

# MOTIVATION AND SELF MASTERY™

## PART I

By L. Kay Wilson, JD  
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**Author, L. Kay Wilson, JD**

**“Be bold, and mighty forces shall come to your aid.”** Goethe

**“Courage is the ladder upon which all the other virtues mount.”** Claire Luce Booth

**“Life expands or contracts in relation to one’s courage.”** Anais Nin

This course is designed to create awareness and self mastery of; 1) how beliefs shape our lives and how we can re-shape our belief systems, 2) how negative patterns can be overcome, 3) possibility thinking and intelligent optimism, 4) risk analysis and overcoming fear of taking chances, 5) the nature of personal freedom and the opportunity to express the highest version of ourselves to the world, and 6) the honorable path of the motivated and self-directed man or woman. **When we are conscious, we are powerful. We get our power back by being more conscious and aware.** So, the bottom line is, this class is about **getting your power back.**

I am looking forward to working with you. L. Kay Wilson

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**A NOTE FROM KAY:**

**Dear Friend,**

Please write to me and let me know what you think of this booklet and whether or not it helped you.

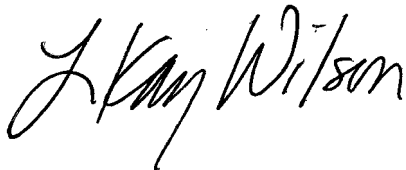
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Your comments and feedback will help me to improve these materials and gain insight into their effectiveness. It has always been my intention to create a simple set of guidelines for personal success. I wanted to make it as simple as possible, yet serious enough to do the subject justice. I hope I have done that.

How you manage your personal power will determine what kind of life you have. There are effective ways to manage your power, and ineffective ways. You have a choice to make every moment and those choices add up. The ultimate gift we have is the gift of choice.

I wish you the best on your journey to personal fulfillment. I wish you happiness, and peace.



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## **MOTIVATION AND SELF MASTERY:**

### **The Basic Model**

1. You are a work in progress and you came here to learn and to forge your spirit into the best version of you that you can be.
2. Your personal power comes from awareness, or consciousness, about how you make choices.
3. When you become conscious of your power to choose, in any moment, how you will respond to life, you will get your power back.
4. You give your power away when you focus on blame, act impulsively, or engage in addictive patterns.
5. You restore your personal power when you act consciously and responsibly in each situation.
6. Through discipline and consciousness, you can solve any problem.
7. Your life matters and you, individually, are an important part of the mystery of life.
8. You have a unique gift to contribute to this world and you must work to find your purpose in life.

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## INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS MOTIVATION AND SELF MASTERY?

In this course ***Motivation and Self Mastery***™, I define the primary skill of self mastery as discipline over one's self.

It is only through self mastery that we can amount to anything in life. It is through motivation and self mastery that we can become any thing and everything that we want to become.

This life journey that we are on is a magnificent opportunity to forge ourselves into the best version of our self that we can be. You are building your character every day by the choices you make. You decide what kind of person you are going to be.

When we are motivated to work toward our greatness, we use discipline to get there. If you want to do something, or get somewhere, or be something, you must use discipline to get there. **Discipline is about consistent action over time.** You don't have to do it all at once. Just take steps every day to reach for your goal. Even small steps taken every day add up and bring you closer to your goal.

Motivation comes from vision and belief in the possibilities of life. Vision is about having a clear picture in your mind about where you want to go. When I was a child, I constantly imagined myself as an attorney at law, arguing cases and winning. Some called this daydreaming: I was actually using creative visualization before it became popular. If you picture something in your mind, over and over again, you may attract it. This can be good or bad. Therefore, it is important to govern your thoughts and don't let them run away to bad places. Focus on the positive, to attract the positive. Focus on motivating yourself.

What is the difference between the student who reads her homework assignment and the student who does not? Motivation.

What is the difference between:

- the father who stays sober for his family, and the father who drinks or takes drugs in front of his children?
- the kid who helps the house run smoothly, and the child who gives his mother a hard time about everything?

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- the friend who calls you on your birthday to wish you well, and the people who just never seem to remember anything important about you?

MOTIVATION. In each example, the first person was motivated and the second person was not. The second person just didn't care for whatever reasons. More than likely, they were self absorbed and unable to see and respond to the needs of others.

You can do the most difficult thing in the world, if you are motivated.

Motivation is the condition of being motivated, or filled with a motive to act. A motive is a need or desire that propels a person to act. So, if you are motivated, you are propelled and have a great desire.

Mastery means possession of skill or technique, and self mastery is the possession of skill in managing the self, your self.

Motivation doesn't just come to us. We can't sit back and wait for it to show up. We have to actively look for it and actively feed our minds with inspiration and sustaining sources. For each person, the road to inspiration is unique, just as each person is unique. But the common thread is that each one of us must look for inspiration and feed the fire of motivation. This is a daily challenge, and one that is very important to manage.

Consciousness is the key to all real growth. Consciousness can be defined as the quality or **state of being aware**, especially of something within oneself. Self awareness is the key to improving your consciousness. To truly value your life and your life journey, you must try to gain more awareness about your inner workings. The more you are aware, or conscious, of what is happening inside of you and around you in the world, the more power you have to exercise freedom of choice as you live your life. You cannot choose freely and appropriately, if you are not aware of all of your choices. Consciousness makes you aware of your choices.

