

# OVERCOMING THE FEAR OF BEING FABULOUS

## Welcome to Module 12 *Emotional Baggage: Curse or Blessing?*

### Overview

This very special module is one that has not only saved many relationships, but has also deeply enhanced users' relationship with themselves.

You'll discover that emotional baggage can be a curse because it lurks in the shadows of your awareness—running your life. And because it's hidden, it has enormous power.

But as you'll discover as you go through this module, emotional baggage can also be a blessing because when you pay attention to the signals that rise up as “baggage”, the care and concern you give to those old wounded parts of you will return rewards you haven't even yet imagined.

### Transcript

**Jim:**

We all know about emotional baggage by a variety of different terms. People call it your stuff. You get your buttons pushed. Or technical terms, it's a, it's shadow material or unconscious content.

What are those emotional moments that seem to spring and arise and often erupt from the slightest little provocation. And they erupt unexpectedly and we are not prepared for them. They create crises and because people are not prepared for them, they confuse what is happening in the moment—that is something that's happening in the present—

with the emotion that they are feeling, so they confuse the past and the present. And we'll get more into that as we go through this evening's presentation.

And what happens is that in those moments of emotional eruption, and by the way, eruption doesn't necessarily have to be loud and noisy and vocal. It can be quiet and withdrawn and actually feeling victimized. The point is that it happens all of a sudden and it seems to spring on us. And when it does, we tend to jump to inaccurate conclusions.

For example, people think that their relationships are ruined or damaged or for that matter they're abandoned. The relationships around the rocks and the emotional baggage as simple as or as common as that term is, is not an experience that is well understood.

And as we said in our title, Emotional Baggage, Curse or Blessing, it can be either. It can be a curse and in the 18 years that Judith and I have worked with people, some people have not been able to resolve it and they have split up and in other instances it turns out to be a blessing because it reveals deep hurts and wounds that are looking to be healed and that's where it turns into a blessing with the effort and knowledge that people put into it.

### **Judith:**

We are committed to helping you understand what is happening to you and your partner or your future partner if you're not currently in a relationship when emotional baggage comes to the surface.

Now we've given you a worksheet. We hope that you've printed it out and if you haven't, don't worry about it. You'd be taking notes. But the first point on the worksheet is, what happens when true love is present?

So in answering number one, we are quoting ourselves from our first book, *The New Intimacy*. And this is our statement.

When true love is present, all that has never been loved before will come to the surface because it can and because it must.

And what we mean by, because it can is that when true love is present, it makes a safe place for the unloved, for the emotional baggage to make itself known by coming to the surface.

And it must come to the surface because unless it does you can't ever feel truly loved for all that you are. You have to know that you are loved for the baggage as well as your brilliance and magnificence.

And the only way that that baggage can be healed and help you grow is for it to come to the surface. So know that when the emotional baggage surfaces, no matter how painful it may be, no matter how shocking it maybe and dangerous it may feel; when true love is present, all that has never been loved before will come to the surface because it can and because it must.

**Jim:**

We have been doing monthly teleseminars. Our first one was entitled, What is Love? The second one, Letting Love Lead. This is a third in the monthly teleseminar series and they build on each other.

What is love explored? The meaning of love both in its temporal and it's superficial as well as deep meanings. Letting love lead with specifically what the title was about. You can let love lead and when you do love will take you into places you have not anticipated.

We refer to love as an entity, something that we generate through us, but then once it's generated we are in its circle and we feed it and it feeds us and there is a reciprocal loop. So when you let love, lead love also has larger plans and a larger vision because it's a vision that's composed of the two people involved. Here's a larger vision for you, then you have on your own and it'll take you into places and one of the places love will take you into your emotional baggage.

It touches emotional baggage, and we'll get into more detail about what that is in just a moment. It touches that emotional baggage and the reason it does is because it is wanting to bring it to the surface so that as Judith said, it can be recognized and loved and thereby healed. So these teleseminars that we are doing, although they don't build formally on one another, they are all interwoven and so we urge you to attend because there is a progression that is going on.

**Judith:**

And also we're doing this to help you build your relationship library so that you will have resources that you can come back to over and over again when you don't have direct access to us.

Now I want to give you an example. We'll come back to this. We're going to give you several examples of how emotional baggage developed.

And the most elementary is one that was very meaningful to me some years back when I, in some early therapy in my training as a psychologist, when I started to examine the

fact that I spent the first nine months of my life as a fetus, as a tiny little baby in my mother's womb.

And a lot of people ignore the fact that you're developing yourself there in your mother's womb, when in fact you are on her biological system. You are inside her nervous system. Her emotional state is going through you as that little child.

So I want each of you to consider that not so much right now, but after you're off this call to really spend a little time thinking about what you know about who your mother was back then. What her life was like, how she felt emotionally, and what you may have ingested during those first nine months.

