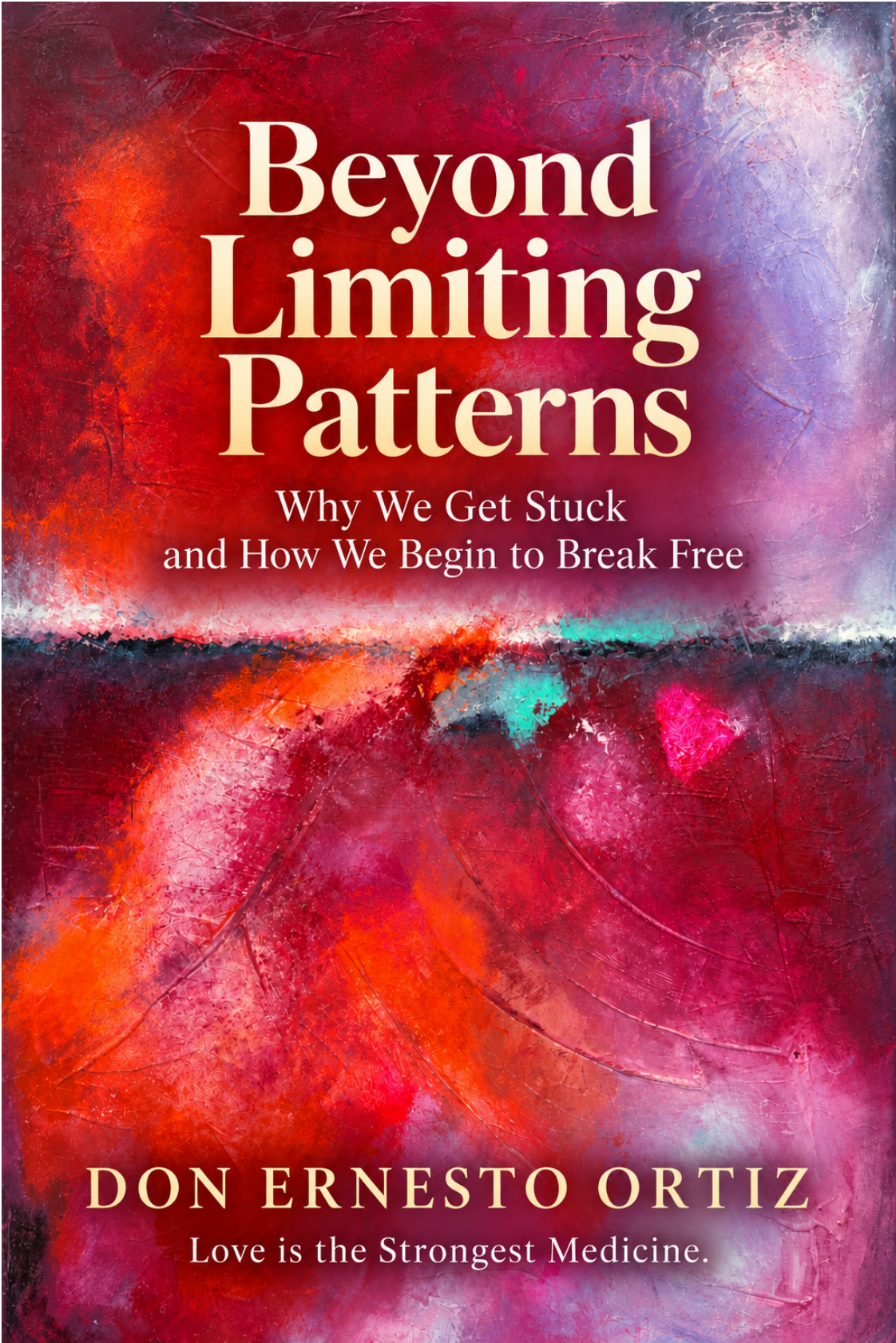




Beyond Limiting Patterns

Why We Get Stuck
and How We Begin to Break Free

DON ERNESTO ORTIZ

Love is the Strongest Medicine.

COPYRIGHT



Copyright © 2026 Don Ernesto Ortiz

Beyond Limiting Patterns

Why We Get Stuck ~ and How We Begin to Break Free

Cover Artwork:

Natacha Skorochod Velásquez

www.nsvelasquez.com

This e-book may be freely distributed in its complete and unaltered form for personal, educational, and non-commercial purposes.

No part of this publication may be altered, translated, republished, reproduced for commercial sale, or incorporated into other works without written permission from the author.

When sharing this work, please retain the author's name, copyright notice, and website information.

www.journeytotheheart.com

PLEASE SHARE THIS BOOK

This book was written as a gift and an invitation to a larger conversation about transformation, compassion, personal freedom, and the awakening of the human heart.

You are warmly encouraged to share this e-book.

Please feel free to send it to friends, family members, colleagues, students, teachers, and communities who may benefit from its message.

If you share this work, please retain the author's name and website:

Don Ernesto Ortiz
Journey to the Heart
www.journeytotheheart.com

If this book touched your heart, please share it with three people or more.