Motivation is of primary importance because without motivation, belief, or drive, we will not endeavor to have self mastery. Once we have a vision or desire of what we want to accomplish, we can then work on having the self mastery or discipline over ourselves to accomplish the goal. When we accomplish goals, we make progress in our life journey. It is a circular

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feedback loop. Each of these key concepts, motivation, self mastery and progress, feeds into each other. As we progress in our life journey, that progress gives us more motivation to accomplish even greater goals. As we accomplish even greater goals, we engage in further self mastery. This brings us further progress in our life journey. And so it goes.



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In any feedback loop, the cycle can go either way. In other words, if we go backwards or lose ground in our life journey, we may slide backwards in our self mastery and lose motivation. That decline could continue, because losing progress and losing self mastery feeds back on itself, unless we affirmatively stop the decline.

What we fail to realize as human beings is that at any, ANY moment, we can reinvent ourselves. We can decide to be a new person. We can stop the downward spiral and start to forge new habits. It all comes back to the power of choice. We can make better choices and change our life at any time.

Welcome to the magnificent journey into YOUR GREATNESS as a unique human being. Remember, **no one has ever lived, or will ever live, who is quite like you.** You are a magnificent being who is important to this world and this universe just for the very fact that you exist. **Take this moment to decide once and for all that you will work to become the best version of you that you can possibly be.** That is the purpose of the life journey, to reach your true greatness, forged through life experiences.

To forge something is to build, construct, fabricate, fashion, form, manufacture, mold, put together, or shape something. That is what you must do with yourself; you must shape yourself into a magnificent version of you. This is your great project – your purpose.

### **CHAPTER 1: THOUGHTS BECOME THINGS: HOW OUR INNER WORLD AFFECTS OUR OUTER WORLD**

We all have a lens through which we look at the world. This lens determines our perspective – how we see the world.

It is important to ask yourself:

- What is my lens on life, where did it come from, and how does it influence my outlook?
- How is it that I started to see the world the way that I do?
- Where did my attitudes come from?

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Your attitudes about life and about your possibilities came from the past. Most of the way we look at things comes from our experiences in past relationships with our parents, siblings and community.

Often, our lens on life, or our perspective, is shaped by:

- our parents
- friends and peers
- experiences
- the media
- society

How you see the world shapes how you interact with it. If you believe that the world is dangerous, you will see proof that the world is dangerous. If you believe that there are opportunities for you, you will see opportunities. **Your beliefs and perspective determine what you will notice and, therefore, experience.**

Below are some examples of how your lens can shape your experience:

- Watching TV news can lead to a lens that sees the world as a dangerous place. A fearful person will identify all of the evidence of danger while ignoring evidence of peace, prosperity and love.
- An immigrant to this country may see more opportunity than a person born here because of the lens that they have.

There are many possible ways to look at the world;

- Positive v. Negative
- Courage v. Fear
- Confidence v. Insecurity
- Trusting v. Suspicious
- Open v. Closed
- Making Effort v. Giving Up
- Striving v. Stagnation

Is there a better way of looking at the world? I think that there is.

The best ideas are those ideas that serve us and make our life better.

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So the measure of an idea's worth is its utility. Does it work?

**There is overwhelming evidence that positive thinking is more functional, more effective, and more enjoyable, than it's opposite, negative thinking. The left side of the column, above, is more effective and functional than the right side.**

As humans, we intuitively know that it is better to be optimistic than pessimistic. Why? Because we know that like attracts like. Negative people hang out with other negative people, complaining and moaning instead of doing something constructive. Positive people stay away from negative people and are attracted to other positive people. Positive people focus on taking action and moving forward. Negative people play the blame game and are crippled by their anxieties about the past.

It's quite simple: A positive person truly believes that there are possibilities in life for improvement and happiness.

A positive person believes in the possibilities of life.

This is not to say that being positive will solve all problems. What being positive does is give you the opportunity to make progress.

Now, it can be said that everyone, from time to time, is negative. What separates positive people from the habitually negative people is how they handle their own negativity by recognizing it as it comes up and consciously channeling it into something positive by focusing on the possibilities for action and improvement in each situation.

There is a saying that all people crash at some point in their life. Even positive people crash from time to time. The difference is that positive people don't allow themselves to live at the crash site.

We all know someone who is "living at the crash site" of whatever disappointment came their way instead of affirmatively putting themselves out into the world to find new opportunities. You may not have received the best parenting, but now is the time for you to "**re-parent**" yourself. We re-parent ourselves by consciously choosing how we will look at the world and our experiences.

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The best kept secret in the world is that **WE HAVE THE POWER TO SHAPE OUR THOUGHTS AND CREATE OUR THOUGHTS AS WE CONSCIOUSLY DECIDE TO DO. Once we change our thinking, we are on the way to changing our life.**

We can CHOOSE our perspective on life, and then realign our thoughts, actions, words and deeds to align with that perspective. We can integrate our total self so that we are effectively manifesting what we want in life.

