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A FREE EBOOK

UNDERSTANDING OTHERS STARTS WITH UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF

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FOREWORD

> *"A wise man, recognizing that the world is but an illusion, does not act as if it is real, so he escapes the suffering."*
>
> – BUDDHA

For your first step in wanting to improve yourself, it can sometimes be hard to know where to start. That is why I decided to write this little book. It is meant to be short and effective and hopefully make you want to proceed with what you were thinking when you picked up this book. I have talked to teenagers and adults about how to get control of their lives and have helped them find direction. Touching the hearts of youths can give you more than anything else in your life; for me, this is one of the most fulfilling experiences I do. You can never prevent people from being lost, but you can always point them in the right direction and that is what this book hopefully will do for you: point you in the direction of improvement, of control, of joy and fulfillment in your life.

When I started working on myself, the reason was that my boss at work sent me to a seminar that teaches NLP (NLP is Neuro Linguistic Programming, a model originally designed by John Grinder and Richard Bandler, for more information we suggest www.its.co.uk.). This was my inspiration to start doing more research and eventually to get into this field. Originally, the reason I was sent to this seminar was to improve my sales skills. Little did I know how much this seminar would change my life, improve it in so many ways and make it more enjoyable. Above all, I today have the opportunity to help other people to improve their lives. I know one thing: without attending that seminar, I would probably still be doing the same things over and over again without really getting or being the person I always wanted to be. It takes so little to do so much. If I would have known how little it takes to make big changes, I would have sought out this information a lot sooner.

The first advice I will give you in this book is simple: stand up straight, put your shoulders back, and start smiling. Up until this point, I am pretty sure you have not needed a reason to slouch, be depressed, or keep a straight face. So here is no reason whatsoever to smile and start making the little things make you smile. Be thankful for all those around you (even those who annoy you). Be thankful that you are not one of them, and that instead, you are walking straight and smiling. Keep your focus on those special things you have that they do not:

This book — and the fact you are taking the first step!

Congratulations on this, you have earned my respect by starting this process.

CHAPTER

01

WHY CHANGE OR IMPROVE?

> *"Success is getting what you want; happiness is wanting what you get."*
>
> – INGRID BERGMAN

> *"We must become the change we want to see."*
>
> – GANDHI

When you start this process, you have some idea of what it is that you want to do — otherwise, you probably would never have bought a book that is meant to help you with figuring out those things for yourself.

Later, we will go into more detail about what it is you might want to change or improve, but for now, we will concentrate on getting to the reasons why you think you must change.

Is this is a must for you or is it just something you think you will enjoy doing?

Is it a definite must for you to make a change at this point? Why is it a must? Where will you go if you keep on this track that you are on now?

What track will you be on if you do change?

Are things turning into a must at this stage for you? (If not, maybe you shouldn't start.)

Think carefully about in what direction you are going.

Where is it leading you? What places will it take you too — mentally and physically — regarding your work, your relationships with those around you? What does the future look like?

Who is still talking to you and what are your conversations about?

Will your life be an emotional rollercoaster or a flat comfort zone on this path?

Do you have a feeling that your life will be boring?

Will you be lost in all the things you have been thinking about getting rid of?

Will you do all or some of the things that you dream of doing?

Now is the time to take responsibility of your life: take control, create your own destiny, write your own autobiography (at least an outline) and tell yourself what you want to feel like in the future. What do you want to see? What do you want to hear from others? What you want to be telling yourself?

Do you want your future to be bright, fun, exciting, playful and fulfilling?

Then now is the time to improve (or change) the things that will get you to that point. Not yesterday or the day before: *today!* Change to the track where the compelling future you have wanted for so long but never had the tools to make. Change those dreams to goals. Set timelines, stop trying, and start doing. Those who *try* are deemed to fail, only those who *do* succeed.

By saying *you will try to change or improve things*, you are already giving yourself the right to fail. By simply using the word "try", you have already accepted that you do not have to go through with it. Think about it for a little bit: what are people really saying when they say they will *try*? Have you had a relationship that you *tried* to keep going? Did it end or did it last? Did you ever *try* skydiving? It is one of the hardest things to try to do: either you do it… or you do not. You get on the plane: now it is doing it or not. Those who try never make it to the dive itself, because they already accepted that the fear was allowed to control them and stop them from jumping.

I could not help but laugh. Not too long ago, as I was watching a trailer for one of my favorite shows. One of the lead characters is going to a therapist for the first time to seek help because he wants to get a better relationship with himself and others around him. The character on the shows cannot hold a relationship, he drinks pretty much constantly, and all he thinks about is himself. The therapist then asks him if he wants help with his drinking problem, alcohol problem, or relationship problem. The character looks at her and says, "No. Those are all very good; I just need to improve my communication with my family."

Realize, as well, that a lot of things are connected. Often, if you change in one area of your life, other things will automatically fall into place. The same thing with issues you might have: they may be affecting more than you realize.

So think about what you have been doing and how it affects the things around you:

What are the things you do on a regular basis?

What have they done for you to this point?

Can you see a connection between what you do and what you have?

Are you aware of that connection and still letting it hold you back?

CHAPTER

02

KNOW WHO YOU WANT TO BE

> *"life is not about finding yourself; it is about creating yourself"*
>
> – GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

> *"One reason so few of us achieve what we truly want is that we never direct our focus; we never concentrate our power. Most people dabble their way through life, never deciding to master anything in particular."*
>
> – ANTHONY ROBBINS

What is it that made you take a look at this section of the bookstore? What was the drive that made you start looking for a way to improve yourself? Doing what you are about to do takes courage; you will have to face your fears and be honest to — and about — yourself. For this, I would like to congratulate you, because most people never make it to this stage.

If there is one thing I know from experience: continue to explore what made you start this, explore it to the fullest, it is absolutely worth it. I would also like to congratulate you for taking these steps, and for first thinking and then taking action on that thought. In brief, that is what self-improvement is about — thinking, find the suitable solution, and then acting upon it.

Now what you should do at this point (before you start anything else) is be absolutely sure that this is what you want to do. Imagine you have to convince someone else of why they NEED to take this action: Why do they need to take this action? Where will it take them if they do not? Why again is this a must for them?

Find what it is that you want to improve. What is it that you would like to change? If you do not know what it is you would like to improve or what you would like to change to, then you are still missing one little element. (This may not be the best time to figure it out if you still need to, you might want to do this as you move further along in this book.) By doing this, you will also make it easier for yourself when (or if) you

choose to continue with what you started. Some of you might be doing it to improve communication with others; some might be doing it to simply get more out of life; or others because they feel like they are stuck in life.

Whatever the reason, this will hopefully work as a guide to you on what steps to take next or at least encourage you to do more.

Write down at least seven reasons for taking action on improving.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

When looking at improving yourself, your skills, your beliefs, or even your identity, you will need the courage to be honest to yourself. Be honest about what you build your decisions on, be honest about what you really want out of life, and be honest about things you may have messed up. If you are not honest about those things, you will not learn from them. If we assume there is no such thing as a mistake, only things to learn from. It's just another way of realizing that when what you tried does not get you what you want, (then all of a sudden life changes, you are filled with experience) and hopefully, you should realize that there is nothing wrong with doing things over and over till you get them right. That is what changing a simple thing like mistakes to experience can do for you. How often will you let your child fall before you say to him or her, "Guess you are not really the walking type of kid!"

Most people who have success in any form have been willing to try things, and have been willing to learn or draw experience from failures and ask themselves better questions. Some people get it right the first time. Others need several tries. It does not matter if we are talking about relationships, business, communication, arts, sports (or any activity that you do). If it does not work the first time, you do what? And if it does not work the second time, you do what?

Not too long ago, I was having a conversation with a twenty-eight-year-old man who had four failed relationships in his experience bag. He had been fighting himself because he was not willing to admit that he might have been wrong about how he did things and communicated in a relationship. We started talking about things and how they had been. The first thing he noticed when he started talking about them was that

all of the women he had dated had one (and in some cases a lot of) commonality. So immediately, he saw a pattern: he chose the same type of girls every time. If it had failed with the first or even the second, without changing himself, how did the third or fourth stand a chance?

As we started discussing it more, he began to notice some more patterns that he seemed to have followed in all of the relationships. He had the same way of:reacting to certain circumstances and dealing with things in a manner he had always done. He noticed that every single time, he was unsuccessful in getting what he really wanted. The reason it took this long to discover the pattern, he realized, was that he was so focused on what he wanted and how he wanted it done that he did not realize that choosing a different way of doing things might lead him to the things he wanted. All he would have to do is change his approach in the communication. What seemed to be in control when he was making his decisions was insecurity and fear of failure. He was so determined to getting the things he wanted, HIS WAY, that he failed to realize that with a little self-confidence and willingness to learn from past attempts, he could have changed his approach and gotten what he really wanted. His past communication patterns and ways of thinking had been the things stopping him from getting what he wanted. Because of his focus on what he wanted, he failed to see that when he was so focused on failure that the failure was exactly what he got.

Be willing to take a look at yourself from a neutral standpoint and be willing to admit that your decisions up till this point may not always have been getting you the things you really want.

Look at yourself from a different perspective and gain a new vision of yourself. You can try looking at yourself — as you would as your friend, your mother, your father, or someone else you know: what do you see? Are you always making the choices that will lead you to what you really want? Have you ever considered sitting down and asking your best friend how he really sees you and what obvious mistakes you are making? Have you ever asked your mother or father to do the same? Have you ever asked people you work with and then just paid attention to what they said — without judgment and with nothing but your full attention. Write down what they say; what do they see as your weaknesses and strengths? You do not always have to agree with them. You will fairly quickly be able to determine what really is, and what things you show (to be able to hide something else), what things you do not want people to see, and what hidden fears that (up until this point) have been all yours. By being neutral in this process and being neutral while reviewing how you do things, you can find out a lot about yourself. Just remember to ask the other person to be as honest (as you are willing to be with yourself). By talking to other people about ourselves and asking for honest opinions, we can often get good questions to ask ourselves. Most people have a tendency to ask questions such as “why would he/she say that?” or “how can they be so mean?” instead of asking “I wonder what I am doing or saying that would make them think that?” or “I wonder what experience they have that I could learn from in this situation?”

A new friendship or relationship cannot happen if there is blame. *This includes a new relationship with yourself.* This means one person is taking responsibility and the other one isn’t. This is both for new friendships and friendships that are being remade. This includes the relationship you have with yourself.

Be forgiving to yourself and others, those around you are easy to forgive if you can forgive yourself. Give yourself the chance to learn from the things you have done (and that others do, as well). We all learn lessons; some just need to be told it less time and learn them faster, because they look within, and they choose responsibility — instead of blame.

We keep looking for answers, but why do we?

Who said that looking for answers is the right thing to do?

Maybe what you should be looking for is the right question — for once you have that, the answers will become clearer…and now, you are actually getting somewhere.

CHAPTER

03

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

"The only man who behaves sensibly is my tailor; he takes my measurements anew every time he sees me, while all the rest go on with their old measurements and expect me to fit them."

George Bernard Shaw

> *"Never mistake knowledge for wisdom. One helps you make a living; the other helps you make a life."*
>
> – SANDRA CAREY

Everyone possesses the ability to learn new things. People have different learning skills and different attitudes towards learning. Some of these skills are and have been influenced by our surroundings, by connecting emotions to the way we learn or perceive what is being thought. Often the way one person learns can be the worst way for another person to try and grasp new knowledge or techniques. That is why different books work for different people and why different teachers fit better to some students than others.

What does this mean for you, have you tried something that did not work and just given up or did you go and find something else to see if that might do it for you?

If you have ever considered (or talked about) yourself as stupid, less intelligent, or not being able to learn, maybe you should stop and take a look at what you have learned up until this point.

How did you learn the things you know and are skilled with today? Did you learn by trying to do them, or did you learn by learning the theory of something and get to think about it and figure out how it worked using the theory you were taught?

We all have our way of learning efficiently; the only thing we tend to forget is how we learned and what the easiest way was for us in learning more. By engulfing ourselves in what we are learning (as children do), we learn easily. This is proven by looking at any child. Think about how a child learns: how fast does he or she learn? How fast could you learn by using the same technique?

Typically, the school systems only accommodate one learning procedure at a time; fortunately, there are many teachers and many different types of things we can learn in school. Why do some teachers stay in our minds for years? What did they have or how did they explain things that made you "get the point." Teachers are as different as students are; therefore (just as in any other relationship), the two parties involved do not always necessarily match. This does not in any way mean that you cannot learn from these teachers. On the contrary, what you could learn from that teacher is exactly *a new way of learning*, of becoming more flexible in your skills —while at the same time, improving your understanding of other people you will encounter in your life.

Teachers can be found at more places than schools. What have you learned from people around you? Who are your true teachers in life?

Who have you learned the most from?

How do you choose the people you learn from?

How have your choices been made, when choosing teachers?

Are you even aware of the most influential people in your life?

Did you learn something you really did want to learn or did you just pick something up because you were around it enough?