Beyond Limiting Patterns
Why We Get Stuck ~ and How We Begin to Break Free
By Don Ernesto Ortiz

Introduction

Perhaps you have experienced a moment when everything seemed to open. A teaching, a retreat, a ceremony, or a quiet realization helped you see yourself differently. You returned to your life with a sense of possibility and then discovered that familiar patterns were still waiting for you.

This short book begins with that experience. Why can we sincerely want to change and yet find ourselves returning to what we hoped to leave behind? What keeps a familiar belief, reaction, or attachment active after we have recognized it?

Through my work with the Akashic Records, I have developed a spiritual understanding of these patterns that I describe through Imaginal Cells and the Amos Code. In these pages, I share what these terms mean within my teaching, and how they help me approach the relationship between accumulated programming and our inherent potential.

We will explore addiction, attachment to the self, codependency, and the ways our search for security can restrict our freedom. We will also consider the art of questioning, the movement from intellectual understanding to lived experience, and the importance of integration in everyday life.

You do not need to be my student or already know the Akashic Records to enter this conversation. Read slowly. Notice what resonates, what raises a question, and what brings you into a more honest encounter with yourself.

I offer this book as a gift: an invitation to approach our patterns with compassion and to discover what becomes possible when they no longer decide everything for us.

Chapter 1

Imaginal Cells: Why Transformation Doesn't Always Last

If you have followed a spiritual path for some time, taken workshops and classes, attended retreats, meditated, done healing work, or participated in ceremonies, I am sure you have experienced something like this.

You attend a retreat or a powerful workshop, and something opens inside you.

Perhaps the teacher is inspiring, and their words touch something deep within you. Maybe the teachings give you a completely different way of looking at yourself and your life. Perhaps the energy of the group carries you into a deeper experience.

Or maybe you participate in a profound ceremony. The facilitator creates a safe and sacred space, and through the ceremony, or perhaps through an experience with a teacher plant, you are shown something about yourself that you had never been able to see before.

Something opens.

The teachings make sense. You feel inspired. Perhaps you experience a breakthrough, a healing, or a profound realization. You see yourself and your life differently. You make decisions about what you are going to change when you return home.

You feel alive.

It is almost as though someone has taken a balloon and filled it completely with air. You leave the retreat expanded, excited, and full of possibility.

And then you go home.

Life begins again.

There are responsibilities waiting for you. Work. Family. Relationships. Bills. Emails. The familiar environment. The familiar people.

And sometimes there is no one around you who really understands what you just experienced, no one with whom you can share what happened inside you.

Little by little, something begins to change.

The air starts escaping from the balloon.

Not all at once.

Slowly.

The clarity isn't quite as clear. The meditation practice becomes less frequent. The promises you made to yourself begin competing with the demands of everyday life.

And after a few weeks, or, if you are lucky, after a few months, you may find yourself wondering:

What happened to me?

You know something changed.

You know the experience was real.

And yet somehow you seem to be returning to many of the same patterns.

Another way I describe it is this:

You take five enormous steps forward...and then somehow you take four steps back.

Have you ever experienced that?

More importantly, have you ever wondered why?

Why is it that we can have a genuine breakthrough, understand something profoundly, feel different, even be different, and yet some invisible force seems to pull us back toward the person we were before?

For many years, this question fascinated me.

And it eventually led me to something I began calling "Imaginal Cells".

The Dragonfly

My exploration began many years ago when I became fascinated with the life of the dragonfly.

The dragonfly begins its life beneath the surface of the water. Depending upon the species and conditions, it may spend a substantial portion of its life there before eventually emerging from the water and becoming the extraordinary winged creature we recognize.

That image spoke deeply to me.

Water has long been associated symbolically with the emotions, and I began to see a profound parallel with the human experience.

How much of our lives do we spend underwater?

We live submerged in emotional experiences, memories, conditioning, relationships, fears, expectations, wounds, beliefs, and patterns inherited from our families and ancestors.

Sometimes we become so accustomed to those waters that we don't even realize we are swimming in them.

Then something happens.

Perhaps through meditation, healing, ceremony, prayer, a teacher, a retreat, or simply a moment of grace, we rise above the surface and glimpse something completely different.

For a moment, we can see.

For a moment, we can breathe differently.

For a moment, we experience another possibility of who we might be.

But then something seems to pull us back beneath the surface.

I began asking myself:

What is it that keeps pulling us back?

What causes someone to experience a genuine transformation and then slowly return to an old way of being?

That inquiry eventually became an important part of my work with the Akashic Records.

In my teaching, the Akashic Records are a spiritual field of information through which we explore our experiences, patterns, and possibilities for growth. Working within them involves asking questions and listening inwardly for guidance and understanding.

And it led me toward a very different understanding of what I call Imaginal Cells.

But before we go there, nature gives us another beautiful teacher.

The Lotus

The lotus is one of the most beautiful flowers in the world, and yet it does not begin its journey in beautiful surroundings.

Its roots are anchored in the mud beneath dark and murky waters.

And from that mud, it begins its journey toward the light.

Slowly, it pushes upward through the darkness and the muddy water, always moving toward the surface, toward the warmth and light of the sun.

Eventually, it breaks through the water and reveals something magnificent, a flower of extraordinary beauty.

What a remarkable image for the spiritual journey.

In many ways, the lotus is no different than ourselves.

We begin our lives surrounded by conditions we did not choose, our family, our culture, our circumstances, our ancestral history.

