dissolve enough to not reinforce us in our reactive patterns.

### Hands-On Help To Release Physical Armor

The most direct way I know to release the physical armor that is caused by anger, fear and judgement is to put hands-on the area to coax the physical tension to let go. Hands-on help may be light or heavy (though not heavy enough to cause injury).

Every time my teacher, other people and I have helped the physical armor-anchor points to release by using hands-on help, the person's anger, fear and judgement has greatly lessened or is completely gone. Almost all armor-anchor points need to have repeated hands-on help before they lose their energy to keep re-forming. Similarly, in massage and in going to a yoga class, all of the release of the physical tension is not going to remain.

### Two Ways That Keep Our Anger, Fear And Judgement Patterns Going And Going

Each of us would like to not go into reactive anger, fear and judgement. And yet these patterns are in us and these patterns keep repeating where we again are in anger, fear and judgement. These patterns are very strong in many people. We don't like that we keep repeating our reactive anger, fear and judgement, and yet, we go back into the anger, fear and judgement time and time and time again. It can drive us crazy!

There are ways that we keep our reactive anger, fear and judgement patterns alive. One way to keep our reactive anger, fear and judgement patterns alive is by repeating these emotions and thoughts throughout the day. The more often something is repeated, the easier it is to do the next time. This makes it easier to keep creating more judgemental thoughts and more anger and fear emotions.

Another way that we continue to re-create our anger, fear and judgement is because the physical armor-anchor points that are created with these emotions and thoughts keep us stuck in the same place; just as an anchor keeps the boat from 'moving on.' As long as the boat is anchored, it'll stay there. As long as the physical armor-anchor points remain, it makes it easier for us to again go into reactive anger, fear and judgement.

## What Is Being Covered Over By Mental And Emotional Armor?

What is there if we don't have a hardness or an edginess in our thoughts or in our emotions inwardly and outwardly? What is being covered over by our protective and aggressive mental and emotional armor?

*If our thoughts and feelings/emotions are not being charged with protection or with aggression, what is there? Can you feel the acceptance that is there? We can be very uncomfortable with what someone has said or done, and still an acceptance can be there rather than a hardening up in our mind and in our emotions.*

We can recognize that our husband or wife is having another tirade. If we're not physically being threatened, then do we need to 'armor up?' Does our mind and our emotions need to go into protective or aggressive armoring behavior? Can we respond to the person without hardness?

A way to find an answer to the question of what we can do if we don't 'armor up' is by asking another question. *The new question is: What would Love do?*

Love may be soft and reach out to comfort the person. Love may walk away. Love may be brash and tell them to stop their tirade. Love may say that 'I'm sick of this and I'm finished with our relationship.'

What would Love do? The answer to this question is so much better than again 'armoring up' with our words and in our feelings.

## Mental Armor

Thoughts that cover over or harden Love are mental armor. Every thought that has a hardness or a sharpness is mental armor. And, boy oh boy, each of us has created (and still creates) a lot of mental armor.

When we judge, this is mental armor. The reader knows what I mean by judge. It's not the judging that happens when we decide which apples to pick out in a store. Judging ourselves and others has a sharp-hard-sharp-edginess to it. We can compassionately be aware of our spouse when they're angry toward us or we can judge them when they're angry toward us. Once we judge, this opens the door for the emotional armor to come roaring through – the anger, the indignation, the righteousness, the justification, the blame, the victim.

## Emotional Armor

Emotional armor is when our emotions have a hardness or an edgy-sharpness to them. Every emotion that is hard or edgy covers over Love. Covering over Love creates armor. We've all felt many hard, edgy emotions in our life, and we'll have many more (unless we're a saint) hard, edgy emotions in our life.

Can the reader begin to feel mental armor and emotional armor? The hardness that covers over our natural Love? When we're relaxed and in our natural heart (not in our emotional heart), what are we feeling? Love. Love in our natural heart is what we feel when we're not being pulled out of it by agitation, fear, anger, shame, jealousy, envy or judgement.

## About Our Past

Our past is more fully healed when we deeply accept that life is unfair and when we have forgiveness for everyone in our life.

## Life Is Unfair

Bad things happen to good people and people with very bad behavior can have money and not go to jail for their crimes. Christians and people who believe in reincarnation have two different views of 'life is unfair.'

Paul in Galatians 6:7 says: "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. Whatever a man sows, he will reap in return."<sup>3</sup> Christians know that life is unfair. Their belief is that the afterlife creates the balancing out of the good and the bad in our life. This is where heaven and hell come in. If you've been good, no matter how tough life has been, you'll be rewarded by being in heaven. If you've been bad, no matter how comfortable you've been, you'll be in hell.

People who believe in reincarnation also believe that life is unfair. They believe that in your next life you'll have very favorable circumstances if you've been good; no matter how harsh and unfair life has been to you. And if you've been bad, even if you've had very comfortable circumstances in your life, you'll be born into harsh circumstances.