It is my belief that we are all born with the ability to learn. Some ways are easier than others, and we all have characteristics that we are born with. These characteristics are something that have to be nurtured, to be used to their full potential. These are the things that are the easiest for us to learn, and come most naturally to us without much effort. Of course, you can always learn things that are not considered your strong suit, and the skills of others can fairly easily be adapted to what you already possess. We can learn any skill that anyone dead or alive has ever had; if someone has done it before, we can do it again. If someone has not done it, then we are simply waiting for the first person to do it.

By doing research on yourself, you will fairly quickly find out what these "natural" abilities are and you can start by finding the positive and negative aspects of your characteristics. We all have positive and negative sides; we do control which ones we use and which ones we nurture. Unfortunately, some of us have been conditioned so the negative ones are often dominant. This is very easily changed once you know — and realize — it is easier to use the positive ones. In pretty much all instances, this will make you feel better about whom you are.

There are several different theories available about what our natural tendencies, strengths, and weaknesses are, and how they are set up and what characteristics go together. Some are better than others, simply because not too many years ago, people doing this kind of research were often judged if they did not stereotype like the high society wanted.

Sigmund Freud is a good example of that.

For years, research on women was unavailable so everything was done from the vision and characteristics of men. Today, fortunately, this has changed and more and more research has been done on these aspects. You can find a lot of these theories in your basic psychology books or simply online. You can also find personality profiling in a lot of books.

You can also find tests online that would show you approximately into which category you would fit. I highly recommend that you make the effort to look for these tests; they can not only help you figure out what your strengths are but also your weakness. With that knowledge, you can play more to your strengths and work on your weaknesses.

Marketers often rely on many of these theories to be able to sell products to consumers. Why do they use them?

Because they work!!!

In addition, some interesting theories to read are of course Freud, Jung, Erickson, and Maslov (to name a few).

When I was in school, I was usually the one whom the teachers did not expect anything from, because I was what they would call a "slow learner." I was not good with theories and did never fully understand why the things worked liked that. As I got older, it was not the fact that I was a slow learner, nor was it that I did not understand the theories. The thing that really held me back was that I had more questions than the teacher could answer. Because she did not have the answers and I wanted more explanations of how the things worked (so she assumed that I did not understand what she was explaining), this teacher would flat out say to me, "everyone else gets it. What is it that you do not understand?" Well, being a child, that made me feel kind of dumb (because I asked more questions, was compared to the other kids, and was chastised because I did not understand what they seemed to be understanding). What that ended up teaching me was not to ask questions at school, and that I should just learn what the teacher was saying by heart and not think too much about why things were that way.

It took me a long time to realize this and to understand that the best thing I can do is to ask questions. Questions are a base for learning new things, the base to better understand yourself and to get a different evaluation on things. At that age, we are vulnerable; we are easily influenced in what we call the "modeling years" of our lives. Yet some of the things we learn at this time hold us back as we get older.

How many things did you learn during the modeling ages of your life?

How much of that is still useful today?

Are they a choice by your conscious mind or are they simply a reaction to something you were taught or picked up along the way?

What things are holding you back?

What things do you want to change?

Do you need to change to be able to get what you want in life?

CHAPTER

04

KEEP LEARNING; LET YOUR INNER CHILD LOOSE

> *"Wisdom is not a product of schooling but of the lifelong attempt to acquire it."*
> – ALBERT EINSTEIN

> *"I do not think much of a man who is not wiser today than he was yesterday."*
> – ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Who are the best learners by nature? At what age did you learn the most? Did you have more problems learning than others at that age? Probably not; we are all more-or-less born as natural learners, just like all other living beings. The best part of it is that we can absorb an infinite amount of information and keep learning. There is no such thing as memory overload. The more you teach your brain, the better your brain functions. The more you are challenged, the more connections are made in your brain. This allows for more of everything your brain can offer. Just like your body does not grow by sleeping, your mind does not gather growth by not using it. On the contrary, the more you use it, the better it works. Try it: lay on the couch for thirty minutes and move as little as you can. Do you feel like going out and running afterwards?

How about if you stand up and walk around. What happens? Do you really want to sit down immediately? Does your body shout for more movement?

The link between memory and recalling information is very distinct. There is no such thing as a "bad memory," and your brain remembers what you are focusing on. The question is what where you focusing on and what are you really recalling?

How many names have you lost track of (or never got)? Do you really not remember the name or did you never store the information because you were not really focusing on the person's name?

Do you forget birthdays and other dates that you are really focusing on absolutely not forgetting? What are you truly focusing on? Is it absolutely not forgetting…. Absolutely forgetting….? What words does you mind delete, we will talk about this more in a later chapter.

What did you do when you were learning the most? A lot of kids I know have no interest in what they are learning in school and have been told that they are slow learners, and that they really cannot learn. At the same time, I am sitting with the same child getting dictated the whole history of the dinosaurs, the complete list of players and stats for the football team they like and the names of all their classmates. Wow, they must be really slow. There is no such thing as a bad or slow learner; there is simply a learner who has not yet discovered how he learns best.

By asking questions, we get answers. These processes we also call "thinking." The question you ask may in advance determine the answer you get. What is the difference between asking "what is 2 + 2?" and then asking "What could add up to get 4?" Is there more than one answer to the second question? Will it leave more possibilities open? Now what is the difference between asking, what am I doing wrong? Ask yourself, "how could I do this differently to make it work?"

Try it: take some thing or problem that you have been doing incorrectly and ask the other question regarding it.

What answers do you get? In the first question, you are more than likely getting all the answers to why it is not working. How about the second question? What does that do you for you? Do you get different answers? Both questions where supposed to lead you to the same answer, were they not? How to make it work? Fix it or make it better. Did the questions lead you to the same answer?

I was once told there is no such thing as a bad answer, only bad questions.

It has been said throughout time, in many different ways, "If you want a better answer, ask a better question." Have you ever tried helping someone solve a problem they had? What finally made them realize how it could be solved? Did you give them an answer or did you simply give them a new way of asking their question? Questions have endless power; they can control how you feel, what you do, and where you are headed in your life.

I was talking to one of my female friends, who is about twenty-six years old. We were trying to work on the frustration she felt when going to the mall or to stores, where people would bump into her or she would feel crowded. She would walk into these situations in a good mood, keeping in the back of her mind "I hate when people bump into me because it makes me frustrated and annoyed". After asking her why she would think that right off the bat when walking in the store in a good mood, she realized she was setting herself up to become frustrated. She deliberately had decided that "if" someone would bump into her, she would get frustrated. She kept asking herself, "When this happens, why are people so rude and inconsiderate?" She had plenty of evidence that people were this way (they had been bumping into her since she was a little girl). After talking to her for a little while, she decided that this was something that had to change. She hated

going to the stores with her boyfriend, her friends and family. Since this was around Christmas time and she had delayed her shopping, we tried to find a better question to ask when this would happen. Now realizing she was responsible for the way she felt, we found a good question to suit her. Every time some bumped into her, she started asking herself, "Am I going to let that person affect how I feel?" The answer, of course, was NO: she was not willing to let a stranger have control of her emotions. On the twenty-third of December, she went shopping by herself and had a great time, found all the gifts for all the people she wanted, and enjoyed every minute of it. A simple change of questions changed her life. Today this question she asks herself has a wide range of effects on things; she uses it more and more, copying what she did in one area to other aspects of her life.

What question are you asking yourself?

When did you make up these questions?

Are they well thought-out or has it just become a habit (a repetitive question)?

We will also go through repetitions and see how we seem to do things over and over without really asking ourselves why we do some of the things we do.

CHAPTER

05

EVALUATE YOUR TIME

> *"Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away."*
>
> – UNKNOWN

> *"Life is not a journey to the grave with intentions of arriving safely in a pretty well-preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out and loudly proclaiming … WOW! What a ride!"*
>
> – UNKNOWN

How much is your time worth? How do you evaluate your time? What do you use your time for? Is your time planned or does it just pass along? How much time have you spent, waiting, sitting around doing nothing, gaining nothing, losing nothing, without enjoying anything that will accumulate to the long run? Most people call this "being bored." I would call it not having enough goals (or, a perfect way to waste your life). If you have time to get bored, you have too little to do. Can you sit around and do nothing without being bored? Absolutely! Most people I know can enjoy sitting doing nothing, giving themselves time to relax, to contemplate things, and to enjoy being in the moment.

I have asked many people what they think their time is worth. In most cases, people have no idea what they think their time is worth, yet any employer has set what they think a person's time is worth. I have heard many people asking to get a raise, but they don't know how much they want, because they still have no evaluation of their time; they just know that they want *more*. Like any other thing you need to start thinking about, you need to determine what your time is worth. Once you have done that, you can start to think, "How can I make those around me agree with me on that?"

You can have different evaluations of you time: say that work is worth $10 an hour, but your free time is then worth $100. If you have an estimate like that, how will you make your time worth that amount? What can you do for yourself that is worth $100 an hour? A lot of people will do absolutely nothing with their

spare time; they will watch TV, engage in pointless conversations, read the newspaper or some other activity that does nothing but kill your time for you. If you have a conversation with someone about nothing, is that worth your time? Could you change the subject to something you would learn from or enhance your life in any way? Instead of watching TV, could you increase your knowledge, either on something you already know or by learning something new? What could you do to make your time worth more, to make yourself worth more?

I am not saying you should not take time to do these activities. They can be a lot of fun, they can be relaxing and can be enjoyed, but the point is, what else *besides this* are you doing? Are you making the best use of your time to get what you want out of life?

I was reading through a book once and it gave me a little advice that I took to heart, so I want to share this with you. Since you are probably already working on your vocabulary, try and switch the word *time* with *life*. So instead of saying "this is a waste of time," say "this is a waste of life."

See if your evaluation of your time changes.

> *"Time is of no importance; only life"*
> – FROM *THE FIFTH ELEMENT*

Before I really knew what I wanted out of life, I spent hours and hours in front of the television or the computer, or just sitting around and talking with friends about nothing. It seemed like a perfect thing to do to have time pass before the next day would start all over again. It was a routine that I liked; it was pleasant and did not challenge me much. I knew what I didn't want to be doing in the future, yet at the same time, I was doing nothing but moving closer to it with my routine, my habits, and my way of life. Once the realization hit me — the reason why I often was bored was that I had no evaluation of my time — that I had no clue what my time was worth at the time (nor had I decided how much I wanted it to be worth a few years from now). So I started focusing on how I wanted life to be five years from that day. How much I would like to be worth at work? How much I would like to be worth as a friend? How much I evaluated my time being worth and when in fact what is was costing me being a friend to others. Pretty soon, it hit me: I often evaluated other's time more than my own. So I set a numbers for how much I wanted to be worth at work and how much I evaluated my free time to be worth. Then, I tried to figure out how I could make a good balance between those; how could I use my free time to make both work time and free time worth more? To be able to be worth to myself (what I had set my minimum limits for), I needed to start doing something to nourish and train my mind, become more knowledgeable for work, become more important to myself, and to make my time worth more than the people who were holding me back, the people I had often referred to as friends.

How do you think you communicate with someone who has no value of their own time (if you see your time being worth more freedom, for example?) If he loves talking about how big his problems are and you are thinking about how to make your life more meaningful? How will a conversation like that be for you? Will

you enjoy it immensely?

So how do you really evaluate your time: are you wasting or using it?

Are you in control of your life — or is the TV, friends, or family?

How much time are you spending on things you want to be doing?

How much time are you spending on growing yourself as a person?

Could you possibly make better use of your time?

How can you — when the question is not if you can afford it or not? The question is can you afford not to do it?

The question, “why not?” is equally important as asking yourself “why?”

Why should I spend time on this? Why shouldn’t you spend time on things you enjoy?

What might be stopping you from such things?

CHAPTER

06

BE RESPONSIBLE

> *"There are two primary choices in life: to accept conditions as they exist, or accept the responsibility for changing them."*
>
> – DENNIS WAITLEY

> *"The price of greatness is responsibility."*
>
> – WINSTON CHURCHILL

Whatever happens, take responsibility for your actions and learn from them.

Getting a closing must mean a new beginning. This means for one era to start, we need to be able to close the previous one. Things like blame, hate, anger, and other feelings are feelings that should not be present when we start a new era. These feeling are usually an indicator of us blaming someone else for the way we feel, behave, or what we do upon others. This does not mean you have started a new era; when these feelings are finally gone, you can say that a new era has started. The key comes down to responsibility; being responsible for actions and reactions of the way we say, do, or express ourselves in any form or way.

Whatever happens, know that you are responsible for the way you feel. Once you realize this, you can start gaining control. If at this point you are not willing to accept the responsibility for yourself, I suggest that you put this book down and stop reading. No one chose the clothes you are wearing but you. No one chose your profession but you. No one chose the workplace you are in but you — and guess what? No one chooses how you feel like but you!

We can blame others for the way we feel — it is the easy way out, it gives us the perfect excuse for doing absolutely nothing about changing the way we feel, and it makes it impossible to change it — because you are putting the most important power you have in the hands of another person and expecting them to change you and how you feel? Do you really think that is the way it works? Does it make any sense at all? Why would you give someone the power to do that?

