

HOW TO MAKE THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE

By

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past twenty-five years, I have written several books on success and positive living. I do not claim to have a corner on the truth, but over time, the principles outlined in my books have worked successfully for myself as well as my readers.

The interesting thing about life is that just when you think you have it figured out, a new lesson presents itself that you are totally unprepared for. Since I am a trained professional, it would seem that I would have an advantage over the average person when it comes to handling life's problems. That is not always true.

It's true that I have advanced skills in helping others, but when it comes to helping myself, another factor enters into the picture. That factor is *human emotion*. In other words, I am *personally involved* and less objective when it comes to handling my own problems or impossible situations.

A few years ago, I experienced some seemingly impossible situations. What surprised me was that the same principles I had been living by for years, which brought success in my personal and business life, seemed to be turning against me. In short, everything that could go wrong; did! This included my health, love relationship, and financial situation. It was almost as if something outside of me was out to get me. At first, I thought the situation was only temporary, and it would pass. Then, when it didn't, and got even worse, I started to lose faith in everything that I had believed.

For the most part, I try to live a positive lifestyle. I do my best to help others along the way by sharing my knowledge, my finances, and myself. Granted, I am human and often fall short of my true intentions, but I could not understand how I attracted all these problems. In an effort to find answers, I asked myself, "Is this a test from God?" "Did I do this to myself?" Then I asked the ultimate stupid question, "Why me?" as though I were exempt because I am a good person. "Look at all those bad people who commit crimes, do drugs, and hurt others physically and emotionally. Why aren't all the bad things happening to them?"

What this book is about is my understanding of why things go wrong and what, if anything, we can do about them. Is positive thinking the answer? Is religion the answer? Is fighting back the answer?

What do we do when there seems to be no answer? It took me almost three years to find out. During that time, I learned some important lessons about

impossible situations. I also learned how to deal with these situations. Most of all, I also learned that it wasn't personal.

Things happen for many reasons. What is most important is not the reason, but how we are going to handle our life right now. When I stopped taking the impossible situations personally and focused on possible opportunities, things began to change. My health improved, my finances jumped back, and I met my wonderful wife, Christine who truly changed my life.

Rather than getting into the details of my impossible situations, I will emphasize what I *learned* from these situations. Again, I don't pretend to have all the answers, but I think you will find some interesting insights that will be helpful to you if you are currently facing what seems like an impossible situation.

I invite you to join me while I reinforce what I have learned. If it can help you in even a small way, this book was well worth the time and effort.

CHAPTER 1

SOMETHING WILL ALWAYS GO WRONG

Have you every noticed that no matter what you do or how positive you are, something always seems to go wrong? It seems like there is one problem after another. We finally get one solved, and another one takes its place. You are having health problems, and when you finally are well, you are facing financial problems. Or you have financial problems and finally get them under control, and you are having a problem with your relationship. Sometimes everything seems to go wrong at once!

As much as we try, we just can't seem to find a way to live our lives without the constant barrage of problems. We read self-help books, listen to tapes, attend to our spiritual life, think positively, but life keeps presenting one problem after another for us to deal with. What's going on?

I might as well give you the bad news first. For as long as you are on the planet, your life will continue to be full of problems. Even those who just focus on the positive will continue to have problems. Optimists who assume "It won't happen to me" often learn, quite painfully, that it does happen to them. They overestimate their ability to accomplish and underestimate their resources and often end up in situations that cause serious problems.

The truth is that no matter what we do, how we think, or how we live our lives, there is no way we can avoid problems. A life without problems is not an option that is available to you, to me, or to anyone else. The reason for this is

that *problems are normal and natural. They represent the difference between where you are and where you want to be.* Since there will always be a gap between where we are in any situation and where we want to be, our life is about solving problems. When you solve on problem, what's going to fill in that space? Another problem! I can guarantee you that every time you solve a problem; another one will come along.

Since we can't avoid problems, the key to happiness and sound mental health is the way we choose to *respond* to problems as opposed to trying to *avoid* them. How we perceive where we are and what we have and how we feel about it will determine what happens to us in the future. I am sure you have seen the bumper sticker that says, "Life's a bitch then you die." I don't believe that, but whether it's true or not, one thing is for sure: What's important is not what happens to us, but how we respond to what happens to us.

It is impossible to escape the fact that something will always go wrong. This is part of the ebb and flow of life. It is not so much that something is going wrong, but our interpretation or view of what is happening. Anything that seems to go wrong is something that usually doesn't fit our cause-and-effect view of order. To assume that something has gone wrong is to assume that something is *happening* to us, either as an individual or collectively.

For the majority of people, life is often a desperate, frustrating struggle to survive. Talk to most people and they will tell you about their financial problems, job problems, health problems, relationship problems, and the overall bad luck that plagues them. They feel fearful, sincere, and anxious. They are preoccupied with worry. In essence, they are not in control of their lives; their lives seem to be controlling them.

Life is a reflection of our own beliefs and points of view. Our beliefs literally shape our experience. If you think you are unlucky, a loser, things are happening to you, and life is unfair, you will be plagued by misfortune. Is it really bad luck, or are you just living out your beliefs? Perhaps you have had it all backward. You may have been dwelling on how unlucky you are and not realizing that your belief is creating more bad luck. It may appear that we are victims of circumstances, but the truth is that we are the captain of our own ships and creators of our own destinies.

LIFE IS NOT FAIR – OR IS IT?

Some people spend half their life in hospitals, while others are healthy. Some people spend their life in poverty, while others have more money than they know what to do with. On the surface, it seems that life is not fair. However,

life is always fair because *things are the way they are*. What is unfair are our *expectations* of life. If you expect life to be fair based on your expectations of how people or situations are *supposed* to be, you will end up in the loony bin. (That's the clinical term for a psychiatric ward.) I can tell you right now: Life will always *appear* to be unfair.

In our personal lives, more often than not, things will not go as we expect and people will not live up to our expectations of what is fair or not fair. Often, the whole world appears to be chaotic. It will seem like those who should be rewarded are not rewarded, and those who should be punished are not punished. However, in studying quantum physics, we learn that most of what we see, as disorder is actually chaotic order. Apparently random, unpredictable crisis, trauma, and destruction mask a higher order of events. Chaos, the actual process of disorder, is normal and natural.

Maintaining faith in apparent chaotic disorder is a major component in living a positive and productive life. This is not a form of blind faith or positive thinking, but an understanding that all breakthroughs and positive changes come from some form of meaningful chaos or disorder. When things don't go our way or life seems unfair, it is normal for us to ask three questions: Why me? Why now? What now?

Why Me?

It is normal to ask "Why me?" when things go wrong in our lives. Another variation of the question is "Why her?" or "Why him?" Many times we ask this in regard to a loved one, especially a child. Why does this have to happen to them? Why do they have to suffer so? Even when things go right, we ask, "Why me? Why is all this good stuff happening to me? Why am I having such good luck?" "Why do they have such good luck when they are such jerks?" The answer to the "Why me?" question is simply that *nothing is happening to them or us. It is just happening*. The problem is that we personalize it, as though it were happening to us.

A good illustration is a natural disaster. If a tornado strikes and your home is destroyed, you have an individual experience, but the tornado is not happening to you, it is just happening. Your experience of living through the destruction is your personalization of the event. Did you die? Obviously not, or you wouldn't be reading this book. Were you financially ruined forever? Probably not.

The library is filled with books about individuals rising out of despair. The despair caused them to change, and in retrospect they were thankful for their experience. It doesn't mean they would want to go through it again. It means that they have learned more about themselves and are stronger and wiser from the experience. The key is not to personalize every challenge or problem in life

by assuming something is *happening* to you. Every time you ask “Why me?” you assume you are a victim of circumstances, people, or conditions. We need to keep reminding ourselves that things don’t happen to *us* personally, they just happen, and the Why me? Question only limits of the possibility of finding a solution.

Why Now?

“Just when things were getting better.” “Just when I was about to...this had to happen.” “Why now?” Again, it is happening now, not just to us. If you are in a crowd and there is a gunshot and a bullet whizzes by you and misses you, is it happening to you? What about the person who gets shot? What about those who just hear a noise? Each person interprets or personalizes the event according to what happened to them. If a tree falls in the forest and you are not there, it is just falling. You can accept that. The tree is just falling. It is not happening to anyone. If, on the other hand, you happen to walk under the tree while it is falling, you personalize it and say that the tree fell on you. You may ask, “Why me?” or “Why now?”

Fortunately, we cannot choose the time or nature of the traumas and crises in our lives. We can’t tell the universe what to do; we can only be part of the events that unfold. The concept of time is irrelevant. Whenever anything happens to us, it is the perfect time for it to happen because it is happening. Our own personalized version of what we call the “right” or “wrong” time for it to happen is futile and irrelevant.

If you could schedule when a crisis or trauma was going to happen in your life, exactly what time would you select for damage to your marriage, relationship, child, career, home financial security, or health? When is a good time for bad things to happen? The answer is obvious. There is no good time. As difficult as it is to accept, these things will happen, no matter how we feel about them and no matter how assiduously we try to avoid them.

What Now?

Our first reaction in a time of crisis is to try to do *something – anything* – to make it go away. We live in a culture that places an emphasis on immediate solutions to every problem. When something goes wrong in our lives, we feel the need to resolve our immediate situation by doing something. However, it is this very intensity and urgency to solve our problems that causes us to overlook permanent and lasting solutions.

Before we can resolve any problem, crisis, chaos, or trauma, we must learn from our experience so that we don’t repeat it again. We must always keep in

mind that *the lesson is more important than the solution*. If we just focus on an immediate solution, we will not learn the lesson and more than likely will encounter the same situation again some time in the future.

The “What do I do now?” question comes from our desire to put all the pieces of the puzzle together quickly without having any idea of what the entire puzzle looks like. Keep in mind that the picture of the puzzle is on the box so that you can see the end result before you begin sorting and putting together the pieces of the puzzle. In life, we also have to be able to see the end result (a permanent and lasting solution) before we can put the pieces together.

WHAT IS, IS WHAT IS

The study of quantum physics reveals to us that things do not just happen to us - they simply are. Everything that occurs in our lives is a series of events waiting for us to give them meaning by our perceptions. When we witness apparent chaos or destruction, are we viewing a universe, nation, or world out of control, or is infinite order being revealed to us through a temporary disruption? The important key is to understand that we cannot stop or redirect the flow of the universe or the way things are or what will happen. What we can do is observe what it is doing to us and how it effects change in our lives.

What about sickness? Is AIDS a punishment from God for our promiscuous behavior? Do we create sickness as some fields of psychology and metaphysics suggest? Or is sickness just a temporary physiological disruption of energy? What role does our genetic dice play in all this?

We must learn to see illness, destruction, trauma, and chaos not as a punishment from God or a predictor of doom, but as a temporary developmental adjustment. Most of all, we must learn to observe how we let it affect us and how we can change its effect upon us. There can be no healing without developmental adjustments.

Our impossible situations are influenced more by what we think than the way things are. Our perception of reality, which can be defined as *what is*, influences our behavior more than reality itself. Therefore, it's not the way things are that is the problem, but the way we *think* they are. Just because we think something is so, does not mean that it is actually true. Perception forms everything in our life.

The problem with perception is that it not only influences the way things were and the way things are, but the way things will be in the future. It keeps us stuck because we spend so much time defending our perception. Our defense often borders on a pathological need to defend our position. When we do this, we are unable to consider other options. Most of our energy is used up

preparing our defense or rebuttal as to why things are as they are, and why we can't change. A worst-case scenario of this situation is if we have a life partner who has the same perception. Now we have two people with a common goal based on the wrong perceptions.

Our perception of reality is formed from three sources: awareness, deletion, and distortion. *Awareness* is what we have been exposed to or programmed with from our outer and inner world. *Deletions* are those parts of reality that we have ignored or not experienced. It's like being tuned into a certain radio frequently and deleting all other frequencies. It doesn't mean that those frequencies do not exist, it just means we are not aware of them. *Distortion* is the filter through which we see reality. These are the assumptions that we make about things such as life, God, and what others are like. Our decisions and actions are based on these assumptions, which are often distorted through our filter of deletions (not having enough information). Distortions and deletions in turn influence our awareness of reality.

Moving from the impossible to the possible requires that we modify our awareness. We can do this through conscious choice, or it may be forced upon us as the result of events in our lives. We tend to look at things differently after a divorce, death, losing our money, failing a test, or losing our job or business. This gets our attention and alters our awareness. Whether we like it or not, these events are self-correcting and cause us to change our thinking and behavior.

What we are striving for is conscious awareness through choice. This is a conscious commitment to change our impossible situations to possible opportunities. *Our goal in life should be to convert what we know into positive results.* In order to achieve positive results we need to weigh up our decisions to see if they serve others and us in a positive way. This is accomplished through awareness and self-correction.

WHAT? WELCOME PROBLEMS?

Since problems or seemingly impossible situations are inevitable, why not learn to welcome them instead of resisting them? They are *wake-up calls for creativity*. If we could welcome problems as they arise, seek the lesson early on, and make the necessary changes or adjustments, we would experience less pain. The key to overcoming problems is our perception of the problem. Is it really such a bad problem, or do we make it worse in our minds? If the problem is very serious, can we handle it with strength like a master of life, or do we spend most of our energy trying to fight, ignore, or resist it?

As each opportunity or situation comes your way, remember that you have a choice to act on it in the best way you can. Another one will follow every situation that you handle. No matter how difficult things are, there is always the other side or *complementary opposite*. This is what we must look for, without denying where we are right now. We must accept our current reality and make the best of it.

PROBLEMS CAN SHIFT OUR COURSE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Problems often appear to be impossible situations. They signify our need to change something - usually ourselves. The problem is not what is important; it's what we do about it that makes all the difference.

Problems can motivate us to change and ultimately make things work better for others and ourselves. Some eastern philosophers, saints, and sages even see problems as life's gifts. Ancient sages say that the more problems we have, the more opportunities we have to raise our consciousness to that of a more highly developed person. After all, what you *get* by reaching your destination is not as important as what you *become* by reaching your destination. By any standards, our purpose on earth is to develop ourselves to the best of our abilities. Therefore, every problem or stumbling block that comes our way is a chance to change for the better.

WHAT WE LOOK FOR IS WHAT WE FIND

Our reality is created from our own observations. As unbelievable as it may seem, we see what we look for, and create what we see. A psychologist using an ink blot test will ask patients what they see when they look at the inkblot. One patient may see a butterfly, while another may see the face of the devil. A hungry person looking at a picture of a bowl of fruit will see it as a source of food; an artist may see it as a potential subject for a painting. What this teaches us is that we create our own reality by our own unique point of view.

Researchers know that what they discover is influenced by what they are looking for and who is doing the looking. Repeated and double blind experiments, in which researchers are unaware of what is being studied, are often used to control the influence of the observer creating the results of the experiment. Extending this idea into daily life, what we see actually creates what we experience as individuals, couples, families, communities, states, nations, and the world.

Why do we tend to see the glass as half empty, rather than the glass being half full? When we get into negative thinking, we often see only the problems we face instead of looking for the good we can find. The question to ask ourselves

is “How often does this happen to me?” How can we minimize our negative thoughts? When we introspect and self-observe, we can notice more intently how we respond to different situations. Then we can create a change in our thinking by realizing what our mind is doing and by choosing to look for the solutions to our problems, or even find golden opportunities within our problems

LIVING WITH UNCERTAINTY

One of the things that scare most people is living in uncertainty. Yet, you cannot identify one aspect of your life that is totally certain. Even when you will die, or what may follow, is uncertain. At best, it remains a matter of speculation.

Unfortunately, most people would rather be certain of something that is uncertain. They would rather accept a point of view that they have never verified for themselves than live with uncertainty. This is the foundation of all religions.

RELIGION – OUR ULTIMATE SEARCH FOR CERTAINTY

Religion satisfies our need for certainty. Regardless of the teachings of any religion, none can offer proof that what it teaches is the truth. The only proof is in the sacred books, writings, and revelations given *exclusively* to each religion by God. And, of course, each one is different. What religious teachers ask of their followers is to substitute lack of proof with faith. The problem is that *we see what we look for and believe what we find*.

The Wayfare Institute is comprised of some of the finest biblical scholars from several universities and theological schools. Over a twelve year period, these scholars studied the Bible from a secular point of view. The project was called the “Jesus Seminar”. This group decided to approach the Bible from a strictly *historical* point of view. The goal, unlike that in traditional theology, is not to prove that everything in the Bible is true, but to set aside only those teachings that could be historically verified. The discoveries were quite interesting.

The scholars found that only *twenty percent* of what is written in the New Testament can be verified as the actual teachings of Jesus. That includes most of what Jesus was supposed to have said. This could blow the lid off the fundamental theory that everything written in the Bible is the exact word of God. However, those who have a need for certainty will be the most threatened by the conclusions of this study, because it attacks the very foundation of their beliefs.

Challenging our beliefs is always healthy, because it brings us to a new level of awareness. *If we think we know, we don't.* Only when we are willing to admit that there is a possibility that we don't know, can we grow and learn more of the truth. This comes through living in uncertainty.

COMPLEMENTARY OPPOSITES – LOOKING AT THE WHOLE

There are complementary sides to every aspect of our existence. The concept of complementary opposites teaches us that there is an opposite side to everything. Up and down, good and bad, front and back, positive and negative are all connected. We tend to see things as disjointed; yet our reality is composed of parts of a greater picture. Unfortunately, we tend to believe that the part we see is the whole. Our intellectual and emotional conditioning, which includes compartmentalization of reality, prevents us from seeing the whole picture. Most perceptions are divorced from the total context.

Imagery, meditation, mind over matter, and positive thinking all have their place, but permanent and lasting change comes from changing our perception. We must allow for discomfort and then realize that it can be changed, if we will make changes in our perception. Often we have to have greater discomfort or pain from our current situation before we are willing to make the change. Simply put, when it becomes more difficult to suffer than change, you will change.

CHANGE ON A DIME, GAIN NINE

Remember the phrase, “A stitch in time saves nine?” How about, “Change in time, makes things fine?” Why not change sooner, before the difficulty intensifies? Obviously, we would spare ourselves from an unnecessary extension of pain if we would change sooner rather than later. If we become paralyzed and afraid to make a move because we fear that another problem will come along, we remain stuck in our fears. Of course, there will be more problems. That's the way life goes. If we maintain a positive frame of mind, we are more likely to fill the new space with positive experiences. This is especially so if we have learned from our past mistakes.

If we have not learned from the past experience, we will recreate a similar experience until we get the message. Life is a persistent teacher. It will keep repeating lessons until we learn.

GOING BEYOND POSITIVE THINKING

When illness, crisis, or trauma enters our lives, we are told to adopt a positive attitude. Although this may seem logical on the surface, we must also allow

ourselves to feel depressed, helpless, and angry. These are important feelings, just as are happiness and joy. The principle of complementary opposites teaches us that there is an opposite aspect to everything. Up and down, happy and sad, and hope and despair are all important aspects of a healthy personality.

The individual who is always positive often uses it as a way to cover up unpleasant feelings such as anger, sadness, worry, and depression. This person is just as psychologically unbalanced as the person who overindulges in these negative feelings is. Real life is about feeling the ups and downs and knowing that there is something good and positive to be found during our feelings of sadness or disappointment. How else can we contemplate different ways to look at situations and then make positive changes and improvements?

Although it may be a bit uncomfortable to clearly review something unfavorable that has happened in our lives, some of the best decisions we ever make are realized in times of crisis. We need to acknowledge such feelings and let them happen in order to work through them. Allowing, instead of resisting, is what lifts us to new heights.

Some people overdo their positive outlook to the point of being unrealistic and are in danger of overlooking important pitfalls to avoid. Balancing between these complementary opposites is like a dance, and the dance becomes easy when we understand what we can do with the insight we gain from the dance.

Without such insight, we fail to see clearly where we are and where we want to go. If we don't know where we are, we surely cannot sail our ship in the right direction.

What do you think happens over your lifetime if you don't correct your false beliefs? Over time, how far off course do you think that might take you? Look at your life right now. Are you on course? Imagine what it is going to be like in the next five or ten years. How satisfying will it be then if your life isn't the way you want it because you didn't make the necessary corrections?

RESISTANCE

We resist for a variety of reasons, which include deep-seated negative psychological programming by those who influences us in our childhood, fear of the unknown, fear of failure, fear of being judged by others, having a fixed or rigid perspective, or experiencing discomfort when we change a habit.

We know we should change, but we tend to resist change with every fiber of our being. Whatever we resist persists and often intensifies, so why do we

resist? Even as you read this chapter, you are probably experiencing resistance at some level. Your mind may be telling you that what you are reading is true, but it doesn't apply to you, because in your case, it's different. I'm sorry, my friend, but it's the same for all of us. The harder you resist, the harder it is to break through the impossible to the possible. In effect, we become our own worst enemies. It's like shooting ourselves in the foot each time we tell ourselves that something is impossible.

We all have our own behavioral comfort zones. There is a part of us that wants to change and move to the edge of the circle, and there is a part of us that wants to stay in the middle, isolated from change. Think about anything you have done. Part of you wanted to do it, and part of you fought change. The problem with staying in the middle is that we continue to do more of what we have been doing in order to maintain the status quo. The more we tend to stay in the middle of the circle, the more we close off our options.

Some of us hold on tightly, even fiercely, to our foundation of beliefs, fearing that to change our views would destroy our foundation. Our minds are not like pyramids, where if you take a piece out from the bottom, all the rest will tumble down. Yes, we should hold onto our thoughts and robustly convey them in a debatable situation, but we must also change on a dime when someone gives us a new piece of information or a new concept that warrants a change in our view. This is the greatest strength of character.

Life can bring us some small pebbles to deal with, or life's ebbs and flows can bring us a bowling ball that surely will make that pyramid and tumble down. Doesn't it seem like these bowling balls or giant boulders come rolling into our lives when we have some kind of great lesson to learn? Usually we figure this out after the unsettling experience has forced us to reach new heights, to break through our set ways. Perhaps life brings us more bowling balls when we build stockades around us in our attempts to have certainty and security.

Fear of the unknown can get in the way of our greatest life experiences or hinder the greatest results we can achieve. If we hold on to our foundation of knowledge with so much scrutiny that little can reach us, we are limited by our conscious mind. We hear so often that scientific experts say that we do not use all of our brains. To reach farther within our minds, we need to go beyond what we know or what we think we know. Our conscious mind knows what we know, such as how to cook or change a tire on our car, but the subconscious mind knows so much more. It knows all that we have ever heard or seen, although we think we do not remember these things. Everything we have ever heard of seen can be remembered. We just need to reach it through techniques, such as using mental exercises, relaxation techniques, or physical exercise.

Our conscious mind knows what we know and it is aware of those things we don't know (such as, I don't know how to write a computer program). We tend to think we do not know things that are merely buried in our subconscious minds somewhere because we cannot seem to retrieve them at the moment. Actually, we are capable of retrieving any information within our minds. Sometimes we may think a thought is an original one, when it actually may have entered our minds from some other source at some other time.

When we come up with truly original ideas, the genius in us comes to the fore. We are tapping universal knowledge, where Einstein grasped his brilliant ideas. This occurs within the *Superconscious mind*. Our Superconscious mind is our power center, and it knows *the perfect way* for us, a realm of absolute ideas that cannot be wrong. This Source, which we can contact at will, always gives us the information we need to lead us out of barren places into more productive fields. William James called this transcendental power the *Superconscious mind*. Emerson referred to it as the *Universal mind*. Whatever you call it, just know that it does exist and, because it always knows the perfect way for you, that you can tap its unlimited potential to receive the creative ideas you need to solve your problems.

HOW TO REMAIN OPEN TO IDEAS

When it comes to knowing and not knowing, wouldn't it be best for us to quickly admit that we don't know something and then seek ideas that are deep within our minds or that come from great inspiration?

We can always increase our listening ability. This allows us to grasp more available intelligence. Listening to ourselves, listening to all the wonderful minds of others, and listening by observation gives us *unlimited resources*.

Do you build mental roads by which you can meet and share yourself with other people, or do you erect mental walls that separate you from others? These walls can never stand against time and change, but if you build roads that join you to other people, you can travel endlessly through time. You can change the direction of your course and make your resources virtually unlimited. These roads can be lifelines, like arteries to the hearts, minds, and souls of others with all their wisdom becoming yours as well. You will be empowered with this kind of strength, rather than be a stone wall that is actually superficial and is easily broken down.

You can resist change by saying, “I can’t help it. That’s just the way I am!” The truth is, whatever is happening in your life right now is not determined by the way you are but by the way you have chosen to be.

Rest assured life’s problems and challenges will confront you. You can perceive your problems as breaking you down, or you can perceive the experiences as challenges that are building you up and carrying you away in a much better direction in the long run.

IS SOMETHING REALLY GOING WRONG, OR IS IT REALLY GOING RIGHT?

Life is filled with uncertainty, but we must trust that there is truly some kind of Divine order that is right for us. Usually, something that is going wrong is really going to make things go right in the long run. We often can’t see the forest for the trees until we have walked all the way through it.

Under most circumstances, we are not able to see what lies ahead. Looking back, we can see how impossible situations that seemed to be going wrong actually worked to our benefit. Very few of us have the ability to accurately look into the future. None of us knows for sure what the future may bring. But we must know that whatever happens, there is always a reason and a solution. The reason may or may not be apparent, but the solution is available if we trust that we have the inner power to handle any situation.

Each failure brings you closer to success. If you allow failure and rejection to run your life, you will severely limit your possibilities. Keep in mind that you have an equal chance to succeed in anything if you will just give it a chance. You have nothing to lose until you give up.

RESPONSE TO PROBLEMS – POSSIBILITY VS. IMPOSSIBILITY

Each time we are faced with a problem, we have two choices. We can perceive the problem as a threat and fear it or we can perceive the problem as an opportunity to meet a challenge. We can go into distress, or we can feel a positive level of stress – the kind of tension that gives us just the right amount of adrenaline to feel the thrill of overcoming the problem. However, we block this rush of positive adrenaline when we block the positive energy-boosting emotions. Our western culture encourages us to not feel emotions, but to be logical. Using only logical, linear, left-brain thinking eliminates our dynamic sense of challenge, adventure, empowerment, and victory. Some people are so logical that they don’t even enjoy a victorious outcome, no matter which road they took to get there.

If we are consumed with self-doubt, fear, or anger by perceiving problems as threats to our survival, we are just allowing ourselves to be engulfed with the feeling that we have no control and that things are *happening to us*. As soon as we are faced with trouble, we should evaluate our attitudes and perception, looking to see if we are feeling like a victim, and immediately turn around the problem by looking for possibilities and viewing them as opportunities and challenges.

LETTING GO OF WHAT DOESN'T WORK

One of the most difficult obstacles we face in changing the impossible to the possible is letting go of what doesn't work. We tend to remain in jobs and careers we dislike, we don't deal with unresolved conflict, we don't love as passionately as we want, we replay negative experiences in our mind, we practice unhealthy physical patterns, we remain bored or scared, and we are afraid to change. On top of all this, we reinforce our impossible situations by telling our troubles to anyone who will listen.

Even through our past behaviors are causing pain, we keep doing the same thing over and over again. This is a form of mental illness. One of the characteristics of mentally ill people is that they repeatedly do the same thing but expect different results. Said another way, if you keep doing what you have been doing, you will keep getting what you have been getting. Instead of changing, we manifest the immobilization behaviors of inaction: we promise to change in the future, but we continue to repeat strategies that don't work. This only limits our ability to make the impossible possible.

Our willingness or inability to change is rooted in our decision that something out there is preventing us. To justify our position, we form a victim mentality that essentially says that what is happening to us is not our fault. If "they" (parents, family, boss, mate or government) were not standing in our way, we could have what we want. This victim mentality of blaming, criticizing, rationalizing, justifying, explaining, avoiding, and attempting to change external forces keeps us trapped in impossible life situations. As we empower these outside forces, our options become fewer. In turn, this self-limiting process prevents us from using our creative resources to work through our self-created obstacles. As long as we blame others, we remain ignorant about our contribution to the problem or what we can do to change it. Blame always involves giving up power.

LEARNING THE LESSON, THROWING AWAY THE EXPERIENCE

Most of the impossible situations we experience are a product of our past choices, not our circumstances. The sum total of our life is linked to the choices we have made. As stated earlier, things don't just happen to us. However, not all of our choices are made out of conscious awareness. Many times we are just operating out of false beliefs and values.

It is amazing that we can survive all this, since some of the consequences can throw our life into chaos or even be dangerous. For many people, life is not a matter of living; it is just a matter of surviving the consequences of their choices. The downside is that, if we survive the consequences of our choices, we are less likely to change. Instead we accept the consequences of our poor choices while living life in the survival mode. Success, happiness and inner joy, however, cannot be experienced if we are living in the survival mode.

Every choice we make either moves us closer or farther away from where we want to be. All progress in life, whether individually or collectively, comes through the power of choice. We can either choose to stay in the past or move into the future. Most of the time, the solution is within us, but we just don't act on it. The law of inertia comes into play. It is more difficult to get a standing object moving than one that has a little momentum.

Finding yourself in impossible situations can be turned into a positive experience. Consider it a breakthrough opportunity or a wake-up call that will enable you to move from where you are to where you want to be. We must begin by replacing the thought pattern of, "That's the way it is meant to be," or "That's the way I am," with "Up until now, that's the way I was," or "Up until now, that the way it was."