If we believe life is unfair and we're frustrated, angry or depressed about life being unfair, then we'll have a lot of mental, emotional and physical armor that covers over Love.

My teacher worked with me for a year and a half to come to a deeper peace and acceptance of life being unfair. He knew the judgement I had about the unfairness of life was preventing me from living in deeper joy.

## Forgiveness

Any unforgiveness in us toward another person creates a hardness and a bitterness in us; creating mental, emotional and physical armor. This hardens us to experiencing the full joy of life.

Forgiveness doesn't mean that we condone or like what someone said or did. It means that we don't hold a hardness in our heart toward the other person. This frees us to have a more joyful life.

There is a mental forgiveness that is superficial. Our mind forgives and we still carry anger or depression from the incident. There is deep forgiveness that touches our soul. Many people think they have forgiven someone only to discover later in therapy that they're still holding a lot of anger toward the person.

A test for deep forgiveness is if we feel compassion for the other person. Do we feel compassion for the person who did or said something terrible to us? No one has said or done terrible things when they're coming from Love. When people do or say terrible things, they're very troubled inside.

I know two women who were raped decades ago. It took them decades to have forgiveness to the men who raped them. One person said that she has compassion for the man. I don't know the other person well enough to ask her if she has compassion for the man. I do know that it took both of them decades to come to this point, and that they're so much more free and happy because of the forgiveness that they have.

## De-Armoring The Past

Our past thoughts and our past emotions are past. When we think about and feel about our past thoughts and emotions, they are no longer past. They are alive again in our present life with the accompanying mental and emotional edgy-hardness; with the accompanying mental and emotional armoring of Love. With the edgy-hardness there again, we can create more physical armor (an increased tensing or even numbing) of our body. This can be like adding more weight to the anchor; reinforcing that the ship (our armored thoughts and armored emotions) will stay in place.

Many times when we bring up past thoughts and past emotions, we can again re-invigorate these thoughts and emotions and end up making them stronger. A person one year after their divorce may have more mental and emotional armor-hardness toward their spouse than they had at the time of their divorce.

De-armor the past always takes place in the present. To de-armor the past, we work with the armored body, the armored judgement-thoughts and the armored angry-fearful-emotions as they come up in the present moment. The next section addresses de-armor the present.

### **De-Armoring The Present**

We can de-armor the present by relaxing our body when we're aware that our body is tightening because of our thoughts and emotions. We can de-armor the present by beginning to ease the energy of judgement, anger and fear when we're aware that our thoughts are judgemental or that our emotions are angry or fearful.

The lessening of our judgemental thoughts or of our reactive emotions is not done through suppression or denial. We're fully aware of the hard thoughts and emotions. We may choose to not 'go down this road again.'

The people in the Thursday group have been coming closer to the energy of the anger, fear and judgement. They have become more intimate with the anger, fear and judgement while also being gentle toward themselves rather than condemning themselves for the thoughts and emotions that are currently there.

We can de-armor the present by breathing into the anger, fear and judgement. As we breathe more deeply into the places where there is physical armor (tightening or numbing), the body will relax. Fear, anger and judgement will lessen; just as an upset child will (almost always) quiet when gently held in the parent's arms.

When our thoughts and emotions don't have a hard-edginess to them, our body won't react by tensing, numbing or by creating physical armor-anchor points. Without physical anchor points in the body, the anger, fear and judgement have no place to settle into. The anger, fear and judgement can then leave, like 'a ship passing on the ocean' (rather than a ship that is anchored and never leaves).

### **What Would Love Do?**

Armor is a hardness that blocks Love. Without armor, we are Love.

Love takes no effort. Just don't block Love and Love is there.

We have a choice when we feel the hard-edginess of our thoughts and of our emotions. We can continue with the hardness or we can ask: What would Love do?

It comes to the question: Do you want your anger, fear and judgement to create your internal state and your external behavior or do you want Love to create who you are, what you say and what you do?

The choice of Love is easier said than done. The work of de-arming our past and of de-arming our present is what we do in the Thursday group. The work of de-arming is best done in a safe and supportive group environment. We are stronger together than apart.

May all beings live in Love.

#### Footnotes:

- 1 The articles that previously addressed physical anchor points are: [Anger Revisited](#); pages 2-3, [Moving Forward When We're In Reaction](#); pages 4-7. Also pages 4-5 in the article [Letting Go](#) has a section on anchor points. [Beyond The Thinking Mind](#) on page 2 briefly addresses physical anchor points.
- 2 The article [Uncommon Happiness: Beyond The Limits Of Therapy](#) specifically addresses the good and the limitation that counseling therapy often provides.
- 3 [This link](#) gives 21 Bible verses relating to 'what you sow, so shall you reap.'