If you can choose, what makes you upset (like my friend with the shopping)? Can you — today — make an intelligent and thought-out plan of how you want things to affect you? I said on the first pages of this book, you usually need no reason to be upset, mad, angry, or annoyed. But somehow, people always seem to need a really good reason to be happy. It has to be a lot bigger than the reason to be upset, because "upset" seems to be so comfortable for many people, because they are so used to it. Are there simple changes you can make in your life to make it more fun and for you to become happier or more playful even?

By asking different question than you are already doing, could you change these things easily?

For the longest time, I hated to brush my teeth. When I was young, it was something I was forced to do. I had to do it, as I grew older. I knew that it was for my own good, yet for some reason, it always made me a little annoyed that I had to this. I know all the positive effects it has, and I also know all the downsides to not doing it. So I should be able to make an educated choice about why I should want to do this. I kept asking myself, "Why do I become so annoyed when I do this? I know it is something I want to do and know that it really good for me." So I decided to ask myself a different question: "How can I turn this around and be happy when I brush my teeth? How can I have fun while brushing my teeth?" I went to the store to see what was available in oral hygiene products. That is when I saw it: the battery-operated toothbrush, immediately I smiled. "That would be so much fun! Not only can I use it to brush my teeth, but I can think of a lot of jokes about using my 'battery-operated' toothbrush." After I bought it, I started telling people how happy I was with my new battery-operated wand that I used at night before going to bed. Of course, I have heard all the jokes that probably have gone through your head at this time. Guess what? Today, this is exactly what goes through my head every time I brush my teeth — sharing the jokes about my toothbrush with people and having a good laugh.

The smallest change in questions can make you change your perspective on the things you do or believe. Start asking questions today. Good questions will do more for you than any other thing. They can change everything from your tooth-brushing experience to how you lead your life.

CHAPTER

07

OBT (OUTCOME-BASED THINKING)

> *"Success is a ladder that cannot be climbed with your hands in your pocket."*
>
> – UNKNOWN

> *"Success means doing the best we can with what we have. Success is the doing, not the getting; in the trying, not the triumph. Success is a personal standard, reaching for the highest that is in us, becoming all that we can be."*
>
> – ZIG ZIGLAR

Moving toward what you want — or away from what you fear or trying to avoid.

"Knowing what you don't want is halfway of getting you exactly that" is a sentence that I believe has been very misinterpreted throughout time. This does not mean that if you know what you don't want, you are halfway of getting what you want; it literally means you are halfway to getting what you didn't want in the first place.

How many people do you know today who are (or have) something they didn't want? How many who have said "I do not want to be like my parents" are today the spitting image of them? Who has said I don't want to be alone, thus stuck in a situation of being that all alone, or even worse, being in a situation they don't want with someone just because they don't want to be alone. "Don't" and "won't" are your worst enemies. Your brain will (with time) remove those words and change sentences for your subliminal (subconscious) mind.

Meaning this: I don't want to be without an education." Your mind will alter to: "I want to be without an education." Some words the mind simply does not obsorb, a perfect example would: Do not think of a blue car. What did you think about? Now how many people do still not have the education they want? Is it because they keep talking about how they don't want to be without an education? Or is it because they know exactly what they want to be educated in and just can't find a way of actually doing it?

There are many things we have to deal with in life, but if we do not deal with ourselves and our emotions and thoughts and set goals for ourselves, we will lead a life that turns out to be a life we didn't want. Now which one do you want to be? The person who knows what they want and will get it — or the person who doesn't knows what she want and gets most of the things she doesn't want and then tries to be pleased with it?

The way you phrase sentences controls what you brain does with them in the long run. "Be careful what you wish for; you might get it" is a well-known sentence that I (and probably a lot of people) have heard many times (fortunately — and unfortunately— because we often get something because we do not specify how we want it.

When we are looking at what we want, we must also think about what comes with it: "with great wisdom comes great responsibility." With a wife and children comes responsibility, with kids comes sharing time you once had alone with your spouse. By having money, other people often become jealous. With celebrity, comes doubt of the people who want to be your friends.

A childhood friend of mine always wanted to be a famous musician. He was and is one of the kindest people I know, always friendly and loved being around people. I remember as kids we would go visit new places and he would always be the one that walked away with a new friend. As we grew older it was the same story, he simply loved interacting with people and making friends. In our late teen years, he finally formed a band with two other people. They went on to record a studio album that hit big and have since recorded many more. He has been on tour the majority of our adulthood and lives out of a bus and hotel rooms for months at a time. I had spoken to him in a few year, but he was finally on tour near where I currently live so I decided to go meet up with him. Something had changed, he had changed, despite getting what he wanted the change wasn't good. I couldn't help myself but comment on how he seemed wary of people, the guy that was always willing to talk with everyone. Then he said something that struck me: I have exactly what I wanted, people know who I am, they listen to our music and I'm making money creating something I love. But I'm barely every home with my wife and kids, I don't trust that people truly want to get to know me anymore or if they are just talking to me because I'm in the band. Creating the music I love has come at the expense of something I didn't realize, I no longer trust people truly want to get to know me and I'm finding it impossible to genuinely make new friends.

As you can see, we need to think about the things that come with the things we want. Equally important is to know that when we move away from the things we do not want, we often move away from other things as well. If you are afraid of lacking money in old age, without a plan of what you really need, you may be preparing to take money with you to the grave. Knowing what you want to avoid without knowing what you want instead is a very common thing. So be careful to state what you want instead of those things you are avoiding. State everything in as much detail as you possibly can. Make your goals a minimum. Instead of saying "I want to be rich," state in what ways you want to be rich? Is it family? Is it money? Is it friends?

What exactly is it then? Is it having two children? Four? Do you want to have 1 million dollars — or 3 million? What is the minimum you want? Once you know this, you have to be willing to take action. Goals without action are nothing. Make things happen — you are the only one who can.

Knowledge is useless without action. Goals are useless without action. Simply taking one step towards something is action; the first step can often be the hardest one to make as well. Just remember: getting past that first step will put you on a new route, a new journey.

Once you get into the habit of outcome-based thinking, you will start to notice that you do this more often, in conversations, at work, and at home.

How often do you ask yourself what you want out of the communication with your friends? What do you want out of a conversation with a client, your family, or your spouse? Are you getting what you want out of these relationships? Or, are you the one who makes the other person get everything from you and all you get to do is to sit there and listen and waste your time?

What do you think a chef does when he starts cooking? Does he just grab ingredients that are laying around, mix them together, and hope that it will be edible? Does a lawyer go into court hoping that things will be discussed in a way that is good for his case? Does a cop pull you over not knowing what he is going to say to you or what he stopped you for, just hoping that it may be something? Does your company hope that there will be enough money for your salary at the end of the month? These are all examples of outcome-based thinking that you probably have used in your life. What happens when you go to the store? Do you know why you are going there and know what you are getting? How about when you get in your car? Is it on autopilot? (Almost is, isn't it?) You have already planned in your head where you are going and immediately decided what is the optimal way of getting there, all without really thinking about it most of the time. What happens if you apply the same things to your life? You know exactly where you are going; do you think your mind will go on autopilot to get those things then?

What if talking to a client would be like going to the store? You know what you want and are you willing to throw in a few extra things? Would you increase your sale or your business?

So what in your life are you outcome-based on?

What would you like your outcomes to be? What do you want?

Are there any aspects of your life that you could apply this to that you have not to this point?

When would be a good time to start becoming more of an outcome-based thinker and implement the power of outcome-based thinking?

CHAPTER

08

MOVING TOWARD OR AWAY FROM

Your attitude, not your aptitude, will determine your altitude."

- Zig Ziglar

> *"Success is focusing the full power of all you are on what you have a burning desire to achieve."*
>
> — WILFRED PETERSON

Most of us either move towards or away from things. Logic would say that moving away from one thing is automatically moving towards another. This is not always the fact; a lot of people start moving away from things and once they hit what is called the *comfort zone*, they stop. Comfort may not be what most people want it to be; still, a lot of people seem to settle for it. This means that you did move away, not towards. On the other hand, if you move towards something, you will not stop till you reach it — so when moving away at first, it is a good idea to stop and realize what is it that you truly are going for.

Most people spend their time in this comfort zone. Here, many find safety and thus, they prefer to be there, simply because they are afraid of what they might have to do or face on the way to what they truly want. There is nothing wrong with settling for comfort; just be sure that you realize that you *choose* comfort. You have the choice to keep going and get what you truly want or remain stuck in the comfort zone. If you are uneasy about something or feel unfulfilled, the chances are you have hit a few of these comfort zones.

When seeking to be fulfilled, we have to know what we are moving towards; just by having a lifestyle that reflects that, we automatically start doing the things that will lead us to our desired destinations. Would you ever get in a car without knowing where you want to end up? A lot of people go for a drive, and they know they want to end up at home again. Do people ever get in a car just to drive and hope that the steering wheel will lead them to a place they like? Most likely not; they will always make a decision when to turn, when to speed up, when to slow down, and when to stop.

How many people do you know around you who are just cruising along without a destination? Are you one of those people? Are you stuck on a road that will lead you to nowhere? Does your destination have the things you truly want?

Moving away from things can be a good thing; it often gives people the drive they need to start doing things. If you have ever started to move away from something, think about what it was: often, the opposite of what caused that pain is what you want: the pleasure that goes against the pain. So why not go get it and move towards it instead of just moving away from the pain? Sometimes it is not this simple. The answer usually lies within you. Just stop and think and ask yourself some questions (make sure they are *good* questions) and see where it leads you. Remember, we are always allowed to change what we want; just make sure that the changes will get you closer to what you want the meaning of your life to be. Know that with all choices, other things come as well: with compassion, comes ease; by planting a tomato seed, you get a plant and tomatoes, not only a new tomato. Things usually never come in singles: start doing good things and good things come with you (and the same applies the other way around: start doing things that hurt you and you will cause yourself more pain).

One of my friends has been trying to avoid being hurt for years. He was in a relationship that ended badly and left him with (as he described it) "a bleeding heart." He was constantly moving away from that relationship, while at the same time trying to find a new one. When asked what he wanted in a new relationship, he said "someone who will not hurt me like I was hurt the last time." While he was moving away from the pain of the last relationship, he was looking for a new one, with an "away" attitude. He had a few relationships after this. They didn't last long since he was always looking for someone whom he was sure that wouldn't hurt him as he had been hurt before.

After a while, we started focusing on what he wanted out of a relationship, he started making a list of all the things he would like to give into a relationship and hopefully get. Now once that list was ready, he had some idea of what he wanted (instead of what he didn't want): the shift from away to towards. Today, he is happily married with a woman who receives all the things he put on the list and gives him a lot more than what he put on his wish list.

Making changes on small or big issues that you have when moving away will not be as effective as moving towards would be because one is a clear definition of things you want to have while the other one is simply going away from something, often with no clear distinction of what you are really moving away from and what your final destination is. So define the things in life that you are moving away from: know what they are and know what you want instead of them.

What effects would moving towards things change or do for you?

What pleasant things could you be moving *towards*? What are your true goals in life?

A good thing to do is to write down fifteen items that you really want, things that you want to be moving towards, and then look at them: how many of them are you truly moving towards and how many of them are you in reality moving away from the opposite?

CHAPTER

09

WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET

> *"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."*
>
> – WINSTON CHURCHILL

> *"Success is steady progress toward one's personal goals."*
>
> – JIM ROHN

In other words, what you focus on is what you are truly getting. Are you aware of what you are focusing on? Are you focusing on the future or the past, on what you want or what you do not want?

Our mind will respond to what we see; you can try this from where you sit. Focus on different things around you; watch the TV. What happens? Now look at the floor, the window, everything blue, everything green. What happens? What thought processes did you go through? Were they different depending on what you watched, what you thought about, what questions you asked?

Try this: focus on everything blue (you have thirty seconds to do it). Focus and find everything blue around you. Now tell me: how many yellow things did you see?

Anything you are willing to give your attention to should be worth it, right? Because if you are focusing on it, you will most likely be missing other things (unless you could tell me about all the yellow stuff as well as the blue). So the question you should be asking yourself is "are you giving away your attention to things that are totally irrelevant with what you want?"

What do you get out of focusing on the TV? Looking at it, what does it do for you? Now, focusing on what you are reading and the questions being asked, what does that do for you? Does it make you think? If so, what does it make you think about? What else can you do to start focusing on things you want to be thinking about? What will your life be if you focus on the things that make you think positively, the things that help you reach your goals?

How we control our thoughts can be done by simply changing the questions we ask; you can use them to change your focus. What is the difference between focusing on all the bad things that could happen and all the good things that you want to happen? Are you clear about what you want? How easy is it to find something when we don't know what it is? If I told you to go look for "something useful" right now, you would stand up, get it, and fetch that thing (you know, the thing that I said was useful). Do you have it in your hands now? Good! I am glad that you realized that I just wanted toothpaste. Was that what you wanted as well? That is useful and that is just something.

Now what do you want that can make you happy? Since we have the toothpaste now for you, the useful part is ready, right? How about success? Could you get me the thing that makes you successful? Could you tell me about it? When you are successful you know because…? What do you have? What are you doing? What does success feel like? What is success?