I know in my case, my mother was very depressed. My father was away a lot of the time. It scared her. It made her very nervous and coming from the family she came from, she was a very worrisome. She was a worrywart by her own description. And so I, in my older years, even after I had established myself in my life with two very successful careers were so puzzled my why my nervous system was still so prone to anxiety, depression, and worry.

When I went back and look at that first nine months, I thought, wow, it's in my biology. I grew up with it in those first nine months. And then the first two years of life for any child to also consider this, the brain of the little child is developing lickety split. The brain is not fully formed at all in the womb.

So those first two years of life are really important. And again, the first two years for me, we're in this environment with my mother being very worrisome, depressed, and nervous. And that was all contributing to my brain development.

**Jim:**

Now, for some of you who had never considered this possibility before it might seem far out or perhaps even incredible. Just think about fetal alcohol syndrome, which is a very dramatic expression of what we're talking about. Our child being born to a crack mother or a child being born in a household where there's violence. Now I'm using extreme examples to make my point. It comes back and it's much subtler and what Judith was talking about was considerably subtler.

Nevertheless, that's why we bring this up because there is an initiation into this life inside your mother's womb. And then in those first two years, a lot of the years are critical. But those first two years where the brain is developing, it's really, really critical.

will give you an example well past those first two years out of my life. My father used to say to me, he would point to his left arm, his left upper arm, and he would say, remember, I have three stripes. You have two, and don't you ever forget it.

That meant he was a Sergeant. I was a lesser rank Corporal and I was to never forget it.

My deepest connection in my growing up was with my father, so much so that when Judith and I met, she said that she has never worried about competition from other women, which was utterly true and she said her competition was my father. That's the one I'd given my heart to. And I mostly unconsciously said to my father, okay, you want to be the top dog, that's fine.

And then I'm 25 years old. I'm talented, I'm intelligent, I have possibilities, I'm working as an actor, things are going very, very well and I can't make a career work. I hit limits. I hit ceilings, I looked back on it, I didn't know it. Then I hit ceilings and I back away and I go and I start something fresh and I get to a point where I can start to excel and I backed away and I start something fresh.

What that was was those old childhood instructions that I got that became unconscious. I'll tell you as we progressed through the evening, how that stuffing down turned out to be very, very painful as I began to get in touch with it. But that's another example of, first of all, there's the womb, now I'm say three, four, five, six, seven, eight years old.

### **Judith:**

And then as we move on into dating and we enter adolescence and our twenties and we end up creating relationship, not necessarily ones that are going to last, but very often relationships that are painful. I was in private practice as a psychotherapist for many long years before Jim and I began to work together. I worked in private practice for a number of years in Santa Monica.

And I can't tell you how many women would come in in a new relationship. One they were hopeful about on the one hand. On the other hand, telling me they were certain that the man was going to cheat on them. Why? Well, they had no evidence except every other man in their life had cheated on them and their father had cheated on the mother. The brother was currently cheating on his wife. So every man must cheat on their relationships with their conclusion.

It was hard for them to understand that that was emotional baggage that they had picked up through their early family and then reproduced it in their dating relationship. And now all they could see was that men were going to cheat and so then they would be suspicious. They would go spying in the man's wallet, in his appointment book in his computer, and what would they create? They would create a terrible tension, that terrible problem in the relationship. And lo and behold, very often the man would indeed end up cheating. But they found it hard to see that they at that point were helping create it. That's another way that this emotional baggage trails through our life,

**Jim:**

I said earlier that we jump to inaccurate conclusions and even though the inaccurate conclusion in this case is generalized, it's all men cheat. When in fact, as I said, even though these women had evidence that men did very close evidenced fathers and brothers and that sort of thing, the generalization is all men cheat and then they are trapped inside their own decision about life.

Men would often say women are controlling and suffocating. Mostly they would say they're suffocating. And that again is an inaccurate conclusion for most women. But that is a wound to belief that turns into a limitation and that is also a form of wound that would then limit these men and their relationships with women.

And men would also say to us, I am paying the price for her previous boyfriend. I don't want to have to pay the price for what they did. She's unaware that she's distrustful and critical and in fact she was again having been hurt, decisions are made and then we take those decisions, we turn them into points of view and we turn them into an attitude and a decision about life. And that's another way that the wound is formed.

**Judith:**

For women, one that has certainly been an issue in my life and I know for a number of women, is a man's tone of voice. I might resonate with this, uh, either on the receiving end of a woman complaining about your tone of voice, if you're a man. And as a woman you may have been offended and alarmed and upset by that tone of voice.

Well, in my case, my father had very rough and angry tone of voice. And with Jim even the slightest, anything that might be perceived as a tone of voice early on, which just set me off with just make my bones rattle. It unnerved me so much and it was very hard for me to hear that sometimes I was misperceiving altogether.

Jim didn't even really have a tone of voice. It just somehow sort of struck me that way because the baggage coming from my past was so noisy, was so easily alarmed.

