



Shahryar Sadree

Higher Powered

A Book of Powerful Secrets to Finding Happiness

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higherpoweredbook.com

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“The future depends on
what you do today.”

—Mahatma Gandhi

CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	IX
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	XI
1. SURVIVAL INSTINCT	1
2. A LIFE OF TURMOIL.....	7
3. BREAKING THE CHAIN.....	14
4. COMING TO BELIEVE.....	20
5. BECOMING AWARE	27
6. WHO IS GOD?	33
7. BEING OF THREE PARTS	43
8. OVERCOMING FEAR	54
9. CLEARING THE SLATE	62
10. THE POWER OF GIVING	71
11. YOUR THOUGHTS	78

12. THE POWER OF CHOICE	84
13. NATURAL LAWS OF THE UNIVERSE.....	93
14. REPROGRAMMING BEGINS NOW	106
BIBLIOGRAPHY	113

Foreword

HAPPINESS BEGINS HERE ...

Happiness is something many of us seek but can't seem to find. Living hand-to-mouth is often the experience that leads people to believe that struggle is the only way toward success. For some people, success is not even a possible reality—and neither is being happy. What if you could wake up tomorrow and experience the life you've always dreamed of? What would it be like? What would your home look like? Where would it be? What would you drive? What would you do for work? The answers to these questions are a starting point to making the dream your reality. Don't worry about *how* you will get there. The most important part is *what* will make you happy. Only you know what it will take, and only you can get you there. To truly live the life of your dreams, you need to be prepared to let go of thoughts, ideas, and beliefs that have kept you in a holding pattern. Be prepared to give up that lifestyle for a new one. The good news is that you won't have to travel very far to find a life of joy and fulfillment.

INTRODUCTION TO A NEW LIFE

Welcome to the beginning of your new life. If you have made the decision to change things in your life that do not work for you,

this book will empower you. Millions of people everywhere seek a purpose to their lives, and even more seek God to guide them to a purpose.

Change of mind only happens if we allow it to happen from within. This is a huge step to understand and to utilize in our life. Once we understand this, it becomes impossible to point blame at others for our own mistakes. This will also open doors to making better choices.

While the ideas in this book are not bound to any religion, you may find the word *God* within these pages. The author has chosen to call his understanding of a spiritual higher power *God*. You may do the same, or call it whatever you understand it to be. This is the whole point of spirituality—to discover and form your own understanding of a higher power. It is not important what you call it, but that you believe in something greater than your human body alone.

Human beings are made of three parts: a body, a mind, and a spirit. Most of us live for the needs of the body, and some of us consider the needs of the mind; however, the majority of us do very little to understand the spiritual part of our being. That often results in a feeling of emptiness. This spirit, or what we refer to as our *soul*, is the missing link that most people seek in things on the outside like sex, money, drugs, and alcohol to make them feel complete.

Understanding this inner power that lies deep inside all of us can instantly change our lives. The hardest part in all this is to take the first step. In this book, you will find that you are the creator and have the power to make your dreams become reality. It is and always has been in your hands. If you have had enough of what you are experiencing and are ready for a brand-new life, then open your mind and see what it means to be *higher powered*!

Acknowledgments

This book is dedicated to:

Mom

Words cannot describe the level of love and respect I have for you. You gave me life and a compass that always brings me to love. I owe every victory to your undying support. You are my rock.

Angelina Sadree

To the love of my life, my best friend in the world, my lover, partner, and soul mate. The years we have shared together may not have been all bright and warm, but the moments in between have been those that can only be experienced in dreams.

Maziar Sadree

You set the standard for what a best friend should be. You were the inspiration that saved me from myself all the years I was a lost soul. I hope working together on this project has given you a new outlook on life as it did for me.

My International Family

The only thing between us are miles. I love every one of you.

A day will come where we will all unite and laugh at our experiences and silly behaviors on this plane of existence.

And also, to the people of the world who
are lost and consumed by fear
and are looking to find their way back to love.
Let this book be your beacon of hope.

A VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO:

My Mother and Father, who gave me a childhood that made me the man I am today.

My birth brother, Mazi. Your help with this book is appreciated beyond words, and I can't thank you enough for your support and love all these years. I am truly blessed and extremely grateful to have you in my life.

My life brother, Brian Dainis. You continue to inspire the best that is within me with your kind spirit and thirst for knowledge. You are truly a testament of the powers of applied knowledge. I am very grateful to have you as my best friend in this lifetime.

My life brother, James Presta. We have been through a lot over the years and our friendship has taught me that though we are different, there is so much we can learn from one another. I cherish our relationship and love you and all your sarcasm, porcupine!

My Life Brother, Talon Blaque. Although it seems like we never agree on anything, I want you to know that it is people like you

that inspire me the most. You are one who knows how to make a dream become reality. It takes dedication at any cost. I have watched you sacrifice everything and continue that with limitless conviction. You are a great teacher and friend. I am grateful and proud to say I know you on such a deep level.

My life brothers, David and Ralph Young. The time we spent together as a family is what I think of the most. It was an honor and a privilege to play alongside such great musicians.

My life brothers, Andy Joyce, Bobby Templeton and all of my Templeton family, Zack Young, Jim Springer, Dan Ricanovich, Michael Blair, Stacy King, Tim Coyle, Wayne Johnson, Robert Gray Jr., Joey and Christopher Aceto, Eric “JoJo” Medeiros, and Mike “Chopper” Greiss, Steven Loso, Ron League, Robert Haugh II, and Scottie Wright, I love you all!

My spirit brother, James Schmidt. You were there when the rest of the school wanted to kick my ass. Your friendship taught me to let my guard down and trust. Though your physical body perished before we had a chance to reunite, I felt a spiritual connection with you that carries on to this day. I know what I experienced in Shreveport in the wake of your passing was very real for me, and I know our paths will cross again somewhere in the universe.

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A very special thanks to Joe and Donna Lombardi and Frank Randazzo.

CHAPTER 1: SURVIVAL INSTINCT

First, let's talk about basic survival. Most of us live only to survive. Living paycheck to paycheck leaves little time to think of anything else. In today's world, a great many work long hours to make a living. This basic instinct of survival is hardwired into our minds as we enter adulthood. So what would happen if we were to abandon this instinct? Is that even possible? Would our whole world cave in around us if we focused on anything other than survival? Actually, there is more to life than merely surviving. *Living* means to experience all things. I don't recommend throwing everything to the wind and going off the grid, but some have done just that and have found a life of joy and tranquility.

It is the material things that bind us to this superficial existence. We feel that in order to survive, we have to keep all that we have collected. The mere thought of losing our possessions haunts us. In extreme cases, this can be seen as hoarding. These are people who collect and keep everything: trinkets, old newspapers, trash, spoiled food, and even feces! I had an experience that proved some truth to this theory when I recently moved to a new home.

My wife and I decided to throw out everything that we had not used in the last two years (with the exception of a few items like pictures, sentimental items, and such). We took almost ten trailer loads to the dump! That was seventeen years of collecting junk, and for several of those years, we were even paying for storage

to keep it. I was shocked at all the things we *paid* to hold on to. We are both far from the hoarders you see on TV, but it did bring to light a new understanding of their mentality while making me think about my own life.

LIVING IS *GIVING*

Would I ever give a TV to someone who didn't have one, even if I knew I could sell it to someone else? Could I give a fifty-dollar bill to a stranger who needed it more than I did? What I discovered is that doing these things will open our minds to living rather than just survival. Self-preservation is instinct, but we often take that to the extreme. When we think of others and how our actions can affect their lives, we can say we are *living*! Giving to others has an effect that can only be described as a positive experience. The feeling is beyond satisfaction. The best way to experience this feeling is to just do it. There are opportunities everywhere to give. For example, sometimes the recipient of your gesture may be an animal, like a scared and hungry cat or a lost dog.

My wife and I have been rescuing Doberman Pinschers for over a decade. These fierce-looking dogs are actually very loving and gentle. When we bring a new one home, the dog is broken in spirit and often underweight. After a month or so it begins to show signs of improvement. After a year, the animal is full of love and affection. The dog that was once broken is now happy and wants to share everything with me—even its wet, slimy chew toy! The giving is given back in ways beyond my understanding. These animals will put their lives in front of ours. Self-preservation is instinct with them as well, but they are somehow able to disconnect instinct when they feel we are in need of their protection. How is it that this animal can evolve to become such a gentle creature? How does it accept another species as one of its own, protecting it by any means possible, even if it has to give up its own life to do so?

As much as we like to think to the contrary, we are primal. Humans only live to satisfy *their own needs*.

ARE WE A *CIVILIZED* SOCIETY?

We would like to believe that we are civilized, but that too is a bit far from the truth. There are many examples of where our civility is clearly in question. One example is Black Friday. People will actually hurt one another physically for a television, computer, or other high-priced item offered at a discount. In war, humans continue to torture and kill one another, as they have been doing for centuries. Bloody wars have been fought over land, oil, and a general contempt and intolerance of other religions. Leaders around the world then have the audacity to justify the violence in the name of God. Governments invest more time and money developing advanced technology for weapons of war than they do in the crumbling infrastructure of their own countries or the welfare of their people.

School shootings are in the news almost weekly. What follows is a chain reaction. The media uses these horrific situations to get people to watch for the sole purpose of higher ratings and increased advertising revenue. Meanwhile, fear is used in the media and in advertising campaigns to push religious and political agendas. This type of mental manipulation actually steers us further away from any form of civil society.

For our “entertainment,” we have created violent video games to amuse our young. Anything from real-life war games, complete with graphic detail of dismemberment and blood splatter, to games where the whole point is a crime spree (carjacking, assault, armed robbery, high speed car chases from police, etc.). These games only serve one purpose: training future criminals. For the companies that market these games to the public, it’s just business.

Popular television today shows out-of-control individuals

creating their own problems. Drama does make good entertainment, but only in a fictional setting. Real drama for entertainment would seem disturbing to a civilized society.

These are just a few areas where greed, self-preservation, and self-gratification take the place of civility in our society. It's not to say that there is no place for video games, movies, or shopping sprees, but we should be aware of the extent to which we place importance on these things in our lives.

LIVING IN FEAR

Most of us make our decisions based on emotions. That isn't such a bad thing to do, because sometimes our gut instinct is exactly what we need to keep us away from trouble. It is when our decisions are made based on anger or fear that things can go terribly wrong.

Living in constant fear is not quality living. In fact, it is merely surviving, and doing so under intense, stressful conditions. Fear has become a way of life and is ingrained into our culture. It is the opposite of love and has many repercussions. Fear puts our needs of survival before everything else, even when the idea of survival applies to mundane daily activities instead of real life-or-death situations. We *fear* that the store will run out of the hottest new video game, so we rush to secure a place in line, even if it means being rude to others. We *fear* that we'll be late to work, so we drive like maniacs, even if it means putting the lives of others at risk. We *fear* failure, so we live our lives in a constant state of competition.

Competition is taught to us as children. We are encouraged to play sports, and parents enroll their kids at a very young age to become competitive individuals. This is not such a bad thing. It does keep kids out of trouble and builds self-worth and self-esteem. But it's when competition leads us to continuously live

lives of self-preservation that we forget about concepts of love and spiritual growth. Survival of the fittest is something that applies to humans just as it does to the animal kingdom. In the wild, if you are not at the top of your game, you become a feast for the lions. In our twisted version of a civilized world, if you show weakness, others will use that to bring you down. A life driven solely by competition is similar to the primal instincts that govern animals in the wild.

We are generally a species of users, and we consume everything from within the core and on the face of the planet to fulfill our every obsession. It is easy to see that our need to claim rights to all the natural resources on earth has led us to become a fear-based society. It is this fear that has led to the deaths of millions of people due to war, disease, famine, and starvation. Only a few enjoy the luxury of having more than they need to live in comfort for many lifetimes, and the rest struggle or go without.

“Live simply so that others may simply live.”

—Mahatma Gandhi

MOVING BEYOND SURVIVAL

It would seem that education would resolve many, if not all, of the problems we face in the world today, but that would mean an end to the controlling powers of the mighty. They simply cannot afford to allow such freedom of thought. Evolution of a civilized society ceased because of this. There are resources to feed every mouth on the planet, if we actually wanted to do so, but still there are millions starving worldwide. Some of us care enough to form groups that travel across oceans to save starving children in other continents, and yet there are starving children among us who need saving too.

We can't change the carelessness of others, and it's easy to

feel powerless over bureaucracies that perpetuate ongoing social problems of education, public welfare, homelessness, and crime. The only changes we can make are within ourselves. Until we assume responsibility for our own actions, take control of our own well-being, and become a world of givers instead of takers, we will continue to see what we see today.

Knowledge is power only if that knowledge is applied. Otherwise, it becomes useless information. The only way this and every problem we face can be solved for the long-term is if we as a society accept and embrace one simple truth: we are creating our own problems. Until then, we will simply continue on a path of mere existence.

"This generation has given up on growth. They're just hoping for survival."

—Penelope Spheeris

CHAPTER 2: A LIFE OF TURMOIL

Somewhere in time, we were led to believe that we are all separate from each other and from God. This myth started a chain reaction that has brought forth every problem we face today in every part of all our lives. We live in a separatist society that is consumed by fear.

Many people *choose* to live in fear, particularly fear of how others may perceive us and our beliefs. Everything we do is based on the idea that negative consequences will follow if we think differently from the mainstream. This idea is perpetuated in the media and by people in powerful positions, such as politicians, religious leaders, etc. Fear can be a very dangerous emotion, as it can cause our lives, and our world, to quickly spin out of control. Remember that this life of turmoil is one not of punishment, but of choice.

CHALLENGING OUR ASSUMPTIONS

For too long we have been led to believe that it is better to accept what we are told rather than to make our own discoveries. Most of our own belief structures developed over the course of many years through constant repetition, from various sources of information. We're blitzed with a *fixed* set of options on what's true and what's fiction, and then expected to choose the "right" path. Any attempt to challenge these options may lead us to be labeled as outcasts.

Ask anyone walking out of any house of worship if they believe in hell, and they will most likely respond with scripture. What they will tell you is that their testimony *is* the word of God. What they cannot and will not accept is that the words printed on the pages of their holy books were written by men. Furthermore, the chapters in those holy books were *edited* by men of power. This is a very hard pill for them to swallow, because if they were to accept and acknowledge even a fraction of that truth, their whole concept of what they were taught to believe will crumble brick by brick. So, herein lies an illustration of the root of our suffering. If people would use their own senses to guide them, instead of scripture given to them by others in power, life would be different.

¹As of 2015, there are more than 7 billion people populating the planet we call Earth, and that number continues to grow by the second. These people all have their own beliefs, and most stand firmly behind them. When it comes to matters of faith, there are many religions, and each has its own version of the truth. So who is holding the real truth? They can't *all* be right. Truth is based on fact. Only those opinions or theories that prove to be factual can be accepted as truth.

First, let us be clear. None of us were around to see what really took place during the birth of the ancient religions. The only testament we have to go by is what was written and edited by men in the past. So, if our whole way of life is dictated to us by writers from the past, how do we really know what we are told to believe is the real truth? It is very easy to take the word of another and make it our own. It takes time to research it ourselves. The fact remains that we will never know until we do.

"If you tell a big enough lie and tell it frequently enough, it will be believed."

—Adolf Hitler

¹ World Population 2015 - <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/>

HEAVEN AND HELL

Remember Santa Claus? This is a bearded white man who has a legion of elves that live with him in the North Pole. This fat man rides a sleigh powered by flying reindeer, one with a red headlight for a nose, and he makes a trip around the world in one night, only stopping to deliver presents to *every* kid on the planet. On the way, he takes the time to eat cookies and wash them down with a glass of milk at every stop. His method of entry: the chimney. He stuffs his portly body through the chimney and into the house, without alarming anyone of his presence. The next morning, the only trail he leaves behind are the neatly wrapped gifts, lying under a tree. Truth or fiction?

Like Santa, we are taught that God is a bearded white man who lives in the sky in a place called heaven, with winged beings called angels. He gives us all free will, but if we use that free will to do what we want instead of doing what he wants, then he will condemn our soul to hell, a place of fire and brimstone ruled by a fallen angel. But he loves us only if we accept his only son as our savior and he always seems to need money.

Somehow, I find this story of a bearded God roaming around in heaven hard to believe too. This seems like just another *holey* Santa story (without elves, toys, and cookies).

As for hell ... well, I believe hell is a very real place. The more I looked into the actual meaning of what it is to be in hell, the more it started to look like a *figurative* description. A loving God would never send anyone to a place like hell. Instead, I believe we are more than capable of creating hell on our own. Take the cases of these poor souls condemned to hell by their own doing.

Ron is a married man with seven kids, each from a different mother. He works hard and long hours ... not because he wants to, but because he has seven angry mothers always calling him for money. Ron likes the attention he gets from women. One day after

work, he finds himself with Linda, a woman he met in the break room during lunch. After a one-week affair with Linda, she tells Ron she is pregnant with his baby. Ron finds himself in hell yet again!

John likes kids ... and not in the way we would see as normal. John likes to *touch* kids. He is what society would define as a pedophile and uses the internet to prey on children. He sees nothing wrong with what he does and is so convinced that his convictions take him to a television show that will expose his identity and his actions to the world. Soon after that, John becomes a star! Making headlines across the country, he appears on various popular news stations and videos that go viral on the internet. After he does exclusive interviews to explain his views, many who saw him on TV or on the Internet vow to hurt him physically if they ever see him on the street. John is not going to hell ... he *is* in hell!

Jan likes drama in her life. She is drawn to the bad boys in town. To her, being bad is very hot! She dates the baddest of the bad, and that is not an exaggeration. Her ex-boyfriend is in prison for murder. He was arrested, just one week after he beat up Jan and put her in the hospital. She was lucky to have survived. Now that her beau is locked up for the next thirty years, Jan is lonely. Along comes Charlie. This guy is bad (maybe not as bad as her ex, but still bad). After a few dates, Charlie shows his real self, and Jan finds herself in the hospital again. So now Charlie is in jail for outstanding warrants, and Jan is lonely once more.