If we are not clear about what our focus is, we are not clear about what we truly want. The focus gives you whatever you want, simply because if you can define it, you can either make it, find it, or in some cases, convince others to bring it to you. How many people do you know who knew exactly what they wanted in a spouse — and all of a sudden were going on dates with a friend of a friend and actually hit it off? That person may not be their spouse today but maybe they're still friends? Now, how many do you know that were setup with someone like that and had a miserable time, hated every minute, and could not wait for it to be over. If the person who set this up knew what both parties wanted, would that date ever had occurred?

Here is a little story that I was told that really made me think. I hope that it will touch you in some way and make you stop and think for a little bit. I was about fourteen years old when my uncle approached me. We were working on a farm that I used to go to during the summer. At the time, I was living in Denmark and had no real interest in learning my native language, Icelandic. He started speaking to me in Norwegian (very similar to Danish) and I started speaking Danish. He started asking me questions about how I liked the Icelandic courses that I was taking in Denmark. I (of course) told him all the things that bugged me about it, how it wasted my time at night when I could be hanging with my friends, and how dumb it was to have to go to school at night. I complained about how far I had to travel to get there, how stupid the teachers were, and how annoying my parents were for having me do this for absolutely no reason whatsoever. He just looked at me and let me talk on and on about all the dumb, annoying, and silly things I wanted to rant about. Finally, when I couldn't find anything more bad to say, he looked at me and said, "What are you gaining from doing this?"

I looked at him like he was from some planet I had never heard of. Then I started to think, and after a while I said, "Well, I guess I can talk to my entire family here in Iceland, write them letters, teach my children the language if I am still living abroad. I will not be behind in school if we decide to move back to Iceland and, finally, I can read the letters from my family here who loves me."

He looked at me and said, "So, what matters to you most — if you look ten years from now? The fact that you are losing one night a week from playing with your friends or having all these things that have long-time value at your disposal forever?"

"What a silly question," I thought. "How much more silly can this man get? How dumb does he think… whhhooooppppsss!" I then realized what I had just said: I was focusing on that single night a week where I missed out on a little thing that I could have six nights a week, instead of focusing on what this one night a week could do for me in a lifetime. Needless to say, I started thinking a little differently about going to these classes once I got back to Denmark that fall. Every once in a while during that fall, I had to remind myself of the talk we had walking on the fields in Iceland, and every time. I did it in Icelandic.

What are the things that you are focusing on in your life? Has anyone made a simple comment to you where you went off ranting about things that annoy or disturb you or that you simply find dumb in your life? If you stop and think, was the comment *really* that dumb — or was your focus on a certain aspect of things what was really dumb. What else could you start to question yourself with at this point to change your focus, what are the things you want that you haven't gotten yet and are not really on your to-do list? Are you underestimating what you can do with your time? Most people do; they totally overestimate what they can do during a short period of time, but totally underestimate what they can do over a few years.

CHAPTER

10

YOUR EMOTIONS SET FREE

> *"Take control of your consistent emotions and begin to consciously and deliberately reshape your daily experience of life."*
>
> – ANTHONY ROBBINS

> *"It is the mind which creates the world around us, and even though we stand side-by-side in the same meadow, my eyes will never see what is beheld by yours, my heart will never stir to the emotions with which yours is touched."*
>
> – GEORGE GISSING

What do your emotions control? Think about it: what do you do without an emotion affecting it? Is there anything? Do your emotions always seem to be there? What emotions are controlling your decisions? Are you aware of what emotions they are?

How long does it take for you to express what you are feeling?

Did you know that to express an emotion takes on the average of three to ten seconds, creating something from an emotion takes about three to ten minutes, dealing with an emotion and keeping it in you mind can take from three to ten days. Now take anger: how long do you want to take to express it or think about it?

Emotions simply are. What makes them good or bad is how you interpret those emotions and deal with them, and how you communicate or try to deal with them. We can take things that would be bad for one person but someone else could make it a good thing.

Criticism is a good example; too many people take to heart when being criticized. Why do some people look at you and say "thank you" after you criticized their work, and why do others get upset? It is simply this: the first person takes criticism for what it is worth and uses it to improve the work, while the other interprets it that they are not satisfactory, thus they start feeling bad — while the other person might even get enthusiastic about getting "pointers" on how to improve.

How do you deal with your emotions? What do you use them for? Are you making them work for you instead of against you?

Often I have been told that you do not control what you feel. In some instances, that is true: you are not always in control of why you feel the way you do. It is up to you to decide what you do with that emotion though. Knowing that emotions do control you also gives you a certain control of the emotion. By this, I mean that you can change an emotion. (We will explain this in the chapter about how you use your language.) By changing the language, you get certain control. When feeling good, you can change that excellent, happy, relaxed, or even ecstatic emotion to something else. In this same way, you can go from feeling frustrated, to annoyed, to angry, to furious. What do you behave like under each one of these?

What are your decisions like at each of these emotional stages? Do you make different decisions depending on how good or bad you feel? In which state do you make better decisions? By simply expressing how you feel, you can recall that state of mind, and by changing the word you use, you can change the state your mind is in. How does this affect your behavior and decisions? By simply saying, "I am upset because…" will more than often resolve the issue at hand.

Simply saying, "I am upset" will only help you focus on being upset. Why are you really upset? Is there really a reason? Did you misinterpret something? Was what was going on really something that should upset you or did you just decide to let it upset you? Remember: it is you who controls how long you are upset and what you want to do with that emotion? Is there another way you could look at the situation that made you upset? Could you be thankful? What happens if you think of something that made you upset and ask, "What in this situation could I be thankful for or what in this situation could I learn from?" Could you go from upset to surprised or even curious? What happens when you become curious about your upsets or you good days? What can you use the information for? Can you possibly use it to change how you feel, and by doing so, change your life?

A friend of mine comes to mind when discussing emotions; "she holds her cards close" as a mutual friend of ours describes her. One thing that always makes her upset is when people tell her that she is just like her dad. We were discussing this one time and she could not understand why someone would say that, knowing how upset it made her. So I asked her why she got upset. She answered without thought, "the only reason I can see is that we both have a short fuse, and therefore, everyone assumes that I am just like him." So we moved on. I asked why having a short fuse made her upset? She looked at me and said that she knew she had a short fuse and that it did not really bother her, she didn't know why it was and she was working on it because she didn't want it, without stating what she wanted instead, so we focused on tolerance, she wanted more tolerance, towards herself and others to be able to extend her fuse. She hates that her father blows his fuse — and she immediately connects having a short fuse to the emotions she feels when it happens with her father. So she interpreted the same emotion for herself as she did towards her father: when she blew a fuse, she became sad and angry. She was angry at herself for being like that. She told herself that she would start being tolerant towards her father when he blew a fuse. She knew that —

afterwards — he often felt bad, so instead of her reacting immediately, she would smile and wait a little. She could then make a decision on how to react based on being calm and being tolerant that her father used this approach.

Only about a week after our discussion, she started feeling better. Not only did she start becoming more tolerant of her father, she also started to act the same way herself; instead of connecting a short fuse to anger, she now connected it to tolerance, so when her own fuse blew, the reaction she showed was tolerance instead of anger. By doing this simple thing, she had gained control by connecting an event that triggered an emotion to a different reaction: patience and tolerance. She changed the emotion that was in control by being tolerant of herself, and in this case her father, by accepting his flaws as his and hers as hers and at the same time, realizing she can not change him. She can only change the way she reacts to the situation, not only with him but with everyone.

Letting out what you feel verbally is the quickest way to release emotions; it is painless and often delivers you greater results than going into a state of anger, frustration or rage. It can also help you understand what makes you happy and how you can create such an emotion.

The next time you are angry, try to state why you are angry and what triggered it without going into the state that you are used to. Catch the anger and control it by making a chain of emotions. Connect patience to anger (for example), so immediately after anger comes patience or forgiveness. How do you react when you connect either of those to anger?

What do you say and do? How do you react to a situation where you would normally get angry and start yelling? What are the emotions and the intensity of your emotions? Can you make them less intense by lowering the intensity of the word and then immediately connecting a different emotion to it?

Try it a few times with situations you remember: what happens when you do this? Do the actions and reactions of others in the situation change?

How about yourself? What do you feel when you react in a manner like this?

Always remember, you do control your reactions. Often a good thing can be to ask the following question in situations in which you feel uncomfortable: “What do I need to believe to be uncomfortable in this situation or am I going to let this situation control how I feel?”

CHAPTER

11

TAKE CONTROL

> *"It is not because the truth is too difficult to see that we make mistakes... we make mistakes because the easiest and most comfortable course for us is to seek insight where it accords with our emotions - especially selfish ones."*
>
> – ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN

> *"He who controls others may be powerful, but he who has mastered himself is mightier still."*
>
> – LAO TZU

Most people are in control in certain circumstances in their lives. Others think they are. Unfortunately, a lot more realize that they are not — and do not know how to change that.

When would be a good time for you to gain control of yourself and your emotions? Tomorrow? Today? Yesterday? Ten years ago? Where are the emotions coming from that control you today?

By taking control back into time, you allow yourself to change how you feel right now. By taking responsibility for things that have happened, you gain control. By changing your focus, you get control. Have you already done this or are you still letting things control you from the past and finding excuses for why you feel the way you do?

If you reevaluate your past and use the knowledge and experience you have today and realizing that what you did at the time was the best choice for you at that time, does not mean you have to make the same decision again. If you did and you ended up getting the short end of the stick by doing it again, did you really learn from experience? Are you really in control?

A lot of movies seem to be about this subject. People getting control of their lives, getting in control of their emotions, not letting fears hold them back, and using what they have learned to get what they want. What movies can you think of that show exactly that? What was the point that made them rethink their situation

and start focusing on what they want? For a lot of people, something has to happen to them to start taking control. In the movies, you will usually see that something happens before they realize they are not getting what they want; this happens right before the big change in their live. It doesn't have to be that way; you can turn this around yourself without having to have something happen. All you have to do is to take control. Every day, we meet people who have some aspects of this or even people who know exactly what it is all for, what they want their life to mean, what their big purpose is. Usually, these are people who are great in one field or the other of their life. Find those people, learn from them, and have them teach you how they gained the control and how they manage to keep it.

Extraordinary people are really not doing anything extraordinary. The only thing they are doing is what each of us can do at our best, and they just found the way to do it most of the time. This is what being in control is: not controlling one situation or an hour of the week, but being consistent in the choices and the belief that their choice is for the benefit of not only them but for those around them as well, and constantly moving them towards a fulfilling life.

Everyone in business knows that for everyone to be happy in a business relationship, you need to setup what is called a win/win situation. This means that both you and the other person have to gain something from the situation. If not, walk away; otherwise, one person will end up with regret.

This is true with yourself as well. Make sure you are setting up a winning situation for you that you are willing to accept all sides of, that way, everything is a win for you and those around you. If not, make sure that you can walk away or change the options. The old saying is true: "If there is will, there is a way." This is always true: the *will* might take you to what you fear, which is where the will also needs to be consistent. It will lead you to what you want to the long term: it will lead you to fulfillment.

Every so often, I see people take control of their lives and their destiny, instead of leaving it up to others. I had a long conversation with a woman not too long ago who was in an up-and-down relationship. Due to the other person, they both had a hand in it. She was starting to take control of herself and wanted to get control of her relationship as well, and to not be controlling, and to get the control back into it so it would be moving forward.

She started working on herself, realizing that to get control of her situation, she needed to get control of her emotions and the direction in her life. She started exploring what she wanted out of herself and what she wanted to get out of the relationship. Once that was settled, she realized that both she and her spouse did not seem too happy and neither one was really moving forward. She started asking herself what she wanted. Equally importantly, she talked to her spouse to find out what he wanted out of the relationship and what he wanted to do with himself as well. It took a while because she wasn't able to phrase the question correctly, but after several tries, she finally asked the right question to get him to express himself. Once that was settled, they realized they wanted the same things. That they were both unhappy had nothing to do with the relationship; it had everything to do with what they were doing for themselves. Once they realized that what they needed was not more time together but more time to do things for themselves, that would then reflect

that knowledge back into the relationship. By improving how they felt about themselves, they were able to put more into the relationship as well. The time they spent together also increased because they started enjoying each other's company more. They were both more fulfilled and had more to share than just how the day at work was. The time she had spent complaining had not been enough, really had nothing to do with it; they had plenty of time, they were just not enjoying the time they did spend together. By taking control of themselves, they were also able to take control of their relationship and where they were headed both separately and together.

Taking control of your own life will sometimes lead others around you to take control of their lives as well.

Sometimes people do not, on the other hand; that is when you have to decide what you want to be in control of and what will lead you to a fulfilling life.

What would having full control mean for you?

What will you get with taking control right now?

Where will it take you?

What will it change in your life and around you starting right now?