Thoughts are things. Let me say it again. A thought is an actual energy form that vibrates out from your mind into the world like a radio wave. In fact, scientists routinely measure brain waves as they emanate out of the body. And as an existing entity, thoughts attract other energy and sync up with other similar energy. So, if you are “broadcasting” negativity, those negative thoughts will resonate with other negative energies, and guess what? You will attract more negativity to you, which will make you more negative.

Think of the universe as a giant mirror. It will mirror back to you what you send out to it, especially the thoughts that you send out.

Thoughts have power. Be careful what you spend your mental energy on. Be careful about what you spend your time thinking about. We can think ourselves into real trouble with circular worry thoughts, or fearful thoughts.

**It is possible to choose new thoughts**, once you realize that your old negative ways of thinking are not serving your best interests. To change our thoughts, we need to align our thoughts, words, and deeds with a new way of thinking that serves us.

With discipline and focus, we can choose new thoughts and retrain our mind to be more positive.

Each day we need to ask ourselves, what will I do today that will make my life better? What better thoughts can I have to keep me focused on possibilities, and opportunities for growth?

These questions are the beginning of reprogramming your mind to be more effective through positive, possibility thinking.

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## CHAPTER 2: POSITIVE THINKING IN ACTION

All of the major traditions, spiritual and philosophical, agree that it is better to be positive than to be negative. Why? Because, “like attracts like.”

Or “birds of a feather flock together.”

And because like attracts like, you can tell a lot about someone by looking at who they spend time with. “Show me a man’s friends and I will tell you his future.”

If you want to be positive, you need to seek out positive people, places, and activities. Remember, like attracts like. Go where there are people like who you want to be, doing what you want to do, and behaving like you want to behave.

The Golden Rule is the traditional formulation of this powerful principle that “like attracts like”.

**“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”** In other words, treat other people with the same amount of respect and compassion that you want to be treated with, because what you send out into the world comes back to you.

Some people feel angry about what people have done to them. They feel justified to give a little back to those who dished it out to them. Is this an effective way to live?

Should we do unto others as they have done to us? Should we treat others badly if they have treated us badly?

CONSIDER: If we treat others badly when they have treated us badly, then the average behavior spirals downward and gets worse and worse. Escalation ensues. We ratchet up the conflict.

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**PONDER THIS:** Doesn't virtuous behavior necessarily mean that we maintain our standards in the face of lower standards? That we remain positive in the face of negative experience and look for the good or look for the opportunity to make things better?

**Self Mastery** includes the idea that we have the self control to walk away from something that is turning ugly. We have the self control to not retaliate or hit back or make it worse. We have self discipline, and cannot be triggered into behavior that does not honor our highest self.

"It's not worth it" to engage the enemy and create more conflict. Peaceful people with self discipline refuse to participate in zero sum games of winner takes all.

We need to openly admire people who maintain their dignity in the face of trying circumstances. We need to decide that we will be one of those people who maintains his or her dignity in the midst of tough situations.

**"Let it go first."** The person who can let something go first is the person with the most self mastery.

**CHALLENGE:** **Begin to focus on gaining self mastery over your thoughts.**

The power of our thoughts is evident in our lives. What we think about ourselves manifests, materializes and becomes our life. You are where you are right now because of all of the thoughts you have had up to this moment.

When we are positive, positive things come our way and we notice more opportunities. Other positive people are attracted into our lives. HOWEVER, when we think and say negative things, we attract negative outcomes and self-fulfill a negative prophesy. We attract other negative people. Negative thinking is contagious.

Some examples of Negative thinking:

- "I can't do it"
- "I can't do anything right"
- "I'm a screw up"
- "I'm a loser"

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- “Everything I try goes wrong”
- “People don’t like me”
- “I never win”
- “I can’t catch a break”
- “The whole system is against me”

The KEY negative language:

I CAN’T  
I NEVER

When you catch yourself thinking these negative thoughts, think or say “CANCEL” and substitute a new, more positive thought:

- I can get this done
- I will always have plenty
- I AM \_\_\_\_\_(pick something positive, like healthy, sober, peaceful)

Positive affirmations are helpful because your subconscious mind takes everything you say literally and stores it and manifests it.

Say:

I AM STRONG  
I AM HONEST  
I AM HEALTHY  
I AM FREE FROM DRUGS  
EVERY DAY, IN EVERY WAY, I AM GETTING BETTER AND BETTER

Next, when you hear someone say something negative to you, “CANCEL” it and then substitute a powerful positive thought, I AM \_\_\_\_\_(fill in the blank with something positive).

**REMEMBER:**

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YOU ARE NOT ANY ONE THING, YOU ARE A WORK IN PROGRESS AND THE GREATEST GIFT YOU HAVE IS THE **POWER OF CHOICE**

### **CHOOSE POSITIVE THINKING**

On a daily basis, look at what is said to you and what you say to others and focus on the positive, look for your choices, look for possibilities, and let it go first when things get negative with others. Be a leader with self mastery by taking the high road of positivity.

## **CHAPTER 3: CHOICE POINTS AND CHOICE MINDFULNESS**

In any given situation, we will feel more secure and more in control when we realize that we have many choices.

“**Looking for choices**” is a skill that is critical to **Self Mastery**. Train yourself to look for choices, options, different ways of reacting and acting, and make it a habit to think in “choice mode.”