As we look at the stories of Ron, John, Jan, and Charlie, we can see how easily we create our own hell. Some still actually believe hell is a tangible place, where God sends us to be tortured. One group in particular believes that more than 99 percent of the world's population will go there after death. This extremist group, based out of Topeka, Kansas, prides themselves in picketing the funerals of fallen soldiers.² They carry signs that say, "God hates

² Signs – Google Images

you,” “God hates your sons,” “Pray for more dead soldiers,” and “God hates fags.” The fellowship of the ³Westboro Baptist Church was led by ⁴Fred Phelps, a disbarred lawyer and former civil rights activist, until his death on March 19, 2014. The group is well known to be the most obnoxious, rabid hate group in America. I don’t know if any of their members realize that God is more about love and tolerance than hate. As misguided as this group seems to be, they too have free will, and they impose it anywhere and on anyone they want to.

No fire or brimstone can be worse than a life of constant turmoil and self-induced misery. The good news is that hell is not eternal. We can choose to live in hell, or we can wake our souls and let them run us for a while. The choice is ours.

BEING OF FREE WILL

Now, what is truth when it comes to God or a higher power? What I have seen so far, based on my own research of the different world religions, is contradiction after contradiction from one belief system to the next. Holy books offer different interpretations from different cultural and historical perspectives. Religious leaders will try to put some clarity to the confusion, but they all have their own personal understandings. That is what spirituality is based on to begin with: a personal understanding. The truth we seek, therefore, cannot merely be confined within the pages of a book or the walls of a place of worship. It comes from a journey toward enlightenment ... it comes with *faith*.

The spirit, or soul, is what lives to experience life through our bodies. As long as the body is alive, the soul can experience another adventure along the way. Life is a journey, and we can

³ Westboro Baptist Church – <https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/petition/legally-recognize-westboro-baptist-church-hate-group/DYf3pH2d>

⁴ Fred Phelps - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fred_Phelps

go wherever we want. If you want to visit hell, make a few bad choices and you will be there. Be careful though; bad choices can buy you a one-way ticket there (just ask Ron, John, Jan, or Charlie), and sometimes it only takes one bad choice to seal your fate for a lifetime!

One thing is certain: mankind exercises *free will*.

Free will does not always lead human beings to make the right choices, as illustrated in the example of the Westboro Baptist Church and in the cases of Ron, John, Jan, and Charlie. Often, it can lead to a life of turmoil and hell on earth. Today, we witness deforestation of almost half of the trees on the planet, pollution of the air we breathe and the water we drink, contamination of the earth's soil, and tampering with the ecosystems. We smoke, drink alcohol, and consume poisons in form of animal protein and other toxins. We have given full control of our better judgment and decision making to greedy corporations. We sit quietly as they drill for oil in our oceans while killing marine life and contaminating the only part of the planet that hasn't been destroyed by our need to consume during this unconscious killing spree. We also give a private bank the ability to print our country's currency and make us all slaves to it. All this has been our choice. If we wanted better, we would have it.

This world we see as a cruel and harsh place is one that we have created with a collective consciousness ... or rather a *collective unconsciousness*. Our whole system of thinking has caused, and continues to cause, pain and suffering worldwide, yet we hold on to our beliefs as if there is no possibility that we could be wrong or that we have been misled.

We live an unconscious life. We have for many centuries, even from our earliest existence. You can see why it is so easy to pass on what is obviously our fault. Nobody wants to take the blame for the problems we are facing today.

Now that we are awake, is it too late to fix the problems that we

have caused? Though it will take a lot of time and determination, it is possible. If we all choose to make the change together, we may stand a chance.

“The day the power of love overrules the love of power; the world will know peace.”

—Mahatma Gandhi

The love of power has overcome the power of love, and we are seeing the fallout. The greedy few, who pull the strings of society and march us to early graves, don't see a problem with the world the way it is. They are perfectly content as long as you think and do as you are told. Simply follow and obey a set of values and morals put together by others in power, and allow them to dictate what you should think, how you should feel, and what you should do. Just let them do the thinking for you. This way, you will never need to think for yourself. After all, why would you want to do that? You could end up in hell, right?

“What good fortune for governments that the people do not think.”

—Adolf Hitler

CHAPTER 3: BREAKING THE CHAIN

“Progress is a nice word, but change is its motivator and change has its enemies.”

—Robert F. Kennedy

Before we can transform our lives for the better, we first have to break the bonds that bind us to the same old tired way of thinking. Once freed from these bonds, we may then begin our search for truth that will allow us to change for the better. For many people, this step poses the most difficult challenge because it not only requires us to maintain an open mind, but it also demands *action* on our part. We are faced with the life-changing decision to choose another path. The good news is that if your mind stays open, the action will happen without much resistance. Only *you* can hold you back from changing.

We know that nothing will change in our lives without a change in mind and heart. If there's something we do that causes great pain to ourselves and others, we know that the only way to avoid experiencing that pain again is to do something different. If our belief system has led us to making bad choices that ended up causing our own suffering, then we know that maybe a change in what we believe may be in order. If this all seems so simple, it's because it is. Then why do we make this so difficult?

The answer is because for some reason, human beings find it easier to stay bonded to those things that cause great pain and suffering than to make the conscious decision to break those bonds. Change can often be uncomfortable, and therefore we avoid it like the plague. This explains why battered wives stay with their abusive husbands, why millions of people struggle with their addictions, and why we have such a hard time breaking other unhealthy habits, such as smoking and living off fast food. It's simply just too hard to change!

This school of thought is nothing new. In Plato's work ⁵*The Republic*, the ancient Greek philosopher wrote of the ⁶Allegory of the Cave, a dialogue between his brother, Glaucon, and Socrates, whom himself was another founder of Western philosophy. In it, Socrates describes how people who have been chained, facing a wall in a dark cave their whole lives, only see the shadows of moving images coming from things that pass in front of the fire behind them. These prisoners perceive the shadows to be real, even giving them names. Socrates then describes what happens when the prisoners are finally freed of their bond to face the light for the first time:

And now look again, and see what will naturally follow if the prisoners are released and disabused of their error. At first, when any of them is liberated and compelled suddenly to stand up and turn his neck round and walk and look toward the light, he will suffer sharp pains; the glare will distress him, and he will be unable to see the realities of which in his former state he had seen the shadows; and then conceive someone saying to him, that what he saw before was an illusion, but that now, when

⁵ The Republic - <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.8.vii.html>

⁶ Allegory of the Cave - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allegory_of_the_Cave

he is approaching nearer to being and his eye is turned toward more real existence, he has a clearer vision, what will be his reply? And you may further imagine that his instructor is pointing to the objects as they pass and requiring him to name them, will he not be perplexed? Will he not fancy that the shadows which he formerly saw are truer than the objects which are now shown to him?

He further states:

And if he is compelled to look straight at the light, will he not have a pain in his eyes which will make him turn away to take and take in the objects of vision which he can see, and which he will conceive to be in reality clearer than the things which are now being shown to him?

Change can sometimes be painful for people, especially when seeing the light for the first time. As described by Socrates, the light can force the prisoner to turn back to look only at what does not cause him pain: to live in darkness. This is nothing but *perceived* reality. In order to escape this, it takes someone to be courageous enough to face the initial pain of the light, so that eventually the light, rather than the darkness, finally becomes one's truth.

In our fearless search for truth, we must first be prepared to begin this journey by navigating through a world of lies, manipulation, and indoctrination. Some of these lies we tell ourselves not because we enjoy lying to ourselves, but because the truth can be a painful thing to accept. To avoid this pain, we do what Socrates described, which is to run back to the darkness, our comfort zone. What we tell ourselves, we begin to believe so strongly that it must be true. After years of living a life of lies,

the lies ultimately become reality, and the truth becomes elusive. Again, it takes courage to navigate the rough waters of deception and darkness to seek truth.

Where does this courage and strength come from? How do you break a chain that has bonded you to a way of thinking you've grown accustomed to after so many years? The answer starts with a free and open mind. Those who seek truth listen more than they speak, question more than they dictate, and encourage dialogue more than they stifle debate. They have no fear of what they may discover, even if it's a truth that may be too painful to digest at first. They know that this pain is temporary, and after a brief period of adjustment, their eyes will soon get used to the light.

In recent history, there have been many spiritual and political leaders who illustrated the courage of seeing the light, offering their followers a new way of thinking. President John F. Kennedy was one example. This man displayed the political will and wisdom to avert a catastrophic war during a time of heightened tension by applying tough, principled diplomacy rather than rushing to military action. At the same time, he saw opportunities to push the American people farther than they have ever gone in the areas of space exploration and civil service.

"Mankind must put an end to war before war puts an end to mankind."

—John F. Kennedy

In 1968, JFK's brother, Robert F. Kennedy, himself a visionary who championed the cause of human rights and civil liberties, made his own run for the president of the United States.

"There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why ... I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?"

—Robert F. Kennedy

During the same era, another man, Martin Luther King, Jr., introduced America to one of the greatest displays of organized civil disobedience. As the spiritual leader of the Civil Rights Movement, Dr. King's message of love, tolerance, and peaceful resistance resonated not only with the African American community, but also with millions of other Americans who witnessed the brutality of the forces fighting against their cause.

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Sadly, each of these great men's lives was tragically cut short by an assassin's bullet. Controversy still swirls around their deaths, as many people believe that elements within the government conspired to commit these reprehensible crimes. Whatever you choose to believe, the fact remains that these voices calling for change from JFK, RFK and MLK were instantly silenced, abruptly shaking the hopes and dreams of their devoted followers, while the rest of the world gradually started coming apart at the seams.

What followed their tragic deaths was decades of world conflict: an escalation of conflict in Vietnam; an accelerated nuclear arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union; the Iran-Iraq War; the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; Grenada; Panama; Iran-Contra; continued conflict between Israel, its neighbors, and the Palestinian people; 9/11, Gulf War I and II (US invasion and occupation of Iraq); US invasion and occupation of Afghanistan; and on and on.

While there is no way to know for sure if any of these events could have been avoided or would have turned out differently had these political and spiritual leaders been alive, one thing is certain: the full potential of the impact of their message will never be realized. It really doesn't matter whether or not you believe that

these men's lives were cut short by one lone wolf assassin or by a government conspiracy. What is known is that their voices for positive change during a turbulent time were muted in an instant, their lights prematurely extinguished, which ultimately kept a nation and the world in a place of darkness.

Apparently, some people were not ready to be enlightened. Perhaps they were already at ease with the status quo: living in a society with ongoing racial discrimination and segregation, accepting a world that only knows war and could never know peace, etc. To these people, this place of darkness became their reality. Any effort to shine a light of change on their perception would be deemed a threat to their comfortable existence. As Socrates noted, the pain from the light forced the prisoners to turn back to face the wall of the cave; reality was too painful to endure.

Sometimes other people will keep you from seeing this light, and sometimes we do that ourselves. In either case, we remain bonded to one way of thinking. In our personal lives, this means that we accept a life of pain rather than seeking a way to improve our personal, spiritual, and financial wellness. In society, this means that we become tools for further manipulation and indoctrination by outside forces. We rely on others to paint the truth for us. We see every day in the media and with our politicians. Too many people put their faith in what is dictated to them, or they simply have no interest in changing their behavior because change is uncomfortable.

Remember: in order to break this bond, it takes strength and courage. The same strength and courage was on display in a few great leaders, but they only come around once in a generation. They tried to reshape and change the world. However, it is every individual's responsibility to seek the truth and make their own life changes. It's ultimately *our* choice whether or not we want to face the fire and endure its pain for a chance at a better life, or to retreat to face the wall of the cave in darkness and continue living a life of lies.

CHAPTER 4: COMING TO BELIEVE

Enlightenment is only for those who seek it. It is a gift for the beings who find it, and it changes the quality of life for those who live it.

After years of active addiction and some of the darkest moments of my life, I started to look for relief outside of what I thought would make me feel normal again. They had stopped working many years prior and were only making things worse. There were times when I had all a man could want materialistically, but I still had an overwhelming feeling of emptiness inside. That made self-destruction seem like a good idea. I was simply tired of being tired. The emotional pain was too great to bear, and it seemed like there was no end to the despair.

My situation was not uncommon. As a matter of fact, ⁷healthline.com reports that in 2012, one in ten Americans suffered from depression, and that number has been increasing by 20 percent per year. I believe my problem stemmed from a spiritual void that was neglected for many years. There were obvious signs along the way, but I chose to ignore them. For a long time, I had felt

⁷ Depression statistics – <http://www.healthline.com/health/depression/statistics-infographic>

that there was something missing, but I could never put a finger on it. I always had a need to be in the company of others to feel comfort, as solitude was never enough. This was something that would haunt me throughout my life, until the moment I took that first step in my spiritual journey.

THE JAMES EXPERIENCE

The loss of a loved one has to be the most painful thing we can ever experience in this life. I can remember vividly the overwhelming grief I felt when my uncle passed, and before him, too many friends and family members to list. But the loss was sudden, and the pain came from an emptiness I felt at the time. After the loss of my best friend, James, whom I had known since I was ten years old, I had a different experience. I flew out to Shreveport, Louisiana, to see him one last time. I arrived the night before his memorial, and once I got settled in my hotel room, something drove me to go and explore the town. It had been almost thirty years since I had been there, but the memories of my childhood best friend were still fresh in my mind.

I could hear his voice in my head saying we should go out and *explore*. That is what we did back then. As I started to drive out of the hotel parking lot, I had a feeling that I wasn't alone. I was the only body in the car, but there were two souls that had united after a long time. James navigated me through a city that had changed dramatically since I left almost thirty years prior. The whole town had gone through a face-lift. Nothing looked the way I remembered it, but somehow the car found these places of interest.

First stop, the apartments I lived in right before I moved to Florida in 1986. I could hear his voice say, "Remember ... you used to ride your dirt bike up and down these stairs." I thought to myself, *I did!* Then, we went to look for a restaurant that was open late. While there, James was still with me, and I could feel his

presence as he said something funny while I took my first sip of iced tea. I couldn't help but to laugh, shooting tea through my nose. Everyone in the restaurant who looked into the booth saw only one body (mine), but there were two souls in that booth that night.

Later, back at the hotel, I asked him if he was crashing there with me or going to be with his family. He said, "I am already there with them." I didn't understand that, but he stayed with me, as we were when we were kids. After a long and very impressive fart, we both laughed and I fell asleep. We did that a lot as kids.

The next day, we explored some more. We went to places we used to go when we were kids, and we carried a conversation the whole time. At the funeral home, I met up with his brother and sisters, his ex-wife, kids, girlfriend, friends, and other family. They all remembered me from my youth, when I attended many family reunions and cookouts and such. His mom called me her adopted son back then, and she cared for me like one of her own children. There was a lot of love within that family, and they shared much of it with me.

When I saw his body lying lifeless, it was surreal. I felt like the whole funeral was a dream. How could that be? I just spent several hours with my best friend outside of his body! Then reality set in. His body had died, but James was very much *alive*! I didn't mention any of this with the family, but I figured that they too felt what I did, as his presence was strong around me.

The experience in Shreveport is one I will never forget. It opened my eyes to a life beyond a mere physical existence. It also strengthened my connection with God and offered a new understanding and perspective of my own spirit.

DENYING THE UNDENIABLE

Without God, life is meaningless. Life becomes a flicker of light in an infinite blackness. Although there are many who do not believe

in a higher power, these individuals short-change themselves of their full potential. Denying your soul is like saying your emotions are not real. You can't see pain, but you can feel it. Is that real? We can't see radiation, but those who experienced the bombing of ⁸Hiroshima on that fateful day (August 6, 1945) would tell you that it is very real.

It is very easy to dismiss events that happen in our lives as coincidence, even if they occur all the time. Some would see this as a sign or proof that God does exist. To the atheist, there is some unknown explanation, just not God.

I wonder what would make a thief go to the police to turn in a computer he stole after finding out the owner of that computer was a pedophile. That is not just coincidence ... that is a much higher calling. This actually happened in ⁹Redcar, North Yorkshire (UK) in 2009.

Having faith in something invisible is hard unless the proof is undeniable. Living without a purpose, or just in the shell (the body), is a lonely existence. For me, pain was very real, even though no one else could see it. This was enough proof that an invisible power did exist and was very real. Coming to believe in a greater power started with that pain. I knew that if the power of pain could move a stubborn mule like me to change, I wasn't the only one in charge of the power. In fact, I was powerless over the pain until I took action that would ease that pain. This simple concept didn't come easily. It actually took years to understand, mainly because I would self-medicate to numb the pain. It wasn't until I decided to put down the medicine, finding myself in the fog I had created, that my life started to change for the better.

⁸ Hiroshima Bombing – Google

⁹ Thief turns in computer - <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1206348/Sex-offender-caught--thieves-steal-laptop-awash-child-pornography.html>

MOVING PAST DENIAL

Proof of a higher power was everywhere I looked after that. I had become aware of things that had more power than me and could point them out in any given moment. Lightning, for example, has the power to change plans anytime it wants to. If I wanted to work outside on a day with lightning in the area—go for a swim or play a round of golf—I could, but with great risk. If I chose to do so anyway, then lightning is my *higher power*, and I had to accept it.

It was very obvious there was some other force walking with me during my moments of unconscious animation. This too was a power greater than myself. This power actually kept me safe in times when I should have become a casualty of my own carelessness. I can only describe this force as a loving pair of hands that seemed to always pick me up and put me in a better place every time I asked for help. The hands of God come in many forms. Sometimes friends or complete strangers will say something that is key to solutions I am seeking. Mostly, it is a warm feeling inside that things will just work out in the end. Comfort is always the end result when asking this higher power to step in.

The moment I became aware that there was more to guide me than just what I could see with my eyes, I started to see with my other senses—like a person who is blind relies on other senses to make it through life. I realized that even though my eyes were fine, I was still walking blindly through life. It wouldn't have made a difference if I wore a blindfold. My actions would have led me to the same outcomes.