CHAPTER

12

THE VOICES AROUND YOU

> *"When I hear somebody sigh, 'Life is hard,' I am always tempted to ask, 'Compared to what?'"*
>
> – SIDNEY HARRIS

> *"The first reaction to truth is hatred or anger."*
>
> – RALPH WALDO EMERSON

> *"Reasonable people adapt themselves to the world. Unreasonable people attempt to adapt the world to them. All progress, therefore, depends on unreasonable people."*
>
> – GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

People are so afraid that they can be put in one box or another, that they can be generalized or predictable. Let me break the news for you: People can be categorized. This seems somehow to affect people negatively in many ways, and most people try to fight the fact that they can be put in boxes or categories. But why fight it? Are you fighting that it can be done or are you fighting to be different? Because even those fighting the fact can be categorized, so no matter what you do, you are always in one category or another. Astrology is a good example of this. Amazingly, those who have read things about their month or birthday or other things, often find that they are pretty right on describing them.

The question remains for those who are not convinced yet: if we can not be categorized, then how can we be programmed to buy certain items? Why do they have what is known as marketing?

The answer, people, can be generalized or categorized. So, more questions prevail. If the fact is such that people can be categorized, what is more important — fighting that fact or welcoming it to learn more about yourself?

By knowing what categories you belong to, you can more easily see where your weaknesses are and where you need to put the most effort. This is more important than not being put in a certain category. These will also often reveal your natural strengths.

This would mean that by accepting the fact that there is in fact someone who acts and thinks like us, we can use that to our advantage. It should make it easier for us not to be affected by others, and to not let the material needs get a hold of us. Our personality is like someone else's, to some extent at least.

To break a bad habit, one must admit it (at least, that is what has been stated). You cannot fix something that is not broken, so it makes sense. So why not admit that we can be generalized? Accept it, and then from that point, we can use that information to improve ourselves. What would really be the best option? Fighting things that are or using them to our advantage?

Most people I know hear things instead of listening to them. They make a presumption of what the other person is going or trying to say. What is really the message that you get across? What you meant to say or what the listener heard?

Does it really matter what you say if the person you are talking to has already made up their mind about what you were going to say?

How many friends do you have who always misinterpret what you said to them? Why do people do that? Is it because we are vague in our language or is it that they have made an assumption (or a frame) that makes them hear things a certain way? Whatever it is, as an active listener, we try to get exactly what it is the other person is relaying to us. We ask questions instead of making assumptions. This includes talking to yourself: be an active listener.

There are several things that we hear without really listening, once we change the way we think, how do they sound when you are you listening now?

It came to me when I started listening to some of my music again, songs I hadn't heard for a long time, since I already knew the "meaning" of them and what the artist was trying to say. For some reason I picked a few songs, like "Mad World," "Losing My Religion," "With Arms Wide Open," "Higher," "The Ones I Love," and a few others by various bands. Except it had all changed! All of a sudden, I was hearing what they were saying. I started listening. I dropped my old habitual hearing and listened, carefully, with curiosity instead of certainty. If someone has something to say, you should listen. When someone loves to talk, you should hear. There is a difference between those two. *Listening* is something you put an effort into; *hearing* is something we do because we have ears and that allows us to draw assumptions.

It is interesting how throughout history, some people have tried to tell us things. They tell it, but we don't *listen* — we just *hear* it. It makes sense in our own way. Personally, I am realizing more and more that what they said may not be to have you hear it or even to listen to it, maybe it's the simple thing of getting you to think, to question. A simple question as, "What could they be trying to say?" instead of "I think it's this…" puts a different spin on things. When we let go of our presumptions, we can start listening to people.

I was talking to someone the other day who said to me, "I don't want to talk to that person; I remember what he did and what he said to me." I looked at him amazed. Knowing the person he was talking about, I couldn't help but wonder what he was talking about and how he could have heard those things. Then, it hit me: he wasn't listening and thinking about how he could use the information. He made a presumption. He had already decided what he was going to hear, because he knew it all and how it worked, and took it that way. He took things as an attack on what he already knew was right!

I gave him one question to think about (I do believe that the most important thing you can give a person is a better question): "What matters most to you? What he did or said at one point or what you can learn from him today or tomorrow? Does holding a grudge mean more to you than using the information the person has given you to learn more about yourself and to improve yourself?" Regardless to say, once he looked at it like this, his whole mental attitude changed. All of a sudden, he had to change the way he thought, because he now had a different question. He had to listen to his brain answer in a different way than it had done before. Now, this answer led to progress instead of anger.

Everyone has people in their lives whom they do listen to. They affect your decisions, and they sometimes give us better questions. Just make sure they are not giving you better excuses for not doing things. Often, people will tell you to stay away from things they fear. So, be sure when that you are facing a fear, that you ask someone who has already faced that fear for advice. Stay away from the people who still have not done it. Those who have done it have already faced it and can give you the recipe; the others may more than likely still be running away from something. When in doubt, most people will seek advice, even though they often get advice that goes against their better judgment. How do you listen to these voices and to what extent do you let them control? Even voices you hear in music will affect you, because the subconscious mind is often absorbing the information even though you are not really paying attention.

Watch the people around you; what music can you play and how does it affect them?

What sounds make you cheerful?

Which make you sad?

What type of sounds can affect how creative you become?

Studies show that music affects our state of mind. Often it is the sound of the music, you can even get soundtracks that are a certain mHz that control how you feel and what your brain behaves like.

How much attention do you pay to your environment to the extent of sounds? Do you get annoyed in certain places? Do you smile in certain places? What are the sounds around you? Why are people reacting differently when presented to any type of music? Why does some music make you smile while other music makes you depressed? Are you linking the rhythm or the sound to something else?

What about voices? What do they do for you? How do they affect you?

Why do we react differently to the voices we know — the voice of parents or family, the people we look up to?

What makes their voice such an impacting tool? Do you connect more than just the voice to the people you listen to?

Why is it that you pay attention to some and ignore others?

The reason we took hearing as an example in this chapter is that most people relate to this. Now, imagine what vision, touch, smell or other aspects you sense do as well? Hearing is not the only way this happens. We can also hear, see, and feel other things than music or sounds.

What happens when someone is in a bad mood or hurt?

Can you tell by more ways than one?

Sounds are usually so obvious; think about the other things as well.

CHAPTER

13

WITH FEAR IN CONTROL

> *"Love is what we were born with. Fear is what we learned here."*
>
> – UNKNOWN

> *"If you listen to your fears, you will die never knowing what a great person you might have been."*
>
> – ROBERT H. SCHULLER

There are plenty of fears out there for those who want them.

This is the one that gets most people. It's the biggest reason why people are choosing the wrong frames to view the world or situations through. It is the single biggest reason why people are standing still and not moving forward with their lives. Think about what you are afraid of? What are those fears holding you back from doing? What controls you? Is it those fears or is it what you really want and your determination to get it? When you have fear fighting things you want, in most cases, the fear will win. On the other hand, if you see that your fear will lead you to something you fear even more, you will choose to face the one least threatening to you at that time.

Often, our fears are created when we are young. Often people do not realize that it is the fear controlling them. Even those who do realize it hardly ever admit it, but by realizing and admitting it, you can start changing it.

Since your emotions control what you do, how do you think decisions you build on fear are, do you think they are effective or ineffective? Do you think they will lead you to what you want? Will they be intelligent decisions that you can be proud of when they are based on fear?

At what age do people get phobias? When do people start being afraid of loss? Afraid of rejection? Afraid of responsibility? Afraid of dealing with themselves?

What other fears are there? What is it that you fear — since most of us always fear something? If you thought, "I'm not afraid of anything" immediately while reading that, then you need to take a closer look. That was the fear answering.

Are they rational fears? (Is there such a thing as a rational fear?) Every day, I meet people who have fears. The most common one with my male friends is the fear of responsibility and fear of failing, and this is what many women get frustrated over.

The one I have seen in most in my female friends is the fear of being alone and fear of failure; this is what often gets to men.

How do you think a couple mixes that has these fears? Will it be a successful relationship, do you think? What do you think happens when they start talking about living together, getting married, having kids? Now, if the fear is in control, and the fear of responsibility is still there, what do you think the talk about marriage or having kids will do to the those people? How will that conversation end?

What all fears boil down to — no matter what you might call them — is the fear of not being enough and the fear of not being loved. Most fears will all have that in common. When you have scraped all the additional phrases and excuses of the way you talk about your fears, those two are the ones that stand left.

A lot of people have fear as a driving force. Often, it can be a good thing to get people started. At one point, people will often find another force that takes over. For example, someone who is afraid of being poor will have that fear drive him to start doing something. At one point, that will hopefully change to being determined in other ways of live and it will be moving towards success instead of moving away from poverty. The want and the confidence are then there instead of the fear as a driving force within them.

I know a guy who has always been considered a very determined individual with great intelligence and the ability to do whatever he wants. He has done some very impressive things in his life and has done well. He opened his own company, traveled, did well at his work and pretty much leads what a lot of people would consider a successful business life. One day, he started talking to me about a little thing that seemed to be bothering him: the fear of failure. Every once in a while, he would notice that some things he wouldn't attempt. because he was really afraid of failing. We started looking at it to see in what situations it happened and if we could find anything else that the fear was having an affect on. We started as early as the school years; at school, he had always been an average student. When he turned in assignments and did them, he usually got an A for them. What we started to look at was why he only turned in some of them. People had been telling him that it was just because he was bored at school and the projects had not been a challenge for him. Later in life, when he started his company, people expected the same. When he started being successful at work, a lot of people saw him as very determined in becoming successful. Starting to connect the dots, we started asking, "Why did you never do all the papers? Why did you start the company? Why are you pushing yourself at work so hard? Why are you willing to make all these sacrifices in other

aspects of your life?" He stopped for a little while and the last part got him: the sacrifices. He had never seen it! He had lost a couple of girlfriends, time with his child, and a lot of communication with his family, but he had never seen it as sacrifice before. He started thinking more and more and we discussed a few things.

First, we found out the reason he started his company was because he thought if he didn't, he had failed the expectations of others on him. Next, it came to if he did turn in all of his papers and did do all of his schoolwork, he also would have failed to meet the expectations of those around him. Same with work, he always started the project and then handed them off as they were almost done; he wasn't able to really finish all of the things he started.

So we started asking why and what would happen if you did? We found out that he was so afraid of failing to meet the expectations of others that it drove him to do things yet he seemed to always stop before they were done; he was starting work but not finishing it. His fear of failure was the driving force, yet it was also stopping him from completing things and getting what he truly wanted. As we talked, he realized this and started working with it. Today, he realizes what he did and how far he could go, and that there is no reason to be afraid of failing. Since he has determination today, he knows that success only comes when he has to do it till he gets it right (and that way, it's not failing). Needless to say, he is today reaching places that most people often only dream about, in every aspect of his life. Instead of focusing on the fear of doing it incorrectly, he focuses on how to do it and how to get what he really wants, even though it takes more than one try he just keeps going. Knowing that doing it wrong is one step closer to doing it right as long as he is willing to change his approach.

The person above is a good example of someone with fear in control, who is hiding it well. Fortunately for him, he realized it early enough to be able to change the fear from being in control, to making that vital turnaround and changing it to having the determination to get the upper hand.

Fortunately this can be done with any fear; you can remove it (or at the least make it useful to you). There are several ways of doing this: one is simply realizing what it is and asking if you can find the same strengths in positive things within you that will give you the same drive. The only difference is that you lose the downsides that the fear always brings with it. If you look at the things you have accomplished in your life, you will realize that the fear was founded long ago and originally was put in you as a tool of protection at the time you needed it. Most likely today, you will have the experience and the skills and the strength to deal with situations the fear protected you from before. Just make sure you are not afraid of dealing with yourself and looking within — it is what takes the most courage of all. The fact that you bought this book and have started taking the steps shows that you have dealt with a fear a lot of people never will.

What would it change for you to realize and overcome your fears?

What pain has the fear caused you?

Have you ever lost something or held back from something because of your fears, and maybe even ended up getting what you feared?

How can you use the fear to get control or even use it to drive you to start something you have wanted to do?

CHAPTER

14

HOW DO YOU FRAME THE WORLD?

> *"Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it."*
>
> – CHARLES R. SWINDOL

> *"What you perceive, your observations, feelings, interpretations are all your truth. Your truth is important. Yet it is not The Truth."*
>
> – RALPH WALDO EMERSON

We all experience the world in different ways; try sitting in a room with some people around a table. Now, place something on the table that is square, and ask everyone to describe what they see. What are the descriptions you are getting? Are some people only describing the box? Are those descriptions the same? Who is describing more than what you placed on the table? Are people looking at different things or experiencing things differently? Why do they choose to describe only what is on the table, when others describe more than that? What happens next? Do the others try to talk again about what they see? Did they follow the ones with the broader view? Did everyone follow what one person did? Who are the followers? Who are the leaders? Who are the thinkers? What is everyone experiencing? Now, imagine how they view the rest of world and things around them. Now do you understand why eyewitnesses are not credible? Do you understand why two people in the same situation can get two very different recollections from that situation?

It is simple: if one person can draw an experience from something, so can another. Yours is not necessarily the right one, nor is the other person's. Maybe it is something completely different. It is all a matter of what we have discussed: focus and interpretation.