Translate your past actions into an analysis of the choices that you made at each juncture. Review the past by looking at choices made and choices overlooked or not taken. For every situation, there are many, many different paths through it. The universe is vast and infinite – it has no limits. There are limitless possibilities which are available to you in every moment of your existence. Learn to look for possibilities.

### **Moving Forward with Choice Mindfulness**

Part of the excitement of looking at the future is the feeling that there are opportunities for growth and happiness. When we feel that we have choices, we experience true freedom. Cultivating choice mindfulness enables us to simultaneously cultivate our feelings of possibilities for a fulfilling life.

### **Looking at the present with Choice Mindfulness:**

At each moment that you are conscious, you have an opportunity to experience the HERE and NOW. Every major philosophy or religion, from Buddhism to Christianity, to Native American spiritual traditions, speaks of the concept that an enlightened person focuses on each NOW as it

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occurs, living fully in the present moment. Choice-seeking mindfulness allows us to translate each NOW into what it is, a choice to be either conscious and powerful or unconscious and powerless over our impulses, addictions, or negative thinking.

You have choices about how you can think about a situation, react to a situation or behave in a situation. **If you are not aware of your choices, you are not free to make those choices.** The key to choice awareness is consciously looking for choices in each moment.

EXERCISE: As an exercise in disciplining choice mindfulness, try naming all of your choices as they occur in one hour. Start with each blink, each movement, each thought, each action, and say as you are doing it, "I am choosing to \_\_\_\_." Keep doing it for each increment of each moment.

As you label everything as the choice that it is, you will find that you are really at the center of your creation which is your life. Choice mindfulness gets our power back. It trains us to look at ourselves as creators and choosers of our existence. It disciplines us to be conscious of how we affect our world and the actions that we take.

### Analyzing Conflict with Choice Mindfulness:

Often, when we react quickly to a social situation, we react without thinking through our choices. Sometimes our reaction is out of proportion with the situation and our reaction then eclipses the original act to which we are reacting. In other words, someone says something to us that is unkind and we blast back with something even nastier, then the fact that we raised the stakes becomes the focus of the other person's fury and it just keeps getting worse.

Breaking the cycle of violence, including verbal violence, necessarily requires self mastery.

Someone has got to show leadership and **self mastery** by controlling themselves. Someone has got to show leadership and display a better way of being, and therefore leading by example.

Stopping to consider your choices before reacting is the first step to gaining that self mastery. Do you really want to be a hot head, manipulated into reacting by every person who hits your hot buttons?

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Who has the power in that situation? The person hitting your buttons has the power, until you decide to gain self mastery and get a hold of your reaction.

THE POWER OF THE PAUSE: As an exercise, start habitually pausing before responding to situations. You do not have to rush to respond. Slow down. Take your time. Powerful people do not let pressure to react quickly influence them. **Powerful people take their time.**

One of the biggest mistakes people make while confronted with a situation is RUSHING TO ACTION. Pause. Take time, and state that you need time, to consider your options. This is **self mastery**. Some of the worst decisions and responses are made too quickly. Take back your power by slowing down and pausing before you decide consciously what you want to do to respond to a situation.

### EXERCISE: Analyzing Past Mistakes with Choice Mindfulness:

In your life, as you went along you made choices and each choice contributed to where you are today. When you look back at your life, review the choices you made and also look at where you could have made a different choice. Each “mistake” you made represents a less optimal choice, and there were other choices you could have made that would have been more optimal. By training your mind to look at your choices in the past, you are preparing for the future choices you will make.

As you review past patterns, you will begin to see where you get tripped up and where you overlook other choices. This empowers you to meet situations in the present with more insight and thinking awareness.

If you are conscious of the ways that you get tripped up, you will have the power to overcome those triggers. Consciousness gives you power and the ability to make better choices.

### Analyzing Routine Activities Like Driving with Choice Mindfulness:

Anytime we are operating unconsciously, we are not being mindful of our choices and we are missing the NOW. As an example, car accidents are caused by mind-less-ness, people operating unconsciously, distracted, lost in thought, in their own little world.

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The next thing they are aware of is the fact that they were going too fast to stop in time and they crash. Almost all motor vehicle accidents are caused by people driving too fast to exercise choices when something unpredicted happens, like the car in front of you slams on its brakes or swerves into your lane without looking (mindlessness on their part).

Driving consciously means paying attention to the NOW-ness of the situations as they unfold before you while you operate your motor vehicle. While you are driving you are choosing to operate at a certain speed. You can choose to pay attention, or you can allow your attention to lapse by getting lost in some thought trance about work, your children, or some other issues. People in other vehicles are no longer seen as people, but as objects in your way. Traffic signs blur by, hardly noticed. You close the gap between your car and the one in front of you as you rush to get wherever it is you are going. This kind of driving is happening constantly. This kind of driving is why we now have car accidents routinely involving three or four cars. It used to be that two car accidents were most common kind of accident we would see. Now, on the highway given how fast and unconsciously people are driving, we are seeing multiple car accidents more and more.