When we go through difficult times and finally resolve our problem, we need to keep the lesson, but throw away the experience. In other words, focus on what you learned from *solving* your problem rather than what *happened* to you. Instead of playing over and over what they did, what they said, how they did it to you, or how life was unfair, focus on the solution and how you can *avoid* this type of situation again. Realize that you are now much wiser and more capable of handling similar problems if they should arise.

By taking the initiative to change our destiny, we break the cycle of repeating our past experiences over and over again. The moment we determine we are the cause and not the effect, we gain power to control our destiny. If we don't, history will just keep repeating itself until we get the lesson.

MIRACLES – FACT OR MYTH?

Are there such things as miracles? What are miracles, anyway? Let's go back to the, Why me? Why now?, What now? scenario. Picture two parents in a hospital emergency room. Both have a child who may die at any moment from a serious illness. Both pray to God, asking him to spare their child. One child lives and the other dies. The question we must ask is, did God allow one to live and the other to die, or *is that just the way it is?*

As always, we have a choice in our perception. Whenever we don't understand something, we call it a miracle. And, of course, miracles are always positive. When something goes wrong, it is never a miracle; instead, we call it fate or bad luck. Keep in mind that at one time in our history; it would have been a miracle to see an airplane in the sky because no one knew about aerodynamics. Many of the things we take for granted today would have been amazing miracles during the life span of Jesus. The unexplained is often viewed as a miracle until we know the principle behind it.

Miracles are not God breaking his rules. Miracles are evidence of our conscious or unconscious acceptance of what is happening at the moment based on a principal or universal law of which we have no knowledge. The more we learn about the way things are, the more we realize that there are no miracles, only perfect order where everything is happening to the right person at the right time in the right way, based on our level of awareness as individuals, countries, and nations.

No matter what we are facing, we must realize that the problem or apparent bad luck is only a *temporary* situation. Once we have the answer to our problem and act on it, we can change it from a negative experience to a positive one. It is at that moment that so-called miracles will occur.

CHAPTER 2

THE GREATER SELF AND THE CREATED SELF

Where did you come from? When confronted with that question, most of us would answer, "From my parents." However, your parents had parents, too, and if we continue to look back in time, we see that life flows from a continuous line of creation. If we ask where did the creation come from, we have no answer but that of the One Creator or Universal Substance. If this is so, then we must also come from the One Substance or One Creator. In other words, our life is born *through* our parents not *of* our parents.

This line of thought leads us to the conclusion that we are much more than we appear. This essence of *who we really are* is the *Greater Self*, because it came from and was created by the One Creator. When we think of ourselves as single individuals, we lose sight of our true power. It is this feeling of separation from which we really are, the *Greater Self*, that is the seed of impossibility thinking. Instead of focusing on who we are, we focus on *what we have become*, which is our *Created Self*.

Perhaps you have heard of the 100th monkey phenomenon. In the late 1970s, the Japanese government studied a small colony of monkeys that lived on several adjoining islands in the Philippines. While observing the behavior of the monkeys, they noticed that one monkey had discovered how to clean dirt from potatoes by washing them in a stream. The monkey taught this skill to several other monkeys, one at a time. After the 100th monkey had been taught, something very strange happened. Every monkey in the entire colony was instantly able to perform this same skill without being taught. When the number reached 100, it apparently made a quantum leap of consciousness because every monkey was able to perform this skill. This seems to support the *One Mind or Universal Mind* concept.

Our perception of oneness can be viewed as a universe with One Mind, but billions of individual brains that contribute to the whole, rather than billions of individual brains all going in separate directions. We share the One Mind and consciousness with everything and everyone around us, including animals and plants. The Greater Self is an extension and expression of the infinite One Mind, which may be called by many different names, such as *spirit*, the *Earth Mother*, *God*, *the force*, or just *energy*.

The word God has become empty of meaning through years of misuse. By misuse I mean it gives rise to absurd beliefs, assumptions and ego delusions such as My God is the only true God and your God is false. Therefore I prefer to use any terminology but God, so that we do not fall into the trap of my God is better than your God is.

If we understand that our Greater Self came from and is one with the Universal Substance, we must then ask why the Universal Substance gave us life. Why are we here? Are we to be born without a way to understand the meaning of our lives? Are we to spend the rest of our lives eating, sleeping, working, trying to entertain and amuse ourselves, and then die without knowing the purpose of our existence? I don't think so.

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Businesses take an annual inventory of profits and losses, assets and liabilities, what is working and what isn't. Depending on how much we are working on

ourselves or changing ourselves, we should take inventory with some kind of regularity as well. An inventory of our liabilities might include personality defects such as intolerance, dishonesty, pride, procrastination, fear, or selfishness, but a personal inventory is not about assessing only our liabilities. We can't forget the *assets* in an *assessment*.

An inventory does not have to be a lengthy list of all that is wrong with us, but rather a look at our assets, uniqueness, strengths, weaknesses, or areas we want to improve. Most importantly, the elements of our personal inventory need to be of such a nature that we can measure and review our progress. If we see a problem repeating itself in a pattern, it will make it easier for us to stop the pattern by recognizing the scenario that triggers the habitual behavior. Wouldn't taking an honest look at your life and taking a personal inventory help you know your Greater Self and your greatest happiness? Wouldn't it help you to eliminate your old, undesirable self, which was created by others' expectations, and encourage development of a new, Greater Self?

If you build on your assets, even turn your liabilities into assets, then your Greater Self will be fully realized. One way to explore and heighten your assets is to examine them through your purpose, which is your passion. You see not only does purpose give you strength, it also rallies your talents to the fore. If you are doing something worthwhile, then you appreciate your true strengths, skills, and talents. By becoming aware of your strengths, you feel more complete, whole, and naturally motivated. It feels so much better to do what you want to do rather than what you feel burdened to do. If you are using the talents that give you pleasure; you will no longer be looking outside yourself for happiness, because your work and recreation will be fully satisfying.

If you ask yourself how you could be excited about doing certain jobs, then let me tell you about a roto-rooter serviceman's story that was shown on a television news show. The episode was about how customer service is perceived in America these days, where the public is getting so used to poor service that they no longer expect good service. The television show featured a man who was exuberant about his work, even though his job of fixing messed-up sewage systems is one that is not always pleasant. His attitude was marvelous. He was skilled, with many years of experience, and most importantly, he always had a positive attitude and would strive for excellence.

His uniqueness stood out. He was incredibly positive with his customers and he would go above and beyond the call of duty by doing something like cleaning up, not only what mess he may have made, but also the surrounding mess that existed *before* he got there. The special effort he put into cleaning up was actually an easy extra step, but so were the endless, unique, self-created devices

he used to achieve excellence in his work, such as having cologne, mirrors, and even a shower so that he could clean himself up between customers.

The list could go on and on with this Roto-Rooter serviceman's unique ideas, which demonstrated the quality of his work and, most of all, his pride and enthusiasm for his job. The man was literally radiant because he knew he was worth something, worth something grand, even though he works with sewage. And guess what? He earns \$70,000 per year! If he thinks he's worth something, what do you think you are worth? You will never let yourself have more money than you think you are worth.

Another individual named Peter Franklin, who has a seemingly ordinary job, has reached the big time by being an extraordinary individual. Franklin is a cabby who is aired all over the world as a talk radio personality. He broadcasts his wisdom from his cab while driving the crazy streets of New York. How did he get noticed? By his radiant personality, which expressed his Greatest Self, of course.

If you see yourself as your best or Greater Self, identify all your most motivating talents, and rally them toward some issue or interest you care about. Then you will create work environments that truly fit who you really are, even while working at a job that is unsuited to your greatest talents and abilities. You will be happy and fulfilled when you choose to let go, and let your *real* self out.

Personal change always seems difficult, if not impossible, as long as we are focused on what we don't have (liabilities) as opposed to what we do have going for us (assets). The first step is taking a look at our assets rather than our liabilities. Assets are the tools in our favor that we can use to make the impossible possible. The more we focus on our assets, the more power we will have to change our lives and circumstances. Let's take a look at some of our assets.

Spiritual Assets

Belief or lack of belief in a connection to a Higher Power (whatever you believe it to be) can be a spiritual asset or a spiritual liability. *It is important to understand that we are spiritual beings with a temporary human experience, not human beings with a temporary spiritual experience.* What this means is that you will outlive and outlast anything that is going on in your life right now. Whether you are tall, short, thin, fat, heterosexual, homosexual, Asian, Caucasian, European, African, male, female, rich, poor, sick, or healthy, this is only your temporary state. Who you are – your Greater Self or human spirit – is permanent and lasting. What is important to understand is that what you *have* and what you *do* is only temporary.

Your perception, of who you are mentally, physically, and spiritually, forms your Greater Self. This Greater Self is a composite of principles, values, decisions, experiences, friends, heroes, suffering, passion, habits, visions, beliefs, dreams, realities, and goals that are tied to your purpose. Your Greater Self is driven by your life purpose.

Regardless of whether we are clear about our purpose on earth, we can be clear about what we decide to contribute to the world and ourselves. If you have a passion to serve mankind, then this purpose can be tied to what work you choose to do. If your purpose is tied to what surrounds you, such as you and your family, then your purpose is doing the work that you do is to provide for your family. Nonetheless, there is a purpose behind every goal. In other words, earning a certain amount of money per year is your goal, but your purpose is to create the life you want. Purpose is what motivates you toward your goals. Therefore, your passion and your spirit are what compel you. Expressing your passion motivates you to be fully engaged in your work and life.

Your reason for doing whatever you do can be specifically tied to your goals in your job, even if your job may be somewhat mundane compared to your worldly concerns. For example, if a business is marketing an item to a certain group of consumers, the purpose behind any goal the company sets is to provide the best product that will make their customers more satisfied. This is so that people will prefer their products to some other companies' products and their customers' reasons for using their products will surpass companies whose product designers are simply competing among them for what appears to be the best idea. Having a clear purpose keeps us on track in the right direction and motivates us with a passion.

The human element can never be left out of business. This is why businesses seek innovation from the spirit and passion of their employees. They know that without it, their businesses could not survive and thrive in these highly competitive times. Individually, your passion and spirit make you the best you can be. Your uniqueness is what makes you a valuable contribution to any purpose or organization. Your Greater Self is your asset. Your purpose is your Greater Self-desiring to express itself.

Values Align Your Purpose with Your Goals

Purpose brings us clarity about where we are going and what specifically we are doing on a daily basis in order to accomplish that end. Commitment to a purpose larger than ourselves gives us meaning. Purpose make us feel inspired and empowered. We feel like there is always something we can do that can make a difference. Purpose toward something larger is what has driven the

great achievers of the world. The larger picture is never merely about larger amounts of money; it is about what we value.

One of the most successful Hollywood talent agents and movie producers, David Geffin, cited this quote in a recent television interview. “The man who says money will make him happy doesn’t have money.” David Geffin is known to have more money than most people do in Hollywood. He worked his way up in his field from being an usher at a television studio to representing some of the greatest names in Hollywood and the world (such as Elton John). Most recently has formed a movie studio that is equal in stature to MGM or 20th Century Fox. Geffin has all the money and success he could possibly want, and yet he chooses to continue to work hard, take risks, and pursues intense challenges.

Early on, Geffin realized his passion for television and the movies, and was attracted by the powerful effect these media, had on people. He realized it was his passion from his first job as an usher for television audiences in the early days of black-and-white TV. From there, he worked in the mailroom at the William Morris talent agency. He was flexible and able to make changes quickly when he saw opportunities. When he saw one of the agents talking on the telephone one day, he thought he could do what he saw, and achieved this goal within the agency. Later, he built his own top-drawer talent agency. David Geffin did not know how great he would eventually become. He did not set goals that were unrealistic. He simply kept working in the field that was his passion and became great by his own dynamics. Geffin said that, at first, he had no vision beyond making \$1,000 per week and wanting a certain car that he dreamed of. In a television interview he said it was easy once he followed his passion.”

Geffin felt that he was carried along his career path by his passion and dedication to his work. He certainly fulfilled all he committed himself to doing most effectively. Although he worked hard on tasks and goals on a daily basis, he did not set out to be the greatest film producer. Instead, he became a great film producer as a result of his accomplishments as a passionate and productive individual. Money was not his top priority; his work was.

Ancient wisdom tells us that if our desires are based too much on material things because we want to have more than others do, then we may become easily frustrated and angry when we do not get what we want. Those who have visions of grandeur and yet hold those visions with good values and good pleasure can enjoy themselves while they journey toward their ideals. Having a wholesome view, filled with dreams of enjoyment, allows us to be happy along the way.

This is not to say that hard work isn't necessary. At times, we might have to muster up every ounce of our strength to get what we want. There are times when we might need to be like a warrior, fighting to get where we want to go. Only we can know which methods are best at any given time on our journey or mission. Purpose generates strength and courage around our deepest satisfactions.

If our desires are also based on winning, and in turn defeating others, we lose the depth of meaning and strength we need to conduct ourselves successfully and happily. For example, people who are too involved in winning during a sticky divorce will exhaust themselves in the battle rather than turn over matter to professionals who can more competently handle all the problems. We must certainly take care of overseeing critical details, but we can destroy our happiness by thinking that our value is about winning, which includes an emphasis on defeating others.

Is Your Life about Meaning or Matter?

Is your life about being a consumer? There is little time for meaning when your life is spent in getting, consuming, fixing, repairing, and maintaining physical matter that you cannot take with you when you leave this planet.

Unfortunately, most of us have little understanding of how valuable it would be for us to have meaning in all we do. We should ask ourselves, 'Why am I doing this?' 'What do I want to accomplish?' 'Why is this task more important than another?' 'Why is this person approaching me?' The last question is good one to ask yourself often, or to ask the person who is approaching you with conversation, especially if he or she rambling on and not getting to the point.

You don't have to have a crisis in order to make more meaningful choices in directing your life. A university study of sixty students who had attempted suicide was asked why they did so. Eight-five percent stated that their reason was because their life seemed meaningless. Surprisingly, 93 percent of the students were having good social and family relationships, and they were doing well academically. Viktor Frankl has said, "People today have the means to live, but no meaning to live for." When our lives have meaning we are not just enduring life and surviving, rather we will hold an enduring light of true satisfaction and happiness.

The only thing we can take with us when we leave this planet is the knowledge or meaning we have given to our lives. The matter, the physical stuff, must be left behind. Our focus should be on those things that will be with us forever. Relationships, love, helping one another, creating a better world, and

cooperating with the perfect pattern of our unfoldment as extensions of the one mind as our Greater Self has infinite value.

Mental Assets

Mental assets include our attitudes, perception, knowledge, problem-solving ability, and style of thinking (linear vs. creative thinking, which is right-brain/left brain thinking). It is no great secret that by controlling our thoughts we can control our attitudes. This is the single greatest asset because attitude determines action. Our attitudes determine whether we are going to take responsibility or complain and blame others. The choice is always ours and ours alone. No one can influence an individual's attitude. We are the ones who ultimately decide what we are going to think and those thoughts form our attitudes about who we are and what we are capable of accomplishing. This is why the capacity for choosing our thoughts is our greatest power.

People go to therapists for weeks, months, and years only to find out that if they change their perception, they can change their thinking. If they change their thinking, they can change their attitudes. If they change their attitudes or outlook, they can change their outer experiences. You can save yourself all that expensive therapy by coming to the same conclusion and accepting this truth.

Rediscover your true self by reviewing all of your feelings, hopes, fears, desires, and values to find out what matters to you, not what matters to someone else or what matters to certain groups of people. Not only are we creatures of habit, but we are creatures of social habits, and social habitats. There are times when others' judgments will, if we allow them, creep into our behavior. The more you honestly and clearly explore yourself in relation to your inner desires and values, the more self-directed your life will be. To a great degree, you can control your own destiny if you are not afraid to take risks.

Rolling the Dice, Taking Risks

If we think of life as a game, we surely have to take some risks, or we will not get anywhere on the playing board. Life is fair; the game is fair. All is perfect in the end. This you will see by just welcoming, or at least accepting what comes your way and openly and honestly looking at what is really happening to you, and most of all, seeing the purpose of things, the reason why everything happens as it does. The reason why unpleasant things happen is not only because we must make a change that we may be resisting, but also because of the beauty found in the lesson we can learn from the experience.

As the song goes, "For every season, there is a reason, and a time for every purpose under heaven." The word *purpose* and the answer to the word *why* are

almost synonymous. It is funny though, that as children we may have often been told not to ask why so much. Yet asking why of yourself and others more often could be quite interesting. For example, just asking a person, “Why did you call?” especially if that person is rambling, could make your time and the time of the caller much more efficient. Asking yourself why you are working on one thing rather than another can make a difference in setting priorities in your time management.

“But,” you might ask, “if everything has a reason, why would we lose a loved one?” There is always a reason. It may have been best for that person to go on elsewhere, whether you like it or not. After all, who said this world is paradise? Some wonderful people are only here for a short time, or what seems like a short time. Why were they taken from us so early? Why then, would a wicked person be given a long life? Who knows? Since we can't change what happens to us, our only choice for sound mental and spiritual health is to change how we *feel* about what happens. This is something we have control over.

Physical Assets

In order to actualize our thoughts, we must be able to take *physical action* at the appropriate time. This is accomplished through physical energy, movement, sex drive, health, strength, stamina, and fitness. If we are not in balance in any of these areas, we will sabotage our success because we will have to compensate for lacking in these areas of physical well being.

Motivation is a combination of physical energy and mental energy. Actually, since the mind controls our physical body, it is our mind that truly drives us to take any action. If our attitude is negative, we won't be motivated to go anywhere or do anything. Motivation is having a positive attitude about doing things that we may not always feel like doing. When our purpose and passion are tied into our mind-set, we'll do almost anything to get where we want to go. Finally, all we need to do is believe in what we are doing. We can enable this to happen when we realize that we will do almost anything it takes to get what we want.

Only you can motivate yourself. No one can be motivated by others. The important factor is that you are motivated to do the most positive and constructive activities rather than destructive activities such as laziness. To overcome negative motivation, it is essential that you change your awareness of what you desire and how you can achieve it. Once you focus your desires, you

Increasing your awareness of the potential benefits of taking any given action can elevate your motivation. People can attempt to motivate you, they can even threaten you, but unless you desire to make changes and take actions for which you can see rewards, you will not do it, no matter what the consequences might be. Without being aware of it and in touch with your positive inner desires, you could sabotage your own success by making the wrong choices due to lazy and self-destructive motivation.

The criminal, alcoholic, overeater, or drug addict have all gone through the same process and, based on their levels of awareness, decided that addiction is worth whatever price they have to pay for it. Once their awareness changes – usually under tragic circumstances – they realize that the cost of escaping from reality and a self they have come to hate is too high for what they are receiving in return. Their motivation then sets them on a more positive course.

People can only change through their own conscious decisions. Until their awareness is changed, people will not do what you want them to do. You can try every method you can even try to scare them into action, but their action will only be temporary in order to get you off their backs. People will only change when they align their passion and spirit, setting their motivation in gear toward their own positive vision.

Skills Assets

Along with our personal inventory, we need to review our specific skills in relation to the work we are doing and our basic professional skills, such as communications and interpersonal skills. Make a checklist of your skills and particularly note which areas of expertise you have not brushed up on lately. Continuing education is vital. There is always more to learn; yet we tend to know it all.

How are you at handling conflicts, negotiating, persuading, giving directions that someone else can clearly understand, building partnerships and team mates, prioritizing, time managing, and making decisions? Many people do not realize that there are actually seminars specifically on the subject of decision making. Have you ever taken a course in decision making? How about an entire course on listening skills?

If you want to double-check and see what skills you might enhance, take a look at a good role model and see what that person does. Ask the role model questions, and then pursue the skills and techniques he or she uses. Have you ever asked someone if you could spend a day with him or her to find out how that person does what they do? This is not something just for students to do; a seasoned professional can do so and, if anything, you will actually impress the person you are interviewing.

The Asset of Persistence with Flexibility

Persistence receives the category of being an asset on its own. The following quote of President Calvin Coolidge says it all:

Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not. Nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not. Unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not. The world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan "press on" has solved, and always will solve the problems of the human race.

Although the essence and drive of persistence is the bottom line in accomplishing great things, being persistent to the point of ignorance and stubbornness is just plain stupid. And disappointingly, we see people and businesses resist adjusting their plan because they think they will lose their plan altogether. The internationally renowned business advisor and syndicated columnist, Tom Peters, who wrote *In Search of Excellence*, also wrote another best seller called *Thriving on Chaos*. Peters elaborates throughout his books that flexibility and quickness are keys to success in these fact-paced times. Nonetheless, the key here is the balance between action and inaction, knowing when to hold 'em and when to fold 'em.

During my first efforts as an entrepreneur, I constantly examined my capabilities by observing myself and measuring myself against all the qualities I needed to be successful. What I discovered was the most valuable quality I needed was persistence. I needed the persistence to perform most consistently the tasks that brought me income, and it was important to realize that I should not get too caught up in perfecting other things that were not producing an income. Of critical importance was getting these nonproductive tasks out of the way and performing the tasks that brought real revenue. Sounds like simple prioritizing, but once you get caught up in managing a business, you can easily lose critical production time that brings you income. Entrepreneurs start wearing lots of hats, depending on the growth of the business and available staff. I found President Coolidge's quote to be the important one to keep in front of me.

However, being foolishly stubborn and rigid about having your plan implemented *one* way – your way – is not what persistence is about. Referring to David Geffin again, a variety of celebrities were interviewed and asked to speak about Geffin. They repeatedly described the same asset about Geffin: "He can change on a dime." Geffin had plenty of perseverance, but when new information or opportunities came his way, he instantly made changes. Many of

us resist change to our own detriment. We miss the opportunity. Being hit with problems and making chances are the challenges Geffin thrives on. Problems are not something negative. Problems are our barometers for knowing when and how to change or adjust our course, yet we must keep our eye on the overall vision of what we ultimately want and then persist again.

SETTING LIFE GOALS

Your goals don't start in the brain; they start in your heart. If you set goals from a personal perspective in the six major areas of your life, you will find your purpose will be tied into your career and all your daily activities. You can break these goals down into long-term and short-term goals and knowing your values and purpose can set priorities. The six major areas are:

CAREER: What do you want to accomplish as far as your work is concerned?

FINANCIAL: Realistically, how much money do you want to have?

PHYSICAL: What program for physical fitness do you want to develop?

MENTAL: In what areas of your life do you wish to study and obtain more knowledge?

FAMILY: What relationships do you want to have and maintain with your family?

SPIRITUAL: What are you striving for spiritually?

Set your goals with a vision of the new and improved you. Don't get caught up in the trap of living in the past. Recognize your current reality and then move on. It's OK to dream of good and reasonable things happening in your life. Let the dreams roll into your thoughts. Do you know people who seem to actualize their dreams often? Look at how their positive thinking works for them. A little optimism is fine, but keep your feet on the ground at the same time. It is only when dreaming takes us away from what we need to do on a daily basis that we could get into trouble, and I think most of us regularly hear, loud and clear, the constant reminders of all our basic and essential responsibilities.

Have reasonable expectations. Give yourself a frequent reality check. If you are faltering, admit it and find out why. Your present tasks and responsibilities are the most important things you have to do. There is a universal principle that states that you will not be given greater opportunities in life until you have proven that you are more capable than your present work demands. Failure to perform your present actions efficiently and successfully will delay success and

may actually set in motion a situation that will cause you to go backward. Do not try to escape from the present for a better future that does not yet exist. Do what is important, and then eliminate or delegate the rest.

EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS ALONG WITH YOUR SOUL

Hold on to your negative thoughts and your world will unfold as those values, inner beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions become reality. Change your thoughts, and your world will unfold in new and more positive ways. In other words, if you don't change your beliefs, your life will be like this forever. Is that good news?

Fortune favors the bold. Wishful thinking will not make your dreams come true. Bold action will. He who hesitates is lost. You won't ever have to be a loser again if you take *bold action*. If you want to be free, realize that your resources are unlimited. Your mind controls your limitations or freedom from limitations, so don't let your limitations control your mind. If you think the latter, you have declared yourself a prisoner, and you will be a prisoner. Once you are fed up with that kind of thinking, you can move yourself into a kind of freedom greater than you have ever known before. You will remain where you are only as long as you wish.

You don't have to be superman to break through your barriers. As you may know, a certain sports shoe manufacturers ad says, "Just do it!" As Richard Simmons once put it, "Get that paint brush in your hand and sit down with your canvas. This is your life. You are the artist and creator of your future. All you need to do is to paint the picture of your life on your imaginary canvas. Paint it the way you want it with positive brush strokes and watch it begin to unfold."

Expanding our Greater Self requires awareness, wisdom, courage, and action. The more we know, the more we realize that there is more to learn. That's the true adventure of life. You can do it with the following ten steps to actualizing your Greater Self:

1. Identify what is not working for you and choose to get rid of all that undermines your success. Know your current reality.
2. Get in touch with your Greater self, your soul, your values, your purpose, and align your true essence with your talent.
3. Clarify your vision by aligning your values and purpose with your goals. Everything you do, no matter how mundane, has meaning, a purpose.

4. Check your vision against all your personal assets. Conduct a reality check, for delusion is the enemy of the winner. Be realistic about your assets and liabilities.
5. Check your skills. Get more information, seek advice from others, and get more training. Continuing education is vital.
6. Be self-aware and observant. Honestly check your psyche for neediness, greed, fear, jealousy, and self-righteousness. Improve your mind, with counseling if necessary. Emotionally detach from all that is negative. Also, avoid being too emotionally attached to the result you want.
7. Be dynamic and innovative in *how* you create what you want. Remember, purpose is *why* you want something, goals are specifically *what* you want, and creating what you want is *how* you will accomplish getting what you want.
8. Recognize which are winning patterns and which are losing patterns. Recognize failures, correct them, and get on course – an adjusted course. An airline pilot is constantly changing the setting of his controls of the aircraft in order to remain on course to get to the final destination. If he gets word that there is an overbearing storm, he will instantly change his course. When the red flags of warning are there, it is time to change promptly.
9. Set up your own rules for success and failure and know that possibility thinking will bring you what you want no matter what challenges arise. You have the power to make the impossible possible.
10. Solidify your commitment to yourself and others. Always stick to your word. Consider a win/win environment for all who are around you. You don't have to gobble up others to get what you want. As you build your own success, build your Greatest Self along the way, for this is your most finite purpose on earth. Eleanor Roosevelt wrote, "The purpose of life, after all, is to live it, to taste experience to the utmost, to reach out eagerly and without fear for newer and richer experience."

Have you ever heard the joke about a man, who kept praying every day, "Please God, please, let me win the lottery, oh please." On and on, day after day, he kept praying, and finally God said, "Hey Joe! Buy a Lottery Ticket!"

Eastern philosophy tends to believe that everything is predestined, and that you have little to do with what happens. Western philosophy tends to be in overdrive about making things happen. Americans particularly tend to think they can control everything. To get it right, it takes a balance between these two philosophies.

We are born with our own innate capacity to create our own life dynamics. No one has the same capacity as another. Clearly we are as different as our fingerprints. No one else can make things happen for us. Not even talent agents can *make* the talent, they *discover* the talent. You can discover your own talent and then market it in your life.

Discovering our own talent (or further discovering it) involves expanding your Greater Self as opposed to your Created Self. Our gateway to expanding our sense of our Greater Self is affected by how we perceive what is *outside* us, *within* us, and *all around* us. Our ability to create is constantly affected by our sense of self.

Our Created Self has been developed by all the outside stimuli that make us has a contracted sense of self. Below you will find a list of influences that affect our sense of self. They either make us constrict ourselves unfavorably, or we can build them up in order to expand our Greater Self.

GATEWAYS TO EXPANDING YOUR GREATER SELF

Outside You

Sense of Safety

FROM: Fear of taking risks, of rejection, of self-rejection

TO: Focusing on where support can come from, and supporting yourself with positive affirmations

Sense of Self-Protection

FROM: Letting others bring you down or interfere

TO: Self-nurturing, allowing yourself to be nurtured, setting boundaries with others

Sense of Strength

FROM: Feeling overwhelmed, controlled, weak, helpless, like a victim

TO: Seeing all problems as perfect messages that you can resolve, knowing your Greater Self is your power.

Within You

Sense of Compassion/Love

FROM: Not loving yourself and others, feeling all used up, drained that all you do is drudgery.

TO: Loving yourself, others, and loving what you do.

Sense of Identity and Autonomy

FROM: The self that everyone else created for you, being jealous of others as a mask to keep you from embarking on your own endeavors.

TO: Recovering your self-identity, your Greater Self, by getting in touch with your inner self, knowing that everything that happens has a purpose:

Sense of Power

FROM: Giving your power away to others who criticize, control, blame, or cause chaos; having no vision.

TO: Following your intuition and letting it guide you fearlessly, from anger and separation to synchronicity, freedom to dream.

Around You (Universal)

Sense of Possibility

FROM: Resistance, impossibility, and rigidity

TO: Going with the flow, being receptive and creative

Sense of Connectedness

FROM: Fearing to take risks, having to be perfect

TO: Resourcing Universal Intelligence for all your needs.

Sense of Abundance

FROM: Sense of lack, limitation

TO: Sense of unlimited resources that are attainable.