Along the way, we accumulate experiences, wounds, fears, disappointments, beliefs, attachments, and emotional patterns.

These become our muddy waters.

And yet, somewhere within us, there is something that continues reaching toward the light.

We may not even know what we are searching for.

We simply know that there must be something more.

And so, like the lotus, we begin pushing through the mud.

We search.

We question.

We suffer.

We learn.

We fall down and begin again.

Perhaps we discover meditation. Perhaps a teacher appears. Perhaps we discover prayer, ceremony, the Akashic Records, or another spiritual path. Perhaps we attend a workshop or retreat that changes the way we see ourselves and our lives.

And eventually we begin asking deeper questions:

Who am I?

Why am I here?

Why do I continue repeating the same patterns?

Is there something beyond the way I have been living?

In one way or another, we are searching for the surface.

We are searching for the light.

We are searching for liberation.

And eventually, like the lotus, there may be moments when we break through the surface.

We experience a glimpse of something greater, a moment of clarity, awakening, peace, love, unity, or profound understanding.

But there is something very important about the lotus that we should not overlook.

The lotus does not wait for the mud to disappear before it begins its journey.

It grows through it.

And neither must we.

We do not have to wait until every wound has healed, every fear has disappeared, and every difficulty in our lives has been resolved before we begin reaching for the light.

Perhaps our wounds, our fears, our disappointments, and even some of our darkest experiences are not simply obstacles standing between us and the light.

They can become part of the very journey through which we discover it.

And when the lotus finally breaks through the surface, something extraordinary happens.

It opens.

The sun did not create the lotus.

The light simply creates the conditions that allow what was already contained within the lotus to reveal itself.

And perhaps the same is true for us.

The spiritual journey does not create our brilliance.

It creates the conditions through which our brilliance can finally be revealed.

But the lotus offers us yet another beautiful teaching.

At the end of the day, as the light disappears, the lotus closes its petals.

To me, it is as though the lotus turns inward.

It returns to itself.

And I see in this a beautiful image of meditation.

After reaching toward the light and opening ourselves to the world, there must also be a returning inward, a time of silence, contemplation, integration, and communion with ourselves.

The spiritual journey is therefore not only about reaching toward the light.

It is also about learning to return within.

We emerge.

We open.

We return within.

We integrate.

And then we open again.

Perhaps that is the spiritual path itself.

And the lotus reminds us of something else that is very important:

The mud is not the lotus.

The lotus grows through the mud, but it is not defined by the mud.

Likewise, our fears are not who we are.

Our wounds are not who we are.

Our emotional patterns are not who we are.

Our conditioning is not who we are.

They may be the environment through which we have had to grow, but they do not define the brilliance of what lies within us.

The dragonfly teaches us that we can rise out of the emotional waters.

The lotus teaches us that we can grow through those same waters toward the light, open to something greater, and then return within to integrate what we have discovered.

But both leave us with an important question:

If we are naturally drawn toward the light, why do we so often find ourselves pulled back into the muddy waters?

Why, after touching something profound, do we find ourselves repeating the same behaviors, the same emotional reactions, the same relationships, and sometimes even the same suffering?

What is it within us that keeps repeating the old patterns even after we have experienced something greater?

What keeps pulling us back under the water?

This brings us to what I call Imaginal Cells.

What I Mean by Imaginal Cells

I have been exploring and teaching about Imaginal Cells for many years.

The term itself is not unique to my work. Other writers and teachers have used imaginal cells as a metaphor for personal, social, and evolutionary transformation.

Norie Huddle used the metamorphosis of the butterfly as an image for social transformation. Elisabet Sahtouris explored metamorphosis and living systems in relation to human evolution. Barbara Marx Hubbard used imaginal cells extensively in her teachings on Conscious Evolution.

Their interpretation is beautiful.

But mine developed differently.

In much of their work, the imaginal cell represents the emerging new possibility, something carrying the blueprint of what is trying to become.

In my teaching, Imaginal Cells represent something quite different.

I began to understand them as carriers of old information, patterns and programs that continue to influence us even after our conscious mind has decided to change.

They may be associated with experiences from this lifetime, emotional wounds, ancestral and genealogical patterns, or, within the framework of my work with the Akashic Records, patterns carried across other lifetimes.

Think about this for a moment.

Imagine that you have spent fifty years telling your entire being:

This is who I am.

This is how I survive.

This is what love looks like.

This is what happens when I trust.

This is what happens when I become vulnerable.

This is what I deserve.

Perhaps some of those messages were never even consciously spoken.

Maybe you learned them from your parents.

Perhaps you inherited them from generations before you.

Maybe they arose from painful experiences.

And perhaps some are so deeply embedded that you no longer recognize them as beliefs.

You simply experience them as reality.

Then you attend a four-day retreat and discover something extraordinary:

None of that has to define you.

Wonderful.

But what happens to fifty years of programming?

It doesn't necessarily disappear simply because you have understood something new.

The conscious mind may say:

I am free.

While somewhere much deeper another program whispers:

No, you're not.

And this, I believe, is one of the reasons spiritual transformation can sometimes feel like five steps forward and four steps back.

The conscious mind has received the new information.

The heart may even have experienced it.

You may genuinely have changed.