Almost 40,000 people die on our highways every single year. That's the equivalent of the entire Vietnam war casualty list, EVERY YEAR. This is an epidemic. By any other standards, we should be outraged that this is happening. There should be petitions, caucuses, public awareness campaigns. The same kinds of things that are done for other causes with far less mortality rates.

Commit to conscious driving. Look at your choices as you drive. Choose your speed, choose the distance you keep between your car and the next one. Choose to use your signal light and to change lanes carefully after looking. Choose to yield to others and let them into your lane. Choose to look at other cars as other people who matter and deserve respect, because that's what they really are. When we see the car, we should see the people in that car. Be mindful of that fact that each choice you make in a car means the difference between life or death, literally.

CHOICE MINDFULNESS APPLIES TO EVERY ACTIVITY IN LIFE, from driving to social interaction to selecting purchases in a store.

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When you get in the habit of trying to consider and be aware of all of your choices, you become a mindful, conscious person.

### **Act like something long enough and it becomes a habit.**

A good habit becomes a discipline. When you are disciplined, you are exercising self mastery which will get you what you want in life.

Think about it. It's very simple. You became, over time, someone who made choices that led you to where you are today. Is your present situation a life sentence? No. You can act like a conscious person, make conscious choices and over time you will be a successful person.

When you look at your prior choices and mistakes, don't condemn yourself. You were acting with the consciousness you had at the time you made those choices. At this point in time, you can have higher consciousness and can make better choices.

Have compassion for your self as you review the past. Be gentle with that former version of yourself.

We renounce the choices and love the person. Don't disavow that former self. Don't condemn him or her. Look compassionately at him, for he was laboring under a lie, either a lie to himself or a lie told to him about his possibilities or his choices.

You need to really look at the why's and the lies, and after really looking to understand, commit yourself to making better choices today.

**You are a work in progress.** Your human spirit is magnificent and boundless. You have endless opportunities to make choices that lead you to the life you really want.

## **CHAPTER 4: SOLVE ANY PROBLEM THROUGH DISCIPLINE**

“This feeling of being valuable is a cornerstone of self-discipline because when one considers oneself valuable one will take care of oneself in all ways that are necessary.”

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M. Scott Peck, M.D., The Road Less Traveled: A New Psychology of Love, Traditional Values and Spiritual Growth, Simon and Shuster, New York, 1978, at p. 24.

Dr. Peck's important book, The Road Less Traveled, states that the key to solving life's problems is through discipline.

We have defined discipline in this course as "consistent constructive action over time".

Dr. Peck states, "[w]ithout discipline we can solve nothing." (Peck, 1978, p. 15). He goes on to say that "[w]ith only some discipline we can solve only some problems. With total discipline we can solve all problems." (Peck, 1978, p. 15-16).

Life is not easy and it is filled with issues that come up to challenge us. We are faced with problems on a daily basis. We can substitute "challenges" for the word "problems" but it is the same.

We are uncomfortable with "challenges" because they are difficult and bring up difficult emotions, like feelings of inferiority, sadness, fear, anger, abandonment, and self doubt.

This is part of the human experience. We are inside ourselves, alone, and we look out at a world that is filled with difficulty.

When confronted with difficulties, we often run by drinking, drugging or other avoidance tactics. We think we can outrun our problems, but find that at the end of the day, they are still with us.

### **The only way out of problems is all the way through them.**

As an act of self love, we must face our problems and challenges head on, or we will perpetuate the uncomfortable feelings of inferiority, sadness, fear, anger, abandonment and self doubt. **Self love is the willingness to do those things that serve your spiritual growth.** On the other hand, self loathing stunts your spiritual growth because when you don't care about yourself, you won't take care of yourself, and you will avoid your problems.

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**“This tendency to avoid problems and the emotional suffering inherent in them is the primary basis of all human mental illness.”**(Peck, 1978, p. 17).

Dr. Peck states that the way to solve our problems is to face them directly, to face the suffering that they bring directly.

He states, “let us teach ourselves and our children the necessity for suffering and to experience the pain involved.” Id. Further, we need to develop discipline to face life’s challenges. We must learn to get through the suffering to get to the resolution of problems.

There are four tools of discipline for getting through the suffering to find our way to a real solution to problems.

They are:

1. delaying gratification
2. accepting responsibility
3. dedicating oneself to truth
4. balancing

**“Delaying gratification** is the process of scheduling the pain and pleasure of life in such a way as to enhance the pleasure by meeting and experiencing the pain first and getting it over with. It is the only decent way to live.” (Peck, 1978, p. 19, emphasis added).

Quite simply, this means **DO THE HARD PART FIRST.**

Delaying gratification also means that instead of settling for the first thing that comes along, we have a longer term vision of something better that we want. We delay gratification so that we can prepare for and obtain the more important long term goal.

Brain scans show that the emotional part of the brain, the limbic system, is triggered by immediate gratification, whereas the thinking and reasoning part of the brain is more active when delaying gratification for something more worthwhile in the future.

For example, if you are out shopping and see some new shoes that you want, your emotional brain is stimulated by the prospect of purchasing the new shoes. The purchase will make you feel something like a “high”. However, if you were to delay gratification so that you can save up for a

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down payment on a house, the rational part of your brain is more active. Which part of your brain is going to be in control? You must decide for yourself. Just remember, shoes don't retain investment value, property does. One choice is about an impulse in the present moment, and the other choice is about a long term investment in your future.