Sense of Faith

FROM: Disbelief, “should” or “have to” thinking, lack of belief in self

TO: Knowing that universal intelligence is abundant

Remember, whatever we give our attention to, we create more of. By giving attention to your Greater Self, you will expand the capacities of your Created Self. This will allow you to handle with confidence and power any and all impossible situations you many encounter.

CHAPTER 3

IMPOSSIBILITY THINKING

When we perceive our lives to be on an inevitable path of continual decline, when we think that our situations are impossible and that we are failures, the likely response is to resign our lives to problems and thereby create more problems. Have you ever noticed this? People who have problems seem to create more than their share of problems. It looks like everything is happening to them or that they are very unlucky. They often appear to be victims of a cruel world where they never have a chance to succeed. In essence, they feel powerless, and this became their reality. The cycle becomes self-destructive because belief keeps creating reality and reality keeps creating belief.

LEAD WEIGHTS OF IMPOSSIBILITY

You shouldn't blame yourself when a series of things go wrong all at once. If you do, you will surely conclude that you are the victim of bad luck and therefore *you are* in unlucky person. Any of us at one time or another could be deluged by what seems to be an unending avalanche of problems. Sometimes a substantial series of problems could have like giant ocean waves wiping us out.

Even the most mentally stable individual can reach a breaking point when too many problems and too much negativity comes his way. The solution is to accept it, go with it, and then get rid of it. Instead of seeing impossible situations as happening to you, see them all as happening for a *reason*. If you hang on to misery, you create emotional, psychological, and sometimes physical lead weights that pull you down.

Changing the impossible to the possible is a matter of letting go of destructive patterns that restrict any aspect of our lives. The destructive patterns are what I call the *lead weights of impossibility*. Picture if you will a series of lead weights. Each one weights five pounds. For every impossible or negative thought we have about ourselves, we are strapping on one five-pound lead weight. These lead weights prevent us from changing the impossible to the possible because we are weighed down so much that we can hardly move emotionally, psychologically, or physically. We must ask ourselves how much extra weight are we carrying around right now.

Even though we have many good qualities, our inability to succeed can be impaired by the lead weights of impossibility. Such things as doubt, guilt, anger, fear, and addictions can hold us down. As we try to move forward, we find it impossible because the weights of negativity are almost unbearable. These weights hold us down and keep us from changing our circumstance. Change is almost out of the question unless we figure out a way to release the lead weights of impossibility.

The mind is a marvelous thing. Though the conscious and subconscious, it can either assist us in creating the possible or convince us that whatever we want is impossible. The end result is determined by how we use our mind. To better understand how the mind works, in particular the subconscious, we must first understand its primary function. Although the subconscious can be used to create the possible and guide us to a successful outcome, its primary function is survival.

Through born instincts and programming, the subconscious mind sets up criteria as to what survival means to us as individuals. For each one of us it is different. Some people are concerned about survival in a relationship, some are concerned with financial survival, and for others, it is physical survival. Anything that opposes our notion of survival is challenged by the subconscious. It immediately focuses on the area of perceived danger and alerts us to take evasive action. In essence, it is always looking for perceived danger, similar to the parent who warns a child of safety hazards.

In order to protect us, the subconscious mind looks at every person, place, or situation as a potential source of danger. Another way to define danger is negativity. The mind is always looking within and without for sources of things that could go wrong and possibly hurt us emotionally, physically, or financially. It is saying, "Watch out! You know what happened last time," or "They told you this could happen."

The mind and body react, which triggers our flight or fight response. Unless we control our thinking, we continue to react in a negative way and we continue the downward spiral, which can produce anxiety, procrastination, or in

some cases, severe clinical depression. The worst part is that this becomes a habitual thinking pattern. We must break out of this negative mind-set that our life is not about creating a successful, happy life, but should be spent defending ourselves against all the imaginary and perceived dangers that lurk. If this is the case, then our life is only about protection, not creation.

The bottom line is that our thoughts create our reality. If we are focused on the negative or the impossible, our subconscious will direct us to people, places, and circumstances to prove that we are right. In order to preserve security, the subconscious always seeks to prove that what we are thinking is in fact true.

If you think that every time you get into a relationship the person will leave you, that becomes your reality. Your subconscious then searches for people to come into your life to fulfill that perception. Whenever you are among a group of people, you will be attracted to that type of person. If you should get into a relationship with that person, he or she will eventually leave you. Then you can say, "See, I knew it. Everyone leaves me." If you think that you are going to be sick, your business will fail, or you will lose your money, your subconscious will assist you in making those assumptions a reality.

THE SPIRAL OF IMPOSSIBILITY

When life's outcomes do not match our wishes, we feel threatened. Our primary focus is on survival, *so we are no longer focused on what we want, but what we don't want*. Our motivation is based on fear, and we move away from what we don't want rather than toward what we do want. Our new goal is survival, and one of the ways we protect ourselves is to defend our current situation and ourselves. We express this by claiming that we are victims of society and other people. Our new intention is *not* to turn the impossible into the possible, but to defend ourselves and attack whatever it is we perceive to be the cause of our failure. Our energy sphere keeps contracting as we feel jealousy, blame, self-justification, anger, fear, or the need to run away. This is what causes depression. Until we are willing to change, we are stuck.

PRISON OF IMPOSSIBILITY

Every time we blame something outside of ourselves, we are in effect trying to weasel and out of being accountable. Instead of being accountable, we use weasel phrases such as, "They did it to me," "I can't," "I had no choice," "I don't know what to do," "That's just the way I am," "If only..." "Nobody told me that," and "If things had been different..." These weasel phrases only serve to immobilize us in the present. Weasel statements are all wrapped around one

basic belief which is, “I am not the cause, I am the effect.” Said another way; “I am the victim.”

If you believe this, you share a common trait with most prisoners. Studies of inmates in prisons show that only three percent of all inmates believe they are accountable for what happened to them and why they are in prison. It was their parents, poverty, lack of education, a bad influence, or drugs that caused them to end up where they are. When refuse to take responsibility for where we are, we become imprisoned by our own thoughts. We are locked into the past and cannot escape into the future. The good news is that we don't have to escape this prison of impossibility; we can just walk out the front door once we take responsibility.

Freedom comes when you stop placing responsibility on others for your happiness, success, or financial condition. While this may seem harsh, no one really cares but you. In the greater scheme of things, people are more interested in their lives than they are in yours. They are too busy trying to get out of their own prison of impossibility. If you are waiting for them to help you escape, be prepared to wait for the rest of your life. This approach can only set up for further disappointments. People can assist us, but we must take the initiative and full responsibility for where we are and where we want to be.

REDIRECTING OUR CREATIVE ENERGY

We know that we can use our mind to create the positive or the negative. Why are we so often driven toward the negative? Basically, it comes down to where we direct our creative energy. Universal energy or intelligence is like electricity running through us as creative energy. This energy is directed through the mind. The energy comes to us as positive energy. Unfortunately, we can also use the same potentially creative energy in a negative manner. This is similar to electricity. We can use electricity to turn on the lights in our homes or use it to electrocute a murderer in the electric chair. We form and mold the energy into creation through the mind. Therefore, we have the choice of creating positive energy as possible energy or negative energy as impossible energy in our lives.

Let's examine the power of creative energy within ourselves and how we can direct it. First, we must understand that our ability to use it is in direct proportion to our belief and understanding that it truly exists. Great leaders such as Christ, Gandhi, and Buddha knew how to maximize their creative energy from the universal substance and translate it into positive manifestation or results. The basis of all their teachings is that you also have that same creative energy within you. The manner in which you use it determines the results you will experience in your life. Let's look at some examples. In its simplest manifestation, it can be experienced when you walk into a room with

people in it. Have you ever noticed a heaviness or troublesome atmosphere, even though no one has said anything or acted out of the ordinary? You just get that *feeling*. This is an *energy field*.

The energy field around us changes as we change emotionally, spiritually, and psychologically. The reverse is also true. The energy fields around us affect our psychological and physical states. Think of the universe as one dynamic energy field that sustains us. If we think negatively of ourselves, we disconnect from that source of energy. In order to overcome the impossible, you must have a sense that you are bigger than any problem you face. The *you* I am referring to is not the Created Self you think you ought to be, but your Greater Self – *who you are*.

A simple but profound way to think about this energy is to think that you are at the center of a large sphere or ball of energy that expands and contracts like a balloon. When you are negative, upset, angry, or scared, this energy balloon contracts. This limits your power to change. Alternately, when you are confident, joyful, and compassionate, the energy sphere expands. All the solutions for possibility are open to you. You even look and feel different, not just to yourself, but to others.

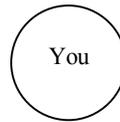
All problems in life can be viewed in the context of this contraction or expansion phenomenon. We have been conditioned to deal with life's problems by contracting our power or energy. The process of contraction and depression continues until with each contraction, all opportunity literally disappears from our lives. This is the true definition of depression. We have the ability to re-pattern our way of thinking. To do this, we must learn to relax, trust, and let go. Then our energy field is free to expand.

CIRCLE OF POSSIBILITY

We tend to take the path of least resistance. Resistance to change is in direct proportion to our comfort zone. We will call this our *circle of possibility*. Our circle of possibility is created by the thoughts we have been thinking and the things we have done. Anything new that we have not done or thought before makes us feel uncomfortable. Uncomfortable thoughts or the prospect of doing something we have not done before increases our anxiety level. This in turn makes us feel even more uncomfortable and causes us to believe that what we want to do is impossible. This discouragement, which comes from believing what we want is impossible, often causes us to give up even before we start. When we move past our comfort level, we find the adventure, excitement, and satisfaction we desire.

Have you ever said to yourself, “I don’t want to do that because it makes me uncomfortable?” You’re not alone. This is a normal response when most people are confronted with a new situation. Unfortunately, most people use discomfort as a reason or an excuse for not doing something. To illustrate this, picture a circle around you.

Circle of Possibility



You are in the middle of the circle. The circle represents your circle of possibility. Everything outside the circle represents things that you have not experienced...things that make you uncomfortable. This also is your circle of protection. Just slightly outside your circle are your goals or even problems that come into your life. When faced with new challenges, opportunities, or obstacles, they begin to intrude upon your circle. The tendency is to rush to the outer limits of your circle and set up defenses. In some cases, you’ll pretend that whatever is outside your circle isn’t there. The problem is, the very thing you want is usually outside your circle. It keeps banging up against your circle until you make a decision to resolve it or achieve it.

Your desire to achieve it or resolve it prompts you to go the edge of the circle and break through. The only way you can get to it is to break through your circle just enough to bring it within your circle of possibility. Once it is within your circle, you can deal with it. Now an interesting thing happens. Each thing you bring inside your circle of possibility expands your comfort zone. In other words, the circle becomes larger and extends beyond your ability to deal with the situation. Now that situation that used to be beyond your limits is within your reach. Not only are you able to deal with it, but you can expand your circle.

The degree to which you are happy or not happy is in direct proportion to how much control your circle of possibility has over you. If it has more control over you than you do of yourself, then you experiences unhappiness, anxiety, and depression. There are four factors that cause us to stay within our circle of impossibility: fear, guilt, unworthiness, and anger. Let’s look at some examples of the lead weights of impossibility and how they make change seem nearly impossible.

Fear

We stay within our limited circle of possibility because of fear. We often feel fear even when we are just skeptical or fear disappointment. Fear is the mind-talk that prevents you from hearing your intuition. It is probably the most

common limiting emotion. The basis of fear is the flight of fight syndrome. Remember that our mind is always trying to protect us. Survival, not success and happiness, are the primary goals. We fear what we don't know, and that fear keeps us from taking action. Not taking action keeps us ignorant, and ignorance creates more fear. Thus the cycle repeats itself.

Any time we venture into the unknown, we will have fears. Everyone has fears. For some of us it's death, public speaking, loss of love, animals, darkness, or flying. After working with thousands of people, it has become clear to me that we create our fears as well as our dreams, and they happen just as we planned them to.

In an interview with pop singer Gloria Estefan after her near fatal accident that involved a severe spinal injury, she said that all her life she had a fear that she would be crippled an accident. She said, "I was afraid I would be crippled and not be able to walk, and I have been afraid of that my entire life. When the accident happened, I thought, it's finally here." Her fear was a self-created prophecy.

Many people have a fear of making mistakes. A major lead weight is our bundle of past mistakes. We all have made mistakes, but we insist on playing them over and over in our head instead of letting them go and moving on. Perhaps you have gained weight, lost your job, ruined your health, or had a relationship that was self-destructive. Because of these mistakes, you have convinced yourself that you can never be in shape again, never find another good job, never restore your health, or never find someone to love you.

In the process of expanding our circle of possibility, we are going to make mistakes. There is no way to avoid them. However, mistakes should not be construed as total and irreversible failures. Mistakes are a buffer zone in your circle where you allow yourself and others an opportunity to make mistakes without judgment. This will allow you to look at mistakes and self-correct rather than wasting valuable energy on what should have happened or what you should have done. Consider all mistakes as feedback, not failures. Instead, keep the lesson and throw away the experience.

One of the biggest fears is the fear of failure. However, there is really no way you can fail in life. Failure is a relative term and a value judgment. What looks like failure to you may not be failure to someone else. If you don't earn \$50,000 a year, you may consider yourself a failure. However, someone else may feel that if they earn \$10,000 a year, they are a success. Failure is determined by the rules we set up in life concerning success and failure. All we

have to do is change the rules. More importantly, we must not let others make the rules for us.

Recently, I read a list of famous and successful individuals that had been fired from a job at least once. One of them was the talk show host, Sally Jessy Raphael. She was fired by approximately twenty radio and television stations before she finally found success with her television talk show. She certainly never gave up. Thomas Edison made 10,000 mistakes before he discovered the light bulb. So just think if he gave up at the 9,999th try, who knows how long we would have had to wait for someone else to discover the light bulb! Do you think Thomas Edison feared failure? I tell people, "If you are not making at least ten mistakes a day, you're doing something wrong."

How to Be More Fearless

I believe that life without fear is not an option that is available to us. I prefer to approach it from this manner: Instead of *fighting* our fears, we can *neutralize* their power over us by just *accepting* them and then taking one small step at a time to overcome them. As simple as it may seem, the only difference between successful people and those who are not successful is their response to fear. Let's face it, we are all afraid. Successful people are afraid, but they take *action*. They don't get immobilized by their fears.

Think of overcoming your fear as a means of building spiritual and emotional muscle. As you start each day, contemplate your daily plan and envision yourself going through it, especially when you will be taking on new challenges that worry or frighten you. If you are in balance, with the mind, body, and spirit connected, you can overcome your fears.

If your biggest fear is that you will be a failure, I have good news for you. You can never really fail, because you can never fail as a *person*. Your job can fail, your finances can fail, your business can fail, your relationship can fail, but that's not *you*. All those things are outside of you. They can all be changed or corrected. The problem comes when you start believing that you are what you have and what you do. The solution to overcoming the fear of failure is to recognize that you cannot fail as a person. The key is to separate yourself from what you have and what you do.

Guilt – The Gift That Keeps on Giving

It is critical to recognize the insidious nature of this emotion in that it can have such crippling, long-term consequences. In adulthood, the guilt-prone person can suffer from underlying, free-flowing guilty feelings even when nothing logical supports their presence. Feelings of guilt can manifest in people's dreams along with guilt's twin - anxiety. Guilt is one of the first and foremost

components of an unworkable moral code that needs erasing if a person wants to live a healthy, balanced life.

When we think or act in a manner that produces guilty feelings, our responses to guilt is to promise not to do it again and/or to punish ourselves by feeling bad. We rationalize that when good people do bad things, they are supposed to feel bad. Feeling bad is the price we must pay for violating our beliefs about what good people do. In every area of our lives we have beliefs about how good people should think and behave. When we act that way, it proves that we are a good person. When we fall short of the ideal image, our unquestioned reaction may be to feel guilty and anxious.

As a child, you were given a standard of perfection to live up to by your parents, religious teachers, and other role models. As you moved into adolescence, you started adding your own set of beliefs about perfection based on input from your family, friends, peer groups, and the effects of advertising and other well-intentioned sources. As an adult, you try to live according to that model of “good” and “bad”, based on those beliefs.

Unfortunately, we rarely question our beliefs about “good” and “bad.” If our beliefs came from authority figures such as our parents, teachers, or religion, we just assume that what they told us is true. Whether they are true or not, is not the issue. More importantly, we must ask ourselves how these programmed images produce feelings of guilt in our daily lives that affect our self-worth? *The important point here is that we must distinguish between when we should change our actions and when we should change our beliefs about our actions.* If our actions are producing a negative result, the easiest way to change our actions is to change our beliefs first.

We must determine the validity of our beliefs by asking ourselves questions. Where did I get this belief? Who told me it was true? Did someone tell me in order to control me? Did they really know what they were talking about, or are they just passing their programmed beliefs on to me for my own good?

Instead of feeling badly, we can use guilt constructively by changing our belief so that our energy is not directed toward feeling bad every time we do something or don't do something that others have told us is bad or wrong. The key here is to understand that good people sometimes do bad things. Bad things can be defined as things that produce a negative result. We must separate the doer (us) from the end result (action). In other words, your actions may sometimes be bad or inappropriate, but you are not a bad person – or a good person for that matter. You are just you, doing good or bad things that produce positive or negative results.

Keep in mind that your Greater Self is neither good nor bad, because at the spiritual level there is no judgment. However, your Created Self is only human and still has imperfections built on false beliefs.

The most formidable guilt-producing statement you can make is, “I could have done better.” That is entirely false. To *know* better is not sufficient to *do* better. Knowledge is unrelated to action and is intrinsically an intellectual process. We know we should not smoke, use drugs, overeat, and hurt ourselves or others, but we do these things anyway. The only way this will change is when we come to the point where we realize the pain of our actions is greater than the price we will have to pay to change them. At that point, we will stop doing negative things to ourselves and to others. Guilt only serves to make us feel bad about our thoughts and actions, and it is a poor replacement for consciously choosing to rid ourselves of undesirable actions.

So, when you do things you feel guilty about, just say to yourself. “Obviously, I have not reached the point where I am perfect. I am only human and I am still learning. I am not going to feel bad, but I am going to use this opportunity to remind myself to do better the next time.” If the pain of your actions is great enough, you will not do it again. If you got away with it this time and did not pay the full price for your actions, you will probably do it again. Just keep reminding yourself that the price is getting too high and now might be a good time to change your thinking more quickly so that you take more appropriate action in the future, without requiring pain to compel you.

If guilt is feeling discouraged, feeling punished, and self-punishing, then we can replace it by being productive, reliable, sincere, cooperative, lucky, involved, tender, gentle and purposeful. Learn to replace stationary and backsliding guilt with positive forward motion. The more you truly become a friend to yourself, recognize your life’s purpose, and engage the Greater Self in your daily dealings, the more you will sense that guilt is relaxing its hold in your mental makeup.

Action will increasingly replace stagnant self-flagellation. Guilt can be a convenient replacement for taking effective action and accepting responsibility. It’s as though we childishly believe that appropriate suffering releases us from capable, adult behavior. As such, guilt becomes a thinly masked form of selfishness. Guilt is a poor substitute for engaging fully in life. As nothing more than self-blame, it is one of the more fruitless, circular non-solutions in which we invest valuable energy.

Allow yourself to release the hold guilt has on you and move on to more effective, self-loving means of changing your behavior. Hair shirts are out...constructive thoughts and concrete actions are in.

Unworthiness.

Self-worth comes from the Greater Self. If you know your true nature, you will better recognize and understand the true nature of those around you. The more you know about yourself, the better you will understand yourself and others.

Don't be afraid to let others see a weakness in you. Some people are so horrified at the thought that someone would discover a weakness in them that they will even lie and manipulate in order to cover for themselves. Some people will take this so far that they will even let others suffer consequences for them.

A televised report on human behavior set up the following situation and recorded it on tape. A job applicant was put in a waiting room that contained a table with several party platters of food. The applicant was told not to take any, as the trays were for a celebration to be held later on. A hidden camera showed the woman giving in to her temptation by eating a variety of items. When the prospective employee was asked if she took any of the food, she said, "No." She was asked again because the interviewer stated that they noticed that some of the food was missing. She still insisted she did not take any food. Another employee was brought into the room. This man had stopped in earlier when the applicant was alone in the room. The employee was asked in front of the applicant if he saw her take any of the food. Even though he said he had not, the applicant, when asked, stated that the employee took the food and not herself.

Is your self-worth so fragile and on such a thin foundation that you fear being wrong? Do you have a problem with saying, "Oops, I made a mistake? Sorry?" I hope not. When we try to cover up our flaws, along with the cover-up, we block any chance of demonstrating our undiscovered, innate strengths.

Twelve Surefire Ways to Destroy Your Self-Worth

1. Have a lack of faith in yourself and whatever you believe in.

Complain, criticize, blame and bring others down. Constantly compare and measure yourself as "better than" others. Hold others down so they won't get ahead of you.

2. Don't be flexible, be a quitter, and be satisfied with less.

3. Associate with weak people. Work along with people who are going nowhere. Worse yet, let them make up your mind for you.

4. Be a “know-it-all.”
5. Be a taker.
6. Use this kind of weak language: “Impossible, tired, problems, unreal, what’s in it for me.”
7. Talk about all the things that are wrong with people. Talk too much, and wait for things to happen.
8. Take a job with no chance for advancement. Leave right at closing time. Do no more. Do only what benefits yourself.
9. Deliberately scatter yourself, spread yourself too thin.
10. Satisfy your lack of self-worth by being a workaholic.
11. Dwell on things not working out, and imagine that they could only get worse.

What You Can Do to Build Your Self-Worth

If we don’t feel we are worthy, competent, or deserving, every time we try to embrace the possible, our subconscious says, “Remember, you told me - you are a jerk, no one will ever love you, you can’t do anything right, and you’re not good enough. Who do you think you are? We know that you are a powerless victim. Don’t even try.” Then we say, “There is no way I can be, do, or have this.” Your subconscious replies. “Now you are being realistic.” Then, when we don’t get what we want, we say, “See, I knew it would not work out. I was right all along.”

This inner dialogue is more predominant than we think. Many people try to cover it up by appearing confident. Some go to the extreme, bordering on arrogance. In reality, they are merely involved in an attempt to hide the fact that they feel incompetent and unworthy.

Where did all this come from? How did we get this way? Without getting into the usual psychobabble about how most of it came from our childhood, suffice it to say that we were not born this way. Our well-intentioned parents tried to bring us up to do the right thing. Unfortunately, through their conditioning, they determined that the best way to do this was to get us to focus on what we were doing wrong. “Don’t do this. You can’t do that. You’re bad. How could you think like that?” The problem with parenting is that, even though we are well intentioned, parenting is really about passing insanity from one generation to the next. This is because our parents were probably brought up in the same

way. Most of us do not examine our beliefs to determine if they are valid or workable. Instead, we just accept that what we believe is true and spend our lives trying to convince ourselves, our children, and others that these beliefs are indeed true. The problem that arises is that we have false beliefs that produce faulty results.

It all starts from our infancy, when our parents mostly warned us of dangers like. “Don’t touch that electrical outlet,” and “Don’t touch that hot iron.” Most parents are busy and in a rush, so most of their time communicating with their children involves a bunch of “don’t do that” messages intended for their basic human need for safety and survival. Ideally, parents should spend *most* of their time, no matter how busy they are, building up their children’s psyches with positive messages that reinforce what their children are doing right, not wrong. This includes encouraging their children to do new things well. We need to show them how to try to do new things and take risks, but not criticize their mistakes when they try.

Unfortunately, our early years were likely spent going through a conditioning process that told us that we were basically bad, stupid, incompetent, and sinners. The only way we thought we could prove otherwise, and ever hope to get approval, was to do what others wanted. It was our way of earning our worthiness. We reinforce a pattern that positive or possible thoughts about ourselves would be good, but negative or impossible thoughts are more realistic and comfortable. Every time we have possibility thoughts, we automatically check them against this primary belief that we are not worthy or competent, and the answer comes up, “Error!” Negative or impossible thoughts feel comfortable, and therefore normal and believable.

One thing you can do to build your self-worth is to say “no” to criticism unless you asked for feedback. When people try to criticize you, let them know the manner in which they can approach you with their concern; otherwise, say “no” to criticism. If you want feedback about something you are questioning about yourself, then ask someone whose opinion you respect. However, you do not have to believe what they tell you. It’s still your life. You can *consider* someone else’s opinion, but must make your own decisions.

Finally, if you feel too much anger toward someone, tell him or her you need time to sort things out, or do some soul searching. Some people are safe to be around, and some people are not. There are an abundance conflict resolution workshops and books that can detail these – and many more – important communication techniques. It would be a good idea to take additional training on conflict resolution since it is one of the most important parts of effective communication.

Eliminating the Feeling of Unworthiness

Unworthiness can leave us feeling unloved, deserted, melancholy, filled with despair, unimportant, unacceptable, and not cared for. One surefire way to perpetuate feelings of unworthiness is to carry out feeling sorry for yourself to the point of becoming a victim.

We can turn around any feelings of unworthiness by doing some soul-searching, self-evaluation, and some self-improvement that ultimately builds our feeling of worthiness. Some of the qualities that we want to achieve to lift us out of unworthiness are excitement, feeling alive, delight, trust, tenderness, being congruent, perception, balance, and feeling at one with people. If we could have more faith in the people around us, and if we could have more faith in ourselves, the world would be a better place.

Anger

Have you noticed that the word *anger* is one letter short of *danger*? Anger always seems to be directed at something: at things, at others, and at ourselves. It is about how we measure up, or actually, how others or we *don't* measure up.

Anger manifests itself in us in a variety of forms. Often, we try to *escape* from it instead of facing it and resolving it.

Ways We Try to Escape Anger

We have different ways to avoid anger. One way is to hold our anger inside and try not to feel anything. Then there is the old silent treatment. A study of marital relationships found that this one behavior pattern makes it nearly impossible for couples to work things out. What these people need to know is that it is safer to argue it out if necessary (with a reasonable partner), than to lose a valuable partner because they refuse to communicate. They should realize that problems can be resolved one way or another if they will at least talk about them.

The overly quiet type often manifests their anger in worst form. They can easily become dangerous when they finally explode or act out their anger. Whenever we hear of a serial killer, and they interview their next door neighbor, we often hear them comment, "He was a quite man."

It is safer to appropriately express anger than to withhold it. Withholding anger may temporarily help you to calm yourself down, but the lingering problem is still unresolved. The problem must have a resolution. If there is something you

can do or must do to solve a problem, face it and do it. Otherwise, the silent treatment is sure to cause more problems.

Some people try to escape their problems and anger with addictions to alcohol, drugs, sex, etc. They soon learn that their addictions will not make their fears and frustrations go away. Anger builds up over a lifetime unless or until we confront it, and do something to release it.

Humor – Your Most Powerful Ally

One of the powerful tools we can use to break through the barriers of impossible situations is humor. Although I am a serious person, I try to see the humorous side of most situations. In fact, some people are taken by surprise when I make a joke about things that are supposed to be serious. Those who know me well have said that, when it comes to humor, “Everything is fair game with you. Nothing is sacred.” It’s true. I often use humor as a means of defusing a situation either by shock value or just by trying to put things into perspective.

I remember one time I was flying into Buffalo, New York. As the plane was landing, the wheels crashed through the concrete runway. Apparently there was a weak spot or a washout under the runway and it couldn't hold the weight of the plane. Anyway, the wheels went through the runway and literally snapped off! The plane landed on its belly and we went scraping across the concrete. Sparks were flying everywhere and the sound of metal against concrete was incredible. After we stopped, the pilot said we were OK and there was no fire, but we would have to evacuate the plane immediately by sliding down the emergency chute.

Everyone was panicked. People were screaming and crying, but no one was hurt. I don’t know why, but at that moment I thought to myself. *Gee, what is everyone worried about? We’re all alive.* My next statement shocked a couple of passengers because I said jokingly as I was getting read to jump down the chute, “That’s great, now how are we going to get the luggage out of here?”

Sure, it was a serious situation, but I used humor to help defuse the seriousness of the situation and to put things into perspective. My message was, “We are alive, so why worry except, of course, about our luggage.” Throughout this book we are going to discuss some serious issues. I just wanted to warn you that often I will try to put things into perspective through the use of humor, or looking at things on the light side. So, make it a fun journey. Let’s try to learn more about ourselves and have fun in the process.

If the following behaviors are indicative of our anger: hostility, hatred, resentment, antagonism, sarcasm, withholding, rejecting, fiery temper, then the following opposite behaviors can free us from it; acceptance, willingness, interest, receptiveness, invigoration, encouragement, appreciation, being tuned in, feeling deserving and forgiveness.

CHANGING IMPOSSIBILITY THINKING TO POSSIBILITY THINKING

It is obvious that impossibility thinking severely limits our lives. All the problems you face in life are caused by your perception. This perception has formed a Created Self that includes personality traits that are both positive and negative. If you want to change any situation from the impossible to the possible, you must first change your perception of *who you are* rather than what you do, or what you have. What you do and what you have is the result of how you perceive your Created Self. The more you tune into who you are – your Greater Self – the less you will have to rely on your Created Self.

CHAPTER 4

POSSIBILITY THINKING

Success, happiness, and good luck is ready for us, whenever we are ready for it. Unfortunately, most of us do not know how to unlock the door. We sit in mental prisons and wait for our life to change, never realizing that the door to the prison is open – there are no guards. The key that unlocks the door is our attitude.