But somewhere deeper, the old programming is still running.

And eventually it begins pulling us toward the familiar.

Back beneath the water.

Back into the mud.

Back toward the person we thought we had left behind.

This does not mean the retreat failed.

It does not mean the teacher failed.

It does not mean the ceremony failed.

And it certainly does not mean that your experience wasn't real.

Perhaps something else is happening.

Perhaps the experience showed you what is possible. Perhaps it showed you that you are possible.

Now the deeper work begins.

Perhaps that is one of the great invitations of the spiritual journey.

Not simply to have extraordinary experiences.

Not simply to become inspired.

Not simply to keep inflating the balloon again and again by attending another workshop, another retreat, another ceremony.

But eventually to ask:

What keeps letting the air out?

What keeps pulling me beneath the water?

What keeps me rooted in the mud when some part of me already knows the direction of the light?

And perhaps the most important question of all:

What would happen if I finally released what is preventing the deepest blueprint within me from expressing itself?

The dragonfly eventually leaves the water.

The lotus eventually reaches the light.

And perhaps our journey is not about becoming something that we are not.

Perhaps it is about releasing everything that prevents us from discovering, and expressing, the brilliance of what has been there all along.

The Amos Code

This brings us to something essential in my understanding of Imaginal Cells: what I call the Amos Code.

Before going further, let me explain what I mean by that.

The Amos Code is not something that we acquire through a workshop, a teacher, a ceremony, or even through spiritual practice. It is something that is already present within us.

Within my spiritual understanding, I describe the Amos Code as an original blueprint carried within our DNA, a deeper coding of our inherent potential that exists beneath

the accumulated programming of our human experience. I use this language to express my spiritual framework rather than an established description of genetics.

Throughout our lives, layers of information are added: emotional experiences, beliefs, fears, family conditioning, ancestral patterns, trauma, and, within my understanding of the Akashic Records, information carried from other lifetimes.

These layers can become so powerful that we begin to identify with them.

We believe that they are who we are.

But they are not the original blueprint.

They are what has accumulated around it.

This distinction is fundamental to my teaching about Imaginal Cells.

The Imaginal Cells carry the old programming.

The Amos Code carries the possibility of the original blueprint.

Therefore, the purpose of this work is not to create the Amos Code, nor is it to place something new within us.

It is to remove what has prevented what is already there from being fully expressed.

This is why I often think of a brilliant light covered by layer after layer of cloth.

Removing the cloth does not create the light.

The light was already there.

As the old programming is identified and released, the brilliance of the Amos Code can begin to surface, allowing the original blueprint to express itself more fully in our lives.

Chapter 2

Recognizing Old Patterns and Beginning to Break Free

Recognizing the Old Programming

How do we recognize the old programming?

Often, we begin by noticing the distance between what we consciously want and what we repeatedly do.

We want intimacy, yet we withdraw when someone comes close.

We want to express ourselves, yet we remain silent because we fear disapproval.

We want freedom, yet we continue making choices around the fear of losing something.

And sometimes we recognize the pattern very clearly.

We know it hurts us.

We know we want to change.

Yet we find ourselves returning to it.

Understanding Addiction

Addiction can be a painful example of this struggle.

But when I speak of addiction here, I am speaking beyond alcohol, drugs, or other substances.

Within my spiritual understanding, addiction is a pattern created and sustained by the ego through which we repeatedly seek something outside ourselves to escape what is happening within us. It can become a way of running away from ourselves, creating separation from the real self.

The object of that attachment can take many forms.

Gambling. Sugar. Overeating. Sex. Shopping. The internet. Being Wounded.

Even yoga and spiritual practices can become part of this pattern when we use them compulsively to avoid our feelings, our responsibilities, or an honest encounter with ourselves.

These activities are not all addictions simply because we enjoy them or practice them often. What matters here is our relationship with them: the sense that we must return to them, the difficulty of choosing otherwise, and the consequences for our lives.

What am I seeking through this?

And what am I trying not to feel?

Perhaps we shop to briefly escape a sense of emptiness.

Perhaps we eat beyond our hunger because food offers comfort.

Perhaps we continually seek sexual encounters because being desired gives us a temporary feeling of worth.

Perhaps we spend hours on the internet because silence would bring us into contact with loneliness.

Perhaps we become attached to being wounded because it brings us attention and care. Without realizing it, we may be asking others to “lick our wounds,” hoping their tenderness will soothe a pain we have not yet learned how to meet within ourselves.

Or perhaps we move from one spiritual practice to another, continually seeking an elevated experience while avoiding something painful that needs our attention.

The relief may be real.

But it may also be temporary.

And when it fades, the need returns.

Someone may sincerely decide to stop or change the behavior. They recognize its consequences. They make promises to themselves and perhaps to the people they love.

And then the urge returns.

An uncomfortable feeling arises. Loneliness. Anxiety. Emptiness. A memory. Or simply a familiar situation that awakens the familiar desire.

They fight it.

They resist.

They tell themselves: This time, I will not give in.

And yet they may find themselves returning to the very thing they had decided to leave behind.

Afterward comes the disappointment.

Why did I do this again?

Sometimes shame follows, and the struggle becomes even more painful.

Within my teaching about Imaginal Cells, this invites us to look beneath the repeated behavior and explore the information sustaining it.