**Responsibility** is the act of taking on the job of solving your own problems for yourself. It is also about looking at your own actions and your contributions to a situation first, before assigning blame to others.

**Repeat: Responsibility is about looking at your own contributions to a situation first and foremost.** It is also about looking at places where you have obligations you need to meet and meeting them.

**Dedication to truth** requires that we constantly evaluate our perspectives to see if they are accurate, and look for additional information to make them more accurate.

**Dedication to truth requires that we look for information that contradicts our position with an eye to facing up to whether our version of reality is true or not.**

When we see something that indicates our truth needs to be reworked, we need to revise our viewpoint. This is difficult work, as “[t]he process of making revisions, particularly major revisions, is painful, sometimes excruciatingly painful. And herein lies the major source of many of the ills of mankind.” (Peck, 1978, p. 46)

People are often reluctant to change their minds, preferring to stick to their original position, because change is difficult. However, the only way we grow is through change, which can only come from self examination. **Therefore, the key to growth is honest self examination.**

**Balancing** is the process by which we use our judgment and reason to regulate ourselves. “[I]t is necessary that the higher centers of our brain (judgment) be able to regulate and modulate the lower centers (emotion).” (Peck, 1978, p. 65). When you balance, you seek moderation. You consider all of the factors and weigh your options carefully.

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You need to know how to express different emotions at different times in an appropriate manner for each time by finding the right **BALANCE**.

There is a time for anger and its appropriate expression, just as there is a time for fear, caution, and mistrust. These “negative” emotions can help us survive.

Yet if we don't learn how to control these negative emotions, they control us.

Balancing is the process by which we learn the proper use and control of these emotions so that we are more effective and do not end up losing our power. **Anything that controls us has power over us.** We get our power back by consciously balancing our thoughts and our actions so that we are not blindly reacting to situations, but are **consciously responding**.

These four disciplines should be reviewed whenever a challenging situation comes up to see where you need to meet that challenge.

### **CHAPTER 5: THE POWER OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Blaming is very satisfying on some level and comes very easily to almost all people. We have all engaged in blaming someone for something.

Blaming is satisfying because it relieves us of the responsibility we have over our lives. “It's not my fault. It's his fault!”

However, blaming also takes away our power precisely because it makes us less responsible.

**Responsibility is the ability to choose our response.**

When you start to look at yourself and examine your inner motives, with honesty and compassion, you are on the road to **self mastery**

**CONSIDER:** If you blame others for your life or your situations, can you really be in control of your future?

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**PONDER THIS:** Is it more powerful to look at your own contributions to a situation before you point the finger at someone else? You can't control others but you can master yourself and make better choices in any situation you find yourself in.

**SELF MASTERY** includes the attitude of embracing RESPONSIBILITY and honestly looking at YOUR **OWN CONTRIBUTION TO A SITUATION.**

**CHALLENGE:** ASK yourself: **What am I ignoring about my contribution to this situation?** Answer this question honestly. Have the courage to look yourself in the eye and examine your actions. This is the **ONLY WAY TO GAIN SELF MASTERY.**

Get in the habit of self examination. In any given conflict, as a discipline, **look at your contributions to the situation first.** If it feels uncomfortable, you are probably getting closer to the truth. Stick with it, even though it feels bad. Learning to stick with it and really take a hard look at yourself even when it hurts is **CRUCIAL** to moving forward. **There is no other way to progress in life. We must face ourselves and our choices.**

**CHALLENGE:** Are you ready to honestly look at your life's major events or turning points and ask yourself what your contribution to the situation was?

**CHALLENGE:** Are you ready to **inventory the blame game?**

- Can you honestly look at all of the situations where you blamed others?
- Who are they?
- Are you ready to look at yourself and your choices with compassion?
- Are you willing to forgive others and move forward by making more conscious choices?
- When you look back on your life, was there a higher way of being that you could have adopted in certain situations that would have positively affected where you are today?
- Imagine that you are back there, and that you are operating in the highest good, what would you have done differently?

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**TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE** by getting your power back. Decide to command, control and take charge of your own life, now. The way to do this is to become more conscious about the way you act, react and operate in the world and take responsibility for all of your choices.

**EXERCISE THE GREATEST GIFT OF CHOICE:** You have the power to make better choices at any point in your life.

**LOOK BACK AND ANALYZE THE BETTER CHOICE:** Start to review your life, with compassion, to see how your “old self” use to do things. You can learn a lot about how to respond to the future if you review the choices of your “old self”.

**WHAT IS YOUR HIGHEST GOOD IN ANY SITUATION?** You know what you should do. What is stopping you from doing it?

**WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR?** What are the values that you want to communicate to the world by your actions? Remember, your life is your message. What message are you sending out into the world?

When you ABANDON BLAME, you TAKE BACK YOUR POWER TO CHOOSE a better way of being and doing for yourself. This is where the real power is. This is **self mastery**.