Let's explore this a little more, get into a little more detail. How you frame the world is your choice, often a choice you made long ago and haven't even realized that you made it at that time. How many things are you still framing in the way you did at some early age? We will look at this in a little more detail later on, when we talk about beliefs. For now, we will focus on the framing, reframing, and the structures that you have.

Now, when you see the world, through what frame are you viewing it?

Is it a wooden frame? A metal frame? Is it light or dark? Is it a problem frame or a solution frame? Is it maybe even a happy frame…or a sad frame? A guilt frame or an anger frame?

Think about it: What frame would describe how you encounter the world?

Is it more than one, do you use different frames for different situations? How do you know you are using the right frame for the right situation?

Some people, unfortunately, still have not realized what frame they are using. Because they are using the wrong frame, they are stuck with the same view, and they are not getting what they want and do not understand why.

This means that we have a structure that we have made for ourselves; these structures are built from the frames we have created to deal with our experiences and how we choose to view them.

We all have to make sense of the world. We put together structures of experience to function, but these structures may not always be the correct ones to use or the best if they have not worked in the past. We have to ask ourselves what is wrong with our structure if we are always getting a poor result. Maybe it is time to restructure how we do things and to try a different approach. Maybe it is time to let go of the old way of doing things and try something new. Copy systems that have worked for others; do what they do and share the success. Try viewing things through a different frame.

When we are not willing to accept the things that aren't working for us, we tend to blame others for our structures not working. It is often that blame is put there because it is easier for us, as opposed to accepting a change in our structure (or at least a lot of people believe that it is so). They do not realize that they are hurting themselves to the long run.

To be able to fulfill our needs, we often do quick doses of our needs: we get hungry, so we grab junk food; we get lonely, so we do a one-night stand; we get tired of reality, so we need a change and we grab a bottle of alcohol. There are certain things a human being needs — the basic emotional needs — but if we don't know how to get them or have a wrong structure, we do what we call quick fixes of these needs. Have you thought about why you tend to react the same way in similar situations, is that reaction working or should you change it?

Some people tend to get too stuck on one of the needs and thus tend to ignore other needs or meet them in some quick-fix way.

They stop moving forward because they are comfortable. They stop expanding their business because they are afraid that they will lose touch with reality. They think they will be lonely if they are successful.

The funny thing about these needs is that we tend to seek outside ourselves first before we accept these things within ourselves. We have structures that work for us with this as well. We look for other people to compliment us, to value our success instead of valuing it to ourselves. If we are too stuck on that structure, we tend to try to do everything that way. This does not mean that it will work, but it may actually mean that you are deliberately destroying what you want because you are not willing to change your structures. Even worse, you don't realize it's your structure because you think the content is what matters.

What structures are you using in your life and how are they working?

Do you realize the difference between content and structure?

Do you know how to fulfill your needs yourself? One thing is fact: You can't share what you don't have. If you are trying to do that, you will end up losing, no matter what the situation is.

Like everything else, once you can find and explore them you can start getting the things you want.

"Watch your thoughts; they become your words. Watch your words; they become your actions. Watch your actions; they become your habits. Watch your habits; they become your character. Watch your character, for it will become your destiny."

How do we identify structures? What is the difference between content and structure?

Is it the structure or the content that makes us what we are today? How do we handle things? How we deal with life?

Let's say you have a building, a solid form. The building is condemned. Does it really matter what furniture we put into it? Will the house be better by furnishing it? In most cases, we know what content we want, yet somehow some things just don't seem to work. Now, is it the furniture or the building that isn't working? What can we do about situations where we don't get the outcome we want? Should we change the content? Where will that lead us?

If we take a new look at things, and put the furniture in a different building, would that be more effective than trying to keep changing the furniture in a condemned building? In a nice building, all the furniture will look good, and we have to go through less and less furniture, because we start putting the furniture that we really want into that house. You see, taking a different look at things and putting things in another perspective will always help. It doesn't matter what the situation is or even if it is something before or after a certain situation. It is what we call "experience" and that is extremely valuable. Being curious about what you do and how you do it will lead you to more experiences than you can imagine. It will teach you more then anyone can preach to you. Try putting furniture in a different house and see what it looks like; often it's the house — not the furniture — that needs replacing.

As you can see, the structure of your life is the frame through which you view your situations, and the frames you use are the structure of your life.

Now is it turning out like you wanted?

Are you using the right frames? Having an ugly frame will most likely make any picture look ugly as well. How about having a really good-looking frame? What will happen to the picture you put in it?

By simply changing a problem frame to a solution frame, you can change everything you come across. By changing an angry frame to and curious frame, you can do the same.

Think about a situation where you did not get the outcome you wanted. What did you do? Did you blame the other person for that?

Have you done those things in the same way before (used the same structure)? What frame did you use? Most likely, if you did not get what you wanted out of the situation, you are using the wrong frame for you. The structure was wrong.

As you have seen in the chapters before, most of the problems I and others have gone through are caused by putting things in a wrong frame, structuring what we experience in a non-effective manner, choosing the wrong tool for the right job (or choosing the right tool for the wrong job).

Take a minute to think about situations where you could change your frame, change your approach, or change the way you handle something. In other words, change the structure of your experience. What could it do for you? Would it bring you closer to what you really want?

Take something you have been dealing with for a while, one of the things in your problem frame: Take it and put it into a solution frame, the frame that shows you the answers to the problem. Instead of asking “Why can’t I solve this?” or stating “This is really a problem,” ask something like “How can I solve this? What would I need to make this work for me?”

Try and take something that you have been really frustrated with and put it in a curious frame. What can you learn about it?

You can do this with anything: change the frame and it will change the structure. Once you have changed that, you can put anything into that structure.

CHAPTER

15

WHO IS YOUR PEER GROUP?

> *"Lay down with dogs and you will get fleas."*
>
> – PROVERB

> *"A word to the wise ain't necessary. It's the stupid ones who need the advice."*
>
> – BILL COSBY

The word "peer" in defined in the dictionary like this:

"A person who has equal standing with another or others, as in rank, class, or age: children who are easily influenced by their peers."

-- *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition.*

How little we know about the effects others have on us, not only in wording but in action and acceptance of their behavior. If you want to know who you are, look at those you call your peers. Most people will lead a life according to the standards of those around them. The group we call peers is an incredible force in our life. In this chapter, we will look at how our peers affect us and how we can affect them. There is even a term called *peer pressure*. In this chapter, I hope you get a better understanding of this term and how it affects almost everyone at all stages of life, why kids start doing things that you would never believe they would do, and why you might have done something that you today have no clue why you did or even how you could accept such a behavior from yourself.

Most people's lives are a reflection of their peer group's expectations — the things that can disappoint us the most (while at the same time, do the most for us). Without expectations, what is there? How do we set a standard for ourselves if we do not have expectations for ourselves or other people? This does not mean that we have to have our expectation of others affect how we feel, but we always have a choice. If we have

no expectations for the people we choose to surround ourselves with, then what standard are we setting for ourselves? If we approve certain things about our friends, aren't we saying to ourselves that it is really ok? It is ok that these people have no expectations for themselves? What are you saying to yourself then?

I will tell you a story about me, a story that helped me realize this. Unfortunately I did something that I never thought I would do because of my own beliefs.

This was during the first seminar that I ever taught; all in all, a great weekend. The last day of the seminar, I got a phone call from the person I thought was my girlfriend, but as it turns out, she had decided to end it — by sleeping with another person and then notifying me. At the time my world collapsed, I didn't know what to do; I got lost in my own thoughts. During this seminar, some of the people I got to stay with were doing marijuana, and suddenly after spending the weekend with them, I had somehow come to think that it was ok. (It was their lifestyle and it was their choice, their way of running away from the pain.) A belief that I have never had. I have always been against drugs and always will be.

After two days, my head was at the point where I couldn't control anything, I lost one of my basic needs — the need to feel in control (a need that everyone has). I had tried everything (I thought). I was full of guilt and thought that it may have been my fault that she had what I felt was cheating on me. During this time period, I was staying with the guys who had been smoking. All of a sudden I decided, "Why not? Why not try? They seem ok, even though they do it."

So I did it: I had four puffs of that thing passed around the table. Immediately, I felt the effects so I jumped on the chance and went to sleep. The next day, I realized what I had done. I had gone against one of my main beliefs, and I had made a mistake because I was trying to run away from something, away from the pain.

The next few days were hectic, but I am thankful for the experience that this gave me. Today, I stand a much better man, even though I did make some mistakes while trying to avoid the pain.

But one of the things I learned from this was that if you accept the behavior of others, you also accept it within yourself. It doesn't matter how strong you are. If you don't expect the same things of the ones you consider your peers as what you would expect from yourself, you are unconsciously accepting that the standard they have is really ok for you, too. If I would have known then what I do today, I would probably have handled the situation differently. I realize now that even though I made some bad choices during this time, I also made a breakthrough on various others and was able to use my bad choices as experience.

Then I remembered — true changes in life happen with three circumstances. In real pain, in real pleasure, or in those times when we hit a point where we think "Oh shit!!" In this case, I was lucky because during this week period, I hit all of them and learned more than I ever could have imagined. Even though at the time, things seemed like everything was over. I had no control over all the expectations I had made towards others, not because my standard was very different from theirs, but because I accepted it. I opened a window that was supposed to stay shut, not only regarding drugs, but also other things as well. Today, I

treasure this experience because it made me stronger and a better man. More importantly, it helped me turn myself into the person I want to be. Without having to depend on others, or having others tell me what I should be, I realized that I have to be the man I WANT to be - not to TRY to be that man, but to just BE that man. Try is the war cry of losers. In all honesty, that is not what I am. I figured that out; now I either do things or I don't. One thing I do today is I do set my standards for myself and I hold myself to those standards. If other people have lower standards for themselves, I do not accept them, but I do — on the other hand — feel empathy for their choices.

By choosing the people you surround yourself with wisely, you can start shaping your knowledge, your destiny, and even your beliefs. By being willing to learn from those you can and not waste your time on those trying to drag you down, you will excel like you never would have believed.

It has been said that "it is lonely at the top." Here is a news flash: it is a myth. It is great at the top! Your life becomes more fulfilling and you just don't need to waste your time talking to people who talk about doing things without ever taking action on those words. Don't waste time listening to the problems of people who are not willing to do anything about those problems, or who won't take control of their lives, let alone their destinies. Even the Bible says "The lord helps those who help themselves." How true do you believe that is?

People around us have a tendency of wanting to hold you back. As weird as it sounds, the people are doing it because they do care about you. Have you ever had a friend who started to excel in one aspect of their live? What happened to those around him? Did they follow him or did they become jealous? Did they do something about themselves or did they try to tear down what he was doing?

A lot of people will try to hold you back if you start to excel, simply because they know deep inside that if you keep going on this track, they will lose you. Because you stop having time to listen to people talking constantly about things without acting on them, you will most likely not have time to listen to people complain about how wrong the world is or unfair it is. Do not let this get to you; just like anywhere else in life, you will make friends. They will be different and they will be at your level. It makes sense since you are now talking about different things then you were before. There are friends to make at the top as well as at the bottom — they are fewer in number, but they are the elite in their class. Once you are there, you also will be part of that group. You will be the one others want to know cause they can learn from you, they can be part of your life, and you become a leader — a true leader — who walks the talk, has been around, and has done what so many only talk about.

The first time I worked with a true leader, it changed my life. By being willing to learn from him, I was able to enhance my life in many ways. By slowly starting to learn about his beliefs, his way of thinking, and his way of expressing his thoughts and feelings, I was able to get a better understanding of what really made him who he was. Gradually, I started to notice at what times he was saying or behaving in a the way that I wanted to behave, to be able to think the way he did, to be able to say and share things with others like he did. So I started first by imitating him, walking and talking like him at times when he was showing a certain behavior or getting a point across to fellow workers. One of the beliefs that I found he has is that given the

chance, everyone will excel. He often told me, "It is not when a person makes a mistake that I look at their ability, it is what they do after that point: do they continue? Do they keep on going, trying to get things done they way they are meant to be?" Realizing that this is the way he thinks, I decided to try it on for a size and see what it would do for me. Little did I know of all the things that came with that little change of belief from "If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself" to "everyone can excel if given the right support and the chance." Along with it, came trust, respect, others willing to help me, and others wanting to know what it was that I was doing. It was a very interesting time, experiencing all the good things that came with a little change of belief, a different perspective, and a slightly different approach on talking to and dealing with people. By considering him as my peer, I was able to adapt part of his beliefs, part of the way he dealt with things. It was an easy step to improving me.

Who are the people around you?

Why are those people around you?

Do you have expectations to those people?

Do you have fewer expectations for those around you than for yourself?

What will those people do for you in the future?

What will you do for them and what are they doing for you?

What do you want out of the communication?

What is it that you are truly holding onto with those people?

CHAPTER

16

BELIEFS

> *"Belief means not wanting to know what is true."*
>
> – FREDERICH NIETZSCHE

> *"What we can or cannot do, what we consider possible or impossible, is rarely a function of our true capability. It is more likely a function of our beliefs about who we are."*
>
> – ANTHONY ROBBINS

Beliefs are something we create. We believe all kind of things and we change our beliefs. They are not certain or imbedded in stone; some beliefs are more based on what we wanted at one point in our life, and sometimes, it is just because we wanted to belief certain things by choice. Things that looked good at the time, such as disco music and long hair.