POSITIVE THINKING VS. POSSIBILITY THINKING

Thus far, we have considered how impossibility thinking keeps us from having what we truly want in life. The obvious answer would seem to be to just think positively and believe that what we want is possible. On the surface, this seems reasonable, but in the real world, it is not entirely true. As an example, look at something near you right now. Focus on it. Now think positively to yourself that what you are looking at will move. Now, mentally command it to move. Keep thinking positively. What happened? I think you get the idea.

Although there may have been a few avatars in the world that might have done this, most of us haven't reached that level of awareness yet. The mind is powerful, but not powerful enough to *will* things to happen. The problem with positive thinking is that there is a gap between our current reality and what we want to happen. This gap, if not understood and handled properly, can create anxiety, confusion, and even mental illness.

THE POWER OF POSITIVE FOCUS

There is a big difference between *focusing* on the positive and *thinking* positively. When we are focusing on the positive, we are not saying that things are different than our reality. We are not in denial. What our focus does is make us aware of the possibilities. It gives us direction. Whatever we focus on, we create more of. In every situation we have a choice. We can focus on the positive or the negative. If you look at what is wrong with your and/or the world, that is exactly what you will see. Since you cannot look in two directions at the same time, you will miss the possible. On the other hand if you focus on the possible, you not only tend to feel better, but you will see new possibilities that you had not seen before. Think back to the object you were trying to move with positive thinking. If you focus on the positive, instead of thinking positively you will say to yourself, "That object will not move. That is the reality. But I have the ability to move if I choose. I think I will get up and move it".

The difference between the positive thinker and the possibility thinker is that the positive thinker says, "I am happy," when he is not, "I am rich," when he is poor, "I am healthy," when he is sick. The possibility thinker says, "I am unhappy now, but I can do something that will make me happy." "I don't have any money right now, but if I focus on this possible opportunity, I can turn it around," "I am sick right now, but if I do this, I can help to heal myself." The difference between positive thinking and possibility thinking is that the possibility thinker does not deny reality.

CAN YOU HAVE ANYTHING YOU WANT?

Is anything possible, or are there limitations? Turn on any talk show, read any self-help book, and we are told that the causative factor behind our psychological and emotional ills is low self-esteem. The cure, of course, is high self-esteem. The continuous message is that if one has high self-esteem, one is healthy and can achieve a healthy outcome in relationships, business, health, and finances. In many respects, this is absolutely true, but there is also a pathological downside, which can be termed, *misguided* high self-esteem or a feeling of invulnerability.

The illusion of invulnerability is often the cause of impossible situations. This overconfidence comes about from the belief that somehow, through positive thinking and good intentions, we can avoid the negative things that happen to us and to other people. We overestimate our prospect of success or survival by misperceiving our current situation.

Contrary to the claims of positive thinkers who believe you can have anything you want, realistically there are certain limitations. First, there are physical limitations. If you are in London, you can't be in Paris at the same time. There are financial limitations. If you want to buy a new car and don't have any money, all the positive thinking in the world will not help you.

For a clearer definition of what is possible, let's say that if someone else can, or has, achieved something, it is *possible* for you. However you must be realistic about your limitations and work through them in order to achieve the same outcome.

GOOD INTENTIONS, INEFFECTIVE APPROACH

Many impossible situations are created in the process of goal setting. The reason for this is that we chronically employ ineffective approaches and fail to change or correct our ineffective behavior, especially when we recognize that what we are doing is not working. One of the most commonly ineffective approaches is over persistence while using ineffective behavior. Many people will persist at something beyond all reason. They need to prove something to themselves, or they don't want to be wrong or make a mistake. In order to avoid this, they keep pressing on with unworkable behavior patterns that eventually lead them to an impossible situation. Often, we observe this in our relationships with others, where we can see the results of their stubborn persistence.

Many people are guided by well-intentioned motives but experience setbacks, problems, misfortunes, and other difficulties because of ineffective approaches. Most of the time it involves misjudgment. They misjudge themselves and their abilities. These errors in judgment lead to setting themselves up in impossible situations. They may not see what is possible and probable in the present moment. Instead, they overestimate what they are capable of achieving at the present time. An important point here is that when we have brought failure and suffering into our lives, although it was never our goal, many times it is a by-product of our effort to obtain a desirable goal.

Over-persistence in the wrong direction will not get you what you want or take you where you want to go. It only creates more impossible situations. Persistence is important in the attainment of any goal or desire, if we are headed in the right direction, but excessive and pathological persistence in the wrong direction can only lead us to the depths of impossibility. Most self-help literature illustrates the virtue of persistence by pointing out those who have eventually triumphed, despite impossible situations. They point out that those who give up too easily are nothing more than quitters. While persistence may be a virtue, it can also be destructive. Some approaches or strategies simply are

ineffective, and through persistence we multiply the number of failures that we experience, which often leads to disaster.

As an example, the investor who buys a certain stock and then sees that it continues to drop but won't bail out even though he will clearly lose even more money. Instead of having a stop loss, he hangs on. Another instance would be a person who remains in a relationship that is self-destructive, where the partner does not want to get help. The person stays in the relationship because he or she is more concerned with *persevering* or *saving* the relationship, rather than having a healthy relationship. Saving the relationship becomes paramount, rather than saving the individuals in the relationship. Take the student who pursues a career path, only to find out that it is not right for him, yet he keeps on the path because he does not want to be a quitter.

The point here is that it is important to know when to quit. Quitting is not always bad. We must learn to make an accurate assessment regarding when persistence is necessary and when it is self-destructive, and then make a healthy adjustment in those negative behaviors that keep us on the wrong track. People find all kinds of ways of behaving in opposition to what they really want. Many of these behavior patterns are deliberate and intentional. However, this doesn't mean that we are self-destructive. On one hand, some people deliberately take actions that will clearly bring harm to them, while others do not foresee the consequences of their actions. They do not want to fail or sabotage their relationships, health, careers, or finances, yet they act in ways that destroy their own efforts to reach a positive outcome.

Other people fall in the middle somewhere. They can see the possibility of harm but ignore it or downplay it. When they look back, they recognize that the outcome was, in many cases, foreseeable and avoidable. This may include wearing a seat belt, using a condom, not smoking, compulsive gambling, alcohol consumption, or substance abuse. At the time, they ignore the risks and focus on the immediate pleasure.

A significant portion of impossible situations is created in our lives when we take unnecessary risks. We may not be seeking self-harm or self-destruction, in fact we try to avoid it, but the real risk is our own behavior, which seems to turn against us when your problems intensify. Things might have turned out well, but they didn't. Not everyone who smokes will have lung cancer, or who is in an accident without a seat belt will get hurt, or who has sex without a condom will get AIDS. Nonetheless, the risks are there and the facts were well known in advance.

YOUR DOMINANT THOUGHT CREATES YOUR DESTINY.

We are certain, based on quantum biology (which is the application of quantum physics to biology), that our neurology is driven by our dominant thoughts. Our beliefs, whether they are true or false, structure us in a way that shapes the very anatomy and physiology of our nervous system. Besides the importance of our nervous system on our physical moment, the nervous system, particularly our brain, keeps reinforcing what we believe to be true, whether it is true or not. In essence, we live our life conditioned by a programmed reality that may cause us to get off course and end up where we don't want to be. This can lead to a feeling of helplessness, victimization, depression, or even despair.

We often experience these feelings and emotions after a series of setbacks or defeats, such as failed romance, losing our business or job, or loss of money. We decide to give up and start to believe that there are forces beyond our control that make directing our own lives impossible. This can be a particularly destructive pattern because even when conditions become favorable for success, we do not see the opportunity. Instead, we stay stuck in impossible situations or, what's worse, we continue to set ourselves up for failure.

This behavior pattern is predominant in minority groups that have been oppressed in our society. The cycle of discrimination, failure, helplessness and apathy tend to make many minorities think that financial freedom and success is only available to the non-white majority. Many individuals or groups have concluded that they have not been given a fair chance, so there is no use in making an effort. Even when many opportunities have been open to minorities through affirmative action, rent subsidies and entitlement programs, many are reluctant to take advantage of them, which is perplexing.

On the other hand, there are others from the same social groups who say they would rather not have assistance. They believe they can achieve their goals regardless of the obstacles that confront them. And in most cases, they do. It is interesting that many immigrants who come to this country with far more obstacles to overcome, such as cultural and language barriers, seem to do better than minorities who are born in this country. As an example, one in twelve Asian households have an income of less than \$15,000 per year when they first come to this country. Within five years, one in seven of these same households have an income of over \$50,000 per year. The success of these people contradicts the theory that only the white Anglo can succeed and achieve their dreams. The difference seems to be not in ability, but in *attitude*. The Asians, for example, see opportunity or possibility rather than being pessimistic.

Shakespeare said that life is our stage and we are all actors. This is so true. Life is a stage and we tend to act out the scripts we have been told to play. One way or the other, your life is a continuous series of scenes in a play. The play must

go on until you die. The only control you have over your life, the play, is changing the script. You can write a new script at any time. All it takes is a conscious decision to accept a new attitude.

ATTRACTING GOOD LUCK

Have you ever wondered why certain people seem to be lucky? What is this thing called luck? Can you acquire it? How do you acquire it? Most people have no idea what luck really is. They try to attract luck, to draw its force for an instant here and an instant there, hoping that it will bring them what they want. Most people's attitude about luck is a mixture of rationalization, resignation, and superstition. In truth, you are already a winner, but you must learn to control your destiny. When you do, your personality, instinct, and intuition will attract, recognize, and respond to favorable turns of events.

How do we do this? The good news is that in order to experience good luck you do not have to change who you are. In fact, you are so unique that *you cannot change who you are*, even if you tried. It is important that you get the idea that there is nothing wrong with you. There is nothing wrong with being that you are. If that is true, you are only left with one option. You must change the way you look at things or your perception of reality.

STOP UNLUCKY PATTERNS

Negative patterns, or bad-luck patterns, must be stopped. They must be stopped consciously. First of all, never complain about your bad luck, because nobody really cares but you. Other people's exaggerated memories of their own bad luck dwarf whatever you are complaining about. In some cases, if you complain about your bad luck to others, they are actually happy that you are having bad luck. They may even try to take advantage of you when you are down on your luck because they think you are weak, or you are not a force to be reckoned with.

If you consider yourself a poor, unlucky loser who always get the bad end of everything; you will attract more of the same. If you see yourself as a victim, you will always be a victim. In truth, most victims are really volunteers. We volunteer by being unconscious or unaware. This sets us up for the bad luck cycles we experience in life.

By believing in yourself and your ability to attract good luck, you will set a new momentum that will change and amaze you. The stronger your belief, the greater the success, but you have to desire it and act on it, not just wish for it. The greater your desire and willingness to act, the greater the power you have

over your life. It requires an unwavering belief that you are *already* lucky. Lucky people get lucky breaks. They get the promotions, win, enjoy financial and social success, and have healthy, happy relationships.

LUCK IS NOT RANDOM

If you think luck is random, you are wrong. This can be demonstrated by the consistency of lucky and unlucky persons. Consistently unlucky people suffer from a lack of focus, apathy, and low self-esteem. They set themselves up as victims of circumstance. It appears that luck is pushing them one way and then another. Their view of life is that they are unlucky. They keep attracting more bad luck, so they keep reinforcing their belief. They think unlucky, they act unlucky, they speak unlucky, and therefore they are unlucky.

STATE OF MIND, STATE OF LUCK

The question remains: Can you really attract good luck? Is it possible to develop skills whereby you can fairly well control the particular outcome of events in your life? Can you, with concerted effort, really change your luck? Can you, in truth, control your destiny, or is this just positive thinking nonsense? The answer is, no, this is not nonsense. It is a sound psychological principle.

It is my contention that to acquire and maintain good luck, you do not have to make any drastic change in your life. All efforts to improve your job, marriage, relationship, health, or money are useless. They mean nothing if you persist in believing that the worst will happen or that you are an unlucky person who gets all of life's bad breaks. Trying to change your outer experiences before changing your inner beliefs is a total waste of time and energy. Without changing your attitude first, the new job, marriage, divorce, a move, health, relationships, and money – all of it – will still leave you with an empty feeling. What is worse, even if you get what you want, you will lose it because your belief is that you are a loser and unlucky.

Once you have mastered the mental adjustments, you will open yourself up to intuition and hunches that you can profit from. Intuition and hunches often guide lucky people. If used effectively, they can be extremely useful and lucrative. Hunches are based on a reservoir of subconscious facts that you have accumulated over a period of time. To develop intuition and hunches, you must access what you know. If you have a background in a certain area and you get a strong hunch, more than likely you will be correct. We are not talking about hunches that are random bits of irrelevant information, but those that are based on some realization from your past experiences. You cannot trust a hunch unless you have some background in that situation. For example, if you do not

have on background in the stock market and you get a hunch, it is untrustworthy.

DON'T MAKE THING WORSE THAN THEY ARE

You must never worry about whether you are lucky or unlucky. You can't control your luck, but you can control your decisions and therefore dramatically affect your luck. Our attitude, or state of mind, determines the decisions we make. One decision determines the next. In the end, we either win or lose. Sometimes we make bad decisions. The important thing is to accept things as they are. Do your best to change them, but don't attract more bad luck by making things worse. I never met anyone who didn't make things worse sometimes. We get angry, we feel we have been cheated, or that we have lost something, and we try to get even. We lose at romance or business and we make things worse by throwing ourselves out of sync.

This happens all the time in life. For example, we allow a broken relationship to distort and destroy other areas of our lives because we are no longer thinking rationally. Decisions that would normally matter don't seem to matter by comparison. In fact, people who are heartbroken often make the worst business decisions imaginable. Those decisions don't seem to matter compared to the heartbreak. Those decisions add up, and eventually, even if they didn't matter so much individually, matter in the end.

What particularly intensifies this unfavorable state of mind is when we feel heavily invested in certain situations. Many people will stay in a bad relationship, job, or project because they don't want to be wrong and because they have put so much of themselves and their money into whatever it is. This keeps them where they are and even makes things worse. From now on, promise yourself you will never make things worse.

Why is it so hard for us to let go when the signs that are telling us we should do so are so obvious? Because we will not change any situation until the pain of staying where we are is greater than the temporary pain we will experience making the change. Usually, before we take the leap and make a change, our difficult situation tends to seem bigger than life. In retrospect, after we have taken the risk of starting anew, the change we feared has almost always diminished. What we thought was so bad just wasn't so bad after all, or at least we realize we have moved on, leaving a bad situation behind us.

A negative situation may bring about an attitude of self-defeat, impossibility, of failure in one individual or group, but another individual or group will see only possibilities and the opportunity to succeed. If we have a self-defeating attitude,

we set ourselves up for continued failure. This is worsened if we insist on blaming external forces and see our failure as an isolated misfortune bestowed upon us. For most of us, it is a matter of giving up too easily by blaming others for our impossible situations.

HOMEOSTASIS - RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

No matter how committed you are to changing your life for the better, there will come a time when you will start backsliding. Is it because you are lazy or have no willpower? Not necessarily. Backsliding is a universal experience. Every one of us resists significant change, whether it is necessarily accepting something less, or even something better. Our body, brain, and behavior have a built-in tendency to stay at the same level and to resist change. This resistance to change is called *homeostasis*. It is characterized in all self-regulating systems, both psychological and physical. A simple example of homeostasis can be found in your home heating system. The thermostat on the wall senses the room temperature. When the temperature drops below the level you set, it turns on the heater. The heater completes the loop by sending heat to the room. When the room reaches the temperature level you set, the thermostat sends an electrical signal back to the heater to turn off the heat, thus retaining homeostasis.

We all have psychological feedback loops. The problem is that they are limited to whatever level we are used to. They keep things as they are, even if things aren't very good. Whenever you make a change, your subconscious feels threatened and starts sending warning messages. This is just part of your survival mechanism. Your subconscious thinks that if you make the change, you won't survive, so it tries to protect you.

Homeostasis doesn't distinguish between change for the better and change for the worse. It resists all change. Even if you enjoy and profit from the change, you will meet with homeostasis sooner or later. You might experience homeostatic alarm signals in the form of physical or psychological symptoms. You might unconsciously sabotage yourself. Even though you want to win, you will find yourself losing at things where you should have easily won. For this reason, it is important to reset your level of homeostasis. The level is determined by your value and goals, and then by reprogramming them into your subconscious so your subconscious can reset the automatic homeostatic level.

THE POWER OF INSTANT REPLAY – REPLAY IT

Resetting your homeostatic level is quite simple. Most of us are familiar with the term “instant replay”. A video camera records what has happened and is

able to play back an event for review. Unfortunately, when watching a replay, there is nothing we can do to change what has happened.

Several years ago, I began teaching a concept that I call instant pre-play. It is the opposite of instant replay. Using instant pre-play, we record an incident in our mind *before* it happens. It is a demonstrated fact that we are teleological, which means we move toward what we picture. Physically, emotionally, and psychologically we create what we picture in our mind by visualizing it with activity and movement.

The best way for imagery to work is that it must be in the first person, present tense, and it should have movement. This is accomplished by putting yourself in the picture with repetitive involvement. You must see yourself having already accepted the outcome. It then becomes the job of your subconscious to get the picture to match your reality. (In Gestalt psychology this is called *closure*.)

As the new picture becomes vivid with repetition, the subconscious is compelled to supply the means to make the image a reality. It does this by alerting you to the necessary people, places, and events that will assist you in achieving your goal. Your subconscious will also supply the creative energy and drive to accomplish the end result. This creates your new level of homeostasis.

The total quality and quantity of your life is determined by what you pre-play in your mind. Instead of using instant replay, which focuses on the past, start using instant pre-play and create your future the way you want it.

ANCHOR YOUR BRAIN TO SUCCESS

The concept of anchoring is used extensively by the advertising media. They anchor your brain to a specific logo (such as McDonald's arches with their name), certain colors (like Kodak's yellow packaging). Such stimulus triggers our brains to think about the advertising message and reminds us to purchase the product. We can use these kinds of trigger techniques to our advantage.

As many of you know, I am an avid thoroughbred handicapper. Before I open the Racing Form, I look at the Racing Form logo on the front page and say, "My brain guides me to the winner in each race." Since our subconscious mind is a cybernetic mechanism, every time I look at the Racing Form logo, it triggers winning pattern recognition. By using this triggering technique the brain will, at the right moment, intuitively seek out the best information from past strategies that produced success. All of our senses create such triggers in

our brains: sight, smell, touch, taste, sound, and even our sixth sense (our intuition) responds.

If advertisers are willing to invest millions so that they can anchor our brains to think of their products or services, it only makes sense that we can do the same. However, don't take my word for it. Do it yourself. It only takes a few seconds, and the results will far outweigh the effort.

IMAGINATION GENERATES NEW POSSIBILITIES

There are numerous techniques for creating positive images that bring winning results. The degree to which we assume something is possible or impossible is largely controlled by our imagination. As one of the most powerful and creative tools at our disposal, the imagination is continuously active and only we can govern whether our selective imaging is positive or negative.

When we use the imagination negatively by reliving the pains of the past (fears, guilt, and feelings of anger or unworthiness), we automatically limit our circle of possibility. Our imagination not only replays the negative images of the past, but it replays them in a larger and more detailed manner than they actually occurred. Even small failures become monumental disasters. The original damage is magnified, since our subconscious plays its natural role by accepting these elaborate false images as actual experience. The subconscious proceeds to keep us in a prison of negativity by implementing similar experiences to coincide with this understanding of reality. In essence, we create an unhappy, insecure present by picturing past sadness and perceived failure, and then we try to form our future from a present state of mind that is built upon those negative images of the past. As long as we let our imagination focus on an unworkable past, we are unable to move into a self-sustaining future. Using past negative images while trying to visualize a positive future cancels out our efforts.

You can choose how you are going to use your imagination. It belongs to you, and no one has control over it except for you. You can remember whatever parts of the past you want, but pre-play the future you desire. By selectively applying your imagination, you can focus on the positive experiences from your past and using these images to form a solid base for the future. Perceiving a positive future not only shows us how to get where we want to go, but actually draws us toward the people, circumstances, places, and conditions to fulfill our image of the future. On the other hand, a negative image of the future also draws us toward the people, places, and events to convince us that what we want is impossible.

Using positive and purposeful pre-play imaging offers a radical departure from focusing on the negativity of the past. Expand the potential in your life by

selectively imaging the best for yourself. Allow your mind to be free. Visualize images for the creation of new possibilities based on these observations, and you will be amazed at the desires that will surface and the creative solutions you will discover to enable effective action. As purposeful, creative beings, positive images provide excitement, direction, and a clear vision for which we will make the best effort. For the highly visual person, this conceptual portion of the possibility process is often deeply satisfying. Certainly, visual validation is a key element in expanding our circle of possibility and defining the potential benefits in enacting change. If you are a person who responds powerfully to the sense of hearing or touch, add these kinds of stimulus to your visualization.

In making choices, people often support the impossibility stance by asserting, “I can’t.” This is usually based on what they have experienced in the past – the images that they hold in their minds. Of course, this typical disclaimer is sustained by what we tend to think of as good reasons (really excuses) as to why achieving, having, or being what we desire is quite impossible.

The truth of the matter is that you can be, do, or have just about anything you choose. However, if you think something is impossible, or if you don’t do a certain thing, it is because you choose to accept it as impossible. *It is not because you can’t.* Whatever you get into the “I can’t syndrome, it helps to say to yourself, “I can, but right now I choose not to.” At least you are acknowledging that no one or nothing outside of you is controlling the outcome. Any delay in creating what you want is not the result of people, circumstances, or conditions outside of you, but rather your limited circle of possibility. Your circle of possibility can only be expanded through possibility thinking.

Taking Responsibility for Impossible Situations

Probably the most difficult concept to grasp is the idea that we are fully responsible for all that we experience in our lives. By taking responsibility for our lives and our happiness, we rid ourselves of emotional dependency, and therefore we are self-reliant. Often, we know what the consequences of our actions will be, other times we may not, but either way around, we are responsible for our actions. By taking the stance of being fully responsible, we enrich our lives by finding better, more responsible solutions.

Psychologist Albert Ellis states: “The best years of your life are the ones in which you decide your problems are your own. You don’t blame them on your mother, the ecology, or the President. You realize that you control your own destiny.” When we face our problems we tend to see life and all that happens around us differently. We can become bitter as we blame everyone or

everything around us, or we can become more aligned with our purpose and our Greater Self as we heighten our approach to life.

NINETY-NINE PERCENT ACCOUNTABILITY DOESN'T WORK

The difficult, but most important step, is taking accountability for where we are right now. As long as we deny being responsible for our life being the way it is, as long as we blame society, parents, our mate, friends, family, the government, our employer, or anyone else, we put our power to change our lives beyond our reach. If we deny even 1%, that 1% adds and multiplies every day. The only way we can move from an impossible to a possible situation is to be totally accountable at all times. Notice that I didn't say most of the time, or 50% of the time. If you are not accountable 100% of the time, then it sets you up as the victim for the times you choose to not be accountable. This is selective accountability.

I believe there are no victims, only volunteers. With the exception of children or the mentally incompetent, I believe no one can do it to us unless we give them permission, or we set ourselves up to be victims. The bottom line is if you are being mistreated, you are cooperating with the treatment.

Those who see themselves as victims do not like to hear this. I have received letters from people citing example after example about how their circumstances are different. It really wasn't their fault. Perhaps they're right...and perhaps they are wrong. However, there is one major problem with this line of reasoning. If they are not accountable, who is? Once we make something external accountable for our experience, then our life is about getting *them* to change. What are the odds of that happening? Usually, slim to none. Once again, when we blame others, we get to be right, but we still don't have what we want.

ACCOUNTABILITY IS NOT SELF-BLAME

I am not saying we should blame ourselves for what has happened, but we must realize that in some way we participated in the outcome, either consciously or unconsciously. At this point we come to the, "Why?" or the "How?" question. We can either say, "Why did this happen to me?" Or "How can I change my attitude, behavior, and actions so that it will not happen again. Notice we didn't say, "How can I get *them* to change?" but "How can I change and self-correct?"

It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that we are the victim. When we see people who lose their homes in a flood, hurricane, or earthquake, we sympathize with them. However, the bottom line is that they are still accountable for what has happened. They are accountable not for the hurricane, flood, or earthquake, but for living in a high-risk area! For example, it is a

known fact that hurricanes occur in the Southeast, United States. It is a *known fact* that it floods in Texas. It is a *known fact* that California is on an earthquake fault. Yet, people still choose to live in these areas of the country.

There is nothing wrong with that, but they are accountable for their decision to live with the risk factor. They are accountable for their choices, even though they appear to be victims. I recently read a government report that most people who live high-risk areas don't carry insurance. Earthquake and flood insurance is relatively inexpensive, yet they refuse to accept that a major natural disaster can occur, and when it does, they act surprised. Then, they believe they are victims.

You might argue that there are a few exceptions. Sometimes things happen to people and there just seems to be no reason for it. There was no way they could have avoided it. Even if we acknowledge that there are a few exceptions where people are true victims of their circumstances, let's say 5%, the problem is that the other 95% of the population thinks they are in that 5%. That means that 95% of the population remains in impossible situations.

How do you feel when you are around people who tell you their story of victimization with no intention of taking responsibility? They have their victim story down to a science. They blame, complain, moan, and groan. The longer they tell it and the more people they tell it to, the better they are at eliciting a response they want. Again, if they think something or someone outside of himself or herself is to blame, then that something or someone must change before their life can improve. They are not victims, they are volunteers. Once these people stop volunteering to be a victim, their lives will change.

Unfortunately, many people like being victims. In fact, some of these people would have nothing to say if they weren't complaining or telling their victim story. These people are eventually perceived as "pain symbols" to everyone they come in contact with. When we become a pain symbol, our friends, family and coworkers will do their best to avoid us.

We like to be around people who are positive and accountable for their life. However, no one wants to be around a pain symbol. These are the types of people that brighten up a room when they leave! Don't be one of them. Notice how you feel when you are around people who take charge of their lives and focus on how they can make life better. These are the people we want to associate with because they encourage us to be accountable.

YOU CAN'T CONTROL THE EXTERNAL, BUT YOU CAN CONTROL THE INTERNAL

We must approach life from the standpoint that our life will either be controlled externally or internally. If you approach life externally, you be a blamer and complainer. You will attribute your failures to your childhood, poor education, poverty, or a feeling that you have never been given a chance. On the other hand, if you are the internal type, you recognize that you are in charge of your life, accountable for the results as well as the lack of results, and you know that you have the power to make the changes that will improve any situation.

Collectively, we have become a society of blamers and helpless victims. This is reinforced by the media and TV talk shows. The shows feature guests suffering from every imaginable condition, and what is worse, they portray these individuals as helpless victims of some external misfortune. The focus of the programs tend to be on how we need to change those external causes of our problems so that others won't suffer the same fate.

If an external source is not the cause of their problems, then the shows convey that they must be suffering from some type of mental condition that justifies their behavior. If drinking or drugs has ruined their lives, the cause is not a lack of self-control, but the disease of alcoholism and drug addiction. If they are violent, then it is because their parents were either too strict or not strict enough, but whichever it is, it is was never the right amount of control from their parents. There is an excuse for every deviant behavior you can think of. As if these presentations aren't enough, the shows bring in an expert in the chemical or biological field to tell us that it isn't their fault; the real problem is too much sugar, caffeine, or poor nutrition.

IT'S NOT MY FAULT

I remember reading about a woman in Florida who won an *eleven million-dollar* lawsuit against Kmart because her husband purchased a rifle while he was intoxicated. There was a legal claim filed against Kmart maintaining that the clerk was at fault because he did not correctly determine the physical and mental condition of the man at the time of the sale. The man shot his wife. Was this Kmart's fault? If we take this premise a step further, then the real culprit here would be the distributor who sold the gun to Kmart. If they hadn't sold the gun to Kmart, this would not have happened. Really, though, the fault should be with the manufacturer of the rifle. If they had not made the gun, none of this would have happened. I think you get the point.

This line of reasoning is about as logical as saying flies cause garbage. The issue here is that the responsibility or blame should not be with the stores who sell guns or the manufacturers of guns. The issue is the responsibility of the

individual who got drunk. He is totally responsible for his conduct, especially when he injures another person. The message we send to society is that what happens to people is not their fault, and if they do something to harm themselves or others, there is always some external factor involved that was beyond their control. Clearly, it is time to stop this nonsense.

REPEAT IT UNTIL YOU GET IT

How many times have we discovered that we keep repeating the same thing over and over again? Even in relationships, the names and faces change, but the relationship problems are the same. The reason for this is that we keep doing things the same way as we have always done them. This repetition sets us up to experience the same outcome.

One method that you can use to prevent having the same kind of relationships over and over again is to consider this: All your relationships have been with different people, so it cannot be *their* fault that the relationships failed. If you think about all those relationships, what is the common denominator in ALL those failed relationships? The answer is - You! Since each relationship was with a different person, and they all had the same outcome, you must be attracting the outcome. Once you understand this, you can take responsibility and stop the cycle. You can correct or change what you have been doing in the past, so you can stop making the same mistakes.

The only authority figure is within you. When you look internally rather than externally for who or what is responsible for your success or failure, you realize that you – *only you* – know the truth about what is working and what is not working for you. When you are honest with yourself, you can clearly see what needs to be adjusted in order to get what you want in life. On the other hand, if you allow others to make decisions for you, they will surely end up doing it *to* you.