What does this pattern promise me?

What do I fear experiencing without it?

And how has seeking relief become a way of moving farther away from myself?

Understanding this does not explain every aspect of addiction, nor does it replace the support someone may need. But it can open a compassionate inquiry into what happens beneath the conscious decision to stop.

Self-Cherishing: Attachment to the Self

And perhaps one of the deepest addictions, in this spiritual sense, is our attachment to the self: self-cherishing.

Here, I mean the continual preoccupation with “me” and “mine.”

My desires. My fears. My importance. My opinions. My looks. My need to be recognized, protected, and right.

Self-cherishing is different from caring for ourselves with love and respect. It places our own concerns at the center of everything, making it difficult to see beyond them.

We become attached to a particular image of ourselves and feel compelled to defend it.

We seek approval because it reassures us that this image is valuable.

We resist criticism because it threatens the identity we have built.

We may insist on being right even when doing so damages a relationship.

And even our suffering can become part of that identity.

This is my wound.

This is my story.

This is who I am.

We deserve compassion for what we have experienced. Yet we can also ask whether we have become so identified with our story that we no longer allow ourselves to discover anything beyond it.

When we hold that identity tightly, letting go can feel threatening.

Who would I be without the story I have repeated for so long?

Self-cherishing can also enter our spiritual lives.

We want to be more evolved, more knowledgeable, more awakened. We may become attached to being the healer, the teacher, or the person who has extraordinary experiences.

Even the search for freedom can become another way of reinforcing the identity we are trying to release.

We may accumulate teachings, titles, initiations, and experiences while continuing to organize everything around the same question:

What does this say about me?

Within my understanding, this attachment deepens our sense of separation, from others and from the real self beneath the identities we defend.

So, our inquiry must also turn inward:

What image of myself am I protecting?

What happens when that image is questioned?

Can I care for myself while allowing the needs and suffering of others to matter just as deeply?

Can I listen without needing to defend myself?

Can I encounter another person without making their experience revolve around mine?

Recognizing self-cherishing invites us to loosen our grip, opening space for compassion, connection, and a greater freedom to be.

This brings us back to the deeper inquiry of Imaginal Cells.

What old information keeps telling me that I must seek, repeat, possess, or defend something in order to be whole?

And what becomes possible when that information no longer governs my choices?

Codependency and Personal Freedom

A similar inquiry can help us recognize patterns of codependency.

We may begin organizing our lives around being needed, wanted, approved of, or loved by another person.

Little by little, our own needs become harder to hear.

We say yes when something within us wants to say no.

We take responsibility for another person's feelings.

We try to keep the peace by abandoning our own truth.

We may even feel guilty for wanting time, space, or a life that belongs to us.

And eventually we must ask:

How much of my personal freedom have I surrendered to preserve this connection?

The need to feel wanted and loved is deeply human. But when our sense of worth depends upon another person's response, even a painful relationship can become difficult to leave.

Somewhere within us, there may be an old message:

Without you, I am nothing.

If you leave, it means I am not worthy of love.

If I stop taking care of you, you will no longer need me.

And if you no longer need me, will you still love me?

We may stay because the relationship gives us moments of reassurance, even while we repeatedly silence ourselves to keep it.

This surrender of freedom can also appear in our relationship with work.

We remain in a job because it gives us money, security, recognition, or a familiar identity.

Those are real needs. Financial responsibilities deserve to be taken seriously.

But alongside those practical realities, there may also be a deeper belief:

I have no choice.

I cannot do anything else.

My worth depends upon what I earn.

It is safer to remain unhappy than to face the unknown.

The inquiry is not simply whether we should leave a job or a relationship.

It is whether we can recognize what is shaping our choices.

Am I staying with awareness?

What responsibilities must I honor?

What possibilities have I stopped allowing myself to consider?

Where have I mistaken fear for the whole truth of my situation?

Sometimes the familiar offers enough comfort to keep us attached, even when it also brings suffering.

We know how to live within it.

We know what is expected of us.

Beyond it, we may not yet know who we will be.

This is where recognizing the old programming becomes important.

In my understanding of Imaginal Cells, the information they carry can become so familiar that we experience it as our identity.

This is who I am.

This is what I need.

This is all that is possible for me.

But can we begin to question those statements?

Can we observe the urge, the fear, or the need for approval without immediately allowing it to decide for us?

Recognition begins to create room for another possibility.

We can approach what we discover with honesty and compassion.

We can ask what purpose the pattern has served, what it has cost us, and what support we need to begin responding differently.

And beneath that inquiry lies the question that brings us back to the Amos Code:

What within me has not yet had the freedom to express itself?

We might call this the path of the wounded healer, when our desire to care for others becomes entangled with our own unresolved wounds.

Codependency can be difficult to recognize because it often takes the shape of qualities we value.

Devotion.

Loyalty.

Generosity.

The willingness to help.

We may give so much that everyone around us sees a caring person, while we quietly lose the freedom to choose when and how we give.

One question can help us see more clearly:

Can I choose to act differently without feeling that my worth or the connection itself is in danger?

Perhaps someone comes to us with a problem.

Before they have even asked for help, we begin arranging a solution. We interrupt our plans, assume responsibilities, and devote our energy to making everything better.

