



# Welcome to The Art of Living Consciously!

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*Today I am sharing a simple tip for becoming more conscious, empowered, and effective in your life.*

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**Notice how often you use the phrase “I have to,”** as in “I have to go to the grocery store.” “I have to get up early tomorrow.” “I have to do this.” “I have to do that.”

You probably use this phrase often. We all do!

These two words sound innocent enough but by using this phrase you are telling yourself that you are powerless to choose, which isn't even true!

**When you say that you “have to” do something, you are affirming to yourself that you have no choice.**

That you are a passive victim. That you are captive. That you're not in control of your own life.

***You are not captive. You are free. You always have a choice.  
You might not like your options, but you always have a choice.***

Want to liberate yourself? Drop “I have to” from your vocabulary.

## *Here's how to flip your mindset from captive to empowered:*

**Step One:** Notice when you say or think the phrase “have to.” This is important because you can't change what you don't notice.

**Step Two:** Recognize that you have a choice and change your language. You don't “have to” do anything, ever.

Instead, you can say “I want to” or “I choose to” or “I'm going to”.

Remember, you have created your life, choice by choice. You're responsible whether you take ownership or not.

Reaffirming your freedom puts you back in the driver's seat and reminds you that you do have a choice.

Don't you feel better already?

**BONUS Step Three:** Recognize what a privilege that choice is.

For example, if you feel you “have to” go to the grocery store, think of how amazing it is that you can just get in your car, drive to the store, and have access to a wide variety and quantity of fresh, healthy food. Then you get to bring it home and store it in a refrigerator for later. How incredible is that?

When you recognize the opportunity and privilege in the choice, you will begin to feel grateful for that abundance.

Suddenly, gratitude turns that trip to the grocery store into a joy rather than a chore.

This requires practice, but it pays off!

*Never underestimate the power of your words.*

I invite you to commit to noticing when you say, “have to.” Notice it with a compassionate, curious mind rather than a judgmental, negative mind.

You won’t hear yourself each time you say it or think it, but you’ll get better at it! The first step is noticing. Gently correct yourself, and maybe even interject gratitude.

*Here are other language swaps to try:*

Instead of...	Use...
<p><b>Can’t, should, shouldn’t, have to, need to, must etc.</b></p> <p><i>(These are captivity words)</i></p> <p><b>EXAMPLE:</b> “I have to go to work today.”</p>	<p><b>Choose to, choose not to, want to, am going to etc.</b></p> <p><i>(Reminds us that we are free, and we always, always have a choice)</i></p> <p><b>EXAMPLE:</b> “I choose to go to work today because I want the security my job provides.”</p>
<p><b>“Problem”</b></p> <p><i>(Labels a situation as negative rather than seeing it as just what is happening)</i></p> <p><b>EXAMPLE:</b> “I have a problem because my car won’t start.”</p>	<p><b>Experiencing a (life event), etc.</b></p> <p><i>(Allows us to see a situation with curiosity and neutrality, which is a much better frame of mind for finding solutions.)</i></p> <p><b>EXAMPLE:</b> “My car didn’t start. Ok, what do I want to do about it?”</p>
<p><b>“It” as in “It’s a great song,” or “It’s hard to learn that.”</b></p> <p><i>(“It” assumes truth in how we interpret something. There’s no ownership, responsibility, or room for questioning or other perspectives here.)</i></p> <p><b>EXAMPLE:</b> “It’s horrible, my flight was cancelled!!”</p>	<p><b>“I” as in “I like this song” or “I’m having difficulty learning that.”</b></p> <p><i>(“I” reminds us to filter our experience through a particular lens which is uniquely ours, and is not necessarily shared by others.)</i></p> <p><b>EXAMPLE:</b> “I feel disappointed that my flight was cancelled.”</p>

To learn more about The Art of Living Consciously, visit me at [TheArtOfLivingConsciously.com](http://TheArtOfLivingConsciously.com)

You’re well on your way to living a more conscious, fulfilling life!

Dr. Louise Finlayson is a Harvard Medical School trained Clinical Psychologist and Transformational Coach. Her mission is to inspire lasting transformation through awakening consciousness on the planet one person at a time.

Dr. Finlayson is highly engaged and passionate about her work. In the spirit of excellence, compassion, and integrity, she provides clients with a nonjudgmental, safe environment in which to explore and grow. She is known for the practicality and clarity of her teachings. Dr. Finlayson gives workshops and retreats locally, nationally, and internationally.



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