

Wally pointed out the window to the power lines running along the road. “One of those lines is the hot, or positive, cable; the other is the ground, or neutral, cable. The hot wire carries power generated up in northern Colorado at a coal-fired plant. The ground or neutral wire carries a charge back to that power plant. The electrical charge of this ground wire informs the power source of how much load is on the system.”

Wally paused for a moment as if to emphasize what he was about to say: “Without that ground wire reporting to the power plant, it would be impossible for additional electricity to flow out from that energy source into the ‘hot’ wire.”

“So is the ground wire a messenger of sorts that communicates with the power source about what has been used, and, in a sense, asks for more?” I asked.

“Well, Paul, I never thought of it quite like that, but that’s a pretty good way to describe it. Not only is the ground wire a critical messenger, electricians know that in a safe power delivery system, the ground wire has to have the same electrical carrying capacity as the hot wire. In other words, there has to be a big enough return—or ‘ground’—to accommodate all the electricity that has been sent via the hot wire. Most of the time, the ground wire will only be ‘asking’ for a small percentage of the total power made available to the system in the hot wire.

“In my diagram, I wrote ‘Ground Wire Switch’ next to the largest switch. No matter if the circuit with the smaller wire [6a] or the one with the larger wire [6b] is being used to turn on the lights, if I turn off the Ground Wire Switch, absolutely no lights will work. There has to be an operational ground or neutral wire for any power to get through to the lights. Without the ground wire, there is no completion of the loop that allows the electricity to flow to where it is needed!”

Wally’s Ground Wire Switch helped me see that I had a choice. I could choose to “stay” and notice what I really needed when uncomfortable feelings and situations presented themselves in my life, or I could “leave” by attempting to simply fix the discomfort in some way.



**SECTION ONE
WORKSHEET A**

Money Groundedness Practice:

Grounding with My Tendency to “Leave” Before I “Stay”

Take a few minutes to complete this first worksheet. Please deal with whatever you are feeling concerned or uneasy with right at this moment. If it is a money concern, fine. It may even be a level of frustration with this book and its approach to money. What matters is that you access your present discomfort.

? At this moment I’m feeling some discomfort about:

? My typical reaction to this kind of feeling is to:

? To “stay” with this uneasiness means that I will:

? The longer I stay with this feeling, the more clearly I see that I need:

? When I acknowledge this need, I feel:

? If I had left, I would have missed out on:

? By staying, I have learned or experienced:



As I worked with this exercise, I saw how little experience I had in paying attention to what was really going on. I had developed a hundred skills to “fix” or “leave” but felt totally disarmed by my sense of vulnerability when trying to access my feelings and true longings. The amazing thing, to my surprise, was the relief and sense of happiness that grew out of this place of “weakness”!

“Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired and success achieved.”

—Helen Keller

Looking back at my life from where I sat in my office that Monday morning, I couldn’t help but see how I, and so many others, were like our home with a defective fan plugged into the outlet: on the verge of catching fire from the lack of any real grounding around money and its true purpose: i.e. what it could and could not do.

It was at that point that I made the resolution to revise my way of relating to money both within myself as well as with my clients. Since I started practicing “staying vs. leaving,” with money as my teacher, I have seen some powerful changes take place.

When I stop to notice those changes, I feel so thankful for the day Wally fixed my fan and took the time to say, “Don’t underestimate the importance of being grounded.”