We may do this so automatically that we never pause to ask:

What help is actually needed?

What can I reasonably offer?

What belongs to this person to work through?

Over time, a particular arrangement develops.

One person repeatedly takes responsibility.

The other becomes accustomed to having responsibility taken for them.

Both may find the arrangement familiar, even as it limits their freedom to grow.

The person who helps may feel exhausted and unappreciated. Yet stepping back can awaken a surprising discomfort.

If I am no longer solving the problem, what is my place here?

This is where codependency can reveal its connection to identity.

We have become the strong one.

The reliable one.

The one who always knows what to do.

Allowing someone else to find their way requires us to loosen our attachment to that role.

It may also require us to tolerate an unfinished situation.

Someone can be struggling, and we can remain present without immediately intervening.

Someone can make a choice we would not make, and we can acknowledge that their life belongs to them.

This can be uncomfortable when we have learned to experience another person's distress as an instruction to act.

But that discomfort gives us something to observe.

What happens within me when I cannot make everything better?

Can I remain loving while allowing uncertainty?

Can I offer support without taking over?

Personal freedom also includes allowing others the freedom to develop their own capacities.

When we continually rescue someone, we may unintentionally reinforce the belief that they cannot manage without us. And each time we make ourselves indispensable, we strengthen our own attachment to being indispensable.

The pattern sustains itself through both roles.

Changing it may therefore disturb the familiar balance of a relationship.

Others may question our new boundaries. We may question them ourselves.

A familiar feeling of guilt can arise even when we have made a thoughtful and reasonable choice.

That feeling deserves attention, but it does not have to determine our next action.

We can pause.

We can listen.

We can consider whether there is something to repair or whether we are experiencing the discomfort of responding in a new way.

Within my teaching about Imaginal Cells, these moments offer an opportunity to notice the old programming as it becomes active.

We may understand a pattern when we are alone and peaceful. Then someone asks something of us, expresses disappointment, or encounters a difficulty, and the familiar response returns.

That is the moment when the teaching becomes personal.

Can I recognize what is happening before I automatically repeat it?

Can I make a conscious choice about what I offer?

A change may begin with something very small.

Asking before helping.

Taking time before answering.

Offering what we can sustain.

Allowing another person to complete a task in their own way.

Receiving care without immediately trying to repay it.

Through these choices, we begin discovering a relationship in which giving and receiving have room to breathe.

We can be close while retaining our own direction.

We can contribute without becoming responsible for everything.

We can allow ourselves to matter even when we are not performing a useful role.

And perhaps this is one of the deeper invitations of personal freedom:

To discover that our presence has value before we do anything to earn our place.

From Recognition to Release

Recognizing a pattern is an important beginning.

We begin to see what we repeat, what awakens our reactions, and where our choices become restricted. Yet we may also discover that understanding a pattern does not automatically free us from it.

We can describe it clearly and still find ourselves responding in the familiar way.

We may have experienced moments of genuine healing and made meaningful changes in our lives. And yet a particular pattern continues to return, inviting us to explore more deeply.

This is where, in my teaching, we begin an inquiry into the information carried by Imaginal Cells.

The initial levels provide an essential foundation. Through the art of questioning, students begin to experience the magic of self-transformation. They discover how a sincere question can open an unexpected understanding, reveal a familiar situation from another perspective, and bring them into contact with their inner healing potential.

They learn to listen.

They learn to ask more deeply.

And they begin to experience the Akashic Records as a space for an intimate encounter with themselves.

A question opens an exploration. What emerges may invite another question, taking them beyond their first explanation and into something they had not previously considered.

Through this process, students begin to recognize how working within their Records can bring clarity, understanding, and meaningful changes into their lives.

These experiences build trust.

They also help students develop the capacity to approach what arises with honesty and compassion. They become more willing to look at difficult experiences without immediately turning away, judging themselves, or searching for the answer they hoped to receive.

In the way I teach the Akashic Records, I have reserved this deeply profound work for the Level 3 and 4 classes.

However, in many cases, what they discover remains primarily intellectual knowledge. They can understand a pattern and recognize its influence without yet reaching the emotional depth at which they carry it.

My goal in Levels 3 and 4 is to introduce experiential exercises that invite students to open their emotional body and enter into a direct experience of the teaching.

The understanding becomes something they feel within themselves.

Through this deeply personal encounter, we begin approaching what I describe as the root system of the pattern, and the seed from which these bundles of Imaginal Cells emerged.

Within my teaching, this is where the exploration deepens: from knowing about a pattern to encountering the emotional information that sustains it, opening the possibility of working with it at its roots.

At this stage, we begin introducing other modalities, supported by what I experience as the energizing presence of the Akashic Records. Targeted breathwork is one of these modalities, a way of bringing the inquiry into a direct encounter with the body, the breath, and the emotions.

Together, these practices invite students to deepen their experience of what they have discovered through questioning, bringing attention to how a pattern is felt and carried within them.

By Level 3, students begin working with what, within my spiritual understanding, I describe as the deeply rooted information Imaginal Cells hold within our DNA. This exploration continues in Level 4.

The inquiry now moves beyond identifying what we repeatedly do.

We begin exploring the information that keeps those patterns active, even after we have consciously chosen to change.