CHANGE FROM THE INSIDE OUT

All permanent and lasting change must come from the inside out. The way you are is *not* the result of what has happened to you, it's the result of what you decide to *keep inside* you. For most people, it is a matter of trying to change things from the outside in, changing the circumstance and conditions first. The belief is that if something outside of us changes, then we will be happy. Rarely will changing anything outside of us change our life on a permanent and lasting basis. Rearranging our outside circumstances just wastes valuable time and energy, because the underlying cause, our thoughts, beliefs, choices and

actions, has not changed. It's like rearranging deck chairs on the *Titanic*. The ship is going down, no matter how you rearrange the scenery.

This avoidance behavior is similar to driving down the road and noticing that your gas gauge is on empty. Instead of doing something about it, you choose to ignore it by putting your hand over the gas gauge and pretend it's full. But pretending it's full, by not looking at the gauge, will not keep you from running out of gas and ending up on the side of the road. By denying accountability and refusing to take action, you remain in the status quo of impossibility. As you do this, the circumstances of your life journey continue to worsen.

Unfortunately, no instruction manuals were provided when we came to this planet. Most of our instruction about how to handle our life has come from outside sources. This has caused us to disengage our internal learning mechanism. We go through life with a set of unworkable beliefs and values. It's no wonder why things keep happening to us. Rather than reassessing our beliefs and values, most people tend to focus on rationalizing, justifying, defending, and trying to look good. The result is that it consumes our energy to change and blocks our ability to find new solutions. When a problem arises, we need to look for possibilities and view them as opportunities for new solutions.

“HOW CAN I” VS. “WHY ME” QUESTIONS

The act of releasing people, circumstances and conditions outside of you is vital in order for you to change your present circumstances. If you spend your time blaming your problems on things outside of yourself and asking “Why me?” rather than looking at “How can I?” to solve your own problems, you will fail to succeed in life.

When a negative experience occurs, ask yourself how you can change your thinking, or your behavior to turn things around for the better. The way we ask ourselves questions either moves away from solutions or toward solutions. Every time we ask ourselves “why me” questions - Why me, God?” Why do they always do that? Why don't they leave me alone?” - we are wasting valuable energy because there are no answers to these questions. These are endless loop questions that keep us going in circles. Usually one “why” question leads to another.

“How can I” questions, on the other hand, are based on the assumption that we are the cause of our own experience. We are seeking answers that will lead us to *results* instead of reasons. For example, “How can I make this better?” How can I do this? How can I change that? How can I make a positive difference?” Did you notice the difference the thought process? The “why” questions keeps us unaccountable and set us up as victims. The “How can I” questions do something wonderful for us, as they open us up to possibility thinking. Asking

ourselves, “How?” opens our minds to our unlimited creative resources. In essence we are asking, “How can I *create* a positive result?” Notice the entire how questions shown above demonstrate a request for information so that we can take creative action.

So we need to get the “why me” stuff out of our heads. The movie character, Forrest Gump, quoted his mother as saying, “Life is like a box of chocolates. Ya’ never know shat yer gonna git.” In an interview with the actor who played Forrest Gump, Tom Hanks said, “This is horrifyingly so.” And, wouldn’t you think Hanks would have it all, including plenty of money to solve all his problems? Yet he termed it “*horrifyingly*” so. There no answer for all the “why me” questions. On the other hand, we have unlimited answers for the “How can I” questions. Once you seek the “How can I,” you will see life is filled with unlimited opportunity and pleasure.

It’s never too late to change the way we think. Letting go is not easy, but it could be easier to let go if we would just practice by saying, “Yes, I can see this a different way.” “Yes, I can change the way I do this.” I love the children’s story of *The Little Engine That Could*. This is what the train sounds out as it choo-choos along: “I *think* I can, I *think* I can, I *think* I can.” It’s a choice that we can make regarding being open and positive about how we perceive what we can do.

Our emotions affect how we record occurrences in our brain. In other words, our brain records what it thinks (or feels and believes) is happening. We can affect our emotions by using self-talk to direct our brain in the manner in which we want it to believe. This is facilitated by putting together *words* and *pictures* in order to bring about the *emotions* we prefer.

It has taken all our lives for our brains to get programmed to the point where we are right now, and yet we can change our programming far more quickly than we realize. Just imagine yourself being a tape recorder. You can record right over the old stuff and make a new tape with all the positive, possibility thinking you select.

SHORT-TERM BENEFITS, LONG-TERM RISK

We all know that alcohol, smoking, and drugs are potentially destructive. The harm that can come from them is foreseeable. In fact, every package of cigarettes contains a warning. Why do people smoke? The primary reason is that it makes the smoker feel good. This is also true of other harmful habits such as alcohol, drugs, gambling, and overexposure to the sun while getting a tan.

The other reason people smoke cigarettes is that it helps them escape awareness of themselves. Nervous people find that smoking gives them something to do with their hands. The benefits are immediate and the costs are apparent, but come much later. Drinking tonight may make you feel good, but the hangover doesn't come until tomorrow morning, and the liver damage or marital and family breakup doesn't happen right away. Cigarettes offer immediate pleasure, but the cost and problems don't come until much later. Having a tan makes you look and feel good, but prematurely wrinkled and dried skin or possible skin cancer doesn't show up until later in life. Substance abuse fits the pattern of accepting long-term costs to gain immediate satisfaction. Short-term relief always comes at the cost of increased risk of long-term psychological, emotional, and physical damage. By not taking responsibility for what we do, we merely delay an inevitable confrontation with pain and reality.

THE INVESTMENT MENTALITY

Often we refuse to take responsibility for investing our money, time, or effort in something that isn't working because we won't give up the investment mentality. Too many people end up losers because they try to recover what they have lost rather than responding to new opportunities that arise at the same time.

In life, it doesn't matter how much money, time, or effort you have invested in your relationships; business or investments there are times when you must let go and begin anew. As Kenny Rogers said in "The Gambler," "You have to know when to hold 'em and know when to fold 'em. When we take responsibility for our circumstance, no matter what, we are more likely to get rid of what is not working than stay where we are because we feel invested in it.

Sometimes we are so invested in what happens to us, we can't let go. Then, we find that holding on, either made no difference, or made things worse.

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR RISKS

The rewards in life are always in proportion to the risk. This is true of investments, business, and personal relationships. The potential cost, loss, or discomfort associated with taking a risk keeps us from making the impossible possible. The truth of the matter is that most of the time the cost, loss, or discomfort of not taking risks is a greater price to pay than taking them. If you are not willing to risk the unusual, you will have to settle for the ordinary.

Risks fall into many categories including emotional, physical, financial, and spiritual. We are afraid to take risks because we are afraid of being hurt

financially, psychologically, or emotionally, but by not taking risks; the only thing we can be assured of is that we will have more of what we had before.

For most people, the biggest risk of all is in *not* taking risks. At least by taking risks we have the opportunity to find out if something is possible for us. This is particularly true of relationships. In a relationship we must risk. The only way to fully experience any relationship is to risk everything. This means allowing yourself to be prepared and able to handle it emotionally if it does not work out, or to experience a greater amount of joy than you have ever experienced before. If we are willing to risk and totally commit, the chances are that the relationship will add to the lives of both individuals. Even if it doesn't work out, at least you will know for sure that it wasn't right for you, but because of a lack of commitment or risk on your part.

It is important to understand that often there is no real way of knowing without experiencing. What this means is that you can't know something until you do it. If you have never been in a swimming pool and someone told you about the water and how it feels to swim, there is still no way to know how to swim or how it feels until you jump in and find out for yourself. In doing so, there is a certain risk involved. Life works the same way.

Turning the impossible into the possible requires you to move outside your circle of possibility, beyond your wall for resistance, and there is no way of doing this without taking risks and making a few mistakes. Once you understand this, you set yourself free to explore unlimited possibilities.

MISTAKES ARE JUST PART OF OUR EVERYDAY PERFORMANCE

We make mistakes every day. If you don't make some mistakes every day, then you are not doing enough of the right stuff to succeed. Remember, your mistakes are *not who you are*; they are a temporary occurrence. Certainly, we all need to take responsibility for what we do, but then we need to move on. It is easier to say, "Yes, I did that. I see what did not work. Now, what can I do to make things better?"

Risk taking is an acceptable way to try new things. Businesses have become increasingly supportive of risk taking, trying new things and believing that people should not be reprimanded for making mistakes. They believe that failed attempts at trying something new should be accepted as part of the path to achieving excellence. If this is so, why should we be disappointed in ourselves when we make mistakes? The only disappointment should be that the method we tried did not work. How disappointing it is when people try to cover up their

mistakes, making matter worse. If you are quick to acknowledge your mistake, you can correct it immediately and try something new.

NOT NOW – MAYBE LATER

Your effectiveness as a person can be measured by your ability to complete things. Incomplete or unresolved situations and projects drain our resources and waste our creative energy. The energy of avoidance is substituted for creative energy. Some of us have multiple sources of incomplete or unresolved situations in relationships, business, unpaid debts, keeping agreements, and withholding love and appreciation. All of this keeps us living in the past, while taking away from the present. The best way to escape from your past or current problems is to resolve them now.

Procrastination comes about because we think completing or changing something will be more difficult than not doing it. In other words, we tend to perceive that the payoff for staying where we are outweighs the benefits we will experience if we do something about it. Unless the perceived pleasure is greater than the pain we think that making a change will bring us, we will not make the change. Add procrastination to any situation and we double our resistance to success. Look at your life and see how much procrastination has cost you. Are you willing to keep paying the high price, or are you ready to take action NOW? The answer to this question will determine how long you stay in any impossible situation.

DON'T HANG ON TO SINKING SHIPS

A friend of mine who is a stockbroker shared an interesting statistic with me. He said that a study performed by one of the major investment companies showed that over 85 percent of investors persist beyond the point when they first become aware they should get out of an investment that potentially is ready to decline in value. Even more interesting is the fact that over 50 percent persisted beyond the breakeven point of their original investment. This is the point at which getting out of the investment would bring back less than their initial investment.

A perfect example of this self-destructive and fruitless behavior is the U.S. government. It continues to pour millions of dollars into projects that are doomed to failure. The advantage that the government has over you and me is that it can disregard the consequences because all they have to do is raise taxes to pay for continued and persistent failures. As taxpayers, however, we will eventually run out of money.

As we discussed earlier, people often persist in impossible situations because of an “investment mentality”. They have time, money, emotional, and

psychological investment in a person, business situation, stocks or property and they don't want to lose their investment. This can be seen in situations where people are willing to throw good money after bad. Once we feel we have an investment in something, we are reluctant to abandon our investment or previous efforts. The downside is that we squander what we have left rather than only losing what we already have invested.

We are programmed to believe that to back out after we have committed time, emotions, energy, or money is to admit failure. Instead of losing what we have invested with little to show for our efforts, we would rather invest more of ourselves in a sinking ship. The hope or illusion is that things will eventually turn around. This leads to further failure and puts us into a greater impossible situation.

CHAOS TRIGGERS UNIQUE POSSIBILITIES

Chaos kicks our minds into possibility thinking. All of the seeming chaos in the world is actually chaotic order. It is a wealth of information and possibilities unfolding in perfect time for us to respond. Why is it so hard for us to remember that chaos has a positive side? Chaos gives us the opportunity to let go of all that we don't want anymore. It gives us a lot of work with, whether we realize it or not, at just the right time. Because chaos is fast-paced, it helps us let go of the past that we no longer need, since we are forced to take immediate action.

Chaos helps us change the way we think because it happens rapidly. It forces us to reach deep within ourselves, to our Greater Self, and it forces us to expand our circle of possibility as we stretch ourselves to new heights. Whatever we thought was the truth may no longer be the truth for us. The hidden benefit in chaos is that it opens us up to new possibilities.

CLAIMING RESPONSIBILITY FOR BOTH THE GOOD AND THE BAD

We can observe the undesirable personality patterns in other people and easily see how those negative patterns block their success. However, we do not see them in ourselves quite so easily.

Taking responsibility for all you do and all you are involved in does not mean that you must blame yourself. It simply means owning up to what has happened to you and taking responsibility for changing it. Keep in mind that nothing you do is "right" or "wrong", "good" or "bad". Everything just has a consequence. There should be no judgment involved. Instead, give yourself the right to make

mistakes, because it is through mistakes you learn what does not work. This helps you to focus on what does work.

Replace the negative images of yourself by identifying and appreciating your own unique talents and gifts. Turn off your critical internal voice and turn that voice into a friendly, helpful force. Use your internal wisdom and intuition to correct your mistakes and move towards a more positive outcome

CHAPTER 5

DEATH – THE ULTIMATE IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION

If you will live a though every day were your last day on earth – someday you will be right!

There is one impossible situation that we must consider before we make plans, goals, and other important life decisions, and that is our inevitable *death*.

IS THERE LIFE BEFORE DEATH?

If we seriously considered our inevitable end on this planet, we probably would do things differently. When we consider transcendence, some of the things that we hold dear may not be of the utmost importance in the end. What's worse is that we may spend our lives attached to what we think is important, only to find that when we face death, we may have missed the real importance of life.

Death isn't just about aging, being terminally ill or having a fatal accident; it's also about that little deaths we experience throughout our lives. Everyone experiences little deaths, and sometimes-large deaths, throughout their lives. Even if your life has run smoothly, and you have been rather free of impossible situations, the one situation you can't avoid is the inevitability of death.

Physicist John A. Wheeler, know for his work regarding black holes, states, "Life without death is meaningless...a picture without a frame." And the famed theologian Paul Tillich asks, "If one is not able to die, is he really able to live?" Contemplating our lives from the perspective of our eventual death can play an important part in giving our lives greater meaning. Death should be part of the full expectancy of life. Without an ever-present sense of death, life has no meaning.

LITTLE DEATHS AND NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCES

People who have had near death experiences, people who have come close to and survived dying, have numerous feelings after coming back to life. Some

feel anger at being revived; others are ecstatic in the glory of it all. As they approach their lives again, they reassess their affairs and life goals with a more philosophical approach. They wish to resolve any loose ends with people and settle all their personal affairs. They may speak more freely about their true thoughts. Often, they wish to celebrate life by doing things they have always wanted to do, but never made the time for.

An American writer of the late 1800s, William Ellery Channing, eloquently described the newfound philosophy of those who have had near death experiences. Notice how much of it refers to *quality of life*. “To live with small means, to seek elegance rather than luxury, and refinement rather than fashion; to be worthy, not respectable, and wealthy not rich; to study hard, think quietly, talk gently, act frankly; to listen to stars and birds, to babes and sages with an open heart; to bear all cheerfully, do all bravely, await occasions, hurry never. In a word, to let the spiritual unconscious grow up through the common. This is my symphony.”

Psychologist and author of *The Fire in the Soul*, Dr. Joan Borysenko, describes the *living* kind of near death experience when people are challenged with crisis, as follows, “*Dark nights of the soul* are extended periods of dwelling at the threshold when it seems as if we can no longer trust the very ground we stand on, when there is nothing familiar left to hold onto that which can give us comfort. If we have a strong belief that our suffering is in the service of growth, dark night experiences can lead us to depths of psychological and spiritual healing and revelation that we literally could not have dreamed of and that are difficult to describe in words without sounding trite.”

We have several choices regarding where we go from the dark night. We can suffer a while and then go back to our usual and unsatisfactory habits; we can throw in the towel and self-destruct; or we can make a transition, expanding our circle of possibility, and emerge with courage, insight, and a new drive toward our dreams.

DEATH – THE REAL COMPLEMENTARY OPPOSITE

The concept of complementary opposites was previously discussed, regarding our perception of opposites such as good or bad, and happy or sad. One thing that certainly intensifies our lives is when we look at the real complementary opposite of life, which is death. If we have spent our whole lives focusing on what we have and what we don't have, when death faces us, we will surely believe that our life was unhappy. Happiness exists when the mind is not removed from itself, when it remains in the present time zone, and when it declines to contrast itself with other times or conditions.

Happiness is an attitude, a feeling of satisfaction that can only be felt within, by being content with who we are, not with what we do or what we have. This becomes paramount in us as we age and are anticipating the end of our life. As we grow older, life is seen more simply, and as we look back we see that what we thought were the little things, were really the big things in life. And what we thought were the big things, were really the little things. Do you see the complementary opposite in this?

YOU WILL NEVER GET OUT OF THIS ALIVE

Where does our life energy go when we die? Humankind has been trying to answer this question since the beginning of time. The first law of thermodynamics teaches that energy cannot be created or destroyed. We have a life energy wave level that cannot be destroyed. In that case, it makes sense that death is nothing more than a falling apart of recycling our Created Self in order that it can be freed to function again in a different, higher order. We are not something that eventually breaks or burns out. Returning again to the concept of complementary opposites, death is the complementary opposite of life. When we face death, we go from one complementary opposite to the other with the following shifts in thinking.

First, what are the things we think about as we reach the end of our life? Most likely, we think about these things:

- Was I **happy** in love, money, career, or health? Did I have fun?
- What did I **want**? Did I get it?
- Was I **kind** to my spouse, parents, children, coworkers, and friends?
- Did my **actions** make things better or worse?
- Can I **forgive**? Am I **forgiven**?
- Did my life have **meaning**?

Then if we had to do over again, what would we do or perceive differently? What would we do differently if we were to have the opportunity to go on living? We would probably:

- Change our **values** to a higher level.
- **Simplify** everything and focus less on material things.
- Make different **choices**, especially realizing that changing the exterior is either not possible or not important.

- Alter the **quality** of our life and quality of our work.
- Take better care of our **health** and everything around us.
- Our **attitude** and temperament would be better. We would be more forgiving, accepting of others and ourselves.

As we approach the end of our lives our perception changes, because we finally begin to learn (sometimes too late) what is truly important.

WHAT WOULD THEY SAY ABOUT YOU IF YOU WERE GONE?

Have you read any obituaries lately? Someone sent me a clipping of a person I knew and I was amazed to read a long list of wonderful accomplishments and fine deeds this man had done in his lifetime. He was eighty-four when he passed away. The man was an engineer. Engineering doesn't sound very exciting, but this man had a full life. He designed outstanding mechanical pieces, gave lectures, and was an expert witness in complicated court cases was active in professional societies, was a skier and mountain climber, and he was even an Eagle Scout leader.

How would your obituary read? Not necessarily the public one, but a personalized summary on yourself? How would your friends and family speak of you? What would they say about you at your memorial service? Perhaps, from time to time, we should do a personal checkup on ourselves. If we take time to plan our day, our week, our year, and our vacations, why not take time to plan our lives. Try this experiment. Write you own obituary. Describe your life up to the moment. After you have written it, match it with how you want to live you life. If it doesn't match up, you have an opportunity before your "final obituary" is written to change your life and circumstances so that, in the end, you have lead the life you always wanted.

ENDINGS MAKE BEGINNINGS

When we go through trauma or when loved ones around us go through trauma, we experience "little deaths". Dr. Borysenko terms these significant life-changing traumas as *dark nights of the soul*.

When these little deaths take place we sometimes feel detached, empty, disoriented, disassociated – and a few more *dis* words – disappointed, and disenchantd.

Whenever we have an ending or little death, we must disengage ourselves. When we choose to disengage, we can feel somewhat empty or disenchantd.

When we have some trauma or an important loss, we may go through a process of questioning the meaning of our life and what we value. Robert Frost refers to this time of disorientation as “lost enough to find yourself.” When we experience the dark night of the soul, we have the opportunity to reframe our thinking and make significant changes in our lives.

When something serious has happened in our lives or we have a close encounter with morality, many of us make significant career changes. Such as cutting down the size of a prospering business just to have more free time, changing from one kind of career to another, moving to a distant location, working with charitable organizations, making religious or spiritual changes, and spending more time with our family and friends. All of this allows us to find deeper meaning to our lives.

The reason that most people are afraid to die is that they never really lived. Instead of living and creating the life they want, they try to softly tiptoe through life so that they can arrive at death safely. These are the people who live lives of quiet desperation. Since there is no way you are going to get out of this alive, you might as well live life to the fullest while you are here. In the end, you will not be as sorry for what you *did*, as for what you *didn't do* but *wanted to do*. Don't make that mistake. Now is the time to do what you really want to do.

CHAPTER 6

EXPANSION AND CONTRACTION OF CREATIVE ENERGY

YOUR CREATIVE INTENTION

Impossible situations in our lives are often created because we are off-purpose. In fact, most people seem to have no idea what their true purpose is. Still, many people seem to know their purpose. We often envy these people because their purpose seems so clear. The truth is that purpose becomes clear when we are ready to express our Greater Self. Each one of us has a purpose and a chosen life from the moment we are born.

In order to discover our purpose or creative intention, we must believe and trust that Creative Intelligence is seeking to create through us. Whatever our field of endeavor, whatever our desires, if we devote our strength to the things we feel suited for and attracted to, something inside us will tell us that it is in keeping with our creative intention. When we feel compelled to do anything in life, even though it may seem trivial in comparison to the accomplishments of others, this is our true creative intention.

Most impossible situations in life are the result of being off course. We are not fulfilling our creative intention, but instead we are trying to force something to happen that is not keeping with our life purpose.

We receive our life energy from Creative Intelligence in two elements: the mind and the body. The mind expresses itself through the body as well as moves the body. The two are inseparable. The continuation of human life is impossible with only one of the two. It is essential to understand that when we unify the mind and the body, our power to overcome the impossible and create the possible is unlimited. This includes illness, financial problems and relationships.

The mind and body are not exactly the same, nor are they entirely different. The body is the visible portion of the mind. When we look at a tree, we forget that half the tree is below the ground. The limitations of the body are largely set in the mind.

FOCUSING OUR CREATIVE ENERGY

Each one of us has an energy source where we can focus our power of creativity. This energy source is at our center of balance. Physicists have defined the center of gravity of an object as an infinitely small point on which an entire object can be balanced. This is not only just an intellectual concept nor is it merely a physical location in the body, but a dynamically active center of balance and stability. This centeredness of power affects everything in our life. It may be difficult to comprehend intellectually, but you can experience this mind and body integration through focus.

Creative energy that can overcome any impossible situation is capable of infinite expansion and contraction, which can be directed by but not contained by the mind. It is not merely a concept but a real force that can be intuitively perceived and mentally directed. Only our imagination limits its potential.

Individuals who perform great feats such as athletes, artists, and various professionals use this creative energy to excel. We can optimize our ability to turn the impossible into the possible by doing the same. This one of the ways we can remove the lead weights of impossibility.

So much of our lives are spent off center. We are not doing what we want to do or what we are created to do, but rather, what we think we should do. When we are focused on what we really want, not what we think we should have or do our vision becomes clear, and that clarity creates our point of power.

TALENT – YOUR CREATIVE INSTINCT

We are all born with innate talents and abilities. It may be only a mere hobby or a pastime, or it may be undeveloped from neglect, but everyone is uniquely gifted to do something better than someone else. These talents usually come so easily that they tend to be taken for granted or undervalued. The difference between talents and skills is that skills are acquired, whereas talents are inborn. Talent is not something acquired at school or learned on the job. Talents are unique combinations of inborn skills. Like fingerprints, no two people's talents are alike, but they are so much a part of us that they are sometimes hard to recognize. They become apparent when we pursue our goals.

How do you know what talents you possess? Begin by asking yourself what you enjoy. We are inwardly drawn to activities that can make use of our talents, though it may be somewhat vague at first. Because talents are with us from birth, they usually manifest early in our lives. Recent science indicates that brain connections happen at an early age. The neurons in the brain actually show the physical movement of these connections occurring in the brains of babies in the womb and throughout infancy. These connections can be stimulated and therefore increased in number if the mother sings repetitive songs and repeats numbers and words.

The fact that the neurons in our brains make their connections primarily in the womb through our early years is why young children can learn multiple languages, yet adults will have more difficulty learning new languages or even changing their accents. Whatever we learned in our early years will enhance certain skills that become an indelible talent. Young boys, who play with blocks, toy cars, and trucks at an early age, often gravitate toward the mechanics of cars. A teenage boy may be found working under the hood of a car before he can even drive a car. Some children may develop a natural propensity for music long before they can play an instrument because they were exposed to music more often when they

keeping with the child's true purpose or creative intention. This could be a serious mistake that can create a long period, if not a lifetime, of unhappiness.

FINDING PURPOSE

Why you do something is more important than how you do it. Purpose is the overall reason for our actions. Goals are the attainment or specific steps along the way. Your goal may be to operate a business, but your purpose is to provide a service to others. Your goal might be to have a five-bedroom house with a family room and a swimming pool, but the purpose of buying the new house is so that your family can enjoy the space together. The purpose in buying the new home would be for the intangible pleasure and happiness. The goal is to find a house with the specific specifications. It is important to distinguish the difference between our purpose and our goal.

Many people, when asked, will say that all they care about is earning money. If earning money to buy things we enjoy is not our most important purpose in life, then what is our purpose? Is it to get more things, or is it to live a more meaningful life. Purpose is the meaning you attribute to your goals and actions. The meaning we give to all our actions comes from within us when we ask ourselves *why* we want something. Purpose is why we want what we want. The goal is what we want. Purpose is the primary reason, and therefore the motivating factor, in our lives.

Purpose is seen as a mission or an intangible reason behind our actions. This is why corporations not only set goals, they first make a "mission statement", which is their statement of purpose. If you do not know what your purpose is, ask yourself, "What is it that I keep thinking about and why do I think about it? What have I always wanted to do but haven't done yet, and why do I consistently desire it?" It may not even be clear to you yet, but thinking about it will help you bring it to the surface. By defining your purpose, you will have a way to gauge whether you are on track with your life. Unfortunately, we often measure success by material possessions or status, but the true measure of success is fulfilling our life purpose.

Even if you think you would be happy with certain material possessions or a certain career status, you may not realize how much more happy and fulfilled you would be if you went after your real passion, which is always linked to your purpose. One of the ways to discover if you are on purpose is to ask yourself, "Would I still expend this energy if I didn't have to work for a living? Would I do this, even if I were not getting paid?" If you ask this, over time, you will come to a conclusion about whether your life is on purpose.

Happiness is not tangible. The key to happiness lies in having a purpose that is not just about getting what we want. When people look for higher meaning in their lives, they often gravitate toward the pleasure of giving to others. People tend to realize later in life that beyond having what we need, the key to true happiness lies in exercising our capacity to give rather than get. If our purpose is beyond the game of having more and getting ahead, we can focus on helping others and find true happiness. Then we are no longer defining our worth by how much money we have or how to get ahead, but rather on who we are as our Greatest Self.

CREATING WHAT WE WANT

Before we begin a long trip or a vacation by automobile, we usually check out the automobile to make sure it is in condition to make the trip. We change the oil, check the tires, and tune up the engine. Only when we are sure that everything is functioning correctly do we feel a sense of security that we will have a safe trip.

Life is much the same. As we travel on our journey of life, we must make sure of the ability and strength of the vehicle in which we are traveling. We must check all the parts of ourselves that will make the journey as safe and secure as possible. In short, we must put ourselves in order and make sure we are not leaking our strength and ability, but have full power to make the journey.

Creativity planning our lives involves making an assessment of where we have been, where we are now, and where we want to arrive. Asking ourselves the following questions will allow us to do a reality check of where we are now and where we want to be.

What

- What do I want, what is the goal?
- What is the tangible/measurable outcome I want?
- What are the obstacles?
- What are the intermittent steps/intermittent goals?
- What must I give up or change?
- What must I do right now to help myself?

Why

- Why do I want these (intangible benefits)?
- Why do I have a passion for this?
- Why does this give me pleasure?

How

How can I accomplish this?
How can I create this?
How can I find others who have achieved this?
How do I know what steps to take in the beginning?

When

When will I start?
When will I be at each stage?
When will I reach it?

Where

Where will it take me?
Where am I now in relation to where I want to go?
Where do I find my resources?

Who

Who can help me?
Who can teach me?
Who will support me?
Who will I celebrate with?

CREATIVE ENERGY

How do we tap our creative energy to move us toward getting what we want? First we need to tap our creative genius, and then we need to focus in the right direction. Scientists have been telling us for years that we only use about 10 percent of our brain. What about the rest? How can we use more of our brains? Have you heard of right-brain/left-brain interaction? This is how we can use more of our brainpower, by stimulating the use of both sides of our brains. The left side of the brain controls linear thinking such as mathematical ability, logical reasoning, tasks, and movements. The right side of the brain is the creative side, controlling conceptual reasoning, receptivity, feeling, and sensing. Scientists have also said that less than 5 percent of people have the natural automatic tendency to use both sides of their brains interactively. Most people shift back and forth from the linear to the creative sides of their brains, but remain in either side without readily accessing the opposite side and allowing one to interact and influence the other. We have the ability to use our

brains more interactively; we just need to use techniques that require us to use both sides of our brain at once.

When we first wake up from sleeping, we tend to be more in the right side of the brain. If we didn't have schedules, we'd start our day more slowly. This is why we may seem to be procrastinating when we are just floating around in the right side of our brain.

A business consultant named Janelle Britain suggests that people who have difficulty getting in gear can trigger the left side of their brain by working a crossword puzzle at the breakfast table, especially if they set a strict time limit on completing it. Another left-brain exercise for the morning would be to get out your Day Planner. As you use the Day Planner to unload the linear mental data in your conscious mind, you will free up your conscious mind to let creative ideas come forward as well. If you find yourself getting exhausted mentally, take out some paper and start doodling. You might actually sketch out what your linear mind is trying to sort out. This is the way to integrate the use of your brain. There are numerous techniques that we can use to brainstorm.