**Jim:**

And we can also expand the source of all of this into boys. For example, vis-a-vis the tone of voice boys are raised and the way boys play with each other and interact with each other, there's a kind of roughness to it. And there is an aggression for most boys. There's an aggressiveness and challenging kind of quality. And then unconsciously it comes out with their spouses and the spouse complaints that it's your tone of voice. And so what emotional baggage leads to when it's not understood is that both parties in the relationship have difficulty understanding the other's complaint. And that would certainly true with Judith and me.



She said it's your tone of voice. And I would say what tone of voice? I could be angry and when I was angry I knew that I was being aggressive. Could you get a really strong say? But then I was being excited or impassioned or determined or whatever and it would come down to that tone of voice.

And so we would get into locks and bins until we sorted all of this stuff out.

So those are a number of ways how the emotional baggage slash wound comes into existence in an individual's life.

Let's turn now to question number two on your worksheet, which is what is emotional baggage?

Well, the emotional baggage is those hurts, slights, and feeling of being emotionally impotent, being abused, they're all laced through with a fear of not being able to make your presence known in the world so that you can actually have a sense of your own control.

For example, if you ever saw a two year old or say a three year old walking through a supermarket, holding the hand of the parent and the parent is striding in full adult strides and the two year olds, little legs are trying to catch up and the parent is making indications that your child should keep up and sort of move along faster when the child is doing only what it knows how to do, which is move on two year old legs.

So the child is getting an unwarranted criticism for age appropriate behavior. But then the problem is is that behavior is being characterized by the adult as incompetent and now the child is confused and generally believes the adult because the child doesn't have enough wherewithal to be able to say, wait a minute, you slow down, I'm the two year old, you should be taking care of me. And as a result we end up feeling there's something wrong with us, there's something wrong with me and years later that gets touched and it's like a third degree burn. When that gets touched, it just hurts like fury and that's what emotional baggage in general and all of you have your own specific experiences and descriptions. But in general that's what emotional baggage is.

### **Judith:**

And number three, what is at the heart of emotional baggage? These decisions that we end up making about ourselves, they're all unconscious. We're not aware we're making these decisions when we're three and five and eight and ten, about our value that somehow if we're punished, we must be bad. That if we're balled out, we may feel guilty all the time that we are making decisions about what life is like and what the world is like and how we fit in there.

And we often feel like we don't fit. We're not good enough, we're not right. We have to struggle, whatever it might be, so that we grow up in some ways feeling constrained,

compressed, confined, confused, and our sense of health collapses over and over and over.

But we can't get away from these problems that we're having, these painful experiences we're having. So what do we do? We stuffed the pain and the frustration and the sense of neglect, whatever it might be. We stuff it down—sort of stick it in a metaphorical suitcase. And then we lock it away just to be able to cope.

**Jim:**

And it's critical that all of us understand that everyone, everyone brings emotional baggage brings that stuffed suitcase into relationships. And the fact is that's normal. Everybody does it. And everybody has a suitcase more or less. And everybody brings it into their relationships.

And it's also normal to really understand that you will occasionally bump into pockets of severe pain and upset. We call those, you know, you get your buttons touched, your stuff has been erupted, you know, the unconscious content or the shadow content has been brought to the surface.

You have to know that those are normal and it's really, really critical to understand that those are normal. The problem is when you don't understand that those are normal, then you take them as abhorrent in some way and then start acting out in ways that are not consistent with what is actually going on inside you and less consistent with what is going on in the moment. And then real trouble sets in.

Well there are a lot of ways that we hear people speak to one another. We call them soul assaults. They're not an assault on what you're doing or an assault on who you are and that you are in some instances like for example, I wish you were never born. We've had people in our offices who were told that again and again, I wish you were never born.

In my own instance, my mother wanted girls. She confessed this. Years later she got two boys. I was the first boy. So it was acceptable because the first one in the cliché should be a boy in the second one's a girl and the boy takes care of this little sister. But my brother was a boy as well. And we grew up in a household where we were wounded in the sense that there was a perceptive and pervasive attitude that girls are better than boys and we happen to be boys.

So that's an example of what I'm talking about. Another one you'll hear is who do you think you are? Meaning do not be who you are being; you be who I tell you to be. You fit back into your place or some such variation on that kind of idea. Or how many times do I have to tell you. Are you that stupid that you don't understand? Do I have to tell you over and over and over again? And you may not understand, but the implication is there's something wrong with you that I have to tell you this many times



Or another one that many people hear far more than the general population would actually give credence to is you won't amount to anything. You will never amount to anything. That's not an assault on what you're doing or your intelligence or your beauty or your style or anything. It's an assault on your being and then then it gets really painful cause once you're being is assaulted versus what you're doing, you can learn to ride a bike. You fall off, well you've just fallen off the bike, you learn to ride, but if you're being has been assaulted, there's no way out of that because you're stuck.