I remember one instance where I was driving home from work with my crew in the truck with me. We had worked a long day and had a loaded trailer in tow. As soon as we pulled the truck onto the on ramp of the highway, the clutch started to whine as I was changing gears. Every time the clutch pedal went to the floor,

the whine got louder and louder, into a full scream. Eventually, we hit a standstill in traffic as rush hour backup was ahead of us. *There is no way we are going to make it home with this problem*, I thought. I called my wife and informed her of the developing problem and had her make arrangements for our rescue. Then, I said a little prayer. *God, if you are with me ... please get us home safely today*. Like magic, the clutch stopped screaming, and there was an unusual silence inside the cab of my truck. It was as if we had all seen the apparition of God in front of us. No one said a word the whole way home.

As soon as the front tires hit the driveway in my yard, the screaming of the clutch came back louder than it had ever been. Once I had the trailer in position to be disconnected, I shut the truck off. A huge plume of smoke came rolling out from under the truck. I knew it was going to be an expensive fix, but my crew and I were home safe. That's when I realized that an invisible power did work in my favor. After that experience, I felt that I could tap into that power at any given moment and for anything I couldn't handle. I believe that this higher power has saved me from myself more times than I will ever know, and continues to do so to this very day.

Death of the body isn't death of the spirit. Many who have crossed over and have come back have said that even after they were dead, memories of their life were very clear. Vivid details of their experience after death have shown similarities across the board. Unless we die and come back, we will have to take their word as fact. It does raise the benefit of doubt to the many who have had after-death experiences and shared them with the living. I would like to believe that there is something greater than this world we are living in right now. I would also have to say that there are things far beyond my understanding or the understanding of the most brilliant minds on the planet.

The changes that took place were subtle at first. Then as

my awareness of my spirit grew stronger, it was almost as if a light came on and everything became visible. For the first time, everything I read and things I picked up from others but couldn't understand made sense. To me, it was divine guidance. Whatever you want to call it, it was very real and undeniable. From that moment on, my belief became faith. I realize now that everything that resulted in my being here was by choice. A life of misery and despair is one made from choice. One thing I do know is this: once you feel a connection to the spirit, you will never feel alone.

The belief in a higher power is a choice. It will open doors to a new way of thinking and a better way to live. We can choose to open those doors or we can believe in nothing except what we see with our own eyes, as my friend James did (he was an atheist). I don't know what his views are now, but I am sure we shared something special and memorable. It was very real from my end.

"The call of death is a call of love. Death can be sweet if we answer it in the affirmative, if we accept it as one of the great eternal forms of life and transformation."

—Hermann Hesse

CHAPTER 5: BECOMING AWARE

"The ultimate value of life depends upon awareness and the power of contemplation rather than upon mere survival."

—Aristotle

Opening your mind is where your conscious journey begins. Up until this moment, you have been living in an unconscious state of being. Your new perspective unfolds before your very eyes to expose undeniable truths about things that you would normally describe as luck or coincidence. Keeping an open mind will reveal secrets that many have journeyed decades, across continents, to find. The simplicity of this is what is truly mind-boggling. Since your perception becomes your reality, once you broaden that perception, you also broaden your scope of reality. Then, the fun begins. You start looking for the signs ... you become aware.

I remember when this first happened to me. I was going through a transitional phase of my being. It was a point in my life that seemed like I was on a downward spiral physically, emotionally, mentally, but most of all, spiritually. I didn't care about my existence anymore. I felt like an empty shell just existing without any purpose or meaning. I had tried many methods of regaining a handle on my life, but everything seemed to push me farther away from what I

was seeking. At some point, the pain from that void became too great for me to ignore, and something had to be done. I can honestly say I understand why some people take their own lives.

Suicide is a taboo that nobody wants to talk about, but it is an option that many consider when they feel enough pain. Some will even go as far as successfully committing it, while an unlucky few will fail and suffer a lifetime of anguish as a result of that failure. I don't support suicide, but death of the body is not a horrible event because it is a part of life. It isn't an end, just a beginning to a new chapter. This is where my open mind has brought me. I am able to see past what most wouldn't dare look at. I now see the beauty of life and celebrate it every morning I wake to journey another day. It all started the day I became aware.

THE PAPERCLIP EXPERIMENT

Someone shared a story with me, and I found it fascinating, so much so that I actually tried to test the theory for myself. I was at the end of my wits and had become willing to try anything. The story was of God. This story was not about the white bearded man in the sky, but of an entity that has tremendous and unexplainable power—the God that had enough power to make me feel whole. All I had to do was let it guide me through life, and the quality of my life would improve dramatically. This began as a belief, but I would need to see some kind of proof that such an entity actually did exist, and that proof had to be something that was consistently present in daily activities. I needed a sign to look for when I asked for its help. This person said to pick an object, but it couldn't be anything of much value, such as gold, silver, or money. The object was only to be something tangible that I could see consistently as a sign of God's presence in front of me. I chose a paperclip.

I said to God that day, "God, if you are there, show me a sign in moments of my despair, in my darkest hours, and when I am

feeling alone.” Something amazing happened after that: I started to see paperclips everywhere! I found them while walking across huge parking lots. I found paperclips in gas stations while pumping gas. I found paperclips while mowing a field on a commercial lawn mower. And not just one, but five in the same day and in different areas of that grass field. I started to collect them, and the proof became hard to deny. Soon after that, it became hard to describe *anything* as coincidence. The paperclip was the doorway to my awareness.

Opening the doors to awareness is as easy as that. The only catch is that you must honestly be seeking truth. You must have an open mind, be willing to let go of your beliefs, and honestly be committed to whatever you see as the result of that mindset. This is a journey of enlightenment. Enlightenment is out there for everyone to discover, but it is *achieved* only by those who are willing to go outside of their own beliefs and venture beyond the boundaries set for them by their religious leaders, political parties, friends, families, or society as a whole. This is a very personal journey, but one that will gain a rite of passage to unlock secrets of the universe that have been mastered by beings like Jesus Christ himself.

Signs of the real truth are everywhere if we only look around with an open mind. Every day brings us to new places in our journey. The wind, the singing birds, your most brilliant thought or deepest gut feeling about something (good or bad), a line in a movie or the bumper sticker on the car in front of you are all signs and the voice of God. Searching within for answers is the best place to find solutions to any problem that we may face. Insight is just that. Some of the best ideas come from within, if we can only calm the outside world for a moment to listen with all our senses for the voice of God.

“When you don’t go within, you go without.”

—Yogi Bajan

SUMMONING THE SPIRIT

Some of us have seen things that seem familiar, or almost like something we have experienced in a past life. Could this be a sign of reincarnation? Deja vu is what some refer to as an experience that seems like a past event. Could this be proof that our spirit has been here before ... if not in a past life, a dream?

What are dreams? Could dreams be an alternate reality or a window to another existence? Scientists have taken interest in dreams and have learned quite a bit, but there is so much more that still remains a mystery. Others believe that dreams are a portal to a parallel universe, but that is only theory as of yet. There is a ton of material on the internet for you to explore and research for yourself.

Now that you have become aware, that there is more to life than just what meets the eye, you may become a little overwhelmed and have some burning questions. These are questions that summon the spirit part of us closer to our minds and bodies. If we are to unlock our full potential, we are going to need all that we are made of: body, mind, and spirit. Taking a look at our lives from another perspective can give us a different point of view. Since our perception *is* our reality, then we do have the power to change our reality by simply changing our mental representation. Becoming aware means, we are not living unconsciously anymore, but rather we are making calculated decisions that are going to take us to where we want to be in life.

THE RIVER OF LIFE

Tony Robbins is one of my favorite speakers and mentors on my spiritual journey. He stated that life is like a river that always flows in its own direction. We can lie back and ride the flow, or we can put paddles in the water and guide ourselves in whatever direction we choose. Going with the flow is something many of us do in life

because it requires the least amount of effort. Eventually, it will lead us to a fall that we may not want to experience. It isn't until we hear the roar of that waterfall ahead that calm turns to panic. Then, the panic leads us to grasp at whatever we can to save us from that fall.

"A real decision is measured by the fact that you've taken a new action. If there's no action, you haven't truly decided."
—Tony Robbins

It wasn't until I woke up from my spiritual coma that I realized my life was in my own hands, and I had the power to change it at any time. That was my *spiritual awakening*. I heard others talk of experiencing this, and in the beginning I always thought of this as an event that would be so great, with explosions and fireworks going off in my head. As it turned out, there were no explosions and no fireworks ... just a feeling of calm. I no longer worried of things outside my own control. Things that would set me off in the past seemed to lose their power. People also lost the power to affect my state of serenity as I came to realize that their thoughts and actions were their own and not mine to change.

A spiritual awakening is a continuum and not an event. It is the state of being that I had been seeking my whole life. My spirit was with me all along and patiently waiting for me to let it steer my mind and body for a while. It had carried me through the darkest moments of my life and never once let me down. My *spirit* was my higher power and would communicate with me through my emotions, the feelings I tried to mask and ignore. Today, I embrace all my emotions, and I let my spirit guide me to become the person I have always wanted to be.

I don't fight with people anymore, no matter what they believe or say. That is their business, and they are on the path they choose to follow. If they express their views, I appreciate and respect

them, whether or not I agree with their point of view. I may choose to go another direction if I don't agree with them, and that is my freedom to choose.

"Happiness can exist only in acceptance."

—George Orwell

Finding happiness is something most of us want in life. There are a few who would rather be angry and bitter, but deep down I would bet their spirit is patiently waiting for a chance to drive them too. Some people like the drama and feed off the negativity of others, but that is their choice.

If you are wondering how to find that happiness in your life, a good place to start that journey toward it is to ask yourself, "What is it in life you really want?" It could be many things. Pull out a notebook and a pen, and start writing things down. Whatever you think will get you there, put it on paper. Then, look at your list every day, several times a day. Focus on that list, and choose to paddle yourself to those things.

You will find your way to them, but it may not be what you had in mind. Obviously, if you want a loved one to come back from the dead, they may not just walk through your door bearing gifts from the afterlife. Instead, you may feel their presence more often, or you may hear their voice in a dream or a memory. This is what you can experience by becoming aware. Awaken your spirit and allow it to guide you through life, and it will. You will find that it has powers beyond your understanding. You will never feel alone, ashamed, or worried. Peace and tranquility will overcome you in the most chaotic situations. You will know what true happiness is and exactly where to find it. All you have to do is go and get it.

"Awareness without action is worthless."

—Dr. Phil McGraw

CHAPTER 6: WHO IS GOD?

"So I say to you, Ask and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you."
—Jesus Christ

Ask anyone on the street, "Who is God?" You may hear "The Almighty." There are many religions, but the big three all believe in one God. It is a he, and He created everything and is watching all the time. This much we all can agree on. There is a lot of misunderstanding between Islamic scripture and Christian leadership, even over this simple detail of one God.

¹⁰The word *Allah* to the Muslims means "God." They use it in context as God's name, like ¹¹the many names Christians use in the Bible: El, Eloah (Genesis 7:1; Isaiah 9:6), Elohim (Genesis 17:7; Jeremiah 31:33), El Shaddai (Genesis 49:24; Psalm 132:2,5), Adonai (Genesis 15:2; Judges 6:15), Yhwh/Yahweh/Jehovah (Deuteronomy 6:4; Daniel 9:14), Yahweh-Jireh (Genesis 22:14), and El Roi (Genesis 16:13)—to name a few.

¹⁰ Allah - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allah>

¹¹ Different names of God - <http://www.gotquestions.org/names-of-God.html>

¹²The term *Christ* stems from back way before the bible. Krysthl-A derives from the seven audible sound tones of creation: *Ka Ra Ya Sa Ta Ha La*. It was broken down into two words, Kryst = Christ and Hl-A = Allah.

IN THE BEGINNING ...

Around AD 325, religious leaders and political leaders united under the ¹³Council of Nicea to impose more influence on the people and control society. The Roman Catholic deity is one who demands worship and will punish those who refuse to do so. Even though they say *God gave us free will*, if you think that free will is *free* ... think again. Punishment is the result of exercising that free will, and in the worst possible way: the burning of your soul for eternity! This seems harsh, but for all nonbelievers, a fate worse than death seems justifiable from a God who demands worship. This is what led me to dig a little and look for holes in this holy story.

Jesus Christ of Nazareth was put to death by a religious leadership that was afraid of losing their power to an actual son of God. In the Bible, ¹⁴Mark 12:12 says, “And they were seeking to seize him, and yet they feared the people, for they understood that He spoke the parable against them. And so they left Him and went away.” Eventually, the decision was to get rid of him. With the help of Judas Iscariot, one of the original twelve apostles of Christ, they were able to seize him when there was no crowd to defend him. Christ was handed over to the Romans and accused

¹² Spirit Science 12 ~ The Human History Movie - <http://youtu.be/U8NNHmV3QPw>

¹³ What Really Happened at Nicea - <http://www.equip.org/article/what-really-happened-at-nicea/>

¹⁴ New American Standard Bible - Mark 12:12 - <http://biblehub.com/nasb/mark/12-12.htm>

of claiming to be a king, which in those times brought with it a death sentence.

Today, the Roman Catholic Church teaches the millions of its followers to worship Christ, but follow the teachings of the Church. The teachings of Christ were to think freely and for ourselves. If we actually followed the teachings of Christ *instead of worshiping him*, we would have a much better understanding of who God really is. That is not the agenda of the Church or in its best interest.

The Bible is a book that most Christians believe *is* the written word of God, but it is really a book written and edited by men. Men of the Roman Catholic Church decided what to use and what to leave out. Those who wrote the pages of this great book had no idea that their stories would be edited out of context. The Bible does have great insight into spiritual principals; however, there are those who take the writings too literally or spin it in a way to control the lives of others. It seems as if this *good book* of virtues was actually edited to control the masses by a powerful upper class of society.

"Powerful people cannot afford to educate the people that they oppress, because once you are truly educated, you will not ask for power. You will take it."

—John Henrik Clarke

The Church requests that its fellowship give a percentage of their earnings as *tithe*. Originally, this was to fund outreach programs, spread the word of God, help the poor, and carry out God's work. Today, your payment to the Church funds lawsuit settlements, real estate deals, and the construction of huge buildings. The most exotic architectural designs found anywhere on the planet are found in the form of churches. Also, the Church has acquired television networks and websites that generate more

tax-free dollars. So the religion industry is booming and tax-free. As for the poor and starving millions, unfortunately they will have to get used to it. God needs bigger buildings and people need nice places to worship him.

"I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ."

—Mahatma Gandhi

Another theory of God is one believed by followers of Islam. The Quran is the Islamic holy book, and it bears the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. Like Judaism and Christianity, Islam teaches that there is one God in the universe: Allah. Islam has several branches, and like Christianity, many variations within those branches. (Do you see a pattern here?) The two concepts within the tradition are the Sunni and Shi'a,

¹⁵The Five Pillars are one of the unifying factors of Islam. These five practices include a ritual vocation of theological virtue, ritual prayer, the zakat (charity), fasting, and the hajj (a pilgrimage to Mecca). Praying to Allah is to be done five times a day. Muslims gather at mosques to pray, study scripture, and worship Allah. Islam recognizes Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem as sacred places. In Islam, all aspects of a Muslim's life are to serve Allah.

Also like Judaism and Christianity, Islam holds to the ministerial office of prophet, but here is where the three disagree. Christians believe John the Baptist was a prophet, while Jews and Muslims don't. Muslims believe that Muhammad was a prophet, while Jews and Christians don't. Muslims have contradictions within their teachings, as all religions do. We have seen the extent of their radical behavior on the news, but there are radical groups within Christianity too.

¹⁵ The Five Pillars - <http://www.spaceandmotion.com/religion-islam-muslim-islamic-quran.htm>

IN THE NAME OF GOD ...

¹⁶Anti-abortion violence is recognized as a form of Christian terrorism.

On **March 10, 1993**, Dr. David Gunn of Pensacola, Florida, was fatally shot during a protest. A group called Operation Rescue put up wanted-style posters of him until his death. Michael F. Griffin was found guilty of Gunn's murder and was sentenced to life in prison. The clinic in Pensacola had been bombed before in 1984 and was also bombed subsequently in 2012.

On **July 29, 1994**, Dr. John Britton and James Barrett, a clinic escort, were both shot to death outside another facility. Rev. Paul Jennings Hill was charged with the murders and received a death sentence.

On **December 30, 1994**, two receptionists, Shannon Lowney and Lee Ann Nichols, were murdered in two clinic attacks in Brookline, Massachusetts.

On **January 29, 1998**, Robert Sanderson, an off-duty police officer who worked as a security guard, lost his life at an abortion clinic in Birmingham, Alabama, when a bomb went off at the clinic.

On **October 23, 1998**, Dr. Barnett Slepian was shot to death with a high-powered rifle at his home in Amherst, New York.

Not all followers of religion are radical. Extremist groups can be found in all walks of life when their radical views turn violent. In Islam, the result of radicalism is Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and ISIS. In Christianity, the result is the Westboro Baptist Church, David Koresh, Warren Jeffs, or one of many Christian terror groups. They all are quick to point out their differences, but one thing they all have in common is the notion *that they are right and you are wrong*.

¹⁶ Anti-abortion violence - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-abortion_violence

There are some truths hidden in all holy books, but to find what part is fiction and what is not, the mind has to be open to new ideas. In the eyes of the average follower of any religion, God is exactly what that religion wants that follower to believe. In the eyes of any religious leadership, God is the business of selling religion. Religion is big business. Make no mistake ... it's tax free, legal, alive, and doing very well!

"God has no religion."

—Mahatma Gandhi

THE PATH TO GOD

So exactly who is God? It may sound crazy, but I asked this question because I refuse to believe that a God of love would inflict harm on those it created, or condone murder in its name. Also, it makes no sense to give free will to a creature you have designed and brought to life, only to inflict the worst possible torture on its soul for the rest of eternity if it decides to exercise free will to pursue its own life of happiness. The stories of such a God could only be made up in the minds of sadistic human beings who want to scare others into submission. If this is your way of thinking and you are happy believing that, go on living that way and may the force be with you. I will take my chances.