## **CHAPTER 6: HOW PEOPLE REALLY CHANGE: PATTERN RECOGNITION**

There are three integral parts to true change:

1. the ability to recognize negative patterns you engage in, AS THEY ARE HAPPENING;
2. the ability to organize your resources, thoughts and coping mechanisms; and
3. the ability to use your will power to take action or avoid a negative action.

**Pattern recognition** is a talent that can be developed. Pattern recognition describes the ability to recognize when you are out of control in the sense that you are giving knee jerk responses to a situation, like being triggered or having your buttons pushed. It is the ability to

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recognize when you are in a pattern AS THE PATTERN IS OCCURRING. This awareness then gives you the power to make better choices, i.e., changes, so that the pattern can be DISRUPTED.

Organization is a name for activity of sorting out your resources, information, and feelings. We can truly change our lives when we start to get organized.

We cannot truly utilize our resources unless we have some basic organization in place.

Will power is how we refer to the force that equals belief and commitment. It is INTENTION and ATTENTION. Your personal power is magnified when you are:

- willing to be honest with yourself and the world
- willing to live with feelings that come out of being honest, even if they are painful
- willing to express yourself
- willing to think things through
- willing to face things
- willing to suffer for something worthwhile

Willingness to face things is the most important will power, I believe. The mere act of looking at something gives you power to see it for what it is. The mere act of looking at something lessens its power over you. Consciousness increases your will power. Decisiveness also increases your will power.

If you really want to change, start working on pattern recognition, organization and will power.

We will start with **PATTERN RECOGNITION**. The way that we will start is by examining the past, because it holds important information about our patterns of behavior and the ways that we habitually interact with the world.

Understand, not all patterns are bad. But if we really want to know why our life has disappointed us, we will find that information by looking for negative patterns. That is the key.

Until we recognize a pattern, we cannot begin to understand it or have conscious command over ourselves to change or master that

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pattern. So the first exercise we are going to get into is to look at the major themes in our life.

Once you understand what is driving you (emotion, hurt feelings, insecurities, fears), you can begin to disrupt the negative pattern. In order to disrupt the negative pattern, you must use organization.

**EXAMPLE:** Sally often has feelings of inferiority come up because of the verbal abuse from her mother she suffered as a child, and continues to experience. Sally often overeats to comfort herself. She became very upset with her weight and decided to do something about it.

Through coaching, she was able to see that she would reach for the ice cream and other junk food after upsetting conversations with her mother on the phone.

Until Sally was able to pinpoint how negatively her mother made her feel (inferior, unloved, unlovable), she could not disrupt the patterns of her reactions to those feelings.

Sally began to keep a journal of her feelings and started consciously watching her frame of mind, carefully noting when she had negative feelings and what came up before each “negativity attack.”

Then, Sally started to disrupt the patterns she noticed by substituting new behaviors. Whenever she noticed she was feeling bad, she would identify the thoughts behind the feeling, substitute a positive thought and then turn on the radio and dance for ten minutes. She stopped buying junk food so there was nothing in the house that she could eat that would sabotage her.

For a while, she eliminated phone calls with her mother while she thought very carefully about limits she needed to set in that relationship. She realized she was desperate for her mother’s approval, which made her particularly vulnerable to her mother’s criticisms. She also realized, by reviewing the patterns in that relationship, that her mother used criticism to control her and had always been very critical without being helpful.

Sally consciously decided that she was going to become more independent of her mother’s opinion of her, set limits in the relationship and reward herself for disrupting the old patterns of coping with new, positive patterns.

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When she felt bad, instead of eating, she substituted dancing for a few minutes to music on the radio. Instead of allowing her mother to get critical without challenge, she started to communicate to her mother after each critical comment, “that was a critical and hurtful comment.” If her mother continued, she would communicate, “that was the second critical and hurtful comment.” If her mother said anything else that was critical, Sally told her, “that was the third critical comment. I am going to hang up now. We will talk again in a week.” Then she would hang up, despite her mother’s attempts to argue with her. Pretty soon, Sally’s mother started to change her behavior and Sally started feeling more powerful.

This example shows how you can **become powerful** by **recognizing negative patterns**, and taking responsibility for managing to change those negative patterns as they are unfolding.

In the prior example, Sally also engaged in Resource Organization. Sally consciously organized her resources to support her new choices. She did this by:

- getting rid of junk food in the house
- setting up a journal to use to write her thoughts down
- identifying a positive, constructive alternative to eating (dancing)

Whenever you are faced with a challenge or problem that you want to solve, you need to organize your resources to support your new direction.

Just as importantly, you also need to use your **will power** to remember why you are making changes and take the action that is needed. You must be willing to suffer a little of discomfort while breaking new ground. You must be willing to abandon old, destructive patterns. In combination, **pattern recognition**, **resource organization** and **will power** will give you the ability to make lasting change.

## CHAPTER 7: REASON, LOGIC AND RISK ANALYSIS

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### REASON and LOGIC:

Reason can be defined as the process of thinking in an orderly way.

Logic is the science of correct reasoning. Logic leads to understanding the connection between an action and an outcome. **Logic is the examination of cause and effect.**

**Cause and effect reasoning** examines how one thing may cause another thing to happen, or how one thing affects another thing.

**Comparative reasoning** is the process of comparing one thing to another thing to see how they are alike and how they are different.