### **Judith:**

As I'm listening Jim, I'm thinking about another phrase: We don't do that. Our family doesn't do things like that.

I knew a woman some years back who told me about when she was growing up and I've middle class family. She wanted to go to Europe upon graduation from high school and as soon as she announced it to her parents, they said, we don't do that. Our kind of people don't do that.

Well she then gave it up because she was loyal to her family. And I've noticed that's often a piece of what happens here too. We love our parents. We love our family and we're loyal to them so we abandon ourselves in favor of what they say we should be doing.

She then announced she wanted to go to college and she wanted to go away to college where she wasn't going to be living at home. They fought her on that. She fought a little bit and managed to enroll at a college that was a few hundred miles away, but listen to what happened. She didn't even make it through the first semester. She was doing fairly well in school, but feeling very depressed.

Well, why? Because she was a "bad" daughter and got into an accident where she was crossing the street and was hit by a car and hurt quite badly and ended up back at home where her parents could take care of her in a hospital bed in the living room. And the parents were wonderful at this. Why they had their child's back where they wanted her at home.

And years later she was, uh, very aware that unconscious processes, the emotional baggage had driven her into that street, that evening, not looking to see the car coming and that she did indeed participate in that car accident. That's how deep emotional baggage can attack our very soul. Our very being, as Jim just said, and take us down if we're not conscious.

**Jim:**

We're going to talk about how all of that applies in a romantic relationship, which is our focus, but also in friendship and colleague relationships in the workplace. We're going to focus on romantic.

We'll be there in just a moment.

But wounds and unconscious baggage can form when you're older from old relationships where she says to him, you're a jerk. It doesn't mean he's insensitive but we can work on that or he is unaware and we can work on that. You're a jerk. Meaning who you are in your totality is effectively worthless. And if you take that in, meaning if you agree in any way with what that statement said, then a wound is created and it will carry on into your subsequent relationships.

For women, you are a bitch and that is often, particularly since the feminist revolution, that term has been used to keep women in their place. It's another way of saying, who do you think you are? It's just a great deal more brutal.

Another one is you're the cause of my problem. If it wasn't for you, we wouldn't be having these problems. And essentially saying, I'm innocent you're guilty, there's something wrong with you.

Or you're just like every other man or you're just like every other woman. And those are all adult based statements that then create wounds that turn into emotional baggage. And one we had heard in our office a number of times is one of them would say to the other, I'm sorry I ever met you. It isn't, I'm sorry, the decision I made to meet you and carry on this relationship for reasons that I wasn't even aware of that I'd like to correct, blah, blah, blah. It's, I'm sorry I ever met you. You're the problem. And so those are some of the ways, some of the stuff that we've heard in some of that you've heard and perhaps if none of these apply specifically to you, you need to take them and sort of massage them to see where it is that you became impacted and how the wounds formed inside of you.

**Judith:**

Right, exactly. We're just giving you large examples and we know they may not fit perfectly for you or may not fit at all. But we're hoping to just open up your awareness of your own emotional baggage. What caused it, what it's about, and we hope it will trigger things as you listen to it.

Now for number four: How do you recognize emotional baggage?

**Jim:**

And in particular in relationships, given our definition of emotional baggage, when it erupts and as I said before, it can erupt violently. It can erupt by somebody withdrawing and being quiet. It always happens in relationship. The emotional baggage is not touched when you're alone in a room. It's always, always, always touched inside of a relationship.

**Judith:**

Now there are two ends of the spectrum that are very often triggered. One is you need to be innocent and you are defensive. You plead your innocence at every turn because you are so vulnerable to feeling falsely accused. Why? Because you grew up in my family where you were falsely accused a lot. And you've got a trigger for that and an old, old wound of being falsely accused.

On the other hand, if you come from Jim's family, you're going to feel guilty and you're going to feel like it's all your fault. Those are the two polar opposites that are very, very common and clearly neither one are accurate. When a couple is having difficulty, both people are participating. Nobody can be totally innocent. Both people are participating.

So watch for when you feel defensive a lot. When you fight for your innocence or when you feel just taken over by guilt all the time. Or it seems like it's all the other person's fault. That's another way of feeling unison rather than feeling defensive.

All of those can be hair trigger, touchstones for emotional baggage.

**Jim:**

Here's an image that might be helpful.

I knew a lawyer in Los Angeles and he was brilliant. And yet his practice was floundering. Actually it was more than floundering. He was actually destroying it. And so we work together and I'm very proud to say that his practice is now flourishing and it was a result of Judith and I working with him and his fiancé.

However, this lawyer was brilliant and he would come in with one kind of image or model after another to try and express for himself and understand for himself what we were talking about. And so he used the image of an internal jury and what you want the internal jury to say is you're innocent. We find you innocent no matter what you've done. No matter what the jury foreman says, we find you innocent.