The path to God doesn't require a middleman or a translator. God's love is unconditional, and this relationship is a very personal one. There isn't a middleman between me and my parents. I pick up the phone or just go to their home whenever I wish. They love me unconditionally. Most parents do, but parents are humans too. Some parents don't understand the concept of unconditional love. Maybe this is where the misunderstanding of God's love begins for some people and the cycle continues for others.

My grandparents were devout Muslims. They would follow

all Five Pillars and practice them consistently. They were both very gentle and kind. They didn't condone any act of violence. In fact, they detested it. They also never forced any of us to follow their system of beliefs. That worked for them, and we were free to choose our own path. Today, it seems as if many followers of the religion of my grandparents, who understood a God of unconditional love, are seeking world domination. This too helped me look for another path to God.

From what I found up to this point, one thing is crystal clear. God is not vengeful or jealous. There is no need to be. If God wanted to be worshiped, I would have come out of the womb worshipping him. There would be no need for free will. God created everything. *Do you think God is incapable of making a fleshy mindless robot?*

When I made that connection to my spirit, it became very clear. There it was in front of me the whole time! God was the spirit part of me ... and the spirit part of everyone else too. Maybe that explains why I felt such a connection to my friend James. That can also explain compassion for others. Even perfect strangers seem to have a spiritual bond to each other.

I was on a roll! I started to really dig and found others who confirmed my latest discovery. They too were lost and seeking the path to God.

As days turned to weeks and months, every question I had about life and the universe came to me in the form of thoughts and feelings. This time, my mind was not in a fog and was firing on all cylinders. My senses were very sharp; I was aware of all of them.

DIVINE ONENESS

What I found was that God is everything and everywhere. This much is true. God is a thought and an idea ... a name. What it refers to transcends anything we can imagine. God's voice is

the breeze from the wind or the sound of the ocean. It can be the bird or the cells that make the leaves of the tree. It can be the thunder, the lightning, or the rain in the storm. The proof of God's existence is in everything from the sunrise to the sunset, the beauty of a mountain vista or the perfection of the snowflake. Even things that we believe are not living (like rocks, soil, and air) are parts of God. We are all parts of God ... *all of us*. It is the image of God that becomes the barrier to our understanding. It is the obstruction in the way of freethinking that will ultimately steer us farther away from any truth to what is *very* real.

The spirit is a part of God; therefore, it never dies and would never be sent to hell. The body will eventually expire, but the parts of us that are God will go on to the next chapter of eternity. So, if God is our spirit, then we are all one. If you feel compassion toward a complete stranger or an animal who is hurting, you may feel the connection. *Helping others makes us feel good inside, every time*. Why is this? Compassion is something we all can relate to (some more than others), but we all have the ability to be compassionate at some level.

This is only my understanding. You may find your own as you get to know yourself better. As I progress in my spiritual journey, more is revealed daily. My conscious contact with God has brought me to an understanding that makes more sense to me than the traditional fairy tale stories bought and sold for centuries.

THE VOICE OF GOD

Communication with God is more than just prayer. Prayer is just me expressing a thought or question. A reply from God starts at the mind and spirit level through thoughts and feelings, and may also include my own voice. Sometimes, I will say something really profound and then think, *Wow, I said that?*

I was driving home one day, and this careless driver almost ran

me off the road. I was about to lose my cool when I read the bumper sticker on his rear window, which said, "It don't get better than this." I had to laugh. How true! Life is what I make of it. I could let this guy bring me down, or I could choose not to. Was that a message from God? I believe it was. It changed my perspective swiftly.

People seem to go with what they are told instead of going from within. Most don't even know why they believe what they do, other than it's what they were *told*, and that is good enough for them. Ask ten people walking out of a church what is so wrong with homosexuality, and I will bet at least nine of them will say, *the Bible says it is wrong*. Most of the people who claim to have found God couldn't begin to describe what God actually is. There are those who use the name of God to do horrific deeds, and some just use God's name to pad their pockets at the expense of others.

There are people like ¹⁷David Koresh and ¹⁸Warren Jeffs, who use the name of God for power and impose their will over a group of followers seeking a connection with God. It is unfortunate that many of the followers of Koresh perished in a fire on April 19, 1993, after a fifty-one-day standoff with ATF agents. It is even more unfortunate that the followers of Warren Jeffs, many of whom were abused by his mind control and subject to acts of pedophilia and rape, still believe to this day he is the mouthpiece of God.

"Belief in a cruel God makes a cruel man."

—Thomas Paine

GOD IS IN *EVERYTHING*

So it is up to you to determine what makes sense. Some people will believe anything they are told to believe, while others need

¹⁷ David Koresh - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Koresh

¹⁸ Warren Jeffs - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warren_Jeffs

more physical proof to form their own beliefs. Faith starts with belief, but it is okay to reevaluate your beliefs. There simply is no law that states you can't, and if there were, free will trumps any man-made law anyway. You can call anything God and be truthful. God made us in his image, so does that make us all Gods? We are capable of creating and destroying. We also have the ability to love unconditionally.

There have been many teachers who have walked among us in the past and in modern times, teachers who understood God and the path to enlightenment. Their footprints are still there for us to follow if we choose. They are the masters of the universe. People like Jesus of Nazareth, Gandhi, The Buddha, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and many more have offered insight to unlock the mysteries of the universe. The information is more easily accessible today than ever before. We can read articles online or find books filled with insight. God's message can be found within any form of media: from this book, to the next movie you watch, to that bumper sticker in the rear window of the guy who nearly killed me. All you have to do is open your mind and become more aware.

"If you can't see God in all, you can't see God at all."

—Yogi Bajan

CHAPTER 7: BEING OF THREE PARTS

"I certainly believe that being in contact with one's spirit and nurturing one's spirit is as important as nurturing one's body and mind. We are three dimensional beings: body, mind, spirit."

—Laurence Fishburne

Mind, body, spirit: this is the sacred trinity. Though we have been able to understand two of the three, and one better than the other, we still are far away from even scratching the surface of the third, the one that will unfold the secrets of the universe. That one is the spirit.

I have stood on top of the world, having everything most would die for, and still felt like something was missing. I have felt like there was a hole in my gut, and the void was so deep that nothing could ever fill it. I tried everything only to experience more pain, until the day I became whole again.

As human beings, we have three parts that make us whole: a body, a mind, and a spirit. These each have their own place in giving life meaning and keeping us healthy and whole. Most of us only live in the needs of the body, and this is very evident in our priorities. Walk into any coffee shop, restaurant, or mall and look at the people. You will notice that almost everyone has their

face buried into a cell phone, even while driving, working, or at school ... and while shopping for more stuff for the body. The focus is always on the body. We almost never take that focus off to feed the mind or the spirit. There is far more to living and enjoying a full life than just living in the shell. Here is what I found along my journey.

THE BODY

The body is that which is flesh. Some people mistake the brain for the mind, but that too is flesh and also part of the body. Feeding the body is important, and so is nurturing it, but we seem to overfeed the body with so many material things that we lose focus on the other elements of our being that complete us. A good example of this begins with the day-to-day activities in life we never give a second thought to. Here was a typical day for me.

I wake up and the first thought is to not be late for work. After a quick shower and a shave, it's off to work. On the way to work, the car has a flat tire, so the next thought is, *How much will that cost?* I begin to worry about my finances. At work, I daydream about a vacation or going to the bar after work. On the way home, I pick up some food for the family and go home. After dinner, I sit down to watch TV (wishing it was much larger). An hour or two later, I wash up and go to bed, only to get up and repeat the same thing over and over.

I did this routine for many years and didn't think much about it. That seemed a normal life and pretty much what everybody else was doing anyway. The mind and spirit were not even a blip on the radar.

Christmastime is busy and stressful for everyone. Most people can relate to this scenario: Decorations, lights, and more lights! What am I getting for who? What bills can I push around to make all this happen? Now, at the mall, where am I going to find a space

to park my damn car? I found that perfect gift, but did I over pay? Where do I hide this thing? It's huge! I hope (*your mate*) got me that (*gift you really want*).

Though, the holiday season is about giving and sharing, the things we do take us far away from our mind and spirit, and traps us further in the shell.

Sex, drugs, alcohol, money, and fame are all concerns of the body. Living only for the body's agenda is why we feel empty and alone. The need to fill the void becomes so great that we begin to grasp at anything from the outside; yet we still feel empty.

I remember working with a young couple that I had hired for one of my businesses. These two would message each other back and forth, only they were back-to-back in the same room. They could have just as easily carried out a verbal conversation and continued to do their work at the same time.

I have noticed more people choose to text or e-mail rather than using the telephone to communicate. This removes the human element of contact from any conversation. It almost seems as if people have become comfortable without the use of a spiritual connection. Humans and animals bond with each other through that highway.

Texting and e-mail is robotic. It lacks the experience one has when hearing another person's voice or seeing their body language react to something said during conversation. Technology grows daily to make everything easy for us, but at some point we have to go out of the way to feed the rest of ourselves. When we only focus on the needs of the body, the other two parts begin to starve.

THE MIND

This part of us is undeniably the most amazing computer processor found anywhere on the planet. It is so awesome that even the smartest people on earth haven't found a way to harness and

utilize all of its power. We use our mind every time we release a thought into the universe. The mind is the greatest creative tool we have, and yet most of us would rather not think.

Picture this: you have this jet fuel racecar in your garage, and it is capable of reaching speeds above 250 miles per hour with ease, and you have never taken it past 2 miles per hour. In relation, we all carry in our heads a super computer that has the potential to unlock every secret to the universe in less than a few minutes, and yet we can barely check our e-mail. The mind is that *powerful*, and we are *that* lazy.

The mind cannot be examined like the brain, as it is not of flesh. The mind has a closer link to the spirit than the body. It has been said that we use a very small percentage of it, somewhere around 10 percent. People still mistake the mind for the brain. We actually use 100 percent of the brain.

Actually, most people don't have a clue as to the function of their subconscious mind, or that it even exists. Most of us walk in a daze like laboratory rats, but we think we are in full control of our lives ... just like the rats.

Former professor of medicine at Stanford University, ¹⁹Dr. Bruce Lipton, says new science of epigenetics show that our mind can change the body's biology to fit the mind's belief. It used to be believed that our genes form who we are. Dr. Lipton shows that if we view things from a positive perspective, we start living better quality lives in spite of our genetic makeup. *Attitude*, positive or negative, sends new messages to the cells in our body that can even change cellular structure, turning diseased cells into healthy ones. This research actually declares that mind and spirit do play a role in who we are.

The subconscious mind is a database loaded with programmed behaviors that were defined before we reached our sixth birthday.

¹⁹ Epigenetics study - <https://www.brucelipton.com/resource/article/epigenetics>

Those fixed programs are the basis of our reactions to situations, and work on autopilot without our knowledge or control. This explains why we sometimes do things we can't explain. We are literally doing them subconsciously. In order to create the things in life that you want, the first step is to take control of your mind. Some people blame others for their bad fortune or circumstance and say, *That's life*, or *It wasn't meant to be*.

Everything that *is* was meant to be. We created it. This is hard to swallow because this logic doesn't reconcile with our perceived reality. How do we create the storm that wiped out an entire city? How do we create the loss of a loved one? We have no control over these things. Nature is outside of our control, but *attitude* is our perception of reality. If we accept the fact that nature is something that happens on its own, then anything caused by nature is also outside of our control. That becomes our reality. Your subconscious mind creates everything else in your life. It merely follows your feelings and your thoughts on any event that you experience. The subconscious mind is what shapes how you live your life. Believe that things will be okay, and they will be okay. Believe that you can succeed, and you will.

The subconscious mind works with the body in ways that allow simple thoughts to trigger physical effects. For example, the thought of a cheating spouse could cause an obsession to find out *who with*, and *why*. This obsession can lead to depression and insomnia. Insomnia, depression, fear, shame, guilt, abandonment, and addiction are all negative effects of the mind on the body. This is how the interconnection between mind and body can play a crucial role in our health. The medical science community has never officially credited the results of the mind healing the body. But, studies have shown that chronically stressed people get sick more often and live shorter lives than those that are more relaxed.

The mind is not the artist, but only a tool in the hands of the artist. To become the artist, you must first master the tools of the

trade. You must learn how to master your thought process. Doing this does take practice, but you have to focus on that which you want, and not on that which you don't. If you are frustrated with someone or something, let go of those negative thoughts and feelings. Dwelling on them will not work to remove the negativity you are experiencing, but only bring you more of it.

²⁰Stress is a silent killer, and everyone has suffered from it at some point in their lives. To identify stress, observe changes in your breathing. Stress can cause hyperventilation. If you experience stress, clear your mind and steer it away from troubling thoughts. A walk does wonders to clear thoughts. Also, meditation is a great way to purify your thoughts. Meditation can improve your health by boosting your ²¹immune system, lowering stress levels, and slowing down the aging process.

²²A good exercise to try is one I found on online. It works very well, but it takes a lot of practice to do:

Find a place to sit in a public setting. Turn off your phone. The goal is to be still and remain non-active throughout this process. All there is to do now is observe other people's activities for thirty minutes. That's it. Don't do anything else. Sit still and watch. The idea behind this is to be watchful and alert while sitting still. Pay close attention to the pace at which people walk, their choice of footwear, their hairstyles, the color of people's eyes ... pay attention to the details.

I enjoy photography. I once followed a bumblebee around a garden with my camera. My goal was to capture a shot of that bee in flight. I must have followed it for hours before I finally got

²⁰ Meditation and stress - <http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=46268>

²¹ Meditation and immune system - <http://eocinstitute.org/meditation/boosting-your-immune-system-with-meditation/>

²² Park bench meditation: - <http://healing.about.com/od/meditation/a/park-bench-meditation.htm>

that shot. My mind was focused only on that bee, and the rest of my thoughts just faded into the abyss. Things like this work. The mind is very powerful. Once you accept this fact and choose to learn how to utilize its powers with the natural laws of the universe, your life will change.

"You cannot have a positive life and a negative mind."

—Joyce Myer

THE SPIRIT

People go through the most horrific hardships imaginable, and still somehow they find ways to push past defeat, winning victory after glorious victory in defiance of all odds. Humanity seems like a race for survival. We are all *champions* right in this moment. From the beginning of our existence, we fought and took down beasts much more powerful than ourselves and endured the aftermath that followed such tremendous undertakings. There is something very special and beautiful within us that allows our survival in spite of the atrocities we face.

AGAINST ALL ODDS

²³The Holocaust, the persecution and systematic murder of six million Jews by the Nazis under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, began in 1933 and continued throughout the duration of World War II. During this time, as Hitler ordered the execution of his Final Solution to annihilate the Jewish people, Jews of all nationalities (men, women, and children), across Europe were sent to death camps, where they suffered unimaginable terror on a daily basis.

²³ History of the Holocaust - http://www.museumoftolerance.com/site/ctmL6KfNVLtH/b.5879251/k.72C8/Timeline_of_the_Holocaust.htm

Torture, humiliation, starvation, and death were the realities faced by innocent people and their families, whose only crime was being born of Jewish descent.

Genocide is not uncommon in human history. It occurred before 1915, when the ²⁴Ottomans attacked the Armenians; in ²⁵Cambodia in 1975; and as recently as 1988, a massacre took place in the end days of the ²⁶Iran/Iraq war. This was a chemical attack that killed thousands of people and injured many more, most of them civilian. Those who survive atrocities like this have incredible power within that makes them capable of continuing through life and functioning normally within society.

The events that took place on the morning of September 11, 2001, in New York, and that continued on in Washington, DC, and Pennsylvania, changed history, but it didn't even put a scratch on the face of humanity. The world came together to mourn the loss of those innocent people who died prematurely. So many firemen, police officers, and other emergency workers heroically sacrificed their own lives so that others could live. In the end, many of them would become casualties of a senseless attack on the innocent. In the aftermath of the attack, a nation came together and sifted through the rubble in hope of finding survivors. Everyone else watched day after day, hoping there would be news of finding even just a few survivors.

This event in our history is one example of the undying spirit that carries us through life. Even when it seems that the pain is just too much to bear, and when suffering is at its peak, the human spirit comes out like a mountain breaking through the earth! It is what keeps us moving forward. The spirit never dies.

²⁴ Armenian Genocide - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_Genocide

²⁵ Cambodian genocide - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambodian_genocide

²⁶ Halabja chemical attack - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halabja_chemical_attack

THE HUMAN CORE

To get a better understanding of this part of our being, it really takes an open mind. Humans are, for the most part, close-minded skeptics who hold strong to their beliefs. Some are so stubborn about their beliefs that they become violent toward others who don't see it their way. I chose not to be one of these people. If it makes sense, you have my attention. I have made many discoveries in my journey. These new findings have opened doors to opportunity, freedom, and peace in my life. I have found the recipe for happiness and joy.

So what exactly is the spirit? Science hasn't been able to figure out this mystery yet, and religion only has their own opinions. Only two things are for certain: the spirit *does* exist, and it works in our lives whether we believe in it or not. The ultimate mystery of *being* defies all methods of our understanding and goes beyond any concept of thought. As I researched, I looked to my own life experiences and searched deep within for answers. My understanding of the spirit is this:

The human spirit is that part of us that is our connection with each other and to God. Therefore, the spirit is the definition of perfection. The spirit is also the core of our being. I believe that it is the spirit's purpose to experience itself through a human body. It has the answer to any question we may seek, but will only reveal truths in bits as we summon it for answers. Our mind and body seem to navigate it through life, and the spirit will go along willingly. I believe this is the *free will* we are given by our creator, and that is why we have to ask for its guidance before it steps in. It will protest actions that are not aligned with its purpose through feelings of guilt, remorse, and shame. Also, it will rejoice in celebration when it is properly represented through feelings of excitement, contentment, and satisfaction. So, it communicates with us through feelings. I have also felt a comforting warmth

when in direct contact with it, as it seems to be an invisible guardian in times of sorrow and sadness. The spirit is loving, unlike the ego, which has only one agenda: to keep me in a constant state of confusion and false pride or fear.