This asks for a willingness to look beneath our familiar explanations.

We may begin with a behavior, an emotional reaction, or a situation that keeps recurring. But as we question more deeply, we allow room for an understanding that reaches beyond what we already know about ourselves.

What meaning does this pattern hold for me?

What belief continues to give it authority in my life?

What do I fear would happen if I released it?

The art of questioning becomes especially valuable here. The main question is important because it opens the inquiry and gives it direction. But the art lies in knowing how to formulate the sub-questions and follow them as the exploration unfolds.

An answer may reveal something unexpected, a feeling, a belief, a memory, or a connection we had not previously recognized. By listening closely, we begin to discover the next question.

What does this mean for me?

What lies beneath this feeling?

How is this connected to the pattern I am exploring?

Rather than rushing back to the original question, we allow these emerging questions to deepen the inquiry. Each offers an opening through which we can approach the pattern with greater awareness, moving toward its roots.

We do not have to force an answer.

We can listen, reflect, and allow the inquiry to unfold.

Within my work with the Akashic Records, this is the threshold of a deeper exploration: recognizing the information I understand as sustaining the pattern and working toward its release.

The intention is to allow greater freedom in how we meet our lives.

Freedom to respond with awareness.

Freedom to make a choice that reflects who we are becoming.

Freedom for the inherent potential of the Amos Code to express itself more fully.

A question that once began with “Why do I keep doing this?” can now lead us toward a more intimate discovery:

What within me continues to carry this pattern?

And what is ready to be released?

The Willingness to Release

As this inquiry deepens, we may encounter something unexpected.

We want the suffering to end, yet part of us remains attached to the pattern through which that suffering continues.

This can be difficult to acknowledge.

Why would I hold on to something that hurts me?

Perhaps because the pattern also represents something familiar. It may have offered protection, preserved a connection, or helped us navigate an experience we did not know how to face.

We may recognize its cost today while still fearing what life would feel like without it.

This is why the willingness to release deserves our attention.

Within our Records, we can bring this uncertainty into the inquiry itself.

What do I believe I would lose if this pattern were no longer part of my life?

What has it helped me avoid?

Am I willing to discover a way of living beyond what I already know?

We can ask these questions sincerely, allowing ourselves to hear an answer that may be uncomfortable.

Perhaps we discover that we are afraid of taking responsibility for a choice.

Perhaps we are waiting for someone else to change before allowing ourselves to move forward.

Perhaps we have become so accustomed to a particular struggle that imagining life beyond it feels strangely unfamiliar.

Recognizing this gives us something meaningful to work with.

We can acknowledge the part of us that wants freedom and the part that remains afraid.

Both can be met with compassion.

There is no need to condemn ourselves for discovering hesitation. An honest recognition of where we are gives the inquiry greater depth.

We might begin with a simple admission:

I want to release this, but I am afraid.

That admission can open a more sincere conversation within our Records than insisting that we are ready while avoiding the fear beneath our words.

From there, another question becomes possible:

What do I need to understand about this fear?

The Meaning We Carry

An experience happens, and we draw a conclusion from it.

Someone leaves, and we conclude that we are unworthy of love.

We are criticized, and we conclude that expressing ourselves is dangerous.

We fail at something, and we conclude that we should never try again.

Over time, the conclusion can continue shaping our lives long after the original event has passed.

We approach new people through it.

We interpret new situations through it.

We may even overlook experiences that challenge it because we have become accustomed to expecting the same outcome.

Within my teaching about Imaginal Cells, I am interested in this information: the meaning that continues to operate beneath our present choices.

As we explore within the Akashic Records, we can begin distinguishing what we experienced from what we came to believe about ourselves because of it.

What happened?

What did I understand it to mean?

Does that understanding still govern the way I live?

This distinction can be profound.

We cannot change the fact that someone left. But we can question the conclusion that their leaving established our worth.

We cannot erase a painful criticism. But we can explore whether we still need to organize our lives around avoiding another one.

The inquiry gives us room to encounter our experience with a wider understanding.

In my teaching, this prepares us to work more deeply with the information carried by Imaginal Cells. We begin recognizing the instructions we have continued to live by, and the possibility that those instructions no longer need to determine our future.

The question becomes increasingly personal:

Am I willing to meet life without allowing this old conclusion to speak for me?

Giving the New Understanding a Place in Our Lives

As we move toward releasing old information, another question arises:

How will this understanding find expression in the way I live?

Within our Records, we may experience a moment of profound clarity. Something we have carried for years becomes visible in a different way. We recognize a belief we had accepted without question or discover that a familiar reaction no longer expresses what we know to be true.

Then we return to daily life.

A conversation takes place.

A decision must be made.

Someone responds in a way we did not expect.

These ordinary moments give us an opportunity to bring our understanding into experience.

Perhaps we have recognized how often we withhold our voice. Now there is something we need to say.

We feel the familiar hesitation.

But this time, we notice it.

We take a breath, find our words, and speak with greater honesty.

The words may be imperfect. Our voice may tremble. Yet we have allowed a new possibility to become an action.

This is an important part of integration.

What we discover within our Records needs room in our relationships, our decisions, and the way we care for ourselves.

We can ask:

What would honoring this understanding look like today?

Sometimes the answer is small and practical.