And the consequence, the horrifying, terrifying consequence of being found guilty or wrong or flawed or whatever it is that you are afraid of is so terrible that we build these internal juries and they say you're innocent.

And we say, Oh good. I knew it all along. So we'd go back to what Judith was talking about where if you feel like you have to be innocent, the corollary to that is some dark side. Let's just for the moment call it guilt, that is equally as intense except if hidden in the emotional suitcase where it has been stuffed and locked away. It is susceptible to coming out in ways that are completely unpredictable and can be dangerous, emotionally dangerous for the most part.

And when that happens, you are thrown into a pit of despair and hopelessness. Now this is another way to recognize emotional baggage, specifically the despair and hopelessness and the sense of impotence because two things are going on.

One, the feelings that you're feeling are not being generated by the current moment. They are being triggered by the current moment, but they are not being generated by the current moment. So in fact, in the present there's nothing you can do to rectify the feelings.

Then when you go back to wherever they began, there was a feeling in that moment whether you were a child or an adolescent or an adult, there was a feeling in that moment of not being able to hold your ground, not being able to make your presence known in the world. And it was hopeless then.

So hopelessness other than in very, very rare circumstances where we are legitimately in the present time, so hopeless and perhaps even despaired, those are two real significant clues that emotional baggage is running its course through you. And another thing you can do is it can cause you to doubt yourself.

And let me just make a point here.

Judith and I really went around and around and round on this for our first couple of years till we understood, and in this particular instance, I have to say that I understood it far deeper than Judith did initially. So that she has taught me a great deal, a great deal, and I have never been with anyone with whom I have been as free to be who I am. And sometimes that gets nasty.

But in this particular instance, she thought because of her father, that when I got excited or when my voice raised or tone of voice, that that was where the power resided. And she would quiet down and speak very quietly and had no idea that that quietness, which I was unable to handle, was just as powerful coming back from her as my loudness was going back to her.

And both of us began to doubt ourselves. Both of us began not to feel secure in who we thought we were. So I just want to make the point that people think that emotional baggage and we're using the word erupt is volcanic. It's catastrophic. It can be, and oftentimes it is, but it's also quiet and withdrawn and passive aggressive and feeling victimized. That is just as powerful an experience of emotional baggage as the other.

And it can be used just as effectively to defend as well as manipulate the person you're with.

### **Judith:**

Now I wanna make the point also that one way to recognize emotional baggage, sort of umbrella way to recognize it, is that your response or your partner's response or both are extreme for the situation you're currently in.

Yes, something in the present moment triggered it, but definitely one or both of you is having a response that is a hundred times louder, longer, deeper, worse than is warranted by what's actually happening in the moment. You know the experience of when you're having an argument and you're mad, but the amount of anger you have is appropriate for what's going on. Or you're sad or you're hurt or disappointed and it fits exactly with what's going on in the moment. You can count on that is not about emotional baggage. But when something happens and you fall into a hole for me sometimes and I just feel hopeless, I know for a fact that I have fallen into emotional baggage because it's not appropriate for what's going on now.

Now Jim talked about me getting quiet.

I remember in the first year or two of our being together, I would get into a state, I just freeze. Jim would say something to me that I took offense by or scared me and I would literally freeze, lose my voice. I couldn't even say anything. And as Jim and I were talking about what we were going to say tonight, I realized that no man that I had ever gone with, been engaged to before, had ever gotten mad at me.

Jim did. And still does once in a while. But here was the deal. All those other men were lovely men, many of them. But they didn't have the passion. They didn't have the gusto. They didn't have the zest of largeness that Jim has.

So what came with that package was he also has anger and can get angry at me.

So what happened? I love this man like I've never loved anybody in my life. And he gets mad at me. It scares me because the only other man who ever got mad at me ferociously was my dad.

And how did I cope with my dad? I shut down. How am I going to cope with Jim? I found myself shutting down in a way I'd never even experienced with my dad. I turned into an ice cube frozen. You'd think I was in the North Pole. Literally couldn't find words to speak.

Now I had to work my way out of that and after the first couple of years it stopped happening. But can you imagine here I'm madly in love with my husband and I'm

acting in some way I've never even experienced before. Knowing that was emotional baggage was enormously helpful.

**Jim:**

And it was normal.

Now, let me just say my side of that so you can see what the dynamic was. When she would turn into an ice cube, I would escalate because her ice cupidity was, utterly powerful because it was impenetrable and I didn't know that. I thought it was defiant, so she looked like she was defiant. I would escalate. But no matter what I did, I couldn't penetrate. And so as a result we were really locked in and stuck. And the beauty about the love that we experienced back and forth with each other and to and from each other is that the environment was safe enough to allow that to happen.

Now granted, and in all fairness, if you put two people in that situation we were in and if they are psychologically unaware, that could be a very dangerous potentially domestically violent situation. That can happen. That's real.

The reason we're doing this call tonight and all the work we do is to make people more and more and more aware of these dynamics so that you can actually see what was going on.