This is only my understanding of the spirit, but more is revealed every day as I pick up new information and experience more of life's ups and downs. I do know this for sure: my spirit has nothing to give the world but love. Everything that comes from it is loving, nurturing, and accepting. Speaking to other like-minded beings, I have had much confirmation of these findings. I can only go with what I feel is the truth that comes from the deepest part of my core. I have trouble accepting lies and stories told by others that make no sense. It seems that my spirit will not accept anything less than truth now that it is awake. It will vomit any senseless data. Some still follow the herd and ingest the rhetoric and propaganda to satisfy their ego.

"By the skillful and sustained use of propaganda, one can make a people see even heaven as hell or an extremely wretched life as paradise."

—Adolf Hitler

SLEEPING GIANTS

Social media has become a cesspool for propaganda and mudslinging. People with good intentions get sucked into vile conversations over their favorite political candidate or religion, not realizing that they are only contributing to the problem. Every time this happens to me, I sense my spirit taking a nap.

We have been misled to believe that we are separate from each other and from God. This division is at the root of all the problems we currently face, and has been the case all throughout our history. Our spirit only seems to come out when we face a

major event like 9/11, or during sporting events. In between, we are sleepwalkers roaming the earth in a state of unconscious animation. Our division will eventually result in the destruction of ourselves and our planet. It is only a matter of time.

We are very close to that tipping point, but there are many of us who don't believe in the lies we are told. There are many who stopped believing in those lies, and some may find truth within these pages and begin to look for more answers after reading this book. That is my goal. I want to make free thinkers out of lost souls. I want to connect with people who will do anything to save life on this planet. I want to connect back to the *all* that we are. I want to live in a united world.

With just the little bit of connection I have had with my inner being in so very little time, I feel whole again. I never feel alone. I love people from a perspective that I never had before. I appreciate everything life has to offer, and if my body were to perish at this moment, I fear nothing ... not the unknown, not change, and not even death. I am the creator. I am one with God, and all creation. I am that ... I am.

CHAPTER 8: OVERCOMING FEAR

"Fear is static that prevents me from hearing myself."
—Samuel Butler

A typical sickness among humanity today is the continued *denial* of our sickness. As we repress those qualities we choose not to accept about ourselves, we make it difficult to see our ego in all its manifestations. To overcome fear, we must first identify the cause of it, and that requires searching within for answers to questions long past due.

Two functions of the body are to grow and to protect. Both are necessary for survival. If you don't feed or nurture your body, you will starve, but if you don't protect it, you will become consumed by something else. Survival is a balance between the two. Throughout our evolution, we learned that it is our nature to be in a state of growth. Since you can't be in a state of growth and protection at the same time, protection is to be used only to aid you in moments of threat. Today, we live in a state of constant fear, and there is no growth. We cannot survive while being in protection mode all the time. If we are to continue on as a species, we really need to switch back to growth, or our extinction will be certain.

Living in fear is the worst thing humans can do, yet we do it all

the time. This is ingrained in us as infants, and as we grow older, it becomes a way of life. Our parents program this into our minds, and society takes it from there. Governments and corporations use fear as a tool to control our thinking. People do horrific things because of fear and become the very monsters they fear most. Some even enjoy the feelings inspired by fear and use it as a form of amusement. Some even fear God.

Fear is the root of every bad result and evil deed in our world today, and every day before it. There is nothing glorious about this human emotion, yet as a society, we have not only accepted it as being normal, but we have glorified its existence in every part of ours. The physical effects of fear can increase the heart rate, sweating, digestive problems, anxiety, and stress, and even cause death. Let's take a closer look at fear, break it down, and see how we have been overcome by it.

EARLY PROGRAMMING

Parents fear the worst, and with all the sickness that has plagued our world, you can't really blame them for it. It seems that you can't trust anyone anymore, but a child has to be prepared to live in this world. Unfortunately, there is evil in every corner of the world, and everywhere in between. To prepare one for dealing with harmful situations, it is my opinion you must make them aware of the dangers and allow them to adapt to the environment in which they live. I am not saying just let whatever happens to them happen, but children have to learn. Teaching them to be aware that some people in the world are on a path of destruction is better than programming them to live in fear.

Worry is a useless behavior that causes unnecessary stress, and that is *more harmful* than the demons one is worried about. It is no wonder that kids fear a boogiemán hiding in the bushes or the monsters under the bed. A lot of kids are afraid of the dark.

Fear of the dark, I believe, is related to a fear of the unknown, and that is something that haunts many of us as adults.

Preparation for a life of hard knocks helps one better cope with life as we know it. As a child becomes an adult, lessons learned early on guide that adult toward better choices. Parenting out of guilt or remorse is damaging to a young mind. It is a very selfish path taken by the parent who chooses this method. Most that do this find out later just how much damage it does to the child, as they become teens. The result of this method of parenting has led many teens down a very dark path.

We see it more and more in the media: a teen has committed suicide because they were bullied. Bullies have been around since the beginning of time. They only have power because they are feared by their victims. Only those with little or no self-esteem fall victim to the bully. Self-esteem begins at a young age. It continues to build or degrade as the child becomes a teen. By this time, if the level of self-worth is low, their vulnerability is very high. Fear plays a huge role in this transition period.

Understanding fear and the damage it causes is the first step to breaking the chain of sickness that has teens committing suicide before life even begins for them. These poor kids are so worried about what others think of them instead of discovering who they are or want to be. Children want to learn, and will, if there is a teacher in their lives who empowers them with knowledge instead of filling their heads with fear. I point blame toward the parents, only because they are the ones who do most of the programming. They begin the process with their own system of morals and values. Let's look deeper into this.

There are those who raise their kids in the church. By that, I mean they believe that the only way to salvation is to follow a fear-based theology that dictates that *you must kneel before one God, or you will forever pay with your soul burning in a lake of fire*. I find the idea of being God fearing to be contradictory to the idea

of a creator that made everything and everyone with love. The story of a jealous and angry God has been around for centuries, and some still believe this horror story. Why? Fear is engrained into our minds as children, and as we become adults, we teach it to our children, and the cycle continues.

FEAR-DRIVEN SOCIETY

We live in a world overrun by fear. Love is a fairy tale. The union of marriage is supposed to be holy and sacred, so much so that the divorce rate is higher now than it has ever been in history. Some still believe that marriage is too holy to allow gays to partake in that union. What are they afraid of? Could a gay couple actually love each other enough to stay together longer than a man and a woman? Silly, isn't it? Fear runs us dizzy in circles, and we couldn't even see the truth if it bit us on the leg. Truth is only seen by those who have the ability to see past the theology programmed into them by others. Those who speak the truth are ridiculed and quickly silenced, as if the truth is to be kept a secret.

The teachings of Christ brought fear to those in power. He told people to love and not fear. The religious leadership didn't want that, because without fear, the whole "angry God" theory would fall apart. So he had to be silenced. The real story is their murder of God's messenger due to fear of losing power. Now, people worship the messenger but ignore his message. Isn't that a mockery of Christ? Free thinking and self-discovery will break the cycle of lies that have us all living in a constant state of fear. Are we just too *lazy* to do this?

Fear has been a mind control tool used by warmongers throughout history. Drug lords have used it to control governments and communities around the world. Corporations use their fear campaigns to sell us their products and services. Fear is a tool used in marketing and political campaigns around the world. We

are being told what to fear by a picture box that we install in our own homes. There are two or more televisions in every home in this country. Some don't make enough money to eat, but they won't go without their TV. We can't miss the next school shooting or the maniac who kills his mother with a hammer and then goes on a killing spree.

Royal families, government leaders, financial institutions, corporations, and the media are all facets of our ego. They require our participation, through our conscious energy, to survive. We have given them the position of *higher power* over our own consciousness. If a higher power can control the nature of our fear, it can also create a fear among us that only *it* can defend us against.

"The people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders, that is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the peacemakers for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in any country."

—Hermann Goering

This also works on an individual level. The ego has only one desire: to be greater and more powerful than the true self. This is an illness that most of us aren't even aware of. This illness causes us to believe that we are separate from nature. This can explain the rise of dependency on technology and a lack of concern to the harm we are causing the planet. It could also explain racism, bigotry, and all other forms of discrimination, which lead to violent crime, war, and eventually, our own demise. This endless state of fear, confusion, and separatism in which society has chosen to live is a symptom of the ego creating a false threat. It is our collective consciousness that creates our governments and spreads fear, not individual people.

There are people who *think* they are free and independent, but are subconsciously too afraid to be free and independent. They will beg to be governed, and since they can't do it for themselves, they usually fall victim to tyranny. There are nations of people like this all over the world. We may be one.

"None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free"

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Most of us don't know how to face our true inner selves because we have lost touch for so long. Through our lack of self-awareness and failure to nurture our minds, we are responsible for allowing the sickness to make our lives more difficult and destroy our world. We are in charge, yet we blame everything and everyone else and complain of the poor results. Look at money as an example.

We give our conscious energy away to money, and blame the money. We say, *Money is the root of all evil*. Money cannot be evil because it is only a symbol and only carries the faith and spirit of the observer. We are the *observers*! Money has value because we say it does. We give it our faith.

We give control of our faith-based money to private corporations instead of our federal government, and we choose to do this because we fear the alternative. As a result, we feed a system that has turned us into slaves. If you think slavery was abolished, *think again*. It has only been refined and perfected to hide all the fine print right under your nose. We allow this to occur through a collective *unconsciousness*, and we made ourselves victims of our own creation.

"People will do anything, no matter how absurd, in order to avoid facing their own soul."

—Carl Jung

FEAR VS. RESPECT

So, is there really such a thing as a healthy fear? In my opinion, there isn't. Fear is *not* healthy. Fear is the absence of love, and with awareness, there is no place for fear. Now, some may say, *Fear nothing, what about bears?* It is true that a grizzly bear can kill you if you walk up to one. Knowing that, don't try to take a selfie with one. It's better to *respect* the bear and give it its space than to fear it. Respect is love. Fear and respect come from two sides of the same coin. If my choices are to fear or respect, I would choose respect. If you are eaten by one, then you didn't respect its space. If a bear walks into my home, my first reaction would be to worry, but if I see one walking up to my tent in the woods, I would have to expect that. To that bear, I am more of a snack than a threat, and one who happened to be in its home.

TAKING NOTICE OF THE FEAR AROUND US

Obesity in America is a huge health issue, but you won't see any fear rhetoric in those tasty hamburger commercials during the five o'clock news. Health care is newsworthy, but those who oppose affordable healthcare go the distance to push the ones who can't afford it against the idea of having it. Fear-based campaigns sell lies to those who are most needy and who actually would vote against their own best interest. Are people that weak in the mind to allow that to happen? You bet! Blinded by fear, we will do anything and hurt anyone, including ourselves.

We even have fear-based holidays. Halloween, enjoyed by kids and adults, is a family event. Who doesn't like a good ghost story told around a campfire? Fear-based entertainment is so popular that slasher movies have begat sequels that stretch to double digits. We are so silly that we even have a fear of other life forms. Fear

of the unknown is something almost everyone can relate to at some point in life.

Terrorists and terror alerts have worked the world into a frenzy. The purpose of this was to sway this country into a war with an invisible enemy. War, and the profits from it, can be a good enough reason to demolish and rebuild nations. Never mind the cost of lives taken, ruined, or destroyed. Fear-based propaganda is everywhere you turn. World economies are fueled by fear. Stock markets rise and fall due to fear, and the fear of losing it all has led many people to take their own lives.

No matter where you look, you can easily see that our lives are controlled by fear. Looking at all the things mentioned above, why would anyone want to live in so much fear? How do we even get up the nerve to leave our homes? A change of mind can and will set the world back on its way to Nirvana. It has been said that *when pain exceeds fear, change will occur*. How much more pain will mankind need to endure before enough becomes enough? How much more pain will *you* require before you have had enough?

"Fools live in fear; a wise man lives in strength."

—Yogi BhaJan

CHAPTER 9: CLEARING THE SLATE

"All changes, even the most longed for, have their melancholy; for what we leave behind us is a part of ourselves; we must die to one life before we can enter another."

—Anatole France

To begin this spiritual journey, I knew there were some things that needed to be addressed before a new life could ever begin. There were many things about my character I didn't like. I carried around a ton of emotional baggage. Some were things I really needed to address, but most was the trash of others I had kept with my own. My temple needed cleaning. As a child, my mom always told me to clean my room, and I was about to clean through forty-two years of my life in a few weeks.

It was time for me to face my demons. I had run for long enough. The pain of going on with more of the same exceeded the fear of change. It was time I got to know the *real me*. This was an inventory process that would expose all my character flaws. These are areas where I always fell short in my day-to-day affairs. I had myself believing that I was the perfect snowflake, and character flaws were things other people had. I never took the time to examine my own flaws up close. To clear the slate, I had

to begin with an inventory of all my behaviors, and that required a change of mindset.

A PERSONAL INVENTORY

I started with pictures of my childhood. I borrowed photo albums from my mother and meticulously went through them picture by picture. The process was simple, but very thorough and time consuming. As I looked at each picture to figure out my age at the time the photo was taken, every one brought up an emotion. Some were happy times, some not so happy. Most of those pictures brought up feelings of fright and loneliness. I kept a written journal of my findings and added every one of my observations.

After this process was complete, I had a written document and a to-do list of things I needed to work on. This was a list of my character defects. One by one, I started on that list. I am still working on that list to this day. It might take the rest of my life to complete, but as long as I remain aware of my thoughts and actions, I continue to work on correcting my behaviors.

One element of my character that I found consistently in my to-do list was *fear*. My whole life was consumed by it. I was afraid of everything in life and had put up a wall to block out everything that could harm me. This put a strain on me and everyone in my life. That wall had to come down brick by brick.

ASKING FOR HELP

I couldn't go another day living in a state of terror. My ego was in control of my mind and body, and my spirit was in a comatose state as a result of the fear. When I came to this conclusion, it explained a lot of my actions toward others. Fear puts a sleeper hold on the spirit, and mine was in a state of unresponsiveness.

The first thing that had to be done was to awaken that sleeping giant within me. To do this, I did the following:

I reached deep within to see exactly what my spirit wanted to experience in this physical body. I learned meditation techniques and started to practice them. As I made more attempts to contact my higher self, something amazing happened. I began to hear its voice through my thoughts! Then I began to feel again. Feelings of sadness, sympathy, optimism, peace, tranquility, gratitude, inspiration, security, affection, and many others overwhelmed me! I was alive again, and my spirit was very much awake. As I continued my conscious contact with that spirit, I was informed that more work was needed to completely clean the slate. My higher self was only there to guide me, but I had to do the bulk of the actual work. So, I went back to the to-do list.

LEAVING BEHIND RESENTMENT

The next thing to address is the resentment I held toward people, places, and things. Resentment can affect our lives in unimaginable ways. It manifests in our thoughts and actions toward others, even without our knowledge. I held a great deal of resentment toward individuals I owed significant gratitude.

“Resentment is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die.”

—Carrie Fisher

Looking at one resentment in particular turned my attention to my high school principal. He had said to me on a few occasions that I wouldn’t amount to anything good. I held in my feelings toward him in the form of a resentment. What I didn’t realize was how his negative remark at that time changed the course of my life in such a positive way. I wanted to prove him wrong, so I did

everything possible to do so. I ended up graduating high school on the Dean's List, with some of the highest grades I had ever gotten in all my years in school. I owe it to that man for bringing out the best in me. Was he sincere in his comment, or was he just placing a fire under me? Either way, I won as a result.

Another instance of my resentment put focus on a counselor at the Boys Club in Chicago when I was seven years old. My friend Frank and I would sneak in to the club because you had to be at least twelve years old to get in. His brother, Timmy, would go inside and place a block between the back doors to keep them open for us. Every time we were caught playing foosball, pool, or basketball, the same counselor would kick us out. No one else seemed to mind us being there as long as we kept to ourselves and didn't make trouble. That was until one day when we were walking back home after we were kicked out again.

Frank noticed a patch of mud next to the building and went up to it. He started to make a mud ball, and he threw it as high as he could toward the side of the building. He said, "Beat that." My competitive spirit couldn't resist, so I gave it everything I had.

This went on until a police car drove by and hit his lights. "What are you punks doing?" asked the police officer as he got out of his car.

Of course our answer to that question was, "Nothing." I had to be thinking, *Are you blind? We are vandalizing this building. What does it look like?* That would have only been a mind-fart, because all I can remember about that moment was fear. He took us both back inside and sat us in front of the same counselor who had kicked us out of the club an hour earlier. The counselor wanted to press charges against us.

The cop said, "Look, these kids are clearly bored, and boredom is the root of trouble." The cop asked why we couldn't just play inside the club when the whole point of the club was to keep kids

like us out of trouble. As it turned out, that cop went to that club as a young boy himself, and his kids went there too.

The counselor agreed to let us stay, but we had to clean up the mess we had made. He supplied us with buckets of soap and water, rags, and a very tall ladder. I was terrified by the climb and the movement of the ladder when I scrubbed the wall, but my focus was more on the reward: I wasn't going to be kicked out anymore! I held in my bitterness toward that counselor for all these years. Could that experience with the police have kept me out of trouble and out of jail all these years? I believe so. I owe that counselor a great deal of gratitude as well.

My father and I have always had friction between us. This friction eventually turned into a feeling of indifference toward him. I did, however, harbor resentment toward him. This resentment had to go. I had to forgive my father in order to move on.

Resentment holds you in a pattern of bitterness toward everything in life. Hanging on to resentment is like walking around with every piece of garbage you would ever throw out, strapped to your back. It keeps you from growth and sickens your spirit, as it did mine. When you forgive someone for their wrongs against you, what you are really doing is forgiving yourself for carrying around all of that garbage. You will never truly find peace in your heart or a path to a better life without doing this.

AMENDING OLD BEHAVIOR

Throughout the years of being in a state of unconsciousness, I did a lot of damage to others. I needed to right those wrongs whenever the opportunity presented itself. It began with those closest to me.