Now look at some of your beliefs. What is it that you truly believe about yourself or about others? About everything? What are these beliefs based on? I remember a time when I believed in the Easter Bunny and Santa Claus. No one could at the time tell they weren't real. It was my strongest belief that I knew, and nobody could tell me otherwise. I also remember a belief I had that I knew better than those around me, not about some things, but about everything, I also remember when I believed that whenever I had something to say, and that everyone should listen because it was so important (when in reality, I was saying nothing — I was just really pleased to hear my own voice).

Now, think what beliefs you have today. If things were to change, you might consider them just as ridiculous as you found your belief in Santa when you were sixteen. If your immediate response was nothing, think again: I can probably guarantee you that there is something. For one, you are looking at how to improve your life; what has been holding you back? Is it one of those beliefs that you hold? When was it created, what was it founded on?

Was it the frame you had been looking through life that created that belief? What if you change the frame? Does the belief change as well — or if you change the belief, would you be forced to change the frames?

When we choose our beliefs, they are sometimes based on negative feelings. What do you believe about the people you want to be liked by? What do you belief about the rich? About the poor? About the regular Joe? What do you believe about your capabilities, or about others and their capabilities? Where do your beliefs affect you? Where are they holding you back? Where are they pushing you?

If you believe that rich people are ignorant, selfish, self-centered and impatient, what do you think your belief is telling you? (That you want to be like that, perhaps?)

I know people who believe that people with money got there just because they are cheap and think of no one but themselves, while at the same time, they tell me that is the last thing they want to do. Even though they do want to have money, what do you think will win in that battle of beliefs? Needless to say, most of these people have more month at the end of the money than money at the end of the month.

What about other, more limiting beliefs? What if you start believing that people cannot change? Well, shall we explore something like that? How many people are in reality the same way they were ten years ago? Not many, fortunately. The good thing is that these changes can be expedited. You can make a change overnight that might take another person at least a month to accomplish - at the pace some people lead their live. What if you believe that no matter what has gone on before, you can be who you want to be today? What if you believe that you can do anything you set your mind to, or learn anything you want to learn? What is your growth opportunity then? What can you do? Where will you head? Maybe the only real question with a belief like that is where you want to go.

A woman I know always wanted to become a teacher. For some reason, she started believing what people had told her — that she was not good academically. At the same time, she loved to teach. She had been teaching at a small beauty school for some time and learned a lot of things while there, such as how to setup seminars, itineraries, manage people, and how to communicate effectively with others. Because she had been told so often that she was not "academic," she started believing it. The contrasting belief was that she would be a great teacher, because she had a way of presenting the material to students and of interacting with them in a way that would make it easier for them to learn. To begin, she got a position as a temporary teacher at a local school. Soon, she started to realize that she could learn new things. From the age of seventeen, she had managed to run a household, did the bills, balanced the checkbook, and she learned how to cook and how to fix things around the house. She had learned all the skills she needed to be able to finish school. The belief that not only what the people said —telling her that she was not an academic type of person — but also the way they behaved towards her, encouraged her to take a less academic lifestyle. When she realized she had everything she needed and she had learned all of this from her late teens, she decided to pursue a full-time teaching job and she went to school for her certification as well. Up on till this point this woman has aces all of her classes, won teacher of the year awards..

The conflicting belief she had — that, on the one hand, she could not learn, the on the other, that she would be a great teacher — kept her from what she wanted to be for years. “How can a great teacher not be able to learn?” was a question she often thought about. Instead, she should have been thinking, “If I taught about the way I learn best, I would be teaching the way it was easiest for me to learn: by doing!”

Beliefs like this can be more subtle or more obvious; the most important thing is realizing which of these beliefs gets you a fulfilled life. Most negative beliefs we have about ourselves have been founded early on and have nothing to do with what we can actually do today. If you look at all the things you have accomplished already, how much more do you need to convince yourself that you can do what you really want?

What have you done? What have you learned? What belief is holding you back? Stop and ask yourself this question when you are in doubt: “Why not?” Usually you will find that there is really no truly founded reason for “why not?” today. Why can’t you chase your dreams and get what you want or learn new things? Also realize that some of your beliefs really do want the same thing: they want you to grow on one level or another.

CHAPTER

17

USING YOUR BODY TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE

> *"There are movements which impinge upon the nerves with a strength that is incomparable, for movement has power to stir the senses and emotions, unique in itself."*
>
> – DORIS HUMPHREY

> *"Words represent your intellect. The sound, gesture, and movement represent your feelings."*
>
> – PATRICIA FRIPP

Physiology describes the way our body and mind are connected, the way the mind affects the body, and how the body affects the mind. How aware are you of your physical posture, how it changes, and how it is all interacting? Do you notice differences in your body when you are feeling down, when you are feeling happy, or when you are ecstatic? What are the differences? Why does your body slouch when you are depressed, and tense up when you are stressed? What happens if you change the physical posture you are in at those times? Does it affect how you feel? How about your face? What does it look like, and what changes can you make to your face that make you feel differently? Are your emotions controlling your muscles? What if you change how your muscles are? Does that affect your emotions?

It has long been known that the body interacts on every level, but how much it works together seems to be what people differ on. For now, we will stick to trying things that work for you. So, try some different facial expressions — frown, smile, or laugh. Try a few you are familiar with; how does it make you feel? How does it make you feel just changing your face, moving all those eighty-six muscles that are there? How about sitting up straight? Or standing up jumping? Lying down in the fetal position? Try a few and see what you

feel with each one. Now how is your body on a daily basis? What positions are you in every day? Why is your body that way, what small changes could you do so that will make your mind be more efficient, or make you happier, more decisive?

Since everything in your body is connected, you should try making mental notes of how your body reacts to certain situations. Then if you can put your body in the same position again, you can start to work on changing it. Notice how your face is, what your body is like, and how you feel, when it is exactly like that. Now, how easy is it to change how your body is? Then how easy do you think changing how you feel is?

How would being more happy affect your decisions, or your ability to be more decisive or determined? Would those help as well in getting you closer to what you want?

What position is your body in when you are in that mental state? How do you stand when you are firm, happy, or determined? Can you move into that physical stance at any time?

A very good example of how much your body interacts with your mind is what the psychologists usually say to all people that come to them suffering from depression. The first advice is to find something to do that involves movement of the body. Go to the gym or take walks — anything that will get the body in motion. Why would you think that is? Why do they not tell the person to go lie down, keep sleeping, or numb themselves in front of the television? Often they cannot tell you exactly why you should do it, but the key fact still remains: movement works!

(Why constantly ask how when you can be asking if it works? Does it work seems to make a lot more sense often than asking how or why. If something works, then how does it matter why, as long as it works? For a lot of people, the why and the how are ways of looking for an excuse, a way to avoid having to take action. Sometimes asking the question, “why not?” will bring you closer to a true answer than asking “why?”)

So stop thinking about it! Instead of just sitting there (while smiling, of course), stand up and take a walk! Stand up and stretch! Do something that will expand your body. Do anything to get your body in motion, instead of just sitting around (which will do absolutely nothing for you).

You may remember the first tip in this book: what was it? What was it connected to? The way you think or something with your body? Do you remember? It was the very simple act of smiling —something most people know how to do, yet simply do not do often enough.

One of Dale Carnegie’s guidelines is the simple act of smiling, not only because of the effect it has on you, but also on those around you.

Here is the space for you to write a story about how smiling more often affected your life (if you have been following that advice, this should be easy for you).

CHAPTER

18

REPETITIONS

> *"Constant repetition carries conviction."*
>
> – ROBERT COLLIER

> *"Whatever we plant in our subconscious mind and nourish with repetition and emotion will one day become a reality."*
>
> – EARL NIGHTINGALE

Do the same thing over and over and it becomes *what*? Are you clear about what you have been repeating over and over? What is a habit of yours by now? Is it a good habit or a bad habit? Do you have the habit of smiling, frowning, laughing for no reason whatsoever, or even crying for no reason whatsoever?

What about things like your diet? How much do you eat? What do you eat? And more importantly, why do you eat what you do? Are you aware of your eating, sleeping, or drinking habits? Are you eating what you are used to or are you eating what will truly fuel your body?

What about other aspects of your life? What kind of driver are you? What route do you choose to drive when going to places you visit often? Do you always go the same way? Why do you do that? Have you tried different routes? Have you considered other ways of getting from point A to point B? Why do you always take the same route, why not change it? What is there along the other routes that could be enjoyed or learned? Is there another route you could take, just for the sake of variety? Do you always take the fastest way or the easiest?

How many aspects of your life are repetitions that you started doing long ago and which still stick with you? What do you say to yourself on a regular basis? What do you say to others? How do you treat yourself or others?

A habit does not necessarily have to be a thing we do, it can be a thing we think. “Habitual thinking” is a phrase that I heard long ago, and up until recently, I did not realize the importance of such a statement. Of course, the way we think affects what we do, so what do you habitually think about? Who talks more than anyone else to you? That’s right: you!

Also, in other aspects of our lives, we have different habits, communication habits, or family habits. You name it — we usually have a habit for it, and pretty much all our life is a routine. A routine we created — often not even consciously — often because when we created it, we had no choice to do otherwise. What resources do you have today that have not always been available? What habits have you created because you lacked some of the resources that you might have today? Is it time to evaluate your habits and think them through? Maybe you should even make a serious judgment call on some of them. Are they really working for you? Are they getting you what you want in the long run? Some habits we have were often intended as a short-term solution. What has happened to them now? Are they still there?

Why do we continue doing some of the ridiculous things that we have done for years? Is it that we so much like our structures that we created, or simply that we do not stop to think about why we do things?

Are you in the habit of helping people, not because you want to, but simply because you started it once and now it seems like you have to do it? What would it take to break such a habit or routine? Is it a routine you like? What does it do for you?

I will tell you a short story of a routine known to many families. I still have, to this day, not found out why or who started this routine or why it is maintained with such integrity as it is by most of my family members. The only reason I have possibly found is the lack of respect that could have started it.

From the viewpoint of others, my family might have seemed like a very normal family with both parents still at home, with me and my three siblings. Everyone was in their routine with work, school, or kindergarten. Being the oldest, I had a part-time job and went to school with it. I never really gave much thought to the routine: I was either at work or at school. It is something we are taught from an early age, even recommended by doctors to make you life have somewhat of a routine. At this time, there were constant disagreements in the family, if not about one thing, then about another. Like most normal families, these disagreements tended to get a little loud — following the pattern set by my parents with any disagreement. For the longest time, I would get into these shouting matches and Olympic door-slamming events with my parents, and of course, I let my siblings hear it as well. When my siblings got older, they (of course), wanted to compete with me in these shouting Olympics that I had so vigorously practiced with my coaches (parents). For years, this communication pattern has been functioning within my family for even the slightest things such as whether or not there was the milk in the fridge.

This pattern (or repetition) of communication has turned out to be a great asset, it seems, for a lot of my family members — since they cherished it so much that they continue to do it to this day. The motto — “If no one heard you, say it louder” — seems to have a lasting effect, at least in my family. Shouting without listening is now the repetition pattern of communication within my family between certain family members.

Not a single one of them knows why it started. More importantly, they still have not discovered that they are not really paying attention to what the other person is saying or the point they are trying to make while doing this. I have heard some great screaming matches at my home where people just made the same statement over and over (worded a little bit differently each time, but the same statement). They just shouted each other's head off before slamming doors. All this, thanks to this glorious pattern or repetition in communication within my family.

Does this pattern seem familiar to you?

Have you seen something similar to it?

Do you know how yours started?

Do you know why it still that way?

A lot of time people say, "But it has always been like this," instead of asking, "Why is it like this and why don't I change it? Is this the way I really want it to be?"

Maybe it is time to start cross-examining some of the repetitions you have. The good thing is that it is just as easy to change a repetition as it was to create it.

Anything you do often enough becomes an unconscious habit; you can change your habit — from watching TV to reading a book, from eating a burger to having fruit, from complaining to complimenting — as long as you are aware of what you are doing and know that you consciously have to break most habits to start with.

CHAPTER

19

IMPORTANCE OF FAITH

> *"I don't know what religious people do. I kind of wished I'd been a Christian with the blind faith that God is doing the right thing. As a Buddhist, you feel like you have more control over the situation, and that you can change your karma."*
>
> – MARCIA WALLACE

> *"There are no miracles for those that have no faith in them."*
>
> – FRENCH PROVERB

Talking about faith, just to start off, let's not confuse *faith* with *religion*. People who have faith are not necessarily strict believers of religion. The two often seem to go together quite easily though. For centuries, man has known that the spiritual side of life is just as important as the physical life. The spiritual side is the part that somehow, on some level, gives us a certainty, strength in time of need, or comfort in hard times. For some, this has a name: some call it God, others Buddha, or even Thor.