When you unload your conscious mind from linear data, you free your mind for creative thinking. If there is too much linear data in the way, it will block your creative flow. Once you empty the overloaded data, you can strike a balance in your right-brain/left-brain thinking.

So many people keep their minds full of facts saying, "Oh, I can remember that," but trying to hold on to lots of information blocks their ability to be creative. It blocks their ability to bring creative ideas into the conscious mind. Now that we are in the information age, we can use our organizer books and computers to store all that stuff. Give your mind a chance to expand by using all of your brain and letting the dynamics of creative energy expand your horizons.

IMAGINATION CREATES POSSIBILITIES

In our society, imagination is an underdeveloped resource. By setting up a positive image of what we want, our beliefs will facilitate us in getting what we want. Visualization and positive affirmations are the tools we can use to help us to create new possibilities.

By using visualization to see your goal in a completed manner, you will eliminate or certainly reduce the stress of trying to achieve something you wouldn't ordinarily believe could be yours. Psychologically, if you can accept the end result, you will be able to be more relaxed and creative because you won't be trying to force something to happen. Instead, by imagining it in your mind as something you already have, you can have it almost effortlessly.

When you are trying too hard to force something to happen, your energy is distorted by too much tension that comes from feeling desperate or perhaps being fearful. This underlying energy is subtly affecting your relationship with people around you, and subtly affecting your resources in an unfavorable and distorted manner. Something to remember is, *less* effort creates *more* results.

IMPRINTING WHAT WE VISUALIZE

Visualization or applied imagination is one of the most significant tools we can use for change. It is the process of maintaining a thought long enough so that the mental picture we create evokes an emotional response. The emotion causes conviction, and conviction causes reality. Thus, thought plus emotion creates conviction. Conviction creates reality.

When you focus your mind on the result you want your brain will facilitate desirable directions and opportunities that will ultimately get you where you want to go. Visualization has a more profound impact on your subconscious mind than you might realize. Your subconscious mind does not distinguish between whether you are imagining something or actually experiencing it. You can make changes in your opinions, beliefs, and levels of expectation by vividly imagining the experiences and circumstances you select.

The only kind of imagery that will alter the subconscious image of reality is *experiential* imagery. Therefore, it is beneficial to create an image that has movement, like a film, not a snapshot. You must clearly identify yourself with the imagery. If you can't see yourself being, doing, or having it, you won't get there. Active visualization, with yourself in the picture, is a key step in the process of transforming your visualization into reality.

SELECT AND AFFIRM WHAT YOU WANT

We are constantly creating when we use our imagination, but when this activity is not appropriately selective, we may tend to limit our possibilities by capturing images from our past and creating the same situations in the future. To avoid creating our future out of past limitations, we must actively imagine the future we desire with ourselves as the key player.

Next, we can solidify these images of what we want by affirming them with quality thoughts, which will validate and confirm the images as true for us. The actual process of applying affirmations and imagery is called imprinting. Imprinting plants the image we want in our minds as real and believable. Our faith and belief is part of the natural process. When we expand our minds with

faith and belief in creating what we want, we open a gateway to unexplored paths and surprising results.

Some people have difficulty getting a clear visual picture in their mind. If so, they are likely to be people who hear more or feel more than they actually tend to visualize. The people who are less visual can build into their images the learning style that works best for them, such as auditory or feeling. If this is true for you, just concentrate on the feeling or focus on sounds during your visualization exercises.

EXPANSION AND CONTRACTION OF CREATIVE ENERGY

If you clearly focus on the result, than all the related facts and ideas that support the idea will come flowing forth, especially if you write or diagram your thoughts. All forms of energy must be focused and harnessed toward the result you want.

A book by Robert Fritz called *The Path of Least Resistance* describes the creative process as energy that always goes toward what you envision. In other words, if you get a clear picture of where you are right now, your *current reality*, and then focus on what you want, your creative energy will *always* direct you on the *path of least resistance* toward what you want. This is a simple law of nature regarding all energy.

For example, a river will simply flow around rocks as its energy is directed toward the sea, roads go around mountainous terrain rather than over it on the way to a town, electrical energy rushes through a coiled and tangled power cord to a light bulb, and thus to the path of least resistance. Therefore, if you create a positive tension between your current reality and where you want to be, your life force will do whatever it needs to get you there. The key is to keep your eye on the goal, sending your energy toward what you want.

What we tend to do so often is take our eyes off the goal, in effect, turning our light switch on and off, over and over again. This interrupts the creative process that would automatically guide us on the right path.

We tend to lose momentum, like the person who starts a diet during a holiday time of overeating and then wonders why he or she gained weight, gets discouraged, and quits.

Results are on the way, but we must keep our *momentum* up, rather than turning the momentum of the creative process on and off. If we have what appears to be a setback, we must give the energy of the creative process a chance to show us how to *adjust* our course. Robert Fritz refers to this as *create and adjust*.

Applying this concept of the creative process to the methods of innovative thinking where we use the right-brain/left-brain thinking, we can use the right side of our brain for scanning creatively through out left-brain database. Next, we can use the left side of our brain to logically sort all the facts to be considered, but we should always remember to check our conclusions and/or ideas with the right side of our brain again to know what is intuitively right or true for us.

By incorporating our intuition and other right-brain senses, we become emotionally motivated by our compelling purpose and passion. This process will happen automatically for us if we give the creative process a chance to work. What generates our creative energy is our application of the right amount of positive stress or tension. We create the right amount of energizing tension when we clearly focus on the difference between our current reality and our vision of what we want. Keep your eye on the goal, and the laws of natural energy will move you automatically on the right path toward your goal.

TURN CONTRACTION INTO EXPANSION

The spiral of impossibility will carry us down into a black hole of failure if we don't change our thinking. Our own negative thinking, or *stinkin' thinkin'*, as the noted motivational speaker Zig Ziglar prevents us from expanding our creativity.

When faced with disappointment and difficulty, we have a choice in life of either expanding or contracting our power. Ultimately, we will choose to expand our power, having the behavioral flexibility to change and do whatever it takes to get what we want. In order to change, we must take action without hesitation when the time is right. Since action leads to the possibility of failure, it is easy to see why so many people stay stuck in impossible situations. Often we choose to contract or depress our creative energy, and we become afraid to take action.

The key to freedom lies in the understanding that there is no way we can fail in the long run, and that the human spirit, or Greater Self can never fail. The Created Self experiences failure because of faulty perception and actions. The good news is that failure is only permanent if we make it so. We begin to understand that all action, whether we perceive it as failure or not, produces a positive benefit in that we have a greater understanding of our actions and ourselves.

Julia Cameron, a successful filmmaker, refers to her own story in her book, *The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*. Her story is a great

example of turning what appears to be contraction into expansion. She tells us that *gain* can be disguised as *loss*, and that if artists realized this, they would use any losses as tools to redirect themselves toward their ultimate goals. She had heard for years, from film director John Cassavetes, “Stop complaining about the lousy curves you get thrown, and stretch, reach for what you *really* want. In order to catch the ball, you have to *want* to catch the ball.”

In short, she was repeatedly told, “If you want to see your films made, you must first sell yourself as a writer and then if one of your scripts is made, and if that film is a hit, and if the climate warms up a little, then you might get a shot at directing.” She listened to this conventional wisdom for a long time, racking up loss after loss, writing script after script.

Finally, after one loss too many, she began to look for the other door, the one she had refused to walk through. She decided to catch the ball. She became an independent filmmaker. Ms. Cameron took matters into her own hands, used her money from writing for Miami Vice, and assembled the basic equipment she needed for filmmaking. She went on to succeed at filmmaking and as a film writer, producing endless features, short films, documentaries, docudramas, teleplays, and movies of the week.

Through the process, Ms. Cameron realized she loves movies, loves making them, and would not let her losses take her down. Lastly, she said, “I learned when hit by loss, to ask the right question – “What next?” instead of “Why me?” She asked herself, “How can I create what I want?”

The choice we make between contraction and expansion is predicated on whether or not our desire to change is based on moving *toward* something we want and love, or *away* from something we fear. What drives you? Fear or love? Have you ever asked yourself this question? Does what you do in life come from your love of what you are doing, or from your fear of losing something you value such as your money, your mate, or job?

PERCEPTION INFLUENCES POSSIBILITIES



Take a look at the above drawing. Now, let me ask you a question. What do you see? Do you see a convex line or a concave line? Which is it? Some would argue for either perception. However, the line has two qualities. It is both

convex and concave. The two qualities are the same and exist side by side. Like the half glass of water, it is all a matter of perception. Perception limits or increases our ability to use our power to keep ourselves in impossible situations or to change them. Before we can change any situation, we must first change our perception.

Changing our perception requires being open to expansion, not being blocked by withdrawing into a rigid and contracted state. At the time we are hit with disappointment, we need to avoid tightening our reins out of fear. Rather, we must open the channels of creativity fully, allowing new input from an expanded circle of possibility. If we get stuck, we need to give ourselves a little nurturing and then head out on a journey for new input. The methods for stimulating the journey are many, including taking a walk, riding a bike, exercising, meditating, diagramming ideas on paper, and working with our dreams.

Exercise is an excellent right-brain/left-brain integrator because we are moving our physical body and at the same time perhaps counting or concentrating with our left brain in some way. Find what works best for you in stimulating your creative genius, which will give you the strength to overcome your obstacles.

FINDING YOUR “CHOKE POINT”

We've had years of programming telling us that mistakes are punishable, therefore risk taking is unwise. Many parents, friends, business associates, and teachers want us to stay where they feel we belong. Then, as soon as we have difficulty, we tend to allow the beliefs of others to be reinforced by thinking they were right. The next steps we try to take will be taken stiffly, as we contract ourselves in what has now become our own resistance to change. Remember resistance to change is nothing more than *hardening of the attitudes*. Rather than viewing this as our “choke point”, a point where we tend to choke up or stay stuck, we can view this as the beginning of a golden opportunity for us to break through to success. It is our choice, depending on how we choose to perceive it and use it.

Granted, tough times are initially uncomfortable, but we must strike the right balance of allowing enough emotion to feel the depth of the situation, yet realize there is always something positive in whatever is happening to us. If we do not control our emotions with some clarity, we will reduce the effectiveness of our logical reasoning. On the other hand, we should not linger very long. As Julia Cameron stated in her book, *The Artist's Way*, “Pain that is not used

profitably and quickly solidifies into a leaden heart, which makes any new action difficult.”

No matter how positive we are there will always be challenges. Earlier, we talked about the ebb and flow of life. Life's cycles are like waves in the ocean. Each one has its peak, but it also must have a valley. We have the opportunity to ride like a surfer, skipping from the top of one wave to another, at just the right moment of opportunity if we will allow ourselves to go with the ebb and flow. The question we must ask ourselves is do we want to perceive our point of challenge as our choke point or our turning point for a breakthrough to greater opportunity?

CYCLE OF INTENTION – ATTENTION

Intention Creates Attention

Once you are clear about your intention, the only thing you need to pay attention to and invest in are those things that support your intention. Whatever you give your energy to is what you will have more of. Our intention is our overall purpose.

If you don't have a clear intention, you will lose focus. Clear out all the debris in your mind, and clear out all the physical debris around you that could interfere with your creative focus. This includes well-meaning advice from friends, mates, family, TV, newspapers, political and religious and authority figures. The result is that whatever *attention* you pay to these sources now becomes your *intention*.

However, if we don't have a clear intention of what we want and where we want to go, then others will decide what we will pay attention to. Since we are paying attention to what the outside world draws our attention to, it becomes our intention and we go around in circles. The essential principle in creating successful habit patterns is to choose our intention in every area of our lives.

Let's imagine we have no particular intention on the kind of relationship we want. Since we must be in the circle somewhere, we end up in the attention mode rather than the intention mode. Our focus is forced upon us, based on whatever the outside world determines. Any individual who comes along and can get our attention becomes the focus of our life, or our intention for that relationship.

Now let's say we know the kind of person we want. Our focus automatically narrows considerably. We invest our attention in those individuals who match our intention. We constantly choose the kind of person to invest our intention in. Consciously choosing the people that match our intention shifts our energy

away from undesirable relationships and draws us together with other positive, creative individuals. The clearer you are on what your intention is, the more power you will have.

INTENTION IS WHY WE CHOOSE OUR DIRECTION

Intention is nothing more than conscious decision. The good news is if you will make the decision, your subconscious will make the provision. Everything that happens in our lives is perfect for us in some way. If we lose sight of this and focus too much on the methods we have been told to believe in, we will limit our subconscious minds from providing us with innovative solutions.

Why we do something is more important than how we do it. The *why* is our *intention*, and the *how* is the *method*. The method is not as important as the why. When we are focused on the why, the method reveals itself to use in an easy, stress-free manner.

Life is a journey. If you wanted to take a trip, you would have to have a reason for the trip. This is your intention or the why. Your choice of transportation would be your method of achieving your intention. Each life intention involves many choices regarding methods. The next thing to consider is whether to take the long route or the short route. Which direction shall we take? Is there a right direction and a wrong direction, or are some just easier than others? If we are focused on the why and not the how or the method, our Greater Self will take care of all the details.

We must look at what our *true* intention is. A clue here is that many intentions are unconscious. In other words, we made a choice earlier in life (based on survival) and even though we say we want one thing, we are actually moving toward another. We may say we want money, but our survival mechanism says we should not take financial risks. We may want a relationship, but our survival mechanism says that we don't want to be hurt. Our true intention may be hidden, yet is constantly revealed in actions. Therefore, before taking any action, we must look at our true intention. The easiest way to do this is to ask, "Is my intention a 'have to' or 'should' or is something I really want to do?" The answer to this will give you a clue to your true intention.

VALUES – KEY TO MOTIVATION

Our reason for wanting to create anything in our lives must be true to our values; otherwise our intent will be distorted and subject to failure. Our values are our truth, therefore our values are our proof that what we want is what we are willing to direct our attention and energy consistently toward.

The key to success is to have dominant thought patterns that are totally aligned with what you want instead of what you don't want. If you are thinking about what you don't want, it becomes the dominant thought in your head that drives your brain's neurology. To the extent that you focus on what you don't want, you will create it. If you want money but focus on avoiding poverty, you will consciously create poverty. Your dominant thought would cause you to miss possibilities for what you want because you are looking for what you don't want.

When we focus on what we want, our values, we will react strongly to anything that pulls us away from it. *Moving toward* values determine what we pay attention to. *Moving away* from values determine what we avoid. You will move toward what you truly want (pleasure) or away from what you don't want (pain or conflict). Values are the key to motivation. Values determine how we spend our time, money, attention, and energy. Put simply, you will end up doing what is important to you and not doing what is not important to you.

Values motivate us to manifest our goals, and goals are the means we use to manifest what we value. Goals create positive pressure. Setting a goal acknowledges to your subconscious mind that where you are not where you want to be. Our values and goals must be aligned. For example, if your goal is to make a lot of money in your business, but you have an opposing value that money is really not that important, or that it is wrong to earn too much money, you will fail simply because you have opposing or conflicting values.

GOALS ARE AIMLESS WITHOUT PURPOSE

Here's how the scenario goes:

Right decision, wrong time.

Wrong decision, right time.

Wrong decision, wrong time.

Right decision, right time.

We can either realize these points after something has gone wrong, when it's too late, or we *consciously* use these points in advance to appropriately change or alter our choices.

Our life is a play where we are the *creative directors* of our own success. Our best answers are always within us. If we make our own choices based on our attunement to our Greater Self, we will always know the right answers for us. When we are out of attunement with our Greater Self, and look for answers outside of ourselves, our ideas may be distorted and faulty. The end result is our faulty ideas will create faulty experiences.

PURPOSE MAKES YOUR GOALS BELIEVABLE

How can our goals be believable if they are not specific? People often say they want a bigger house, more money, a new job or career, but how can they believe this when the image of their goal unclear. Surely our minds do not know how to picture what 'more' or 'bigger' is. Our minds can only picture clear images. Setting effective goals that can be actualized by writing them down and making specific choices as to *what* we want. The choices are based on your purpose.

Why have a bigger house? What specifically does a bigger house include? When we ask ourselves why (which is our purpose) and what (which is a specific goal), we naturally ask ourselves how to fulfill the goal with a clear purpose, such as our family will be happier if the children each have their own rooms. OK, so exactly how many rooms will the new house you want contain? Once you clarify this, you can put your dream machine into a specific gear with a clear and reasonable intention.

Once you set goals using clarity of purpose, you are automatically motivated and committed to a specific image. It is then that you are ready to work on those goals in your day-to-day life. You are ready for a labor of love. Ideas without *labor* are *stillborn*.

OUR SENSE OF PURPOSE KEEPS US ON TRACK

Goals that are set in alignment with our purpose keep us from being distracted by outside influences. Instead of creating what we should, we create what we truly want. We are the creative directors of our own life. As the director, we use our sense of purpose to allow our Greater Self to guide us to the best possible outcome.

This clarity, this level of being and doing, supercedes all self-doubt. The subconscious mind is where all the action takes place, as we integrate our right-brain/left-brain reasoning it ultimately gives us the freedom and boldness to manifest what we truly want.

LET GO AND LET CREATIVE INTELLIGENCE WORK FOR YOU

Once we have our powerful creative purpose in full force and we've set clear and specific goals, we must release our attachment to having those results. If we hang on too tightly, we will distort the energy of Creative Intelligence by closing off channels to bring forth our desire.

As each day progresses, we need to look and listen for messages. The messages will come to us while we observe the play of life – how things play out for us. No matter what comes our way, we need to stop for a moment and look at what is happening – kind of like Native American shamans do. They observe what is happening, and then process it through their mind and spirit. They ask the Great Spirit what to do, as they feel their own spirit connected to the Great Spirit.

Awareness of the spirit is within the creative, receptive part of our minds, which is connected to Creative Intelligence. From this state of awareness we can see what is happening and adjust our course of action. Adjusting our course should be as constant as steering a car. We are always adjusting the steering which allows us to drive around obstacles and reach our destination.

Being flexible as we calmly take note of what is happening around us, rather than getting upset, is the way to stay in touch with our Greater Self. Staying in balance, or remaining centered, is not only a way to prevent problems; it also reinforces the kind of behavior that is characteristic of our Greater Self. Our ultimate purpose in life is to develop that Greater Self through all we do and experience. If we stay focused on this truth, we will respond most favorably to any situation.

CREATING OUR FUTURE USING SMART GOALS

I mentioned earlier, I believe each one of us has a destiny or purpose. I also believe that we are going to get on with it, one way or the other. The choice is either to struggle and make it difficult, or to accomplish it in an easy, stress-free manner.

The purpose of SMART goals is to set yourself up so that your neurology is driven in such a way that it is impossible to fail in the long run. SMART goals are:

S – Specific

By specific, we mean saying exactly what you want. Saying you want more money is not specific and it is not measurable. Every goal must be specific and measurable. Instead of saying, “I want to earn a lot of money,” begin by setting a specific amount each week, month, and season. The important thing about subconscious mind is that it works on the principle of the least effort. If you are specific, it will create an end result that expends the least amount of effort.

The subconscious mind interprets everything literally, similar to a computer. If I write a goal, “I will make \$5,000,” that puts it in the future. If you put it in the future, it always stays in front of you, just out of your reach. Your subconscious mind takes this literally. Instead say, “I now make \$5,000.” Since your

subconscious interprets everything literally, it will act as though the future is now. Remember that your subconscious only responds to specific and definite commands given in the present tense.

M – Modeling

If you want to achieve a specific goal, you have three choices. First, you can try to figure out how to be successful through trial and error. Second, you can observe what losers do, and avoid doing what they do. Third, you can observe what successful people do, and copy what they do. The latter is called modeling. It is the easiest way to achieve any goal and can be implemented through the following process. Find a model, someone who is already getting the results you want. Keep in mind that no matter how difficult something is there is someone who has already done it, which means you can accomplish the same result. Find out what they are doing. Do the same thing until you get the same results. The ultimate judgment of progress is measurable results in a reasonable amount of time.

A – ACTION

You won't take action until you are convinced that the reason why you are doing something is worth the price you will have to pay to achieve it. The reason why you do something is more important than how you do it. The how becomes easy once you focus on the why. Forget about how you are going to do something. Instead, concentrate on the reason why you want to accomplish it. A strong enough why will supply the information, creative energy, and drive to accomplish any goal.

Write down why not having what you want will be painful, what it will cost you not to achieve your goal, and how not having it will be more painful than the price you will have to pay to get what you want. This will set up your neurology so that your brain will want to move away from your present situation toward your goal.

Write down ten ways you will benefit from having what you want. Link massive pleasure to your new goal. Write down ten reasons why you must take action now. Take immediate action. *Remember, trying is not the same as doing.* In life, there is no way you can try. You either do something or you don't. Triers are liars. Lead, follow, or get out of the way.

R – Responsibility

Take total responsibility for your results. Remember that 99% responsibility does not work.

Notice the results you are getting from your action. If what you are doing is not working, do something else. Keep changing course until you get the result you desire. When obstacles or problems block your success, ask “how” questions instead of “why” questions. Spend 20% of your time on the problem, and 80% on the solution.

T – Timing

Time is our most valuable asset, yet we tend to waste it, kill it, and spend it rather than invest it. We can no more afford to spend *major time* on *minor things* than we can to spend *minor time* on *major things*. As far as our goals are concerned, there are no unreasonable goals, just unreasonable time frames. Be realistic in setting time frames. Remember the answer to the question. How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time!

CHAPTER 7

GETTING MORE OUT OF LIFE

TOTAL LIFE ENERGY – THE ULTIMATE PRICE WE PAY

Turning the impossible into the possible will require an expenditure of energy. Each of us comes to this planet with a limited amount of total life energy. The allotment of time we will have on this earth is equal to our total life energy. This is all we will have. Every moment we spend, whether having fun, working, worrying, arguing with our mate, complaining, commuting to and from work, or doing errands, is time we trade for our total life energy.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Census, if you are forty-five, you can expect to live thirty-three more years. This is the average total life energy remaining for someone in your age group.

APPROXIMATE TOTAL LIFE ENERGY REMAINING

Age	Years	Days	Hours
20	56.3	20,540	493,525
25	51.6	18,835	452,325
30	46.9	17,118	411,125
35	42.2	15,403	369,925

40	37.6	13,725	329,600
45	33.0	12,045	289,275
50	28.6	10,439	250,710
55	24.4	8,906	213,890
60	20.5	7,484	179,705
65	16.9	6,168	148,145
70	13.6	4,964	119,218
75	10.7	3,905	98,796

If you are age forty-five and you spend half your life, or total life energy, on necessary functions such as eating, sleeping, commuting to and from work, and body maintenance, you have approximately 144,637 hours left to experience the things that really bring happiness and fulfillment to your life.

TRADING YOUR TOTAL LIFE ENERGY

Money is something for which you trade your life energy. Every possession has cost you a part of your total life energy. You have literally traded your total life energy for the dollars you earned to buy the things that you have. This is time that you will never be able to get back. That expensive car, house, those expensive clothes and gadgets, all have been traded for your total life energy. For example, if your car payment is \$300 per month and you earn a net income of \$10 per hour, this means that you must give thirty hours of your total life energy each month just to pay for the car.

WORKAHOLISM – OVER COMMITMENT TO A FALSE END

Working hard is one thing, but being a workaholic is carrying the concept of commitment to the work ethic too far. Workaholics are compelled by outside forces and motivated by fear and guilt. They are constantly anxious, aggressive, and stressed out, and underneath there is even deeper discord as they actually feel inadequate and suffer from poor self-esteem.

Work is their way to avoid the pressures from the outside with a false exhibition of competence. Often, this façade of competence is coupled with the handicap of being obsessed with perfectionism. Perfectionists are driven by their fear of mistakes. This fear of mistakes is intensified by the perfectionist's fear that others will see their slip-ups, or flaws.

Deep inside, workaholics avoid knowing who they really are, and worse yet, they fear letting anyone else know who they are. They spend much of their time and energy battling against not only mistakes, but also against everything they don't want, instead of focusing on what they do want. They spend much of their

total life energy viewing others as adversaries to combat or compete against. If they are not the types of workaholic that focuses on combating others, then they are people pleasers, struggling to satisfy everyone else but themselves.

Workaholics are typically not spontaneous, much less creative. Without creativity, they have no dynamics. They replace dynamics with the façade of a workaholic. Being a workaholic is another means by which we misdirect our total life energy.

DO YOU UNCONSCIOUSLY WASTE ENERGY?

We can use up our energy, or we can boost up our energy. It is our own decision to do things with effort or to do things with an attitude of pleasure. This attitude can be present in even the subtlest ways. For example, there is a lady who speed walks every day around my neighborhood, but I notice that she always pounds her feet against the pavement and thrusts her whole body with every step (not with any extra exercise movement, just a hard gait). Her face is always tight, with her eyebrows knitted, and she never smiles or says hello. It seems like she uses a large amount of energy just thinking that she is working so hard during her walking exercise.

After months of this, I saw her doing her walk with another lady companion, who was walking just as fast with an equal amount of physical movement, yet she glided along almost effortlessly by comparison. The second lady seemed to enjoy the exercise and the walk. The difference in attitudes about doing the same exercise was obvious.

Do you ever catch yourself spending more mental energy than you actually need to do certain tasks? Whenever I catch myself getting too intense or involved in something I'm doing, I remind myself to relax and pace myself, because I'm just using up extra energy with no added benefit. Once I catch myself doing this, I notice how much better I feel and also that I am getting the same thing accomplished with less effort. As an added benefit, I will often find that when I slow down and pace myself, I am more receptive to my creative side, which always gives me ideas how to improve on what I am doing.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT

Certain emotions can give us energy, rather than sap energy from us. The energy booster emotions listed below are obviously positive emotions. We have been taught to believe that emotions are always interference, something to get rid of, but actually having some feeling give us our zest for life. Negative emotions are the kind that cloud our judgment and drain us of any sense of energy and personal power. The following energy boosters empower us to succeed.

Energy Boosters

Enthusiastic
Energetic stamina
Creative spirit
Resilient
Dynamic
Serene
Motivated by values
Goal/priority oriented
Focused intensity
Hopeful
Courageous
Gifted
Engaged
Competent
Powerful

Energy Sappers

Controlled
Used
Fearful
Worried
Indecisive
Anxious
Critical, criticized
Fatigued
Angry, resentful
Anxiety, hyperactive
Hopeless
Burdened
Detached
Ineffective
Helpless

Energy sappers can not only limit positive, creative actions; they can be so draining that they literally cause adverse physical and emotional symptoms to appear. Physically, we can have difficulty sleeping and digesting, have problems with our heart rate, and experience sweating or chronic fatigue. Emotionally, we can have crying episodes, be aggressive, or become emotionally numb. Even the trauma of positive changes can trigger your alarm system to go off.

If our alarm systems are telling us something, then we can turn them around by resolving what set the alarm off, thus switching an energy sapper into an energy booster. For example, anger is a signal that tells us our needs or wants are not being met or that someone or something has violated us (or is not right with us), or that our values and beliefs are being threatened. By resolving the issue, we can eliminate the energy sapper, putting ourselves back to where we want to remain, which is that of the energy booster.

ENVIRONMENT ENERGY SAPPERS

Everything we do involves the management of our energy, how we talk, walk, work, play and relate with others. Relationships are a constant dance of energy. If in a dating scenario someone comes on too strong, the other party automatically pulls back. This even applies to the energy that surrounds us as we stand physically before another. Surely, you have noticed how uncomfortable it feels to have someone get in your face. Perhaps you are aware when you stand too close to someone as you face him or her in a conversation.

Everyone has a different comfort zone regarding how close they will let another person stand in his or her space. If someone stands too close, the other will step back a bit

We are an energy field, and being conscious of our energy during our conversations makes us more sensitive to how we come across to others and vice versa. If we would remain in this aware and conscious state, we would probably make fewer errors in our interpersonal relationships. As soon as we allow some kind of energy sapper to throw us off balance, we lose sensitivity and insight. Further, we cut off our ability to make use of our best talents and skills.

Scientists have studied these psychological patterns of our energy ups and downs, calling them ultradian rhythms. It is important to normalize these ultradian rhythms. Of course, you also want to do what ever you can to eliminate the cause of the stress, but our bodies have a bit of a time delay in responding to our state of mind.

If we have been upset, even though later on we resolve the problem, our bodies take a while to catch on to our repaired state of mind. Therefore, the best way to prevent undue physical signs of stress is to quickly get on with shifting our thinking the moment our attitude or feelings go awry.

Other environment energy sappers can be found in the office, at home, or wherever we go. There can be all sorts of noises that disturb the ultradian rhythms more than we may realize. Even if you think you are good at tuning out noises, your body is still being affected.

When I am visiting with someone, whether socially or for business, if the person is allowing a lot of loud noises around us, I will find a polite way to ask them to turn off the radio, TV, or whatever noisy device is going on. I know that even if they think they have turned out he noise, their body, and mine, is being subtly thrown off balance while we are together. Sometimes I realize that the person I am visiting may have been distracted by my arrival and does not realize how disturbing the noise is. This is why I mention it to them. I believe both of us would feel much better and we would relate more directly and clearly without noise in the background.