My father is in his late seventies, and the time to make my peace with him while he is alive is limited. I called him and told him I was coming to take him to breakfast and spend the day with him. During my childhood, he was always away working in

other states. We never had a chance to spend entire days together. When he was in town, he wasn't somebody I wanted to be around for very long either. Now, in retirement, he has a lot of time on his hands. I would bet he has done a lot of thinking on his own life. I say this because over breakfast, he had much to say to me regarding his actions back when I was a child. It was as if he was making *his* amends to me.

I listened to him speak of his thoughts and actions, and he answered all my questions in great detail. From time to time, he would choke up in emotion and a tear would break. I knew his feelings were sincere. He also told me of his childhood and the relationship he had with his father, which was very similar to ours. I told him that we basically don't have a father/son relationship, and if he wanted one, he had to begin building it. I would follow, but he had to be the lead. It made him very happy that day to hear me say that.

Today, he calls me regularly if only to say how proud he is of me and how much he loves me. My father is a changed man, and I can see it in him. He has become a *dad*. I didn't have much respect for him then, but now, I have a lot. Making a change that great, this far into his life, is commendable and inspiring. My dad and I still continue doing things together, and I really enjoy being around him. I know he enjoys the time we share together, as he will drop what he is doing to come out to me whenever I ask if he wants to come over. That experience with my father opened a door to feelings I hadn't had for a very long time. In fact, I didn't know some of them even existed. This discovery led me to more work.

The relationship I had with my ex-wife ended with me in a world of pain. I was so in love with her, or so I thought. When she finally had enough and left, my world crumbled as I spiraled into a pit of depression and self-annihilation. Over the next year, I sank deeper to the point of complete oblivion. I didn't want to live anymore. Nothing I did seemed to work until I finally sought help for myself.

After that, I stayed clean for a little while, but eventually I would have a drink here and there. I had remarried by this time, but my substance abuse was starting to show its ugly side again. I woke up one morning and decided that I was done. That was a moment of clarity that would change my life forever.

My ex-wife contacted me through social media after eleven years of absence from my life. Though I was married, I told my wife of the contact; I hold no secrets from her. I explained my need to make my amends to this woman who I had hurt for many years. I didn't need to lobby too hard, as my wife is a very strong and sensible woman. She suggested I meet her the following week. I did, and this is what happened.

I have to admit, I felt a little nervous, but then I remembered the experience I had with my father, and that settled my nerves. The feelings of guilt, shame, and remorse were about to be washed away from my soul for good. I took comfort in that as my ex-wife explained her side of the failed relationship. There were times I felt defensive, but a voice inside kept me quiet. The voice kept saying, *Shut up. You **need** to hear this.* And so I did. The things that I felt guilty about had no value to her. She had other issues with behaviors I still displayed with my current wife. To my disbelief, I carried that garbage behavior into another relationship!

That experience was eye opening and life changing. After she got out all her sentiments, I began to tell her of my spiritual progress and thanked her for allowing me to grow. She asked if she could call me to talk more from time to time as she was going through some hard times. I graciously agreed; this was a chance to correct my past behavior. I wasn't there for her emotionally when we were married, so being someone she could turn to for that kind of support would be my redemption.

That evening, I explained my findings to my wife and asked her how she put up with my awful behavior. She told me that her

connection was to my *spirit*. Deep down, she knew the gentle, kind, loving spirit that I had buried for so many years. She also went on to tell me that she had been dropping hints from time to time, but it was on me to pick them up and make the changes. I was already becoming a changed man, but was still unconscious of my actions, good or bad. So apparently I had picked up on some of those breadcrumbs she was dropping and didn't even know it! I told her it would take a lifetime to make up for my behavior toward her all these years. She said to take it *a day at a time*.

Making amends to those you hurt is a very pleasant experience for both sides. On their end, it gives closure to open wounds and heals emotional scars. On my end, it gives me the ability to let go of the garbage that kept me sick and stuck in my bad behaviors. To move on to a better state of consciousness, we need to correct the hidden state of unconsciousness. That is what you do when you make amends with another being. You are not saying, *I'm sorry*. But rather, you are saying *I am a changed person*. Not everyone is going to react in a pleasant way when you do this, so be careful how you approach others from your past life. You could do more damage than good, to them or yourself. Think about what you are going to do and how that can affect the other person. Sometimes a letter will do just fine. After you write it, read it to yourself and burn it. The point of this exercise is to acknowledge the behaviors that don't define who you are anymore.

The process of change from within isn't easy; in fact, it was the most difficult undertaking I had ever experienced. It was worth it because as a result I find myself more calm, content, and most of all, happy with my new self and my life. I am on my way to becoming the person I chose to be.

As a result of all this work, I have learned this: *To be where I want to be in my life, I have to examine each action and see if it's going to result in getting me closer to or further away from my goals. I do have some control in my life through the things I say*

and do. To meet my goals, these have to be adjusted to support the end result I am seeking.

“It is the highest form of self-respect to admit our errors and mistakes and make amends for them. To make a mistake is only an error in judgment, but to adhere to it when it is discovered shows infirmity of character.”

—Dale Turner

CHAPTER 10: THE POWER OF GIVING

"Remember that the happiest people are not those getting more, but those giving more."

—H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

“**M**oney will never buy you happiness.” Have you ever heard that? Some believe that is true, but it actually can. When you give it to someone else, it makes *them* happy. The feeling of knowing you just made someone’s day special will bring you happiness.

I used to ignore panhandlers because I thought that if I can get out there and earn a living, so could they. Well, it isn’t quite that easy when your life has fallen so low that you can barely feed yourself. What is a ten-dollar bill really going to do in my life today? Will it make me? Will it break me? Even if it is the last bill in my wallet, is that the *last* ten dollars I will ever see again? I know that I will make more because I have more. That poor soul holding that sign doesn’t know where his next meal will come from. I do, and it’s waiting for me ... at my home ... in my refrigerator ... next to all the other groceries I bought last week. I don’t even think about starving. When I run out of chips, I go to the store and fill another shopping cart. That poor soul may go for days without eating. It wouldn’t kill me to buy him a meal or

two. It will make his day, and that will make mine. Having the ability to help someone in need gives me an overwhelming feeling of freedom, power, and joy. It also gives me a sense of abundance. Even when I haven't worked for months and my savings are low, I still give.

My business is a seasonal one, and it is either feast or famine. I have payed close attention to the patterns year after year. I know them so well that I will take from the rich times and save for when I don't have so much. I am blessed in so many ways that I always manage to find work somewhere, doing something. I have a car and a truck with a trailer. I have many skills and can travel to anywhere the work is. I have a cellular phone and websites that make that phone ring all the time. This didn't happen all in one day. It took decades of working day and night to get where I am today. It is almost insulting when people assume I was handed a perfect hand of cards. I actually slept in my broken-down van for a short period of time. I know what it takes to rise above that. Nobody would guess that I suffered these hardships in my life, except those very close to me.

As for the one holding the sign, nobody knows his story either, except those closest to him ... and God. Some people believe that panhandlers are lazy or that they will only buy drugs and alcohol with the money given to them. Is it really that important what they buy? I used to think that way until I realized that what I am giving is a little bit of freedom to choose. Everyone has that right. Also, by giving up the scarcity mindset, a feeling of abundance replaces the fear of not having enough. This is the reason it feels so good to give! It usually results in *more* abundance.

Still there is a lot of self-sabotage that goes on. People, *including myself*, make a bunch of excuses when the opportunity to give becomes present. Though I am still working on this, it's human nature to want more, regardless of how much we have. The rule to remember is this: To get more, you have to give

more. It would seem unnatural, but this is actually true. The best way to overcome resistance to giving is to do it without thought. Whenever the opportunity makes itself present, reach into your pocket and give whatever you pull out. It doesn't matter what denomination that bill is; tell yourself, "There will be more," and just do it.

"The window you receive through is made bigger by the window you give through."

—Dan Kennedy

GREED BY DESIGN

So, why do we find it so hard to give to others when there is plenty for all to have? To answer this question, we have to step back and look at the bigger picture.

Our economic system has caused us to forget *who we are*. We are consumed by it, and our whole world revolves around it. People are constantly searching for fulfillment outside of themselves. This system of commerce has placed us in a constant state of fear of scarcity. It is the nature of this system to distract us from finding truth within ourselves, and it works as it was designed to. It will never give us time to look within because we are too busy trying to stay ahead of it. We don't have the time to look inside ourselves for answers, so we look for truth from those we feel we can trust (religious leaders, news media, government, law enforcement, etc.).

People reward themselves on a very superficial level: buying that new sports car or that fancy wristwatch or that vacation getaway. Most of us view ourselves only on a physical plane. Those of us who have become *higher powered* can see past our physical form and have made contact with the spirit part of us that is one with the universe and everything in it.

It is only then that we can look to others as being part of the whole. A better way of understanding this is like a mother giving a child money to buy lunch at school; a dad buying his daughter a car; a parent putting a child through college or paying a dentist to fix their teeth. That is easy to do when it's your child. But giving money to a stranger is not so easy because we view the stranger as separate from our family. However, when you are in touch with the universe you see *we are all one family*.

I struggle with this too, but it's something new to me. Putting an end to my old ways of thinking and bad behavior was hard to get used to because I was *conditioned* for so long. It was the only way of life I knew. After a year of making changes, it became easier. After three years, that became my new way of life.

Still there are more distractions. People value money over human consciousness. It isn't hard to see why. We all have to pay to stay alive. Everyone wants to achieve some sort of financial freedom, and many of us just want material things that we think will make us happy. We have hopes of winning the lottery, looking for ways to get rich quick. Some even sell drugs or prostitute themselves for fast cash. We sell *our souls* for money. We give money so much power instead of seeing it for what it really is: a tool.

"All money makes possible is for you to stop worrying about money. Then you have freedom to live your life."

—Paul Stanley

These words changed the way I valued money. Paul said it best. Money provides a comfortable means of living instead of just surviving. Still there are those who have enough for ten lifetimes and still want more. I can't see why some people worship money and not life. I am not saying I don't love having money, but I view it as a tool, a means to an end. It is hard to break habitual thinking, but with enough practice, it is possible.

A TRANSFER OF ENERGY

Giving has a tremendous power that is always underestimated. It unlocks one of the most powerful secrets of the universe that many of the elite have been using for thousands of years. Have you ever heard, *you reap what you sow*? There is a lot of truth to that. Contrary to popular belief, the rich are *not* greedy and selfish. They are actually very generous with their giving. They are very much aware of this law of giving, and by the nature of this law, they have found wealth.

I will go deeper into The Law of Attraction in the chapter on Natural Laws of the Universe, but for now we are going to look at the power of giving to receive.

If you focus on the good you can do for others, you will start attracting what you want. This happens when your focus shifts to all the positive things you want in your life. By giving, you put your thoughts into positive energy that you send out to the universe. When you focus on your purpose in life, things will seem as if they are falling into place as you achieve every goal you set. From a scientific viewpoint, the act of giving is basically an exchange of energy. Since *everything* is energy, love, joy, bitterness, anger, and even money is all transferred and returned. Energy has to flow and cannot be contained. The more you allow it to flow out, the more you allow to flow back in. Our system of economy works in this same way.

Keep in mind, though, as you are giving that the idea is to channel positive thoughts; that is the key. If you give more than you have to give, that could wipe out your resources and lead to feelings of fear and anxiety. That goes against the whole idea of what you set out to accomplish. Only give what you can and feel good about. Confirm in your mind that you will do more when you can. Don't let your focus shift to any expectation of getting something in return or how long it will take.

Expectations ruin the experience because you are setting yourself up for disappointment. You may not get back money by giving it. You may see the results in something else. Don't give with expectation. Give because it feels good to do so, and know that there are way too many who need help. You can't save the world alone. Pick a few charities that are important to you and help them, or just do it when the opportunity presents itself. I give in this way more often because it lifts me in the moment.

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

Giving isn't only limited to humans. There are many animals who need rescue. Keep in mind that they are God's little creatures too. My wife and I have rescued many animals over the years. One huge reward you get from a rescue animal is their undying love. All these animals needed the love of a human to comfort them throughout their lives. The love we get back cannot be put into words. We choose to rescue, instead of going to a breeder, because these animals were thrown out and abandoned. Although it seems having this number of animals can be overwhelming at times, we get through it. We don't have any children but we do have a large house on a huge, fenced property. We can also afford their veterinary care, if they ever need it. I will always open my home to a needy animal if I feel that I can handle it, even if only to find a loving home for it. This is just another way of giving.

I have also fostered a number of fellow human beings too, and I will continue to do so, but only if that person truly wants to improve their life and not waste mine. Giving to others doesn't mean you make yourself a doormat. That does nothing but bring hard feelings into your mind, which reverses the power you are trying to acquire. The spirit of giving should bring you a feeling of happiness and warmth, not ill will or regret. Do it wisely, do it

without expectations, and do it often. Always remember: the more you give, the more you get back.

“The miracle is this—the more we share, the more we have.”
—Leonard Nimoy

CHAPTER 11: YOUR THOUGHTS

"If you ever realized how powerful your thoughts are, you would never think a negative thought."

—Peace Pilgrim

Thoughts are very powerful. Anything can manifest itself into reality with enough thought. This is good and bad news. Worry is a negative thought and can bring to you the very thing you are worried about experiencing. Thoughts are the beginning of creation. Most of us think more about the things we don't like than things we want. The universe has many laws, and one of them is the *Law of Attraction*. This chapter will focus on the *power of the mind* and how it can change your life in ways you would never imagine.

ATTRACTION THROUGH THOUGHTS

First, to get a better understanding of this profound law, there are a few things you should know. The Law of Attraction works like physics or gravity. It is very powerful and invisible to the eye, like electricity or radiation ... and it is *very real*. It also works off vibrations we send out. If you are in a negative vibration, you will attract like energy. You will not like the result. Harmony is the ticket you will need.

Patience, belief, and trust are three elements that will nurture your seed (*thought*) into a magnificent tree (*reality*). Thoughts that you hold become your beliefs, and those beliefs set the boundaries, which control your actions. The good news is that you can change those beliefs at any given moment because only you have the power to edit your thoughts.

Like most people, I lived many of my adult years in an unconscious state of being. Going through life day by day, I was hoping the struggle would ease up at some point. It is easy to fall into this pattern of thinking when work is hard to find and the bills keep coming. This is a trap many people fall into. The laws of the universe work with the energy we put out. The Law of Attraction works with our mind and the thoughts and feelings we send out, consciously or unconsciously. So, if we believe we are worthless, we become that. If we feel rich, we become that too.

Choose your thoughts carefully. Everything you are experiencing now is a result of thoughts in the past. I know this is a hard pill to swallow for some. Nobody wishes for an accident, a health issue, or a hurricane to destroy their home, but the mind does set into motion the thought becoming physical reality. Negative feelings, such as fear, depression, resentment, hate, worry, or anger, only work to make us feel bad and obstruct the path to our serenity. They ultimately set the stage for negative things we *expect* will occur. Positive feelings, such as joy, passion, hope, excitement, gratitude, and love, work to *attract* positive results.

Celebrate the good moments in your life and you will experience more. Be grateful for the things you have rather than complaining about what you don't have. When you feel good about something, you are on the right track to a positive result. *Go with your gut feeling*, is a simple instruction toward success, not a cliché.

MAKING OUR THOUGHTS WORK FOR US

Don't allow mundane situations to affect your mood. You can undo any negative thought with a shift in awareness. Most of us can let a careless driver or rush hour traffic ruin our whole day. View it as a time to practice patience. Long lines are another a great place to practice patience. This can also be a time to notice and be grateful for the blessings in our lives. Keep practicing this change of thought, and you will feel a calm you never thought you could achieve!

Gratitude is the best way to start feeling good. Any time you feel like the world is crumbling beneath your feet, be grateful for the things you have, the people in your life, and the things you know. You will feel better, and your thoughts will move you into a better direction.

Having pets is also a great way to feel good. My dogs love me no matter what I do, smell like, look like, have, or don't have. The dog is *truly* my best friend. I have three that will lick the skin off my face if I let them! When I am sad, I usually do. They even lick my tears before they hit my cheek. I also have a cat who loves me very much. She is soft and likes to lick too. These animals I am blessed to have around me can change my mood in an instant if I allow them to. It always comes back to choice, and there is freedom and power in choice. Your thoughts command the universe. If that isn't powerful, tell me what is!

A CHANGE IN MIND; A CHANGE IN LIFE

Life is a play, and *you* write the script. You can do anything you set your mind to, and you can have anything you want. The mind is a super processor that can achieve things beyond anyone's understanding. If you say it is impossible, then it is. If your thoughts are focused hard on something that you believe

is possible, it will become your reality, even if others say you are crazy! Every time we say, *I can't*, remember that we have *chosen* that.

My mission in life has changed many times, and it will continue to change until I feel happy. Every time I feel unhappy with who or where I am, I reinvent myself and move in that direction. You can do this too, over and over (and over) again till the end of this lifetime! *This isn't magic*. There is actual work involved, but if you go into the work with the wrong mindset, you will not see the results you want. The problem is often never the real problem. The root of all problems is the way we see them. Attitude is 90 percent of the end result to any problem. How we deal with the issues we see as a problem is the determining factor to how things work out in the end.

A good example of this dates back to my early twenties. I had always wanted to be a rock star; that was my life's ambition for many years. I even went to California under management contracts, and met some very powerful people in the music industry. As it turned out, I didn't end up a career musician as I had planned.

I know what you are thinking: *It didn't work. So what?* To someone whose whole life was dedicated to being a musician, this can be a difficult thing to accept. That's when I realized I needed a change of mind.

I took the knowledge I acquired in California and applied it to a landscape design and built a business. It took off! I actually make a good living from that business. I get paid well, and my work is published in coffee table books all around the world. I even had a couple of interns who wanted to study under my brand. These interns found my work from across the world, and they came to the United States to complete their internships. Most of the work I do involves stone and rock. *Am I the rock star I set out to become?* I think so. It's all in your perception. Your

mind creates your reality, and only you can control it. (Or you can choose to run on autopilot.)