And once she was able to unfreeze, she was able to stand her ground. And by God she does now. And, and she was also able to say, Jim is not my father. And I was able to feel or drop the feeling of emotional impotence because I was able to get through and we'd have a conversation.

But both of us brought those dynamics to our relationship and those moments were co-created. They were not one or the other. And that's the beauty and the blessing of emotional baggage when you know what it is that's going on.

And Judith wasn't alone in terms of the early days because all of the stuffing down that I got was, albeit I had fits when I was a child and I would throw tantrums, those were expressions of my rage against what I had to endure by my own choice. I, although when I say my own choice, my father said, you will be less than me, and I unconsciously agreed, but I was enraged about it.

So Judith and I meet and I'm in the presence of someone who I know loves me, really, truly loves me and I love. But the most important thing, I know that she truly loves me. Well, up it comes up, comes this rage. And why? Because I want to be recognized for this pain that I'm feeling. I want somebody to see this. I want to let it out. And when she saw it, that mitigated it. And not only what did I want somebody to let it out. I want it to be loved and I want it to be loved first for the pain that I was in and the rage that I



was feeling because the rage was justified. And then I wanted to be loved for the experience that caused the rage.

And once we pass through those stages, then I didn't have to rage anymore because the motivation and the power was gone. So that's how Judith and I worked it out in terms of what we found each other with at the outset of our relationship.

**Judith:**

And I hope you can hear how sharing these very painful experiences with each other, trusting each other with these deep wounds and then healing true love growing past them to some large degree has deepened our intimacy, deepened our connection and of course increased the amount of love that we share.

And so it has really deepened that love and that is how emotional baggage becomes a blessing. Now we would love a world where there was no emotional baggage but we don't live there. We live in a world where there is and so this is how you and your partner or your partner in the future can turn the emotional baggage into a blessing that grows your love.

**Jim:**

Another way to recognize emotional baggage is afoot is when you lash out. We're specifically using the terms lash out, not complain, not arguing, not say, Hey, wait a minute, lash out and it flies out of you like daggers. That's first of all abusive but it's also a signal of the abuse that you experienced because the lashing out is virtually without control.

I also want to make point here. We use the word rage. Rage is very specific and different from anger. Anger is a justified complaint proportional to whatever the stimulus is in the moment. Rage is way out of proportion. Way out of proportion and as a consequence you can tell that it belongs somewhere else than in the moment.

So there is the lashing out and rage is blinding. The other can be a trigger, but you see the other as a threat and they're not a threat, but that's the way it's experienced and so if the consequences, of course you're going to defend yourself, but since it is way out of proportion, be aware that it is emotional baggage that is running the moment.

**Judith:**

And it can make you feel panic like it's life or death. It can be very overwhelming if it feels like a power imbalance, which is often one person feel really powerless because it

seems like the other person has all the power when generally speaking, that's not the case.

I want to just make one quick point before we move on that we are not exonerating anybody for being abusive in their verbal, certainly not physical acting out of emotional baggage. But we are recognizing that this stuff happens. And we want to make you understand that it's common, it's normal, and that there are ways to work with it, which we're going to address in just a moment.

Just want to answer number five: What damage can be caused by emotional baggage? Well, we've pretty much alluded to that, but certainly when you confuse the past and the present, you may falsely determine that you need to break up rather than understanding that healing and growth are beckoning you. Love is inviting you to go deeper into the relationship.

On the other hand, sometime it will surface that we're differences are not negotiable, that you have priorities that don't match and that the emotional baggage is surfacing as well. And all of that comes to the fore and you see that you cannot stay together.

#### **Jim:**

Also, emotional baggage is unconscious. And the fact is the unconscious is far more powerful than consciousness because consciousness is formed and structured. The unconscious is primitive. It is brutal if it has to be. It is an on/off system. It's a kill or be killed source of behavior. And I say kill. I don't mean that literally. I mean emotionally it's for or against. So as a result it actually can wield a lot more emotional power than conscious deliberation and as a result. That person is usually unaware of the power that he or she is generating and therefore is not able to discriminate. So everything. Here's another clue. A how-to. Pay attention when you get into a black and white situation. It is either black or it's white. Nothing in this life is black or white. All of it is a shade of gray, when you're dealing with emotional dynamics and relationship dynamics. And if you think it's black and white, guaranteed, you have been put in a situation where you feeling defensive. You need to protect yourself and it's your way or the highway.

#### **Judith:**

And finally, we want to encourage you to make sure you're not misinterpreting what's going on by assuming it's tragic and that the relationship is over and that you're being destroyed. If all it is, and I'm don't use all as if it's minor, but when that relationship was great yesterday and the relationship's going to be great tomorrow or the next day, but today you've stepped on a mine field of emotional baggage, it's just something that you just have to work out.

**Jim:**

Okay. And for the last question on the worksheet, what to do to “control” the emotional baggage.