The American Indians believe so much that their spirituality guides them that they have dances to help it rain and songs to say goodbye to the spirit. They have rituals to make them feel better. They count on nature to take care of them if they take care of her. Most believe that we are more than just the shell we see in the mirror. In all honesty, it should not matter where you find your spiritual side, for those who have a great connection with it know how much it can give you in life and what strength it can bring to us.

The spiritual side of us is the side that brings us deep fulfillment and gives meaning to the things we do. It is the core of all you are and do. Look at the three-fold rule of Wicca (also known as karma in the eastern beliefs). For others, the Bible or the Ten Commandments are good guideline for our spiritual side.

Most of us have faith to some extent. What you believe or if you choose to believe in something is up to you. If you are looking for a religion, there are many good ones out there; some might even fit what you believe today.

The only thing that is certain is that it is the spiritual side of you that helps determines the destiny you choose. As our faith determines the decisions we make; it is a great influential structure of who we are.

The spiritual side of you is the last part of the big puzzle in life, the final piece that most look for, the guide that will lead you through everything you do.

Can you imagine having a belief that says, “I am guided through life and will get all the help I need from the forces around me to get what I what and accomplish what I set out for?” What would a belief like that (with great faith in the force either within you or around you) help you to achieve what you want?

I have met some great men through my time with companies, both as a consultant and as an employee. One of the greatest entrepreneurs that I know told me about how he finally found that missing piece that he has always somehow felt was missing. One day, he decided to go to a church that his friend went to. He said that it was amazing — they were clapping and having fun. As he put it, “everyone was so alive.” This is one of the greatest men I have ever worked for and with in my live. He was so strongly connected after this to his spiritual side, and I later found out that the belief I mentioned earlier in this book is one that he holds, and he holds it strongly. Through all the things he has been through, he always felt he was guided to make the right choice. His faith has helped him through the fears he often had to face, both professionally and personally.

This is one of the men whom I have learned a great deal from. He is one of the people who have mastered being alive, mastered being fulfilled, mastered being happy. He supports those around him.

How well-connected are you to your spirituality? What do you believe deep down in the core? What is the meaning of everything around you? What is your ultimate purpose? What is the legacy that you believe will be left behind for your children or your grandchildren?

These are questions that each of us deep inside feel and know. We know it because we have had faith all our lives. That faith may or may not have a name, but that is irrelevant. What does matter is the strength in which we do believe the determination of our faith and what it does for us.

Take a look deep inside you: get to know your spiritual side, and get to know yourself on a level that you may not have done much of before. Find the things within you that make everything in and around you work. If you make changes on this level, you will see drastic changes in the rest of everything you do.

Now who are you?

What is your core?

Where does your faith lead you?

Does it protect and guide you?

Are you connected with your spirituality?

Can you talk to it and have it help you make that change in your life that you are looking to make?

If you want to explore the various religions, I would recommend that you browse on the Internet or go to a bookstore. There are several good religions out there if you are seeking a spiritual guide that can be your companion through life. Each of these religions is beautiful at its core and they are all meant to be guidelines for our lives. Most of them never seem to become outdated, even though some of them are misinterpreted and are taken to extremes. Remember that religion does not cause bigotry — men do and how they interpret what is otherwise meant to be a guideline.

CHAPTER

20

STAY HEALTHY, EAT RIGHT, AND SLEEP RIGHT

> *"So many people spend their health gaining wealth, and then have to spend their wealth to regain their health."*
>
> – A. J. REB MATERI

> *"Every human being is the author of his own health or disease."*
>
> – BUDDHA

This part is equally important as anything else you do. What are you like when you are hungry, tired, or sick? What is your body telling you? Why do you become frustrated more easily under these circumstances?

This one — like everything else — is something you should try for yourself. I know people that have tried different diets, have had two or three periods where they went through different diets and had to write down how they felt after eating. There is one above others that seem to have been a greater success for each individual than the rest, find the one that fits you best and energized you.

For more information about diets and dietary options, you can go to your local bookstore. Remember that your body is a chemical balance as well a nutritionally run entity. The chemicals that you absorb, both natural and artificially made, will affect the balance of your body and your energy.

Think of times when you were in a better condition than you are today, less tired and more energetic. How did you feel at that time and what was your diet like? Were you eating things you are not eating today? What could you eat more of that would make your body be like that more often?

What would happen if you could always be like that? How would your productivity be? How would your brain function, and what else would it affect?

(Since you probably did not buy this book to read about what you should or should not do regarding your diet, we will not spend a lot of time on it as long as you realize that it is all connected.) How your body feels often goes with how your mind works, as it is the other way around, as well – thus, the diet is very important.

Just give a little thought to why you eat. Think about if you are eating the best thing you can get away with. Are you eating to give your body the most energy to function at its best?

How about your sleeping habits: how are they? Also, how do you sleep at night? Do you wake up well-rested and ready for the day, or do you hit the snooze button a couple of extra times because it is so hard to get out of bed?

One of the biggest challenges (in regards to sleep) is living in a country like Iceland. In the wintertime, we have almost twenty-four hours of darkness, and in the summer, we have about twenty-four hours of daylight. Now how do you think something like that will affect your body? Going to bed, waking up, and spending your day, either entirely in darkness or daylight?

Fortunately, most Icelanders get accustomed to this, and most people's bodies fluctuate in regards to the light or darkness. In most countries, this is not a problem, the body can more easily know when it is bedtime and when it is time to get up. With a day and night that balances out pretty much accordingly to what you body needs, sleep-wise, this should be easy for most people to do. How many do on the other hand? What do you sleep like? Do you listen to your body when it wants to go to sleep? Does it tell you well before you shut off or fall asleep in front of the TV that now would be a good time to go to bed?

If you think that falling asleep in front of the TV is a good idea, then think again: hardly anything will cause you to sleep as poorly as falling asleep or sleeping with the television on. If you think you cannot fall asleep without it, remember the repetition chapter — anything you do can become a habit. You can kick this one just like anything else.

Look at toddlers or babies: if they are healthy (and not overdosed by sugar as so many children are today), their bodies will tell them exactly when they need to catch some sleep. How many kids fall asleep in the car on the way home from the store or from kindergarten? Their body not only tells them when they need to do this, but they literally just fall asleep when it is time. Now I am not saying that you should just drop down where you stand and take a nap if you get tired. Try to balance out your sleep; try going to bed early and see what time your body wants to wake up. Try this for a few days. It will balance itself out after a while and then you can easily see how much or little sleep your body needs.

According to people who have been doing sleep research, that amount varies from six to nine hours of sleep, depending on physical condition, stress level, and other outside factors. Feel free to do some experimenting with it. See how you feel when your body is getting sufficient rest, and check your productivity and enthusiasm.

Now is the last part: your health. I am surprised over and over again how many people do not even have this on their list of priorities. How do expect your body and mind to function if you are not healthy?

Health:

1. The overall condition of an organism at a given time.

2. Soundness, especially of body or mind; freedom from disease or abnormality.

3. A condition of optimal well-being

-- The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition.

Now according to these definitions of the word, how healthy are you? Remember that being *healthy* and being *fit* are not the same things. One you can have without doing the other. Would you say that bodybuilders (for example) are always healthy? What about those who take steroids? Are they "healthy" as well? Now what about a lineman in any football team? Are he healthy or fit?

There are so many different ways that health is reflected to us these days that we really have to be aware of what we are doing. Why in the world are drug manufactures advertising on television, telling you what you need to ask your doctor about? Isn't it the doctor who is supposed to be telling you what you need to take, if you need to take anything, at all?

Why are we so determined to pump our body full of chemicals, not only on the inside but on the outside as well? If we are becoming so addicted to these chemicals, what about other countries in the world? How is their health? What is their diet like? What about sleep or movement?

Movement is a key to energizing your body, as we tried earlier in this book. Do you always try to park as close to the entrance of the store when you go there? How about the mall? Do you cruise for five minutes, hoping that the spot will clear right in front of the door? Why not take the extra two minutes and park in the first spot you see and walk? It will most likely even save some time for you.

How about other things? How many times do you simply go out for a walk, go to the gym, or do anything that involves movement? Do you ever do these things, or is the only exercise you get channel surfing and leaning into the TV?

Think about what you want: if you want to be healthy consider that half an hour or forty minutes (the time it takes to watch a show, temporary amusement) could be time you invest now to be able to enjoy more of it in the older age. There are so many reruns shown on TV today, which means that I am pretty sure I can catch any show I want to — fifty years from now.

Basic advice:

The easiest way to stay healthy is by watching your diet: eat for fuel not always for pleasure or convenience. Watch your sleep: overdoing the body and filling it with more caffeine to keep going will not make you more productive. Movement will get the body energized, just as sleeping helps it recover. If you put your health on your top ten lists of things you are focused on, I can guarantee that it will help make all the other nine come easier. You will start to enjoy the finer things in life even more and get the best out of yourself.

“Our health always seems much more valuable after we lose it.”

CHAPTER

21

WHAT CAN YOU DO NEXT

> *"Know where to find the information and how to use it. That's the secret of success."*
>
> – ALBERT EINSTEIN

You have started on a great journey now — the journey to improve yourself and become a better person, and a better performer in the musical of life, the fictional character you dreamed of in your favorite movie, or the perfect singer in the band you adore. Why stop here? Why not continue on this journey that will bring you the things you have been longing for — a better sense of yourself and those around you.

Many people have started this journey; those who complete it have become well-known to the public for reaching what most people only dream of.

What could possibly stop you from continuing at this point? Someone who starts on this journey will have tools and knowledge given to them which they will study. It is that little extra that will give them an advantage in life. An advantage that most people wish they had, an advantage that will make them a role model to others, and make them an example that others will follow if they face their fears — as you can easily do.

Make sure that you know where you are headed from this point; there are many books available on the subject of self-improvement or self-help. Just like with everything else, go buy a few; some you may like and some you may not. But if you can learn one thing from each book, it will have been worth it (and those books you do not like, you can give them to other people). Even though you do not like them, they might! They might have a different approach to learning. There is a reason the book was published and made it to the shelves.

So give a little time to study what you want to study, what are the next steps for you. Are you working on your personal skills, your communication, and your vision of life? Just like you would not bring chocolate cake to put on your hook while fishing, you should not read a book about motivation if what you really need are communication skills.

CHAPTER

22

LET'S DO THAT AGAIN!

> *"That some achieve great success is proof to all that others can achieve it as well."*
>
> — ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Now what is it that you want? Are you clear about it yet? Do you now know where you are heading and what you need to do? Probably with some things. Now let us think back: repetitions create habits, and habits often show us who we are. Do you think it would be a good idea to read this book again? Did you miss something? Do the chapters make the same sense to you the first time you read it as when you read it for the second time? Have you ever watched a movie, then when you watched it again, noticed things you did not the first time around? What makes you think that this is different?

The reason this book was so short was simply because I am hoping that in about a week, you will pick it up and read it again. It will be even easier and faster to read the next time around. Some chapters may even have changed for you. Try it! See what it does; you might learn one new thing by reading it again. Of course, you can also continue reading more, by more authors, on different topics or even something totally different. There are many great authors out there who have reached the people in masses. If it has worked for them, it may work for you. Some of these are Dr. Phil, Dale Carnegie, Jim Rohn, Robert Dilts, and Steven and Connie Raye Andreas, to name a few.

Also, Ian Macdermott and Wendy Jago, along with Joseph O'Conner, have written quite a few interesting books regarding various subjects of self-development. Also, look for new books by Gudmundur Sigurdarson at your local bookstore or online at *mindformula.com*.

Whatever you do in the future, I wish you the best. Take charge, make a decision, and stick to it. You can never read or listen too much; learn one thing from each book you read. Soon, you will see great improvement in your skills in all aspects of your life. Remember, repetition is the key — that is how you learned to drive, to talk, to kiss. It is easy to change what we do once we change the pattern and create a new one.

“Be careful what you water your dreams with. Water them with worry and fear and you will produce weeds that choke the life from your dream. Water them with optimism and solutions and you will cultivate success. Always be on the lookout for ways to turn a problem into an opportunity for success. Always be on the lookout for ways to nurture your dream.”

- Lao Tzu

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gudmundur Sigurdarson, known to most people as Gummi, is an entrepreneur, marketer, author and podcast host. He grew up in Denmark and Iceland, came to the United States as an exchange student, and became a permanent resident in 2005.

Before marketing he worked in farming, landscaping, horse training, cooking and meat processing, then moved into sales and leadership. He opened a restaurant of his own, and it failed. That pushed him into the franchise and personal development world, where he worked with large international brands and became a minority owner.

In 2006 he started RedKnight as a website company. It grew into a marketing company that works with small local businesses, and he still runs it today. Everything in the Marketing Mastermind Club comes from that work.

Gummi is the author of *The First Step: A Peek at the Real World* and a contributor to *The Power of Leadership* and *Living the Law of Attraction*. He hosts a podcast where he interviews experienced entrepreneurs, because we should all learn from other people's experience.

You can find the podcast, books and blog at MrGummi.com, and more free lessons at MarketingMastermindClub.com.

A WORD OF APPRECIATION

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Gudmundur Sigurdarson.



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