“Change your thoughts and you change your world.”

—Norman Vincent Peale

MIND OVER MATTER

The mind can actually heal the body. Disease is just that: it is a body in *dis-ease*. Stress causes more damage to our bodies than anything else. Laughter can heal the body and the spirit, so laugh as often as you can. If you are suffering from an illness and are focused only on the illness, you may be bringing on more of it without even knowing. Choose to focus more on being alive and well, and you will have better health. Your body is designed to heal itself.

The power to gain knowledge is everywhere around us. What we do with that knowledge is up to us. We possess the power to act or not. Use this knowledge, and it will empower you to become what you want to be in this life. We are walking power plants! We are energy at our core. Everything in the universe is energy. God is *source* energy. We are all connected. God is in all of us as we are all a part of God.

Are the results of your life what you want? Do they represent who you are? Do your thoughts and actions define you or who you want to be? If yes, good ... keep doing that. If not, how much longer are you going to wait to change it to what you do want? Only you can do that, and it begins with your mind and thoughts.

Never mind what you had or where you are now. What will bring you joy and happiness? Focus only on that. The trick is *focus*. When your focus is on the patterns that brought you to despair, you will get more of that. When your focus shifts to what you choose for yourself, you fall into a groove that will take

you there. This works in every area of life, relationships, health, wealth, finances, even cookies and ice cream! So open the doors to your mind, and keep them open for business, as your life is about to change!

“Once you replace negative thoughts with positive ones, you’ll start having positive results.”

—Willie Nelson

CHAPTER 12: THE POWER OF CHOICE

"If you want more, you have to require more from yourself."
—Dr. Phil McGraw

Choice is one of the greatest freedoms to have. Its roots branch out to every other freedom out there. Choice is a powerful tool used to create a life of happiness, fulfillment, and joy. Most people don't understand how this tool works or even where it is applied. The freedom of choice is used every day; from the time your foot meets the floor until the time you are back in bed. I view choice as a tool because it can fix situations in my life, but it is much more than just a tool. Choice is a power worth possessing (*and using*) to pave a path to freedom and success, in all parts of life. All that is required is insight and thought before your choice is made.

First, it is important to know that your choices have impact on everything around you. Whether or not you are aware of it makes no difference. Everything in life is interrelated in some way or another. Your creation will, at some point, affect something else. There is no room for fear when getting ready to make a choice. Fear will only become a distraction, and it will get in the way of choosing the life you have always wanted to live ... one of freedom, happiness, and power.

CHOOSING TO STAY OUT OF TROUBLE

I have a friend who can't seem to find his way out of trouble. He is a good soul, as I always feel the warmth of love whenever I am around him. His troubles began at an early age, and though he is an adult now, his attraction to trouble just won't seem to go away. I sat down with him and asked how he thinks he got to where he is. He told me that law enforcement is out to get him. Then, I sat quietly and listened to him as he explained the details of a few incidents where he was minding his own business and police officers stopped to harass him. After I had the details I needed, I asked him to close his eyes, take the first situation, and rewind the tape to the moment when the police came into the picture. I told him to freeze frame there. He did. I asked him, "What were you feeling?"

He said, "Defensive."

I asked, "What do you think they were feeling?" After going through the memory, he came to the conclusion that he could have made better choices dealing with the police.

Whenever I am dealing with the police, I always give them the kindness and respect they deserve. Police officers face the worst behaviors people can display. I have tremendous respect for these people. My perception of police officers is that of love. Therefore, my behavior reflects that too. To them, I do not seem to be a threat, and their behavior toward me is also respectful. I can honestly say I have never been treated badly by maintaining that behavior.

There are some law enforcement officials who start off in a very aggressive position, but that is their training. While some may take that way too far, if my reaction is to fight or speak in a way that reflects anger, frustration, or defiance, my situation will only get worse. They are humans too, and they have thoughts and emotions, like me. If you ever find yourself involved with law

enforcement, keep this in mind and see if your experience swings toward a positive one by simply making better choices.

DOING YOUR HOMEWORK

It is all about choices. Every situation in life comes with a decision phase and an action phase. During the decision phase, we have the opportunity to think. This opportunity is a chance to make the outcome work in our favor or work against us. Most people who have things go terribly wrong almost always skip this crucial step and jump right into the action step. Not thinking through their decision usually ends up working against them.

My wife and I enjoy watching TV over dinner. Two shows we like in particular are *Dr. Phil* and *Judge Judy*. These two remarkable people have an insight very close to our own. Judge Judy, though abrasive, has a realistic and fair point of view. She is a judge, and her venue is a courtroom. When people walk into a courtroom, they should be prepared to prove their case to the judge. Most who go before her are ill prepared, and in most cases end up losing their case to the one who is. This happens in real life too because her courtroom works like all others across the country. I always find it comical when people walk up to present their case, and the only piece of evidence they bring with them is their raw emotion.

Dr. Phil is another example of great thinking at its best. He takes a different approach. Like Judge Judy, he does much of his homework *before* each show. His staff prepares him with all the information they have put together, so he knows everything before even meeting his guests. Dr. Phil will ask the tough questions and play back video footage of moments in the decision phase, where better choices could have been made. Most people will see their own actions for what they are. Dr. Phil lets them see video of themselves in action. This has tremendous power because they

actually see raw, live footage of their mistakes and can absorb it when the heat of emotions has had a chance to cool down. The person experiencing the problem quickly sees the moment of error. They then have a chance to digest it. It becomes mindless science after that, but still there are a few who for some reason refuse to see the true nature of their wrongs.

THINK IT THROUGH AND HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR

Every creation begins with thought. We cannot skip this step because thoughts pop in and out of our minds all the time. When we act on those thoughts, we sculpt them into our reality. Thought is the foundation for choice, so making the choice that fits best requires attention.

Action is pulling the trigger on thought. Once we act, there is no going back, and I believe this is where most people freeze up. Their fear paralyzes their ability to move forward. Those who are successful are more afraid of missing a great opportunity than failure. Their only fear is that if they don't move forward, someone else will.

I think this way now because I am more confident in my decision making skills. I know going in that it may not work as planned, but as things change, I adapt to those changes and make the best choices possible. Sometimes I get the result I was looking for, and sometimes the results are not what I had expected. Either way, I forge ahead without regret. Sometimes I fail. *So what.* That just sends me back to more thought, only this time I have more to work with.

Understanding the power of choice seems to be an easy task, unless you have a close-minded view of life. If this is the case, ask yourself this question: *Do I deserve better than what I have now?* Choice is power. It will give you the most life has to offer,

or it will take you to some of the darkest places in the universe. There is one thing about choice that is hard to swallow: *it is always yours to make.*

"I think KISS has always been about celebrating self-empowerment. Celebrating the idea that anything is possible with determination and hard work."

—Paul Stanley

CALIFORNIA DREAMING ...

In 2002, I had an opportunity to go to Los Angeles with my rock band. A personal management company with ties to very influential people in the music industry took interest in us. They wanted us to relocate so that it would be easier to showcase the band to the industry. Also, being in LA would make personal contact easier on short notice. I had always wanted to be a career musician. Though music is one of the hardest areas in the entertainment industry to break into, if I had a chance at it, that moment would have been it. I had to make a choice ... either keep running my lawn business, which was doing well and making money, or throw everything into the wind and chase a dream.

Fortunately, my wife is a very strong woman who can do very well with or without me. She supports me in any hair-brained idea I choose to pursue. My thought was: *I have a full time job that only pays the bills. Now, I have an opportunity to make a dream come to life, and if I don't at least give it a shot, I will never know.* That thought would have haunted me for the rest of my life. So, I decided to sell the business and go out west.

In California, things didn't go as I had thought it would. Our manager had his hands full with other projects that were tied to big contracts. He didn't return most of the phone calls we made to him, except for one. The one voice message I left

him to inform him of the meeting I had with an MCA executive got his attention.

My time in Los Angeles wasn't going to be wasted. I had walked away from a business that was earning me a living. I had invested more than ten thousand dollars to go out there, and the expenses were adding up daily. Sitting on my ass wasn't an option at that point. I had made a phone call to my dear friend, Rob Haiber, who had put me in contact with this management company. Even though the manager wouldn't return my calls, Rob would. The night I called and left the voice message for our manager, I had spoken to Rob earlier that day, and he arranged a meeting with a personal friend of his at MCA.

The next day, I met the man who would change my life and the way I would see the business of music. I didn't realize it then, but I would also get a crash course in marketing. The executive I met at MCA graciously shared his knowledge and experience. His perspective changed mine. He and Rob went way back as childhood friends, and he took the time to explain the business to me in great detail. The meeting was very informal, yet very much down to business. I didn't walk out of there with a record deal, as my band mates were hoping for, but the information I *did* walk out with was priceless! He also knew our band manager and said what I already knew: *A manager that is working with artists that are already tied to contracts doesn't really make the time to pursue side projects.*

I was saddened by this realization. I had given up on a business that was working fine, only to wind up in a dead end. The real source of my sorrow was that I had let my wife down. She believed in me and my silly idea to sell the business and follow a dream. She never once doubted me. *How could I have been so blind?* It was going to take a lifetime to make it up to her.

When I got back to Florida, I started to look for work immediately. I didn't waste any time finding work. I eventually

went back to a landscape company that I had worked for just before I left for LA. I remembered the general manager of that company saying: *for selfish reasons, I hope things in LA don't work out!* I knew he would be glad to see me. He was, and even though the company had put a freeze on hiring, he immediately created a position for me.

I worked there until my debts were paid and I could stand on my feet. Eventually, I went to work for myself again. Using the marketing advice, I had acquired from that record executive in LA, I made another decision to stay in the landscape industry, but this time, I was going for a more artistic approach. I decided to go into *design and build* instead of lawn maintenance. That decision served me very well, and the business became quite successful. My time in Los Angeles was *not* wasted. I took a bad decision and made it right.

"Sometimes you make the right decision, sometimes you make the decision right."

—Dr. Phil McGraw

MAKING LEMONADE OUT OF LEMONS

Sometimes life just won't cooperate with even the purest of my thoughts. It hands over a pile of lemons. It is in those moments that I start looking for sugar and water! As it turned out, I did become a *rock star*. Many of my designs include custom stone and rock work, and that has become my trademark. When you drive by and see a front yard that swiftly grabs your attention anywhere in Florida, chances are good that it's my work.

At the current time, I have been thinking of changing careers *again*. As much as I love what I do, it is quite labor intensive, and I don't know how much longer I can continue doing it. Landscape design work has been my passion, and I really enjoy doing the

bulk of the work as well, but I know there is more out there for me. I also believe that no matter what I find that interests me, I will become good at it. As I am writing this book, I can't help but wonder, *will this be it? Will the next chapter in my life allow me to live as an established author? Will people accept my work and deem it worthy enough to read? Why not?*

CHOICE OF LIFE VERSUS LIFE OF CHOICE

Although choices are an everyday event, most of us don't really put much thought into making them. If people really understood the impact of their choices in their daily lives and the world in which they live, the world would be much different than it is today. Too many people go through life making decisions without a thought. Many of them *accidentally* became parents. I don't know of any way a woman can get pregnant by sheer accident. Irresponsibly, I'll buy that, but not accidentally.

These young moms almost always end up raising the child without the father. It is easy for a teenage boy to skip out on the duties of raising their own children. However, the mother's situation is much more complicated. She has to carry that child while it grows legs and arms, still inside her body. Next, she has to birth that child. Then, after all that hard work, it has become a *part of her*. Now she must take care of it. This can be extremely stressful for a young mother. So more often, the responsibilities of parenting fall on the grandparents. In some cases, this is good for the child, but not always. The only way for that young mother to make this right would be to put her own needs aside for that child.

You can make a good choice, or make a choice good. You can choose to do nothing, and you still made a choice. The power of choice puts the universe in your hands. Yes, it's that powerful! It can make your life great, or it can take you to hell. When it comes to choice, you almost always have one that fits every situation.

Whatever you choose to do in life, make it worthwhile and do it wisely. Life can be beautiful ... if you choose to see it that way.

“Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely.”

—Franklin Delano Roosevelt

CHAPTER 13: NATURAL LAWS OF THE UNIVERSE

"Every person has free choice. Free to obey or disobey the Natural Laws. Your choice determines the consequences. Nobody ever did, or ever will, escape the consequences of his choices."

—Alfred A. Montapert

There are laws that govern us outside of the societies we have created. These laws enforce themselves and need no outside assistance to keep us in line. They were in place long before humans ever walked the earth, and they will be in place long after we are gone. Our world and the rest of the universe obeys these laws, *without exception*. These are the *Natural Laws of the Universe*.

Mastering these laws will allow us to do incredible things, like floating huge ships carrying thousands of tons of cargo across oceans, or sending a ²⁷loaded 747 weighing in at 875,000 pounds into the air like a kite! Science examines these laws down to their very fiber, but yet organized religion blasts the

²⁷ 747 weight - <http://www.museumofflight.org/faq/how-much-can-747-weigh-when-it-takes>

scientific community for their efforts and explanations. I often wonder if the two may ever see their common interest in their quest for answers.

There are things beyond our understanding, as the mysteries of life are vast and abundant. We can choose to explore them or just live in oblivion. Free will is ours to practice. We can believe in anything we want ... unless we believe we can fly. That belief better be at the core of our being *before* we attempt it, and our first flight should be from a couch (just in case we can't).

Laws of the universe are very real and not negotiable. Take gravity, for example. This is a law that doesn't need an enforcer. It reminds us every moment we are awake. The laws of physics did not change for us to put a jetliner into the air. Aviation works in harmony with these laws, and that is why we are able to do it.

Sir Isaac Newton was an English physicist and mathematician. His philosophy led to understanding gravity and motion. One day, while observing an apple falling from a tree, he began to think about how the apple's velocity changes as it moves from the tree closer to the ground. Therefore, there must be a force acting on the apple to cause this change in velocity. Gravity is no secret today. In fact, it was in existence long before Newton discovered it. Yet this contribution to science opened the doors to many things we enjoy today. Newton did all this with a *thought*.

Telekinesis, extrasensory perception (ESP), and levitation have mesmerized mankind from the first discovery. All these things are very real, and although there is little to explain their mechanics, people have witnessed their occurrence. These are a few examples of life's mysteries that have been discovered. You can bet there is infinitely more yet to discover if we keep an open mind. There have been many philosophers who have discovered these laws and have tried to enlighten the rest of us, but some find it hard to accept. Believe them or not, they are what they are.

"The best way to predict the future is to create it."
—Peter Drucker

Thought is the first step to creation. You have to first think of it *before* putting action to it. The delay between thought and action always varies, but action begins with thought. The ways these laws react to our actions begins with our thoughts. You will notice that they all intertwine and are strongly attached to the energy of thought. These are the laws:

Law of Divine Oneness

Everything in the universe is related to everything else through life energy. We are all part of one, and together, we are all part of creation. It is quite a misconception to believe otherwise.

Religion teaches God is a separate being than we are; this myth has led mankind down a very dark path, and we are seeing its effects everywhere we look. The separatist mentality *defies* this law and can explain the hatred, bigotry, racism, war, and all forms of violent behaviors we afflict onto one another and everything else on this planet. If more people were made conscious to this law and followed it, how do you think the world would behave then?

Law of Action

This is very simple to understand. Nothing works with magic. To have a thought or dream manifest into reality, we must put actions behind it, supporting that thought or dream.

If you want to be successful and rich, committing crimes will not support that thought, and you will be disappointed. If your aspirations are to become a career criminal, that action will fit that thought, and it will manifest to your expectations.

Law of Vibration

Everything is energy, no matter what it is. All matter is energy at its core and is in a constant state of motion. Nothing ever sits idle. If you were to examine an atom, what you would observe would be protons and electrons moving in a circle around a neutron. Things that appear still also move, and this movement is referred to as vibrations.

Everything vibrates at a certain frequency. The higher the frequency, the more powerful the energy. The energy of thought is considered the highest form of vibration, making it a very powerful force in the universe.

Law of Perpetual Transmutation of Energy

Everything is in a constant state of change. Your thought energy is always moving into physical form, and whatever you are experiencing right now will also change. You can speed up the change and create a different condition, positive or negative, but there is no going back to the way it was.

Everyone has the power to change their own attitudes, perceptions, thoughts, or lives, as change is all there is. What you can do is accept it and not resist it. It has been said: *the pain is in the resistance*. There is much truth to this statement. We create our own misery as a result of our own actions. In nature, things either grow or die. If you are one who doesn't like change, get over yourself because this law is not going anywhere. It has always been, and it will always be.

One way you can apply this to your life is to look at it this way: Everything that exists is energy, and that energy is always in a constant state of change, from the nonphysical form to the physical form (and back into the nonphysical again). So when a loved one departs from our lives, it really isn't a loss of life. It is only a transformation of energy as they depart. *So celebrate their life, and take comfort knowing that their spirit energy is still very much alive!*

We all feel a sense of loss when we experience the death of

a loved one. In the moment, it seems like we will never see them again, but according to the *Law of Transmutation*, that loved one merely changed form. We can visit them anytime through our nonphysical state of thought or recorded memories. This law can ease a lot of pain during our most hurtful times.

Law of Correspondence

Our current reality is a mirror image of us, and we create it with our innermost dominant thought: as within, so without; as above, so below. When we harbor negativity and the thoughts that come with it, then our outer world becomes tumultuous and full of chaos.

Negativity in our thoughts affects us through many of these laws, and this is one of them. The result of negativity becomes self-perpetuating and can only be corrected by a change in perception. People say things like: *I smoke because it calms me, but my health is bad because I smoke.* A change in our attitude will set the change in our reality into motion.

Michael Jackson wrote a song about this law called “Man in the Mirror.” We have to be the change we want to see. If we want less violence, hatred, crime, bigotry, poverty, and wars, then it all starts with the man in the mirror.