Well, when we looked at it after we had sent it out to you, all, we realized that the word “control” is wrong. You can't control the emotional baggage because emotional baggage is emotional baggage because it's been controlled. And so you don't want to add another layer of control.

What you have to do is open it up, recognize it, see its source, integrate it, and love it. Truly love it. So I had to love the rage and Judith did too.

And I had to love the ice that she turned into, and so did she before we could let it go, because that's what has to happen. Love is like heat. It's like sunlight. It's the warmth that actually begins the healing process.

So what do you do? What can you actually do now in a situation where emotional baggage has erupted?

Well basically if you can, when you're not in the middle of an emotional baggage moment, but if you are in a calm state of mind, what you can do is make an agreement with each other that you will stay on alert as best you can to watch when that is happening.

Basically, I would say for example, if Judith and I made these agreements, I would say to Judith, Judith this is a moment of emotional baggage. I might not use those exact words. I might say something else that's directly relative to whatever it is that's going on.

But nevertheless, I would say this is a moment of emotional baggage and if she has agreed or vice versa, if I have agreed that this is what we will do, I might say, Oh, you don't know what you're talking about. It isn't. But if she persists: This is a moment of emotional baggage; that can settle it down and that can open up the possibility that you can look at what's going on. And you can understand what's going on so that the emotional eruption settles down and then you can find out what's happening.

**Judith:**

Another thing that we have done and that we encourage couples to do is develop a private code of private secret code that only the two of you know and that you've agreed on. So that when you do get flipped out, you do get triggered, you do get bonkers. You can keep some little fragment of consciousness alert that, Oh, you're sucked in again.

And for instance, what we try to do, and we do it pretty well, it's really now and certainly now after the first couple of years, we're in the middle of whatever it is, we'll say, don't take this personally. Don't get sucked in and remember, I love you, but I'm just going crazy right now. Or whatever it is.

We know somebody who is in a very good marriage right now, but she occasionally lapses into treating her husband as if he is the rotten ex-husband that she used to be with. And so the husband has been authorized to say to her, whenever this comes up, remember honey, I'm not Donald remember, don't treat me like Donald. And some people need to say to their partner, their spouse, remember, I'm not your mother or I'm not your older sister or I'm not your father. Whatever it is that you know you need to make a formal solid agreement when things are not erupting to authorize each other to be helpful in that way

**Jim:**

And what I'm about to say; if you remember nothing but this, please remember this, that what is happening in an eruption. I want to repeat. The eruption can be volcanic or it can be utterly quiet. It can be aggressive or it can be passive. It's not just the eruptive image. Eruption means it comes upon you unawares. It takes over. That's what we mean by eruption. When that is happening, a burned spot has been touched spot in the psyche that is equivalent to a third degree burn. It's an old wound and it's an old one that wants to be recognized. As I said, I want it to be recognized for all of that stuffing down that I was experiencing and I'm telling you that while I'm raging at the same time. It wants to be recognized. I want someone to know what happened to me and it wants to be loved.

It wants to hear, I see you, I understand and I love you inside this particular experience. And that then leads to being freed of the pain, which is the ultimate objective of the eruption. I want to get out of this prison of horrible feelings that I'm feeling and with you my love, who loves me well enough to be able to hold the ground for me while I have just erupted internally.

Eventually the freedom from pain actually happens and it's happened with Judith and I. That doesn't mean you clean house entirely. I don't believe frankly, that that's possible. There are still moments. But by God they are not near what they used to be.

There is still tenderness here and there, but it's nothing like it used be and it's because she was there with the strength and the stamina and the intelligence to be able to hold the space so that I could let it go and I didn't have to worry about being stuffed down or rejected like happened when the emotional baggage was originally formed.

**Judith:**

Right. Exactly and it's because we've experienced those experiences with each other over and over that we did write the book, *Be Loved for Who You Really Are*, because certainly you cannot feel that way unless those old wounds are loved and embraced. Also together identify the source as best you can. Oh, the wound that's been triggered over the pain that got triggered and in the experience you just had and trust. This is sometimes difficult to do, but trust that your partner may have a much better angle, much better perception of what caused you to get so triggered because they're stepping outside the experience. They're seeing your family, they're seeing you and your life experiences as you shared it from a little better objective situation than you are. You're in the middle of it. Jim has helped me enormously see things about my family. He did meet my parents, although they were both gone at this point. He knew both of them. He could see things about them that I couldn't see and the same for his family. So as you identify the source, work together, see the other, your partner as a real helpmate in doing this.

**Jim:**

After the eruption is over. Discuss the thoughts and feelings that occurred during the eruption and why do you want to do that? Because you need more clarity. You both do. If I'm the one that's erupting, I need clarity certainly, but so does Judith to understand what's going on. And clarity will bring a sense of control. And in this sense, control really does work.