The bottom line is that everything we do involves the management of our energy

VALUE YOUR LIFE ENERGY – GET RID OF THE FAT

Scientist say our fat holds toxins in our bodies. This is why we have so much more energy when we lose weight. It is not just because we're free of the

weight of the fat, it is because we are cleansed of toxins. A low-fat diet is now being touted as a way to live a healthy life. It is important to cut the fat not only from our diet, but also from our lives.

In your life, fat represents all of those things you think you need in order to be happy. You will find them everywhere. Most of the fat is the result of the “more is better syndrome.” Thus is based on the belief that inner fulfillment comes from possessions, that emotional discomfort can be alleviated by something external. As a child, satisfaction came from a baby bottle, bicycle, or blue blanket. As an adult, we are often convinced it comes from a bottle of Scotch, a BMW, or a financial security blanket.

Since we will consume a portion of our total life energy for money, we must decide on how that money will be used. There is nothing wrong with having money. The manner in which you earn and spend the money is what really matters here. If you acquired your money doing something you love to do while helping others in the process, the expenditure of your total life energy is in balance. If you spend more than you earned on things you don’t need, or try to buy happiness or impress other people; you are out of balance.

Most of us equate work with earning an income. We assume that if we are not getting paid, we must be playing instead of working. Sometimes play can look like work, and work can look like play. Have you ever heard someone say, “This job is so much fun I don’t feel like I am working?” Can you say this about your job? Of so, you are on purpose.

We usually view any unpaid activity as worth less than a paid activity. There is an almost universal belief that if we are not working for money, building a career, trying to get ahead, we are not fundamentally worthy as people.

To me, money means freedom. Instead of buying things, I use it to buy time. Many years ago I had a wise and wealthy teacher who opened my eyes to the real value of money. He said, “You may have an unlimited amount of money someday, but you will not have an unlimited amount of time. The only way to buy time is to do what you love to do. If you earn money doing what you love to do, you will never work another day in your life and you will have enough money to pay others to do what they excel at.”

He said that instead of painting your own house, fixing your own car, and typing your own letters, find people who have achieved excellence in these areas and pay them to do it, and do it well. By achieving excellence in your chosen field or occupation, you will have more than enough money to pay others to do the things you are not good at. This is buying time. You can either

use the time to earn more than you would save by not paying them, or you can use the time you would spend on tasks that you were not good at and did not enjoy to do something you are good at and do enjoy.

This concept has always served me well and has become my philosophy when it comes to money. In business, it is important to figure out exactly what you can do that no one else can do. Then hire people to do everything else. Your goal in business should be to do only the things you can't pay others to do.

We are all good at something or can be good at something if we focus our energy on excellence. If we love what we do, we can achieve excellence. Achieving excellence is the key to lifelong prosperity. If you are good at what you do, no matter what the economy, people will always beat a path to your door to hire you or engage your business or services because there are very few people on the planet that are willing to achieve excellence. Truthfully, I can't even program a VCR. I am not good at a lot of things. I have friends who can do many things, including fix their car, paint their house, and repair their TV. The difference is that, in most cases, it's a necessity because they have no money.

I love what I do, and by investing my time and energy, I have been able to achieve a level of excellence that provides me with an income to pay others to do what I can't and don't want to do. The nice part is that when I hire someone who is good at what they do, they also prosper because, not only are they getting paid and earning a living, but they love what they are doing.

MAKING A LIVING WITHOUT WORKING

Someone once told me that their definition of work is anytime you are do one thing, but would rather be doing something else. For most people work is just that: doing something we don't want to do to earn money to compensate us for the time spent so that we can do or buy things that will make us happy. To me, happiness is loving what you do and getting someone else to pay you to do it.

When you were a child, you were probably asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" What was your answer? Was it something that came from inside of you that you really wanted, or was it something that you felt the adults wanted you to say? Did you select your college or career path because that's what you really wanted to do, or did others choose for you?

An important clue to whether you are happy or unhappy lies in the question, "What do you want to be?" More than likely, your answer was not what you wanted to be, but what you wanted to do. This is the reason so many people are unhappy in their jobs and careers. They have confused doing with being. Our

identification is tied into what we do rather than who we are. This is why we introduce ourselves as secretaries, doctors, and computer programmers.

If you are working a job, or you are in a relationship with someone, or if you are expending any effort in your life and you are not sure of the benefits you will obtain, you will have great difficulty maintaining the necessary enthusiasm, persistence, and dedication. Freud said, “goals cause frustration and anxiety.” He was against the establishment of specific goals. On the other hand, Viktor Frankl said, “We cannot live without goals, because man’s basic nature is to be goal-oriented.” They were both right. The biggest mistake that people make is aiming too high or expecting too much too soon. Sure, you can have it all, but first you’ve got to reach some initial goals along the way. You can’t be an Olympic ski champion unless you’ve at least learned the basic principles of how to ski.

YOUR PASSION – WHY YOU DO WHAT YOU DO

What motivates you to go to work every day? Is it survival, security, tradition, prestige, power, or success? Is it creativity and fulfillment? The real problem we face is that we are trading our total life energy every single day. There is nothing in your life more valuable than the time you have left. You cannot put too much attention and importance on the way you invest those moments. Start tracking your life energy. How much are you trading it for right now? Write down the actual cost in time and money to maintain your lifestyle.

Two factors occur when you are doing what you love. One, you are motivated because you are fulfilling your passion, and two, because your work is a pleasure, it seems like you are making a living without working. Your passion for your work inspires your motivation, making the term’s *task* or *work* seemingly disappear from your vocabulary.

Rather than allowing ourselves to be motivated by fear, deficiency, and other exterior influences, we can automatically be motivated by the inner drive of our passion, which makes everything we do seem effortless. When our passion is being fulfilled, we put our heart into our work. When we’ve got our heart into it, we are not driven by exterior commitments; we are driven by our own dedication to what we love.

The goal of every individual should be excellence, not perfection. Dean Simonton, the Author of *Genius, Creativity and Leadership*, indicates that mistakes are a normal part of the process of the geniuses that create excellence: “Great geniuses make tons of mistakes. They generate lots of ideas and they accept being wrong. They have a kind of internal fortress that allows them to

fail and just keep going.

Notice the following winning formula:

$$\text{Ability} \times \text{Effort} = \text{Results}$$

Further note that it does not say

$$\text{Ability} \times \text{Perfection} = \text{Results}$$

It says *effort*. Also note that ability is having the wisdom not to waste effort.

Trying out new methods and stretching us beyond whatever our previous limits were opens the door for the dynamics of innovative genius. Little failures, like little deaths, tell us when to change direction. What doesn't work leads us to new ideas and gives us the opportunity to try them. In the end, we'll find the better way. Thus, we will be more effective in the long run, and we'll be even more effective every time we use our new discovery over and over again.

SEVEN WAYS TO BOOST YOUR ENERGY AND MAKE YOUR LIFE WORK FOR YOU

1. *Focus on your purpose and goals.*
2. *Know that you deserve what you want.*
3. *Be true to yourself.*
4. *See the possibilities.*
5. *Continuously build your support base of people and resources.*
6. *Believe that you are the creative director of your life.*
7. *Just do it. Stop procrastinating.*

CHAPTER 8

POSSIBLE AND IMPOSSIBLE RELATIONSHIPS

All the possible and impossible situations in life are profoundly influenced by the relationships we have with others and ourselves. We get an operating manual with things like computers and cars, but we don't get an operating

manual when it comes to relationships. This can be a tremendous drawback since just about everything we do involve relationships other people.

Our ability to interface well with others is probably the greatest thing we can master in life. Not only is it important regarding how we interface, but how we connect or bond with others emotionally. The human connection can limit us, motivate us, control us, or influence our choices because of the emotional or psychological nature of the relationship.

There are many different types of relationships including friends, family, lovers, social, business, coworkers, and, more importantly, ourselves that contribute in a unique way to our ability to turn the impossible into the possible.

We can either let relationships get in our way, or we can let them take us right to the top. Relationships influence our success or our lack of success. Successful people make it a point to associate with other successful people, which helps them to become more successful. Unsuccessful people do the same thing, only they associate with other unsuccessful people. This perpetuates their own game of impossibility, whether they are aware of it or not.

RELATIONSHIPS ARE EVERLASTING

We can be certain of the fact that relationships never end. The *form* changes, but the relationship remains forever. No matter how angry, hurt, or separated we feel from someone we have had a relationship with, the human spirit or shared oneness goes on forever.

Because our Greater Self is a part of the Infinite Oneness, we always have a relationship with everyone. We are related, whether we are aware of it or not. When we get into a relationship, all we are doing is acknowledging this connection. The relationship then takes on a certain form.

In reality, we can never begin or end a relationship with anyone; we can only acknowledge or change the form. When we break up, we are actually changing the form of the relationship from friend to enemy or former friend, mate to ex-mate, partner to ex-partner. This does not change the fact that we are still related and will be forever. Even death cannot end our relationship. It only changes the form.

COMMON RELATIONSHIPS THAT INFLUENCE OUR LIVES

Let's take a look at the most common types of relationships.

- Spiritual
- Yourself
- Friendship
- Romantic
- Parent-child
- Family Members
- Business
- Casual

Your Spiritual Relationship

First and foremost there is your spiritual relationship. This is the relationship you have with All There Is God, the universe, or whatever you choose to call it. The focus of religion has been to teach us the best or only path that God wants us to take. Each religion is convinced there is a different path; therefore, I submit that they are all right. There is no *right* or *only* path. What is more important than a single path, is our relationship with All That Is. If we understand that we are ONE with IT and are here to express ourselves as co-creators, there is no way we can be separated from the Source, no matter which path we take. We are all on the same trip and will get to the same destination. Instead of focusing on the destination, perhaps we should focus on the trip. The journey is our true spiritual relationship, not the destination.

Your Relationship with Yourself

The second most important relationship is the one you have with yourself. This is formed by what you say to yourself and what you think about yourself. The dialogue you carry on with yourself affirms your innermost beliefs and translates into vivid images in your subconscious. It inevitably influences outward actions in daily dealings in the world. Negative self-talk tends to be circular, non-productive, hinders problem solving, and is a prime means of harboring hopelessness and impossible situations. Images that comprise our self-talk continuously color our present, even in ways of which we are unaware.

Luckily for us, positive self-talk is also habit forming and, when specifically directed, is a great strength in our quest for positive change in our lives.

The hallmark of our relationship with ourselves should be gentle consideration. Too often we utilize nagging criticism or even harsh condemnation to force positive change. In our self-relationship, the means to achieve a certain end must be honest, ethical, and appropriate to ensure true inner growth. When we can afford this level of consideration and dignity for ourselves, then we automatically extend the same courtesy to others. This is also the action behind loving ourselves and allowing joyful expression without fear of inner reprisals. The soul expands under the open guidance of a kind teacher and withers under the negative expectations of a critical watchdog.

In learning to realign our relationship with ourselves, we must practice and discipline in equal measure: patience as we retrace our steps as many times as necessary, and discipline to be sure we don't give up in premature defeat over the difficult passage of destructive patterns and habits. The work of inner honesty can be frustrating and tiring as we delve through layers of protective deception. However, gentle honesty is the fundamental ingredient in a relationship having a foundation of trust.

Do you feel authentically you, or has your life become an exercise in deceit? Do you have a complete understanding of your true nature, or have you produced a smoke screen behind which you hide, even from yourself? When we allow our inner self to separate in distrust from our conscious self, then our life becomes a shadow act of something that has the potential for authenticity and original creation.

Honesty in our self-relationship is crucial, but so is trust. Essentially, we must trust ourselves to be an accurate authority on our own life. Taking on this essential role is the first step in gaining emotional responsibility. As we allow others to be experts on our lives for us, we abdicate a certain amount of blame, but we also relinquish some happiness and pride in achievements. No matter how willingly we allow or manipulate others to bear our load, this always carries a price of some resentment toward those who oblige as well as sense of inner disappointment at not directing our own life. As we increasingly take on the business of an honest, loving, inner assessment, we become free. It seems like a dichotomy in some ways, but the truth is that we must take a full personal responsibility in order to be free.

In the middle of this daunting proposal to alter your self-relationship, it can be of help to remember earlier discussions regarding the nature of the Greater Self. The Created Self, which may well be layer upon layer of deception, is merely a

cover-up obscuring the Greater Self within. The Greater or Higher Self is changeless and unaltered by external achievements, worries, concerns, and the collection of material possessions. It is *who you really are*, not the person you created through your personality.

The relationship you have with others will mirror the relationship you have with yourself. If you can't forgive yourself, you will not be able to forgive others. If you are impatient with yourself, you will be impatient with others. If you blame yourself and establish unreasonable expectations, you will do the same to others. Does a difference exist in how you treat yourself and how you treat others? What if you talked to others the way you talked to yourself? What if you were as unforgiving to others as you are to yourself? Chances are others would accept the kind of abuse you give to yourself. Said another way, do unto yourself as you would do to others.

Friendships - From Casual to Deep

Cicero described a friend as a second self. Our close friendships, which have depth, involve equal sharing as well as providing each other uplifting enrichment.

True friends are people we can discuss our problems and challenges with. Sharing with close friends is an important balance that needs to be nurtured, and mutually understood.

True friends are people who enjoy being with because we feel good when we are around them. We like to do things with them, *but what we do is not as important as how we feel* when we are around them. Whether we realize it or not, we form all personal relationships based on how others make us feel about ourselves when we are around them. When other people make us feel accepted, appreciated, loved, competent, or successful, we consider them friends. They help us to see the possibilities within ourselves because they are non-judgmental supporters. Often, they point out what is right about us instead of what is wrong. In a non-judgmental way, they can even tell us what we are doing that may be endangering our emotional, psychological, and physical well being. True friends are one of the greatest gifts that we can have in life.

Romantic Relationships

Romantic relationships incorporate a deep and profound aspect of physical attraction and desire. Our desire to be with the other person and our loneliness without him or her often causes us to exhibit all the typical symptoms of a good country-and-western song. Nearly every TV show, novel, movie and song emphasizes some aspect of romantic love. Unfortunately, unconditional love and romantic love are not always the same. Romantic love can be only sexual.

Many people fall in love as an excuse to have sex. This frees them from having to deal with the guilt of having sex just for the sake of enjoyment. If I love someone, sex is OK. If I don't love them, I am just promiscuous.

Romantic love can also be combined with a feeling of unconditional love. It is possible to have love without sex and sex without love. The ideal combination in a romantic relationship is to have both with the same person. Sometimes this is not always possible. We have to decide for ourselves what we truly want out of the relationship. Is friendship more important, not as important, or equally as important as having romance or a sexual relationship? An exciting romantic and love relationship will profoundly influence our creativity, our self-esteem, and our circle of possibility.

There are clearly differences in male and female communication style, thought processes, interests, and goals. However, a current trend seems to be couples working together in their own entrepreneurial enterprises. When couples harmonize in their career efforts, they can have a long lasting and more enriching relationship, but many couples fall apart by finding that their opposites are *not* complementary.

Relationships change dramatically as soon as we live with our partner, whether it is at home, at work, or even while just traveling together. It seems that our true colors come to life in full panavision when we get intimately close to someone. We bring all emotional baggage with us into every romantic relationship. Romantic relationships can give us strength, but only if we are willing to properly nourish them.

Common-Goal Relationships

The common-goal relationship is the most powerful. When combined with friendship, love, and romance, it can be the most dynamic relationship. In a common-goal relationship, we are not only attracted to the other person, but are mutually attracted to a common goal or goals. Our energy sphere is combined with the other person's to create a dynamic source of power. The common goal may be children, a family business, service to your fellow man, or sharing the same spiritual practice. Whatever the goal, if we join with another, all the areas of possibility increase twofold or exponentially. The results can be greater than we can possibly imagine.

What I have learned is that mutual goals and interests, which both can passionately commit to, are the most powerful driving forces within a relationship. The journey becomes more important than the destination. Common goals assist in transcending individual limitations and agendas and

draw from the resources of both partners to achieve a successful, dynamic, and passionate relationship.

Business Relationships

Corporations continually agree that their most important resource is their human resources.

Since people can make or break a business, they are the most important factor in the workplace, and their selection is critical. Human resources/personnel departments are geared to assess human characteristics and qualities and consider them to be as important as job specific capabilities.

When it comes to partnerships or teams, it is important to have a blend of personality styles and thinking styles. For example, a small business that is opening up needs a good bean counter (this term is meant as a compliment to all you accounts and CPAs), a good operations and/or production manager, and someone with finely tuned people skills who can bring the business to the marketplace. If you have two of the same type of person, one of you is unnecessary!

There are three kinds of producers: starters, continuers, and stoppers. The starters are the idea people, the continuers are the implementers, and the stoppers can recognize any pitfall to avoid. Once again, you must have all three types to be successful in business. You may have to find someone outside of the business to handle one of these aspects but you cannot succeed without all three.

Mentor Relationships

You can consciously attract people who might make a good mentor by choosing to attend certain meetings and associations that promote the skill that interests you. Unconsciously we can attract just the right person at just the right time using our desire and intuition. You have probably heard the saying, “When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.” I have found this to be one of the great truths.

A mentor can be one the greatest assets in helping you to reach your goals. I have had several mentors. Without their help I would have been unable to achieve many of the things I have achieved in life. However, you must choose your mentor carefully. Roger Gentis said, “Choose you mentors carefully. People who are lost in their lives tend to follow people who are lost in their theories.”

Family Relationships

Family relationships can range from closeness to downright abuse. One of the most popular terms used by popular psychologists and talk show host is the *dysfunctional* family. Loosely, the term implies that any family unit that does not measure up to a standard of perfection. It seems like every social ill from rudeness to murder has its root cause in the dysfunctional family.

While it is true that our family backgrounds profoundly influence our development and our ability to create possibilities, we can not and should not use it as an excuse for not creating our lives the way we want to. Many so-called children of dysfunctional families have overcome their childhood experiences and have gone on to lead very successful lives. On the other hand, many children of perfectly “normal” families are sitting in prisons.

As with everything in life, it is not what happens to us that matters, but what we do with what happens to us. Also, it is obvious that each person we encounter is coming from a completely different family background. Sometimes the relationship we have with others is a replay of our family relationship. Friends, lovers, and coworkers are just substitutes for the family members we had difficulties with. If we did not resolve our family relationship, there is a good chance we will keep repeating the same behavioral patterns in subsequent relationships.

We all have to work through our family relationships. In the meantime, what is more important is how we feel about ourselves right now and what we are willing to do to turn our impossible situations of the past into possible opportunities in the present.

IMPOSSIBLE OR POSSIBLE DIFFERENCES

How quickly we can switch from harmony to anger with the ones we love and care about. One minute someone can be our friend and the next minute they can be our enemy.

Perception is held in the moment; the mind doesn't get a chance to go through much logical processing when we are upset. As soon as someone triggers our emotional buttons, we jump into the survival mode and react rather than respond. Once we have jumped to a conclusion, we are hard-pressed to change it. If we are in disagreement with someone it often threatens our sense of survival. The concept of seeing another as a complementary opposite is not a consideration.

How can we change this? Perhaps we can change it in three ways. First, by continually working on getting rid of all that negative baggage that has built up inside us, replacing it with possibility thinking and positive vision. Second, by investigating our behavioral habit patterns and learning new ways to perceive what we believe is being communicated and practicing new responses, thus forming new and better patterns of response. And third, by giving people the benefit of the doubt by being open and forgiving in understanding each other's communications, knowing that their intention is what counts.

So often we think a relationship is not repairable. With some relationships, it may be time to let go and move on, but many times we leave relationships behind that could be repaired if both parties could communicate.

Too often instead of communicating, we want *justice...just for us*. Due to our reactionary survival tendencies and the fact that we tend to limit our perception due to our emotions from past experiences, we stay fixed on a "my way or no way" kind of thinking. It's sad that people would rather be right than happy. They cannot accept the unique view of another or negotiate differences into a win/win situation. The fact that we are all so different is what makes life interesting.

We need differences because they stimulate understanding and learning from different points of view. If we were all the same, there would be no need to have relationships. Each one of us has something original to contribute in every relationship. Sometimes we focus on these differences as if they were negative, and we miss their value, rather than looking past the differences, and discovering the benefits.

Often differences are the force that attracts two people. Opposites do attract. Many times, the same differences that attract cause a relationship to end. In the beginning, we appreciate the differences, but eventually we try to change the other person to be more like us. The very thing that attracted that person to us now turns us in the other direction. Instead of appreciating the difference, we see the difference as a deficiency. If you want to make an enemy, try to change someone.

NON-ACCEPTANCE OF DIFFERENCES

Impossible or unworkable relationships are often the result of not accepting each other's differences. Unfulfilled expectations often become the culprit that eventually erodes the relationship. From an accountability standpoint, we frequently do not make our wants, needs, and expectations clear to our partner but still get angry when our unspoken desires are not fulfilled. We expect our partner to read our mind and if he or she can't or won't, we often punish our partner through complaining, blaming, withdrawing, attacking, or worse,

withholding love. When we truly love someone unconditionally, we do not use emotional blackmail to get what we want.

Examine your most important relationship. Is your love, trust, and acceptance conditional or unconditional? Is it, “I will love and accept you when and if you behave this way” or is it “I love you, period.” The more conditions we put on our love, the wider the gap between us and our partner. Often, we set up a series of conditions that must be met by our partner to satisfy us in order for our partner to prove that he or she *really* loves us. If by chance our partner satisfies these conditions, do we finally let him or her off the hook, or do we *increase the demands until they become impossible to fulfill*? More than likely, we keep upping the ante until there is no possible way our partner can meet our demands.

There are very few unselfish relationships. When we look at any relationship, we will see that we are in it for a reason. Something is exchanged for something else. There is nothing wrong with that as long as the goal is mutual exchange and not exploitation. When we approach our relationship from a selfish stance rather than a benevolent one, we set ourselves up for an impossible relationship. Instead of deciding what we can *bring* to the relationship to make it possible, we decide what we want to *take* from the relationship. If our goal is to get fulfillment from our partner, ultimately we will exploit all our partner has to give until there is nothing left. Even if we’re not into a relationship to get, often we will view the relationship as a matter of quid pro quo. If I give something, I expect something in return. This converts the giving aspect of a relationship into a series of loans and debts.

VALUING YOUR PARTNER

We have all heard that familiarity breeds contempt. Unfortunately, this is true. The closer we are to someone, the more lax we become in our communication and behavior. Behaviors that we accept in others are unacceptable in our partner. We set tougher standards for our mate and expect more of him or her because after all, if our partner truly love us, he or she would *know* what we want.

Do you speak with more consideration to your client, your friends, your boss, or your mate? We often don’t give the same care, appreciation, and consideration to our mate as we do to others. We simply take our partner for granted. Often, we feel we are taken for granted, but if you are not getting enough respect, love, or appreciation from your partner, chances are you are not giving enough. If you don’t like what you are receiving, examine what you are giving.

Relationships also change over time by either evolving or deteriorating. This is not good or bad, it is just the way it is. The alternative would be stagnation, which is impossible at the Greater Self-level. Although we like to fantasize that our relationships will last forever, the truth is that they eventually come to an end or change form, either by the death of one partner or other causes of separation. We must accept that endings are simply part of the cycle of change and are not, in and of them, negative. Everything changes. Pain takes center stage due to our resistance to change. The *form* of a relationship might change, but whether the person is in or out of our life, we will have a relationship with that person forever. If we are addicted to the *form* of the relationship, we will experience the pain of change until we give up our addiction. Most of us are not addicted to the person but to the form.

WHAT WILL THEY THINK?

It is difficult enough for us to admit to ourselves that we have made an error in judgement, but what is even more difficult is to admit it to others. The possibility of hearing those dreaded words, “I told you so,” is usually more than we are ready to face. Our concern for what others will think or say keeps us on the downward spiral or impossibility. We may persist against our own better judgement simply to avoid being called a quitter or a loser, because being called a quitter or a loser by others is something we cannot deal with easily. In fact, one of our primary goals is to “look good” to others, so we concentrate on presenting an image to the world rather than being who we are.

The bottom line is that *it does not matter what others think unless you think it matters*. Only you can make it important.

There is a story about Buddha. On his travels, he met a man who did not like him. The man kept insulting him in every possible way. This went on for many days and many miles.

Finally one day Buddha turned to the man and said, “May I ask you a question?”

“What?” the man replied.

“If someone offer you a gift and you decline to accept it, to whom does it then belong?”

The man said, “It belongs to the person who offered it.”

Buddha smiled, “That is correct, so if I decline to accept your abuse, does it still not belong to you?”

The man was speechless and walked away.

When we are concerned about what others will think or say, we lose control over our lives. Pressure is largely a response to the importance we place on

something. Because it is important to *do well*, we pay more attention to what we are doing. The problem is that instead of paying attention to what we want to accomplish and how we are going to do something we focus our attention on what others will think. This causes us to become more self-conscious. Anything that increases our self-consciousness will increase our chances of failing or choking under pressure, whether in sports, business, or any other endeavor. The problem is that we become externally directed instead of internally directed.

Other people's opinions are just that. They are disguised as advice, but they are really nothing more than opinions. Whenever someone starts to tell you how you made a mistake, especially in their terms of failure, let it be known that they are not welcome to give you their opinion, especially when you did not invite them to do so. Make sure you don't let other people's opinions make conclusions for you.

METAMESSAGES – WHAT WE REALLY MEAN WHEN WE SPEAK

Sometimes we want to pull away from relationships when we have had a misunderstanding. We read people differently based on our belief system combined with our perception of what others say and do. The tendency for us to have preconceived ideas about what is communicated to us is filtered through our own linguistic understanding that was developed through childhood within our families, by friends, peers, co-workers and society.

Our cultural differences and our ways of storytelling and giving analogies can cause us perceive words in a completely different way than they were intended. On top of that, body language, facial expressions, and voice tones affect meaning as well.

We conceptualize what we think someone is saying through this filtering process and we each have a very different take on what someone has said to us. We can think someone that we just met is wonderful until he or she surprises us with a remark that seems rude; but to someone else, the person could be perceived as being friendly. Deborah Tannen, Ph.D., who wrote *That's NOT What I Meant!* Terms this conceptualizing as *metamessages*.

Dr. Tannen gives an example of a Greek father whose daughter was expected to ask for permission if she wanted to go to a dance. Because he did not want to seem tyrannical, he never said no. But she could tell that from the way he said yes whether or not he meant it. If he said something like, "Yes, of course go," then she knew he thought it was a good idea. If he said something like, "If you want, you can go," then she understood that he didn't think it was a good idea,

and she wouldn't go. His tone of voice, facial expression, and all the element of conversational style gave her clues as to how he felt about her going.

This was an understood family style of interacting, where the father did not want to appear tyrannical, so he would be *indirect* in his communications. When his daughter would later marry, she could possibly have misunderstandings with her husband about what he meant when he would respond to her requests and suggestions.

There are a multitude of ways people give *metamessages* when they converse, and learning more about this could make a significant difference in making what seems to be impossible relationship into a possible relationship. Metamessages can be communicated by directness, joking (using irony, sarcasm, and figures of speech), being too direct with our honesty, linguistic, signals, voice intonation, questioning (that may seem like interrogation), styles of complaining, manipulation, and persuasion. If you would like to explore this further I strongly suggest reading Dr. Tannen's book.

IMPOSSIBLE EXPECTATIONS

In addition to *metamessages*, we also have ingrained ideas about what we *expect* of others than can cause further misunderstanding. There are two kinds of expectations. In the first instance, we expect others to *automatically perform politely* in a manner that we believe is appropriate or the right thing to do.

The other kind of expectation regards *accomplished performance*. This is the kind of attitude that leaders are so good at building up in others. They are able to motivate people to believe in something that they did not believe before and then help them to bring that expected vision into reality. Most people have to see it before they believe it. A leader can get others to believe it before they see it. This is the key to making the impossible possible.

In order to change our own level of expectancy, we must have a strong belief in our goals, and ourselves but that does not mean we should expect everyone else to see things exactly the way we do.

When it comes to expecting others to respond and perform as we anticipate, our level of expectancy is based on our perception or the frame from which we express ourselves. We can turn people off to us by what seems to be a small infraction of someone else's beliefs by doing what seems morally unforgivable. Either way, complete opposition can happen in a moment.

FORGIVENESS

Relationships can be suddenly ended by one party who has kept count of numerous supposed infractions and suddenly makes a surprise blow by terminating the relationship. When others harm us verbally or physically or just hurt our feelings, they are often viewed by us as unforgivable.

Life brings us all kinds of personal hurts, from broken promises and white lies to physical slaps and beatings. The problem is that if we don't forgive, we carry around the excess negative baggage for the rest of our lives. This excess baggage contributes to the spiral of impossibility. Our resentment becomes part of our belief system, and we use it to justify either doing or not doing something. In many cases the inability or unwillingness to forgive, turns people into professional victims.

Forgiveness is purely a selfish act. You are not doing it for *them*; you are doing it for *you*. This doesn't mean you have to like the person. You don't even have to associate with the person or contact him or her, but you must emotionally and sometimes physically release them. Don't let the memories drag you down into the spiral of impossibility. Realize that the payoff for not forgiving is too high. Not forgiving only makes you "right". The question is would you rather be right or would you rather be happy?

COMMUNICATION STYLE CAN MAKE THE IMPOSSIBLE, POSSIBLE

By not understanding personality differences and the resulting differences in communication style, we will eventually alienate ourselves, since all we can conclude is that others are wrong, and we are always right. Understanding people's belief systems, perceptions, and metamesages can make all the difference in having possible rather than impossible relationships.