To create the life we want by applying this law, we must do a few things. First, we have to look deep inside at every aspect: relationships, career, health, finances, etc. About any areas that are less than satisfying, we must ask: *How are my attitudes toward this area of my life causing this to happen? Why do I think this way? What is the root of this thinking?* This will set new beliefs in your subconscious mind, but these beliefs are *yours* and not preprogrammed ones.

The most important part of the whole process is to take full responsibility for everything in your life, good or bad. Own it all. Visualize your perfect world and focus your thoughts on that. Success in life is available for all, if you know the rules!

Law of Cause and Effect

For every action, there will be an equal and opposite reaction. This law dictates that chance, coincidence, and luck don't exist because every effect has a cause, and every cause has an effect. This law works with thought as well. Put out negative energy, and it will come back negative ... put out positive energy, and you will see positive come back.

I call this law the *Boomerang Effect*. What you throw out will come back to you. *What goes around, comes around, and, You reap what you sow.* Some call this Karma.

Like many laws, you can't manipulate this one either. Your choices are very important here because any choice you make will set off a chain reaction that will unfold as a result of that choice. Even if that choice is not to act at all ... it's still a choice. Keep in mind, life is energy and energy is always moving and changing, even if you think *you* are not!

Law of Compensation

This law is love-based and may work against you through feelings of guilt, anger, judgment, or an inward negativity. God's will for us is to overcome the ego and rid the mind of fear. This Law of Divine Compensation affirms that everything will be fine. Prosperity and abundance await those with a grateful attitude.

A great way of applying this law is to *view your job as a passion and purpose in your life*. A job is merely an exchange of energy while a passion comes from the deepest part of who you are. Going to work bitter because you hate your job will work against you with this law. Find something you enjoy doing, and do that. It was said to me: *If you love what you do, you will never work a day in your life*. There is so much truth to that. Work doesn't seem like work to me. I love everything I do, and I make a comfortable living doing what I love.

If you have something that you really love to do, you will

put more time into the details than someone just trying to make a buck. The more time you put into it, the more you will be able to give and receive from the universe. People violate this law and don't even know it.

Do you have a something-for-nothing-mentality? This law will make that a problem for you. Have you ever taken something you should have paid for? It could come back in ways of misfortune. The universe has its ways of getting even, and there is no use running from these laws, as they are everywhere you go to hide! The next fine or ticket you have to pay, the next time your car breaks down, the next expensive end result you face ... think about the Law of Compensation.

Law of Relativity

This law is simple to understand. Regardless of how bad we believe our lives are, there is always someone else who has it worse. Everything in our physical world is made real by its relation to something else.

You can't have up without down, left without right, good without evil, joy without sorrow. Everything in life just *is* until we have something to measure it against. We determine meaning in everything in life. It's all relative.

Law of Polarity

Similar to the Law of Relativity, everything is on a continuum and has an opposite. Without war, we wouldn't know peace; without bad, we wouldn't know good; without failure, we wouldn't experience success. The Law of Polarity includes a full array of expectations, ranging from one extreme to the other. By acceptance and surrender to whatever events, situations and circumstances arise, you find your way to the quality of life you want for yourself. Truly believe that all things work as they should.

If you accept personal responsibility for whichever end of

the spectrum you find yourself on, you will have achieved *self-mastery*. The only thing required to change pole positions is to make a choice and to put the actions behind the thought to support it. It all comes down to your perception. Because what you believe to be true *is true*. Pointing blame toward others for your own misfortunes will always backfire. First, you take away your power to change the situation to suit you better. Also, you defy many of the laws of nature that govern the universe.

Law of Rhythm

The Law of Rhythm keeps everything together and flowing smooth. Since everything is energy, and all energy moves and changes constantly, these movements and changes occur in rhythm.

Have you ever noticed when you hear music, you want to follow the beat or get an urge to dance? From a scientific view, there is a good reason for that. Seasons follow a rhythm, and so do cycles, stages of development, and patterns. When you become a master of these laws, you will know how to rise above any negative part of any cycle of change and land on your target thought simply by not letting negativity into your consciousness.

The Law of Rhythm is what allows us to walk and the birds to fly. It controls the tides of the oceans and the rising and setting of the sun. Without rhythm, nothing would align properly.

In a relationship, even if you are with the right person, things would go wrong if you are out of rhythm. In the body, if the heart loses its rhythm, the mind becomes confused. If the spirit loses its rhythm, then *we become lost*.

Law of Gender

The law of gender manifests in all things as sex, masculine and feminine. Both are needed for life to exist. The law of gender governs all creation. Males could not exist with the absence of females. Plants and trees would not exist without their seeds

or the ability to pollinate them. Also, the Law of Gender states that everything has its own incubation or maternity period of growth.

This is why it takes nine months for the creation of a baby. Life works in the same manner because of this divine law. Your vision and goals come to you faster than you think due to the gestation period.

People often start something, and when the results don't show up immediately, they abandon their thoughts and move on to something else without allowing the universe to do its work. People who are successful in life know it takes time to manifest dreams into reality. *Give it time.* Have you heard anybody say that? They are telling you that this law is real and works if you allow it to work for you.

"To believe in the things you can see and touch is no belief at all; but to believe in the unseen is a triumph and a blessing."
—Abraham Lincoln

This next law has more power than you will ever know or begin to understand. It has brought wealth and power to the elite who control our world. It has so much power that it has been kept a secret until recently. There is actually a book written on this law alone, called *The Secret*, by Rhonda Byrne.

For you to apply the methods within this book, you must first understand and apply the other laws of nature if you want to see the positive results. These laws work together in harmony, as all things in nature do. The Law of Attraction works with your thoughts. One can *think* one's way into a better life. This is why it is said: *Happiness comes from within, You can't buy happiness, and, You can have anything in the world if you set your mind to it.* Does this all sound familiar? Well, it is true. Creation begins with a *thought*.

Law of Attraction

This law establishes how we create the things, events, and people that come into our lives simply through our thoughts, feelings, speech, and actions. Like attracts like. When you send out negative energy through your thoughts, feelings, speech, and actions, you will receive the same back. If you send out positive energy, you will attract the same back.

The force of attraction is visible in everything around us, and if we are aware, we can actually see it working. Attraction holds together the cells in our bodies, just as it draws bees to a flower. It brings people together with common interests as it brings two souls together as one. It brings you to your favorite people, places, and things. Attraction is *love*. Think about this; if you weren't attracted to something, would you have any feeling toward it?

This works like a tuning fork. If you place a tuning fork in a room full of tuning forks, by causing a vibration in that first fork, *only* the ones tuned to that *exact* frequency will vibrate. I am a guitar player. When my instrument is out of tune with the others in my band, I cannot play music. The sound we all hear is a sour noise that we call a train wreck. Usually, somebody will stop playing and tell the one with the issue to tune up. Musicians are very sensitive to the Law of Attraction on a subconscious level. Even if the tuning is slightly off, the feelings between the band members become tense. All band mates start looking at their own instruments to see if they are the one who is out of tune.

In life, if we are out of tune, we have to stop the music too, so we may get back *in tune*. Sometimes it is our natural rhythm that is off. Most of the time it is our perception that is the culprit. That may be why we don't see the results we are receiving as those we were expecting. It is easy to say that the Law of Attraction doesn't work when we don't get what we want, but if you change the recipe to any formula, it won't work either.

There is a formula to this law that has to be followed in order

for you to see the results you want. Physics allows amazing things to occur, and also follows the laws of nature. Without knowing the formulas and abiding by them, none of that would be possible. The steps are not hard to follow. They are actually quite simple.

ASK – BELIEVE – RECIEVE

The first step is to *ask*. When you have a thought about something you want, the first thing to do is to announce it to the universe. Say it out loud and proud: “I want that car!” Think hard on that thought. Create a vision board, and post pictures of all the things you desire. The better the visual, the more powerful the energy you send out there. Find a picture of exactly the car you want, down to the color, options, and every fine detail. Post it on your vision board. Focus your thoughts on it often. Feel yourself driving it. Act as if you own it *now*, in that moment. Do this often.

The next step is to *believe*. Believe that you can have that car in your life, and then release the thought to the universe. Trust is very important. Make certain in your mind that you *are going to get that car*, and *the universe will find the way to it*. It is also very important to remove all doubt from your mind, as this will slam down on the brakes and your thought will shift to something else. Doubt is the killer of dreams.

Don’t bother to worry about how you will get the car. Know that you will for certain! This is what gets most people screwed up. They think that in their own situation, it would never be possible, and then that becomes their reality. The law works as it should. Any negativity in your thought process ripples through your first thought of choosing that car, like a rock thrown into a calm pond. You will get exactly what you thought you would: *nothing*. Affirmations can help reprogram your subconscious and will also describe your goals as being reached. It also places focus on that which you want and not that which you don’t want.

The last step is to *receive*. The best way to do this is to be grateful for the smallest blessings, ones that most people take for granted. If you eat more than once a day, you are doing better than one billion people on this planet who can't. If you have clean water to drink, be grateful because many don't (and that is a basic necessity of life). ²⁸Over 1.3 billion people have no electricity and ²⁹80 percent of the world's population live in poverty. If you have it better than these people, be grateful. There are many who have real hardships in their lives, just like those who went through the Holocaust or those living in a third world country.

Apply the Law of Relativity, and you will find much to appreciate about the simple problems that we face in America. Accept people and situations as they are. If you see something you don't like, don't complain or harbor negative thoughts or feelings about it. Make the changes within yourself that resemble those things you don't like. Apply the rest of the laws of nature, and you will soon have all the treasures your thoughts can dream up. The universe will keep giving as long as your window of acceptance remains open.

As a result of violating the laws of nature and choosing to create and live by our own set of ridiculous rules, we are experiencing the effects of our own actions. These laws enforce themselves without the need of an army. Nature takes care of its own through these set of rules. Whatever we choose to do with our free will, we are free to do. Consequences do come as a result of our choices, and not in the form of a punishment handed down by an angry God. Rather they are a reaction to our own actions.

These laws are not just for us to follow; the rest of the universe is affected by them as well. Maybe one day we will learn to

²⁸ 1.3 billion people without power - <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/world/world-without-power/>

²⁹ 80 percent of world population live in poverty - <http://www.globalissues.org/article/26/poverty-facts-and-stats>

put our silliness aside and finally grow to become like others in our vast universe that can explore other worlds and dimensions outside of our own. It seems like the only thing left to do at this point is continue on with the suffering we know or start the reprogramming of our own minds. This is clearly the way toward a better life we all seek.

Life is more than mere survival. We all do it as a means to an end. Wouldn't it be beautiful to wake up one morning to peace inside our own minds? How awesome would it be to notice and appreciate the smallest details in things we take for granted? Would you be disappointed to know exactly where to find happiness in your life in any given moment? How badly do you want to experience unconditional love?

God is just a word. To some, it means so much more. To others, it is only a figment of the imagination. Believe in God or not. There is something that ties us all to each other and nature. When we can accept this truth, we will have discovered the true meaning of life. To win any game, you must first master its rules, and only a *few* know them. The rest of us will walk into oblivion.

The root of all problems we face today, in every area of our lives, stems from one basic understanding that most of the human race has lost touch with. This is a very simple concept that we are all part of a one that makes all creation a whole. This basic idea is one of many natural laws of the universe. It is easy to see why we have fallen so far away from this and forgotten who we are as people of a loving society.

CHAPTER 14: REPROGRAMMING BEGINS NOW

“Transmutation, not presumptuous denial, is the weapon of the Master.”

—The Kybalion

Most people say: I’m not perfect, nobody is. Actually, we are. We are all a part of God and creation as a whole. God and everything in that creation is perfection. When we can realize everything in our existence is perfection, we are on the road to mastery. Now, some may argue: How can everything be labeled perfection?

To them I say: Go back and read the natural laws again until you see the answer to your question. To say that God’s creation is not perfect is saying that God is not perfect. The process that allows life to exist and governs all life is perfection. Just because we choose not to follow the laws of nature doesn’t make us any less perfect. We can be stubborn or even egotistical, but never imperfect. These laws are not designed to fail. For us to win at the game of life, we must learn and follow the rules of the game.

"When you realize how perfect everything is, you will tilt your head back and laugh at the sky."

—Buddha

We have been misled for many centuries, and continue to be, by all outside sources we feel we can trust. Our whole system of morals and values we live by needs to be reassessed. If they worked for us as we believed them to, the world would not be in the condition it is in. Denial of what we know is not the truth will not magically make it become truth. We may believe it to be, even think that it is the only way, but our unconsciousness will lead us to a very bitter end. To fix the situations that have gone terribly wrong in our world, we must begin making changes within ourselves.

In the last chapter, I went over natural laws of the universe. These laws will help us find the path to a much better world than the one we are experiencing. We are all walking, talking power plants. We also have the capability to process and store data. For any lasting change to take place, we need to reprogram our minds so they can channel our thoughts in a new direction. It is here that the reprogramming has to begin.

We must realize we are the creators of our own lives. There is a lot of power in that. Allowing ourselves to be misled has taken away our power to change anything we see as imperfection. There is a lot of knowledge to acquire in order to change our way of thinking. Our thoughts are the foundation of our creations, and they have been manipulated.

There is simply no good or bad; everything just *is*. If we label something as bad, or not good, we are confirming that it doesn't fit our thoughts. We must place an action that fits our thoughts in order for it to work as it should.

Computer programmers know this concept well. Every character in a line of code has a value. Each value is an action

within that line of code. A single wrong character in ten thousand lines of code can send everything into a state of malfunction. The software will not work in this condition until the programmer goes through the code, line by line, and corrects the error.

The mind works like a computer. It is actually a super-computer, and most of its super powers take place in the subconscious part of it. There are things that connect to your conscious mind, through your five senses, in everyday activity (day/ night, male/female, hot/ cold, etc.). All things that show obvious differences go right to the conscious side of the mind. However, things that are repetitious or monotonous will eventually tire the conscious mind and will be handed to the subconscious side to take over. Practice is a great way to send thoughts into the subconscious side of the mind. This will take time and persistence, as practice always does.

REPROGRAMMING EXERCISES

There is nothing easy about reprogramming the mind, but it can be done effectively with enough effort and continuity. A foul thought can be redirected easily into a positive direction through your awareness. When you feel the tension building inside of your mind, stop yourself and pause for a minute. Take a couple deep breaths. Exhale and empty your lungs completely. Then, inhale, taking in a deep breath to completely fill the lungs with air, and exhale again to completely empty the lungs. Repeat this a few times, and you will notice a calming effect over your mind and body. Once you are calm, change the thought.

If you are worried about something, ask yourself: *Did I do everything in my power to get a positive result?* If the answer is yes, let it go. Turn it over to the universe. Trust that it will work out as it should. Be grateful for having the things you have in your life. Be grateful you have a new way to live your life. Be grateful for the ability to find happiness whenever you wish. Gratitude opens

your window to receive and also keeps your thoughts channeled in a positive direction.

The beauty in all this is that you don't need to take a class or pay for a tutor to learn what you already know how to do. This just takes practice, and lots of it. You can change any preprogrammed thought or belief in your subconscious by simply replacing it with a new one.

IN CONCLUSION ...

American inspirational speaker and author Esther Hicks says that we are all connected to source energy. Everything we want can flow toward us if we are in a state of well-being. We can also block the natural flow. By looking for signs of a block, we can correct that condition and the flow will continue. Some signs to look for are sickness, stress, or disease. When our mind is in a state of wellness, we won't experience the opposite.

Mind power is a great resource to tap into, as we all possess such power. There is no such thing as a stupid person or idiot. I'm sure you are thinking: *You're wrong. I know many!* We see ignorance and stupid behavior in people all around us every day, and sometimes we are the ones displaying such childish behavior. This doesn't make us idiots. However, it does show that we are misinformed, misguided, arrogant, cocky, and very lazy. Being wrong is not a tragedy, and there is no real shame in that. We only need to own our mistakes for what they are and learn from them. It is a shame, however, if we continue making the same mistake over and over, without ever taking notice of the error in our thinking.

"It is a man's own mind, not his enemy or foe that lures him to evil ways."

—Buddha

When the spirit awakens, the mind will follow a different path than it was previously on. Prior to that moment, the mind was a slave to the body. Once the sleeping giant within us is awake and in control, the body becomes a vehicle. You still have to maintain it, but *you* become the owner, and it doesn't own you anymore. Your mind works better with the spirit, as these two are the nonphysical parts of your being that can define who you *really* are.

The spirit is loving, caring, and gentle. The body is demanding, fearful, and egotistical. The spirit is the real you. You are your spirit. Every action, reaction, or behavior you display defines who you are. That is why we feel remorse, shame, or guilt when we say or do something we regret. That feeling is the spirit *protesting* from deep within! We should listen to those feelings as they guide us to making better choices. That is the power the spirit has when we are aware of its presence, yet many of us avoid those feelings. Nobody likes to experience the feelings of their own guilt. But what better way to get our attention? The feeling of discomfort is much more powerful than words. Listen to your spirit.

"If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is ... Infinite."

—William Blake

Our perception becomes our reality, so to change our reality, we must apply the laws of nature to our perception and change the first thought. When we say: *My life sucks*, it does. If we want to change that, we must apply the Law of Polarity and find the other side of the experience we see as *not* sucking. Then apply the Law of Action to the new thought and soon you will find yourself on the other side of the pole where life doesn't suck.

MY DEAR SPIRIT BROTHERS AND SISTERS ...

Never live your life in fear, but always question your beliefs to make sure that they are your own. Don't be sickened by the things you see in this world. Rather, let your higher self guide you to change the things that raise those sick feelings deep inside. Awaken your spirit and allow it to show you how to live.

Use the knowledge you acquire through your new experiences. Your life will change when you do something different from what you're doing now. You were programmed to think and behave the way you do *before* you had the knowledge or power to do anything about it. Now, all that has changed. The power is in your mind, your spirit has risen, and your dreams can become your reality!

From here, clean your slate, open your mind, and start exploring! Your new life starts now! Get out there and live and enjoy life. You have nothing to fear now that you are ...

Higher Powered.

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