Not control in the sense of being stuffed, but control in the sense of not being overrun and that will expose more of the wound to healing and the healing occurs from awareness of what's going on and the compassion that you're getting from yourself and from the other person.

**Judith:**

And make a commitment to respect each other through this experience. Don't ever fall into what some people allow, which is they lose respect for the other because the other lost control became angry, started weeping, and they lose respect. Notice that you're imposing on your partner that they'd be some perfect being without this emotional baggage in order for you to bestow your respect on them. That's not love.

You need to respect that they are sharing the most primitive, most vulnerable part of themselves with you.

Now, not if they are abusing you and slamming you against the wall. No way.

**Jim:**

The end! That's categorically unacceptable. If there's abuse going on, it must be brought to a stop because the abuse will only escalate.

**Judith:**

Right? Exactly.

And you certainly must ask for change if you are being mistreated or treated in some way that's unacceptable to you. We're not saying you put up with anything, not at all. But do not let yourself lapse into reducing the respect you have for each other because you are sharing this painful experience with each other.

And finally value deeply, deeply value, and talk about it, that you trust each other and you care so much for each other that that's why you have allowed yourself to expose the dark side. Reinforce it, talk with each other about how good it feels to trust each other and to trust how much you care.

**Jim:**

In a world where emotional baggage is just part and parcel of how we exist here. To be with someone who can handle it, to understand what emotional baggage is, to understand yourself in that context, it's a true gift. Because we really can become freed of it and when you become free, you have more of you to be able to bring into the world. There's more energy, there's more vitality, there's more excitement, there's more creativity, there's more intelligence, there's more passion, there's more love. You can bring all that to the world when you are freed of these blocks, these constraints, these compressions that we call emotional baggage.

**Judith:**

And so to close this evening we want to again remind you that when true love is present, all that has never been loved before, will come to the surface because it can. And because it must, that is part of the natural, spiritually wise role of love in your life. It helps you heal and grow and expand into your true, magnificence together.





## Summary of Key Points

1. “When true love is present, all that has never been loved before will come to the surface because it can and because it must.” From *The New Intimacy*- Sherven & Sniechowski
2. Emotional baggage can be seen in the hurts, slights, and feeling of being emotionally impotent, and even being abused. They're all laced together with a fear of not being able to make your presence known in the world so that you can actually have a sense of your own control.
3. At the heart of emotional baggage are the largely unconscious decisions that we end up making about ourselves. We're not aware we're making these decisions when we're a young child. We just know that if we're punished, we must be bad. So we may feel guilty all the time. Unconsciously we are making decisions about what life is like and what the world is like and how we fit in.
4. Emotional baggage can often be recognized by an “eruption” that can be violent or passive and is only touched inside of a relationship.
  - i. You may need to feel innocent and so you are defensive.
  - ii. You may feel guilty and then you're going to feel like it's all your fault.

5. What damage can be caused by emotional baggage?

When you confuse the past and the present, you might falsely determine that your relationship needs to end rather than understand that healing and growth are beckoning you. Love is inviting you to go deeper into the relationship.

On the other hand, sometimes it will surface that your differences are not negotiable and that you have priorities that don't match and the emotional baggage is surfacing as well. And if all of that comes to the fore, you might see that you cannot stay together.

6. Remember that emotional baggage is unconscious. It is an on/off system. It's a black or white source of behavior.

7. Don't misinterpret what's going on by assuming it's tragic and that the relationship is over, when it's not. If that relationship was great yesterday and the relationship's going to be great tomorrow or the next day, but today you've stepped on a mine field of emotional baggage, it's just something that you have to work out.
8. Recognize the emotional baggage, see its source, integrate it, and love it. Truly love it. Love is like heat. It's like sunlight. It's the warmth that actually begins the healing process.
9. When you're in a calm state of mind, make an agreement with each other that you will both stay on the alert as best you can to watch when an eruption is happening. You can say something like: "This is a moment of emotional baggage" and then work through it.
10. Remember that an emotional baggage "eruption" can be volcanic or it can be utterly quiet. It can be aggressive or it can be passive. But what has happened is that a burned spot has been touched. A spot in the psyche that is equivalent to a third degree burn. It's an old wound and it's an old one that wants to be recognized for all of that stuffing down that was experienced. It wants someone to know what happened and it wants to be loved and understood. That then leads to being freed of the pain, which is the ultimate objective of the eruption.
11. After the eruption is over, identify the source, discuss the thoughts and feelings that occurred during the eruption so you can both gain more clarity. Clarity will bring a sense of control. And in this sense, control really does work. And see the other, your partner, as a real helpmate in this process.
12. Make a commitment to respect each other through this experience. Reinforce that respect by talking with each other about how good it feels to trust each other and to trust how much you each care.

## **A final reminder:**

When true love is present, all that has never been loved before will come to the surface because it can and because it must. That is part of the natural, spiritually wise role of love in your life. It helps you heal and grow and expand into your true, magnificence together.

