

do, spending the money you said you would spend. Six is where things get done, and is all about boundaries and limits.

At 6 o'clock you come to discover why you are alive: you find the fulfillment of your sense of purpose and mission. In those moments when you navigate all the curve balls which life inevitably throws you, when you manage to keep all the plates spinning and balanced at the same time, you will experience, at least in snapshots, a deep sense of achievement, accomplishment, and success. Your small, human, and temporary life suddenly feels fully worth living.

But if you stay in a world of limits and boundaries, having to show up on time, and leave on time, honor all your agreements and get the job done, what happens? You will experience some degree of stress. You cannot operate at 6 o'clock without a well-formed sense of being a separate person, without adopting a clearly defined "I." If you stay there too long, there are going to be various degrees of stress. If you remain at 6 o'clock day after day after day, week after week after week, you will ultimately have a burnout. Even eight hours a day causes stress to accumulate.

## **9 O'CLOCK: LETTING GO AND DISSOLUTION**

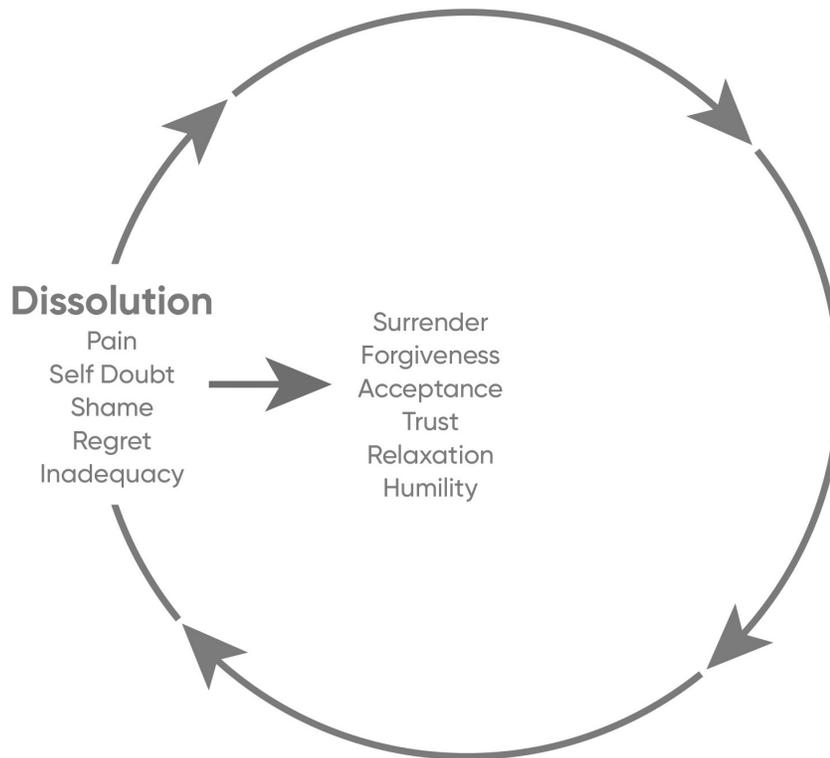
Nine o'clock is an essential part of the process, and cannot be overlooked. We can call it "Dissolution." Nine o'clock is about the return from contraction in form back toward formlessness. It is a kind

of identity death. You cannot go straight from 6 to 12. Nine o'clock is about the dissolving of boundaries. Twelve to 6 was a movement from formlessness to form. Six to 12 is a return from form to formlessness. After being involved in activity, you stop and feel the effect of all those boundaries. If you work hard all week, pushing yourself, and then you stop to relax on a Saturday or Sunday morning, what is your subjective experience? How do you feel? You might say to yourself, "I've been working hard, I'm even going to stay up late and push to get all this done, and then I'm going to enjoy a nice relaxed happy weekend with my partner." So you stay up till two in the morning, you get everything finished, and then you go to sleep, planning on a wonderful honeymoon day when you wake up. What happens? You feel like shit. You had a beautiful day lined up, to go out for breakfast, to go for a nice walk, but instead you have a terrible fight.

As you start to move out of 6, this part of the cycle starts as inherently painful, and unpleasant. Burnout feels horrible, when you have pushed yourself hard enough that you are exhausted. Even if you manage to sleep at night, you wake up in the morning with no energy. Everything feels overwhelming.

But eventually, as you continue to move out of stress and into rejuvenation, the feelings of exhaustion turn into a softening, a deep sigh of relief. Now you discover the true gift of 9: which is a sense of innocence, trust, humility, and relaxation. It is where all our learning happens. It is the part of the cycle where we

remember to surrender to a force greater than our small and limited mind.



In the next chapter we will discover how we can get stuck at any phase of this cycle, and how we shut down the Brilliance that is natural to us. But first, let me tell you about one of the most significant meetings of my life, which has been very formative in the development of this model.

## MEETING LEONARD COHEN

One of the greatest blessings of my life was spending time with Leonard Cohen. In many ways, this book is about him. He was, and is, the poster boy for Radical Brilliance, in all of its phases. In