Having a conversation we have postponed.

Following through on a decision.

Making time for a practice that helps us remain present.

Receiving support when we would ordinarily withdraw.

A change becomes part of our lives through the opportunities we give it to be expressed.

Meeting Ourselves Along the Way

There may also be moments when we respond in the familiar way.

We recognize what happened only afterward.

This can bring disappointment, particularly when we believed we had already moved beyond that response.

But we can approach the moment with curiosity.

What happened just before I reacted?

What did I notice within myself?

Was there something I understood but did not yet know how to express?

We can bring these questions into our Records and continue the exploration.

In my teaching, this willingness to return to the inquiry matters. Each discovery deserves attention, and each difficulty can reveal something that needs further understanding.

We also begin noticing changes that might otherwise pass unnoticed.

Perhaps we recognize a reaction sooner.

Perhaps we recover more quickly.

Perhaps we can acknowledge our part in a conflict without spending days defending ourselves.

Perhaps we become more willing to ask for help.

These are meaningful expressions of a changing relationship with ourselves.

The Brilliance in Ordinary Life

When I speak of the Amos Code, the image of an original brilliance can sound extraordinary.

Yet its expression, within my understanding, can be deeply ordinary.

It may appear in the honesty of a conversation.

In the capacity to listen.

In a choice made with greater freedom.

In the generosity we offer without needing recognition.

In the ability to remain present when we would once have turned away.

We begin discovering what becomes possible when less of our energy is devoted to defending, repeating, and sustaining the old programming.

In the English language, people often say, “That is impossible.”

But I like to look at that word differently.

Impossible becomes: “I am possible.”

To me, this is an invitation to recognize the potential within us, even when we cannot yet see how it will unfold.

Perhaps what we have called impossible is a possibility we have not yet allowed ourselves to explore.

There is more room to participate in life.

More room to create.

More room to meet another person with an open heart.

And more room to recognize a possibility before fear has already decided against it.

The brilliance I speak of finds expression through how we live.

Through the attention we bring to this moment.

Through the care we offer.

Through the choices that gradually give form to what we have discovered within.

The inquiry remains open:

What is asking to be expressed through me now?

And am I willing to give it a place in my life?

Perhaps we can now return to the question with which we began:

Why does transformation not always last?

In my understanding, a profound experience can reveal a possibility while the old information continues to pull us toward the familiar. Working with Imaginal Cells brings our attention to what sustains that pull.

Through the art of questioning, we begin to recognize what we carry. Within the Akashic Records, we deepen that inquiry and approach the work of release. In daily life, we give what we discover an opportunity to take root.

The retreat ends.

The ceremony closes.

We return home.

And there, in the midst of an ordinary day, we encounter an opportunity to respond differently.

We speak a truth we once withheld.

We allow a choice we once believed was impossible.

We meet ourselves with compassion where we once offered only judgment.

In my teaching, these are expressions of the original brilliance finding its way into our lives.

The light was already there.

Now we begin allowing it to shine through the way we live.

With love and gratitude,

Ernesto Ortiz

Love is the Strongest Medicine.

Final Reflection

May we recognize our patterns with honesty and compassion.

May we find the courage to meet the feelings we have learned to avoid.

May we care for others without abandoning ourselves.

May we allow our understanding to take root in the way we live.

May we continue evolving not only intellectually, but spiritually and emotionally.

And may the awakening of the human heart guide us toward greater freedom, connection, and love.

Love is the Strongest Medicine,

Don Ernesto Ortiz

© 2026 Don Ernesto Ortiz

Beyond Limiting Patterns

Why We Get Stuck ~ and How We Begin to Break Free

All rights reserved, except for the sharing permission below.

This e-book may be shared freely in its complete and unaltered form for personal, educational, and non-commercial purposes.

Except for this permitted sharing, no part of this publication may be altered, translated, republished, reproduced for commercial purposes, or incorporated into other works without written permission from the author.

www.journeytotheheart.com

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With deep gratitude to Natacha Skorochod Velásquez for the beautiful artwork featured on the cover of this book.

Her artistic vision helped bring the spirit of this work into visual form.

www.nsvelasquez.com

To my children, thank you for the love, inspiration, and opportunities to grow that you bring into my life.

To my students, thank you for your sincere questions, your willingness to explore, and the experiences you share. You continually inspire me to deepen and refine these teachings.

To the Journey to the Heart team, thank you for your dedication, generosity, and care in helping this work reach others.

If this book touched your heart, please share it with all of your students and friends.

Much Love always,

Don Ernesto Ortiz

www.journeytotheheart.com

About the Author



Don Ernesto Ortiz

Don Ernesto Ortiz is a spiritual teacher, author, and the founder of Journey to the Heart. He guides students through the Akashic Records, Sacred Geometry, meditation, and experiential practices that invite deeper self-understanding and personal transformation.

His work brings together spiritual inquiry, compassion, and the art of questioning. Through classes, retreats, and journeys around the world, he encourages people to explore the patterns that shape their lives and to bring what they discover into everyday experience.

At the heart of his teaching is an invitation to recognize our inherent potential, cultivate a more loving relationship with ourselves and others, and live with greater awareness and freedom.

Love is the Strongest Medicine.

www.journeytotheheart.com