Have you ever noticed that soap operas are dependent upon a blatant lack of communication in order to exist? The wife doesn't tell her husband she is pregnant, the sister doesn't tell the brother that they have a different father, the friend doesn't tell a friend that his business partner is embezzling. What we don't realize is that, in a sense, we fail to communicate almost as badly every day, because we each have different perspectives on what certain phrases and statements mean.

Cultural differences and our family's communication style play a paramount role in our comprehension of what someone means when they speak. Lately, there is more public and professional discussion than ever about the differences

in communication styles between men and women. The specific definitions and applications of male and female differences could make a book of its own, so I will refrain from detailing this.

By nature and necessity of brain function, we are constantly interpreting and conceptualizing what we hear people say. We can perceive whether people are joking or serious, mean or kind, rude or polite; or we can wonder whether a statement was directed at us or to someone else.

The problem is, how often do we ask for clarification before we end up feeling upset by what someone says or does? More importantly, the real question is, do we give people the benefit of the doubt? We regularly give people the benefit of the doubt when they suddenly interrupt us, especially because the interrupter will usually show good reason the subject of the interruption.

Why don't we give more the benefit of the doubt to others more often in other kinds of situations? Usually it is because we reacted first. Then, why don't we resolve misunderstandings by being more willing to relinquish and give the benefit of the doubt in an effort to resolve misunderstandings? Usually we're too upset by then. We're sure the other person could only have meant the worst.

There are several ways to get clarification in order to prevent misunderstanding or to repair the damage from misunderstandings that already occurred. We can ask the other person to restate what he or she said in a new way so that we can be sure we understand the intention and meaning. We can also ask the other person if we understand the message correctly and rephrase the statement. By rephrasing the statement, we are *naming* the perception we believe we are hearing, thus gaining clarification.

Writing often elevates people to communicating because more care is given to the written word. The one thing that is lacking in writing, though, is tone of voice and all that the voice can imply. Although lack of voice intonation is reason writing can often be misunderstood, the slowness of it and the fact that it is in print does make us take greater care in our choice of words. Additionally, re-reading what we wrote give us the chance to notice whether our meaning is clear or whether there could be a double meaning in what we wrote.

NOT LISTENING CAN BE DRASTIC MISTAKE

We can never stop learning when it comes to communications skills, which include verbal, written, and – what is drastically forgotten – our ability to listen. Specialists have been telling us for years that we only retain 10 percent of what we hear. If you think about it, in an all-day seminar, without taking notes, and especially without seeing visual aids, our retention is extremely poor.

Another way to look at the act of listening is, 10 percent of what we hear comes from words, 40 percent of what we hear comes from voice intonation, and 50 percent gets bungled up by our personal interpretation or is entirely lost by our lack of attention.

Now we're getting to the part about how much we really pay attention to what we hear others say. Our attention is usually focused on what we want to say next, while waiting the other person to stop talking. I catch myself doing this, and a business partner I was working with caught me at it, too.

My friend Gary suggested that I press my finger down while I talk, reminding myself to limit how much I say and stop so another can speak. Actually, I found that I needed to do the reverse of what he suggested. Gary was right, my burning desire to jump in when someone else is speaking, so I have chosen to press my finger on the table or the arm of a chair while the other person is speaking in order to prevent my breaking in and to emphasize the importance of my listening. Try this. You may find it very helpful.

HONESTY

Give people a little money and they'll lie, even on the witness stand. Where on earth do people get the idea that it's OK to lie? It's become an accepted way of life. Try never telling a lie - not even white lies. You don't have to tell white lies, you can find a way to diplomatically tell the truth. The only thing I try to avoid is telling people that I am not interested in being with them. I will tell people that I don't seem to have the same interests as them, or that we don't have that much in common...in a careful way.

Once you get into always telling the truth, it makes life so much easier. Being totally honest seems to focus our purpose. I have easy ways to communicate honestly without causing anyone pain. Also, when your life is on purpose, you will find it easy to be honest.

GOOD INFLUENCE OR BAD INFLUENCE?

How do we know who is a good influence on us and who is not? How do we know if we are having an intuitive, accurate hunch about someone and not a rush to judgment based on our own previous experiences? Perhaps a person we have just met is demonstrating only one facet of his or her personality, when there is much more to get to know. We all have our fleeting moments of temporary annoyance, but often we decide that what we have seen in someone we have just met is who they are.

By using our intuition and having a clear understanding of ourselves as we relate to others, we can continually enhance our ability to know who we want in our life.

When we get to the possibility of longer-term and deeper relationships, whether it is business or a love partner, choosing whom to partner up with is a gamble. We take a gamble and accept the risk of being hurt, rejected, and disappointed. As we choose to deepen our relationship with another, we must look at the complementary opposite side of love.

The issue is to free ourselves from unhealthy relationships. Do we want to keep choosing the same kind of people over and over again in our lives, so we can keep learning the same lessons over and over again? Maybe our biggest challenge is to finally learn our lesson and move on.

SELF-LOVE VS. LOVING OTHERS

The 80's has been coined the "Me" decade. The emphasis of most self-help books and seminars was on serving our own needs first in order to better enable us to serve others. In the 90's, there was a backlash against putting self-love before others. Many are quick to blame society's troubles on the "Me" generation. The generalization is that, instead of caring about others, the me-first advocates were more interested in serving themselves.

Perhaps you feel this way. Admittedly, self-love is not the cure for all of society's ills; however, it is the basis of sound mental health. On the surface, it may appear noble to love and serve others first. In all honesty though, we cannot ignore our own needs at the expense of putting others first. It simply doesn't work. You can't give something you don't already have. If you want to borrow five dollars from me, I must first have the five dollars to give you, no matter how much I want to help you. If I give you the five dollars and I need it, I will eventually resent you. If I have taken care of my own needs first, I will be emotionally, psychologically, physically, and spiritually solvent. Instead of trying to give from lack, I can give from abundance. When I give from abundance, I am giving from surplus, so there is an ample supply left over for me. As a result, both of us are stronger individuals.

Without love of self and others, we are impotent to change. A loveless life will be barren and always seem impossible. Love is the most powerful force we have for personal success. Love is the action that strengthens our self-esteem and self-worth by helping us and others to see strengths instead of weaknesses. Love creates a focus on our assets instead of our liabilities. Self-love motivates us to care for ourselves physically and mentally by investing effort in physical fitness, a healthy diet, and sexual satisfaction, expanding the mind and experiencing joyful days.

ELIMINATE THE NEGATIVE, ATTRACT THE POSITIVE

In order to fully experience our possibilities, we must get away from people who are constantly sad, pessimistic, grouchy, or negative in general. Do not join them in their misery. Remember, give them the benefit of the doubt by first telling them that you would prefer to keep things on a more upbeat scale. But if they don't change their way of interacting with you, you must either disassociate yourself from them completely or change the form of the relationship from closeness to casual and infrequent interaction.

We want can-do people around us who see all the reasons and possibilities in how things *can* be done. If you were to hire a consultant, would you select and pay someone to tell you what you cannot do? You want an advisor who can enhance your perception of the possibilities at hand. We must surround ourselves with people with high self-esteem, people who can tell us how to get the job done how to make it happen for us.

While we're busy recognizing the characteristics of the kind of people that can influence our success, we must consider that we must have those same characteristics and abilities.

Can-do people have a sense of timing and value their time, using it to their advantage. They may enjoy life as much as anyone else may, but they don't seek gratification during a time that is essential for accomplishments.

Can-do people know that their personal attitude plays a major role in their success as they set themselves up to succeed. They live in a state of positive *expectancy*. Since they expect to succeed, they do. They have this faith in themselves because they know that they are working in alignment with something much greater than they are. They use their intuition and faith to know when the time is right to take certain actions or steps toward their goals.

When we have the character of a can-do person, we accept success as a natural and inevitable state of events.

CHAPTER 9 POSSIBLE CHOICES

The Greater Self with a Greater Plan of Action

It is one thing to know that we can make the impossible possible, but what is more important is doing something about it. Hopefully, the chapters in this

book have motivated and inspired you to take action. If not, perhaps this chapter will.

At the risk of appearing senile, I have taken the liberty of repeating some of the important points you have already read. My goal is to inspire you to release the power of your Greater Self with a greater plan of action.

Clear thinking and an empowered sense of self is the necessary foundation from which to turn the impossible into the possible. When we plan our lives and set goals with the powerful meaning of purpose, we will remain on track regardless of any obstacles in our path. The clearer we are about what we want, the more power we will have in achieving our goals.

MAKING CHOICES

The only thing in life we have no choice about is making choices. Everything we experience is the result of our conscious or unconscious choices. How much are we aware of the importance of every single choice we make? Are we aware how far any tiny decision that we make may take us?

In some way, either through conscious or unconscious choices, *we set ourselves up* for everything that comes into our life, good or bad, happy or sad, success or failure. This includes all facets of our life, be it business, relationships, health, or personal affairs. In addition, every choice has a natural result leading to further choices of a similar nature.

Before we can free ourselves from impossible situations, we must take responsibility for our own choices. There is no room in our minds or time in our lives to blame everyone or everything else. All this does is fill our hearts and minds with negative emotions like resentment, which blocks our ability to see new possibilities. Our attitude of victimization can leave us barricaded in our own prison of impossibility. Instead, it is our choice to change our attitude to one filled with unlimited possibilities by taking responsibility for where we are and where we want to be.

Our conscious awareness, through possibility choices, is our way of changing impossible situations into possible opportunities. Our goal in life should be to convert every experience, through the dominant thought of possibility thinking, into temporary challenges on our path to becoming our Greater Self. It is not enough to *see* the possibility; we must *become* the possibility.

We have already learned that there is no way to avoid problems. The real secret is the way we choose to respond to problems and life situations. Put simply, it is not what that happens to us that controls our present and future, but what we *think* and *believe* about the *events* in our lives. This means that we must be

willing to accept what has happened, to accept where we are right now, and to take responsibility for changing our present situation. We could view it this way:

What is, *was*.

What was, *is*.

My past will always be the *way it was*. I can't change that.

What will be, is up to me.

I must give up my interpretation of *the way it is* to have it *the way I want it*.

Once we realize that this is reality and that things are the way they are, we can change our thoughts and therefore change our experience.

As Shakespeare so astutely observed, life is our stage and we are all actors. We tend to act out the scripts we have been told to play. One way or the other, our life is a continuous series of scenes in the play. We can write a new script at any time. All it takes is a conscious choice to envision our life script with new possibilities.

POSITIVE LESSONS

We must remember not to *personalize* everything that we think happens to us. The problem with personalizing every experience is that it not only influences the way things were and the way things are, but the way things *will be* in the future.

Positive lessons are not always taught in positive ways. Whether we like it or not, life is fair. Life's traumas give us opportunities to make better choices, to stretch us beyond where we have been before, and to expand our circle of possibility. Unfortunately, most people would rather stay stuck where they are than change their impossible situations. In fact, most people would rather be *certain* they're miserable, than *risk* being happy. They keep doing whatever they have been doing that hasn't worked because they're afraid to risk. All the while, they never realize that the greatest risk of all is not risking. If we don't risk, we can be sure nothing will change.

Turning the surprise of pain or disappointment into positive lessons is essential to personal growth. If life didn't push us sometimes, there would be very little change for the better. There must be stimulation to trigger new thought or change for the better. This creates discontent with the way things are or the way

we want things to be. Without discontent, there is no motivation or stimulation to change.

PERCEPTION ADJUSTMENT – SEE PROBLEMS AS ONLY TEMPORARY

We must see problems as *temporary* and look for the complementary opposite in all that happens to us. We must look for possibilities as we *learn from adversity*, and use the spark of personal challenge to propel us forward. Robert Leighton said it this way: “Learn from adversity!” Adversity is the diamond dust heaven polishes its jewels with!”

We should practice awareness modification. This requires changing our beliefs by learning from adversity. The problem is that the more investment we have in our beliefs, the harder it is to change them. Defending our beliefs and trying to prove ourselves right only serves to waste our valuable time and resources and delays our ability to change our situation.

A possibility thinker is always willing to change and knows he or she is *always part of the answer*. Possibility thinkers sees and answer in every problem. Unfortunately, the impossibility thinker just sees the problem and thinks he or she is the effect instead of the cause.

It’s our choice. We will always find whatever we are looking for. We have a choice to turn the situation around and to find the complementary opposite and make our own reality. If we are caught up in taking everything that happens to us personally and defending our beliefs and actions, we will be so busy protecting our false sense of autonomy that the solution will be out of our reach. We cannot find the solution if we keep looking at the problem. When we focus on the solution, it will be revealed to us, because whatever we are ready for is ready for us. All we have to do is look for it.

ENDINGS MAKE GREATER BEGINNINGS

We must learn from our experiences, forget our past track record, and take each moment as a new beginning. Otherwise, we will keep repeating the same old thing. If we agree long enough for our limitations, they’re ours. It goes like this:

If you keep *doing* what you are have been *doing*
You will keep *getting* what your have been *getting*.

Experience is the best teacher, provided we become the best students. When something doesn’t work out the way we expected, we need to leave the experience behind us, but take with us the lesson that guides us to a new

beginning. There is no time to waste with denial, resistance, avoidance, and criticism or blame. Our habit is to make the same choices and have the same reactions. Welcome all of life's challenges as perfect messages guiding us to shift our course.

CHAOS BRINGS NEW ORDER AND NEW POSSIBILITIES

When life seems to shake things up through ever-changing circumstances, we must use times of disorder or chaos to see the variety of possibilities that come our way. Even though times of disruption and change may seem like chaos, these times are actually *perfect timing* as new possibilities will always come before us. Chaos stirs up our perception, allowing us to refocus and redirect our actions. We have the choice to perceive change as a time of chaos and impossibility, or as perfect timing for new possibilities to appear.

If we view chaos as impossibility, we will kick into our survival mode and close our doors to possibilities. On the other hand, a falsely positive attitude can mean putting your head in the sand and avoiding problems. We must face problems head on, with a new attitude of seeing the possibilities. If we put our head in the sand, we block our sense of self – our Greater Self – where the possibilities and solutions lie. Our Greater Self is personally empowered and can better realize and assess possibilities. Finding winning possibilities requires shifting our emphasis from *won't* power to *willpower*. Remember, it doesn't matter what you *can* do, what really matter is what you *will* do.

RISKS AND REWARDS

If we don't take risks, we can't take quantum leaps that can propel us forward more rapidly. Our rewards in life will always be in direct proportion to the risks we are willing to take. Great inventors try thousands of times until they reach a discovery. Taking risks should be, as much a part of our lives and as easily understood as the every day mistake.

Probably the strongest reason why we don't make certain choices is our fear of mistakes or things not working out as we expected. Worst of all, others might think we made a mistake. Mistakes are an everyday part of life. In fact, I tell people if you are not making at least a dozen mistakes every day, something is wrong. You are not moving forward.

This attitude is currently accepted in many corporations that are beginning to encourage their employees to take risks. Corporations think risk taking is worth it. A current trend in corporate training programs includes the recommendation that corporations welcome their employees to take risk and positively reward

them for doing so, even if certain actions and plans might not work out. They are advised to look for what did work and what was a good idea and then improve on the original idea. Certainly, if corporations are willing to invest in risk taking, the reason is that in the end there is a higher return when the innovative ideas of their people finally pay off.

POSSIBILITIES IN ACTION

Getting On Purpose

Our purpose makes our goals believable because we are connected to the greatest personal benefits that fulfill us. *Why* we do something is more important than *how* we do it. When we have purpose, we will always find the path of least resistance guiding us with possibilities toward our goal.

The positive focus of purpose keeps us from being distracted and can also prevent our becoming too emotional when problems arise because our eyes and mind are focused on something we truly desire. If we get caught up in the small, day-to-day busy stuff, we could miss our chance to give the commitment needed to achieve the greater things in life. People who fail to achieve their real desires in life do so because they *major* in *minor* things.

Goals and Planning

Planning is the creative process put into action, and goals set mileposts of accomplishments with specific measurements of results and time frames. Goals set our strategy into action and ensure our commitment. They motivate in two ways; first by *seeing the measurable results* produced, and then by giving us *checkpoints* to ensure that we maintain our momentum.

The goals we choose must be something we are willing to work for on a daily basis. Otherwise, they are not the right investment for our contribution of time, resources, and energy. When our goals are set with clarity of purpose, then planning, scheduling, and related prioritizing is a breeze. Necessary adjustments are just part of the ongoing process in getting what we want.

MANAGE YOUR TIME, YOUR ENERGY, AND YOUR MIND

Planning and scheduling how and when *we intend* to create what we want is paramount in these fast-paced times. We don't have to get anxious about our time, otherwise we'll make rash decisions and have an ineffective approach toward getting what we want. Our time is vitally important, but it must be managed with clarity and peace of mind. With purpose, our passion kicks in gear; giving us the creative energy we want and need to make work a true passion. We always find time to what we love.

In most people's minds, work is doing something we don't want to do to earn money as compensation, but if we are truly suited for the work we do, we will love doing it and enjoy the compensation. Being suited has to do with two things; our purpose and our instinctive talent, which usually matches our purpose. The key is discovering and focusing on things we love to do. These are our natural talents. The only way to succeed in the long run is to get very good at what we love to do, because we can never get good enough at something we are not suited for. True happiness is loving what you do and getting someone else to pay you to do it.

Having the overview of purpose and the accompanying values give us the big picture we need to see ourselves reaching our goals. With this overview, our planning and scheduling come more easily and effectively, like the path of least resistance. If we do not value our time, energy, and resources as precious, we can deplete them by allowing impossible distractions to take us away from what we want most. With our Greater Self intact and aligned with our true purpose, we know exactly when to do exactly what we need to do with greater effectiveness.

FOCUSING OUR TIME AND ENERGY

Our energy is our most important resource, and therefore it must be protected from impossibility deterrents and directed in a progressive focus toward the possibilities we select. Here are the ways we can simplify our lives to allow for possibilities to come to us easily.

Focus on Simplifying Your Life

Figuratively and literally, clean all your closets. Get rid of everything that you are not using. Create a space for new possibilities.

Organize and Prioritize Your Life

Assess how much time you spend in various areas of your life such as social, spouse/love partner, family, exercise, alone, work, vocation, hobbies and club activities, and relaxing, and then balance them out more evenly.

Mental/Psychological Management

Frequently do a mental checkup regarding your perspectives on your experiences. Seek areas of self-improvement of your interpersonal management.

Never grow tired of growing! -
When your mind is tired, exercise your body.
When your body is tired, exercise your mind.
- Anonymous

FAILING BY NOT DOING

Impossibility thinkers are usually passive. They let things happen to them instead of directing their lives and determining their outcome. They are usually afraid of change in any form, even if there is no risk involved. New situations frighten them or make them anxious. They are unwilling to answer the door when opportunity knocks.

Our success is measured by our ability to complete things, and yet whatever we have not accomplished is what we have chosen to keep from ourselves. Impossibility thinkers who believe things can't be done will go out and prove they are right.

Procrastination is directly related to our impossibility thinking and emotions. With impossibility thinking, we can dread doing tasks that appear to be drudgery when it is only our attitude that makes us perceive this. An old southern grandmother always said, "Thinkin' on it is worse than doin' on it."

The typical excuse for procrastination is to say we don't know what to do or how to do something. An impossibility thinker says, "I don't know." A possibility thinker says, "Let's find out."

It has also been said, "It is better to have tried and failed, than to have failed to try." I believe the *only* failure is not to have tried at all, but that *every* effort we take, no matter what the results, it is a success for having taken action.

We've heard the phrase; "Good things come to those who wait." This may be true when we are motivated and we have already given it all we've got, but for those who just wait, I would say, "Things that come to those who wait may be the things left by those who got there first." We must take action; otherwise those who were willing to take a risk and take action will leave us behind. Our life will be about trying to catch up. Even though risks are involved, you will find that it is much easier to keep up than to catch up. When we have an opportunity and don't take it, we've already made our choice. Not to decide is to decide.

YOU MUST BE SICK AND TIRED OF BEING SICK AND TIRED

Our motivation to take action will occur when it becomes more difficult to suffer than to change; in other words, when we become sick and tired of being sick and tired. Our habits that bring us pain are more comfortable for us than the fear and discomfort we may feel about doing new things in a new way. Why is it so hard for us to let go of certain counterproductive actions and decisions when the signs are there telling us that we have made these mistakes before? Our survival mode is fooling us into thinking we are avoiding pain when we are actually about to create the same old thing all over again.

Usually, before most of us will take the new road, we have to be in more pain than our perceived fear of the new road. Everything we do comes from our need to *avoid* pain and our desire to *gain pleasure*. Both are biologically driven and constitute the *controlling force in our life*. The desire to avoid pain tends to be the greater motivator rather than seeing new possibilities as positive opportunities.

Thought plus emotion creates conviction. Your conviction creates *your reality*. It is our choice to use our emotions as an energy force that shows us self-defeating impossibilities, or we can shift these emotions into energy boosters as we view possibilities with enthusiasm, resilience, creative spirit, and a personal sense of empowered competence.

All of our emotions move us in some way. Emotion is *energy in motion*. What is important to understand is that not all emotions are limiting. We have both limiting emotions that are energy sappers and expanding emotions that are energy boosters. Your choice to see impossibilities or see possibilities. You can either look through the lens of negative emotions, or the lens of motivating emotions.

YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOOSE UNTIL YOU GIVE UP

A possibility thinker says, "It may be difficult, but it's possible." An impossibility thinker says, "It may be possible, but it's too difficult."

Why do we give up? Is it because we've tried before and then perceived ourselves as having failed, therefore our planned desires become unfulfilled dreams rather than something possible and still achievable? Have some of our experiences seemed painful and therefore we fear reaching for the brass ring? Even the concept of the brass ring seems to imply the unattainable. That is *not* what the brass ring concept is about. The brass ring is right there. Others have grasped the brass ring and so can we. Certainly, most of the goals we set are

ones others have achieved before. If this is so, then you can achieve them as well. A possibility thinker says, “I will!” and succeeds. An impossibility thinker says, “I’ll try,” and fails. If we have some setbacks, we must not give up. Each *no* brings us that much closer to a yes. When we persist at something with consistence intention, we can *break through* to the success we want.

If we perceive past losses as catastrophic and painful because we chose to react that way before, we will resort to habit and look to the past as the controlling factor for our future. By setting step-by-step goals where we can see results along the way, then, if we get a bit off the course we anticipated, we can adjust it without catastrophic losses.

EXPECT WHAT YOU WANT

If we are not moving toward what we want, we don’t really want it. The best way to *predict* our future is to *create* it. If we don’t believe it and live it, we must think we are not worthy of it. The end result is that we always move towards what we feel worthy of.

You will either live up to or down to your expectations of yourself and your future. The truth of the matter is, in life, you don’t get what you *want*, and you get what you expect. Everyone *wants* health, wealth, and happiness, but they don’t have it. The problem is they want it but they don’t expect it. If we don’t expect it, we will not create it and attract it. We must believe that we *deserve* what we most desire. The conflict comes from believing “I want this, but I only deserve that.” Whatever we deserve is *really* whatever we choose to *expect* to happen.

We want to train our conscious and subconscious mind to consistently see possibilities, not impossibilities. The mind is a marvelous thing. If you will make the *decision* to be do or have something, your subconscious will make the *provision*. The conscious and subconscious can either assist us in creating the possible, or convince us that what we desire is impossible. The choices we make and the subsequent results we get are determined by how we use our conscious and subconscious mind.

The bottom line is that our thoughts create our reality. If we are focused on the negative, our subconscious will direct us to people, places, and circumstances to prove that we are right. In order to preserve sanity, the subconscious always seeks to prove that what we are thinking is in fact true. Our job is to present ideas to the subconscious that compel it to direct us to what we want instead of what we don’t want – to the possible instead of the impossible.

CREATE A NEW HABIT OF POSSIBILITY THINKING

Listen to your intuitive hunches and give them full consideration as you make choices. These are hunches like, "I have the feeling it's going to rain; better take my raincoat." What happens to you when you get hunches regarding important decisions? We must practice listening to our intuition more often so that when the larger-scale decisions come along, we can go within for the final answers. Our minds must be open and uncluttered to catch these important internal messages. The mind is like a parachute; it works best when it is open, not filled with worry or fear. Fear causes us to make rash decisions, and fear is the mind-talk that prevents you from hearing your intuition.

If we have purpose, which is an inner commitment, then where else but within can we find the best answers regarding the choices we make? If we think something outside of ourselves is the cause of our problem, we will look outside of ourselves for the answer. Taking the time (most often it would only take a minute) to look for inner solutions is how we can make our smartest decisions, because we are giving our minds the chance to run the possibility of our fullest mental capacity, using both the right and left sides of our brains.

Most of us become so influenced by others that we can be lured with their ideas of what choices we should make, and then we are vulnerable to miscalculating the real value or viability of the options presented to us. We must get in the habit of putting on the brakes for a moment and going within, using our clearest mental capacities (right brain/left brain) to assess our own possibilities. When we get caught up in the short-term gain, usually found in the quick fix, we do not consider the possible long-term pain that can result from hasty, externally influenced decisions. It is essential that our self-worth be stronger than the emotional sensation of rejecting the ideas of others.

IMAGINATION MAKES OUR POSSIBILITIES LIMITLESS

There are several ways our imagination expands our circle of possibility. We go beyond reason and logic by adding the dynamic of creative thinking, which triggers our mind to present more possibilities to us from what we know. By using our imagination, we can think of new possibilities with the resources available to us; we perceive more. Our imagination expands our possibilities by showing us ways to interface or connect creative thinking and our imagination. Our open-mindedness makes us receptive to new possibilities coming to us like a magnet. We can solve problems with our imagination, which give us room for expansion.

Imagination and brainstorming allow us to reconstruct or rework our information in order to create plans and goals that enable us to consider possibilities that were originally not in our mind. We can reconsider our options for accomplishing things and actually expand upon the envisioned end result.

For example, if you plan to build a boat, you can think of additional resources for materials, and then with creative thinking you realize that you can build a different, bigger, or better boat than you originally thought. The same imaginative expansion of possibilities can be applied to longer-term goals such as career planning.

Imagination solves problems by *creating possibilities* and anchoring our brain into *visualizing what we desire as possible*. When we envision ourselves having what we want, we pre-play it in our minds as truly possible. To great degree, you can control your own destiny. You are what is expandable.

INTENTION EXPANDS POSSIBILITIES

The key to success is to have dominant thought patterns that are totally aligned with what we want instead of what we don't want. This is our creative intention. If we are thinking about what we don't want, it becomes the dominant thought in our head that drives our brain's neurology. To the extent that we focus on what we don't want, we will create it. If we want money but focus on avoiding poverty, we will unconsciously create poverty. Our dominant thought would cause us to miss possibilities for what we want because we are looking for what we don't want.

Intention creates *attention* and expansion of possibilities that will come to us. We move toward what we picture in our mind and the intention drives us as an energy source. Wherever the mind goes, the energy flows. Whatever you give your energy to is what you will have more of. We don't get what we *want*; we get what we *expect*. When we pre-play in our minds what we expect, our subconscious is compelled to find a way to make it possible.

FREE UP YOUR MIND FOR CREATIVE GENIUS

Allow your creative genius to come to the forefront of your mind rather than bogging your mind down with the way things were in the past or with the possibility of failure. We need to use practical, day-to-day techniques to clear our heads for creativity, whether it is exercise, taking a break, or contemplation during a walk.

Practice staying in the moment. We tend to look at everything from some point of reference, and usually it's from some point in the past. If not the past, then

it's what we imagine in the future regarding possible and impossible situations. We need to focus in the now with what we know now.

We can redirect our creative energy by consciously directing our thoughts as we concentrate on what we want to achieve. Here is a daily exercise you can do and it only takes a few minutes.

Mental Exercise to Focus and Direct Your Creative Mind

1. **Release**

When we work with the mind-set of just making a living, just getting by, we limit our possibilities. In an interview with Barbara Walters, Dustin Hoffman said his tombstone should read, "I knew this was going to happen!" That's funny, but is a satirical remark on the perceived downside of life. We have a choice to either accept that life is predestined and that we cannot change this, or we can choose to live a world of possibilities.

POSSIBILITY CREDO

There are many tools presented throughout this book that you can use to turn impossible situations into possible opportunities. Not all of them will apply to you. Mark and underline the ones that you feel will help you to understand yourself better and motivate you to change your life from this moment on.

In addition, I encourage you to read and memorize the following possibility credo. It sums up the essence of this book and will help direct your thinking to accept the way things are, to be responsible for your choices, and to motivate you to use your resources to turn the impossible into the possible.

I realize that life is fair, regardless of what happens.

I accept things as the way they are before I can change them.

I know whenever I solve a problem, another problem will take its place, but that's okay.

I understand that all problems are just possible opportunities in disguise.

I focus on the solution, not the problem.

I always assume my Greater Self knows a better way to do things than my Created Self.

I either push, pull, or get out of the way, but I keep moving forward.

I am willing to take risks and make mistakes

I am a person of action. If I say I'll do it, I do it.

I keep my promises, especially those to myself.

I never give up, because I know possibility thinkers never quit and impossibility thinkers never win.

Finally, please remember that as you make choices for turning the impossible into the possible through the greater plan of action for your Greater Self.

You must *be* (Who you are – your Greater Self)
before you can *do*, (Change the impossible to the possible)
and you must *do* (Take action)
before you can *have*. (What you want – the possible)