**Deductive reasoning** is the process of starting from a general rule or principle and proceeding to a specific application.

**“Pros versus cons” reasoning is** where one considers the arguments for and against a choice, position, or opinion.

**Modal logic** is the process of arguing about necessity and possibility. This is about asking yourself what is necessary and what is possible.

**Decompositional logic** is the process of breaking something down into parts in order to better understand the whole.

In order to engage in logic, one must be aware of the dangers of ambiguity. Something is ambiguous if it is susceptible to two or more interpretations. Awareness of ambiguity enables a person to identify areas where there is a need for more precision. Precision is important because it is related to thinking clearly.

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### RISK ANALYSIS: Making Choices that Make Sense

Risk is defined as “engaging in any activity with an uncertain outcome.” This includes any of the following activities:

- asking for a raise
- taking on a challenging assignment at work
- sending your resume to a company
- rock climbing
- going to a new social group or club meeting
- investing your money
- going to a meeting where you don't know anyone
- starting a business

The above examples are examples of positive risk taking.

You don't know what the outcome is going to be when you take on the task, but you do know that you are willing to take the risk of loss in order to bear the chance of a gain. In other words, you believe that the possibility of gain outweighs the risk of loss.

Take the example of asking for a raise. The risk is that they will say “no.” So what? Nothing ventured, nothing gained. Clearly, the risk of someone saying no is outweighed by the possibility of him/her saying yes. Therefore, **it is worth it to take this risk.**

Starting a business is worth it because the risk of failing is outweighed by the possibility of having a successful venture.

Some risks are bad risks because they are too risky. What makes a risk “too risky”?

**A risk is too risky when a loss is more likely than getting a benefit.** Or, when the **gain has negative implications**, and the loss could be great, as well. And sometimes, even if you “gain” something, you are not actually gaining anything that is good for you.

Examples include:

- Drug use
- Illegal activities
- Dangerous activities

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- Unprotected sex

There is no real gain from any of these activities. When you take drugs, even if you don't get caught, you have still poisoned your body. What do you get out of it? A high? How long does that last and what good is it, anyway?

When you steal, what do you gain? Let's assume you successfully pull off a heist – you separate your victim from their property without getting caught. What did you risk? Imprisonment. What did you gain? Judas money. Blood money. Bad karma. And you're a thief.

Taking risks is a healthy part of human behavior. Mankind would not have advanced without taking risks. Needless to say, it takes skill to figure out which risks are worth taking. Obviously, some risks are better than others, or, to put it another way, some risks are safer than others.

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What is the rational way to assess risks and make decisions about risk taking?

### **All risk analysis starts by:**

1. identifying all of the options,
2. considering the possible losses (costs) of taking each of the options,
3. considering the possible gains (benefits) of taking each of the options, and
4. weighing the gains against the losses to come up with a preference.

Risk analysis is aided by information. The more information you have about your choices, the more likely you are to make the best choice. So gather as much information as you can about your choices when you are trying to decide which choice to make or which risk to take.

For each choice that is identified, the next step is to consider all of the possible losses or costs of making each of the identified choices. It is very important to be very honest and thorough during this step.

If the potential gain of taking an action outweighs potential losses, then taking the action **may** be a good risk. However, it may not be a good risk if it gives you a benefit but harms others.

Clearly, if the potential losses outweigh the potential gains, then taking the action is a bad risk.

Before we make a choice for taking action or selecting an option, we need to first identify all of the possible choices. If we fail to identify all of the possible choices, then we are operating with less than the best information in a given situation.

## **CHAPTER 8: CORE VALUES**

Every day that we are alive is an opportunity to show the world what we stand for and what our message is. Make no mistake, you are a teacher. You teach people with your life. Your life is your message. With the awareness that you are teaching others by how you live your life, comes the recognition that you have an important opportunity to consciously choose your message. You do this through your values.

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When you live your values, you teach others what it means to be honorable.

Regardless of the values of your upbringing, you can DECIDE for yourself what you stand for and consciously decide what you want to teach the world by your example.

### CORE VALUES:

What are the great virtues?

1. Politeness – We respect ourselves enough to act respectfully to others. Even when others are rude or dismissive, we act with dignity.
2. Fidelity – We are faithful to the truth and our word is our bond.
3. Prudence – We take care of our resources and we don't waste ourselves, our resources, our time or our money.
4. Temperance – We honor our bodies with moderation and balance. We don't engage in extreme behavior.
5. Courage – We push ourselves to be better, in spite of fear. We expand our possibilities by taking good risks to grow.
6. Justice - We get justice when we do justice. We are fair and even handed with others.
7. Generosity – We give, and by giving, we receive.
8. Compassion – We feel for the pain of others and we act with mercy.
9. Mercy – We give people a chance to be better and are gentle in spirit toward others.
10. Gratitude – We acknowledge what we already have with a glad heart.
11. Humility – We acknowledge that we can improve and that we are not better than others.
12. Simplicity – We make sure the basics are covered first and keep things simple and clean.
13. Tolerance – We live and let live because we are not threatened by anyone or anything.
14. Purity - We hold some things as sacred and we strive for personal clarity. We recognize the part of ourselves that is pure spirit, and also recognize our basic goodness.
15. Gentleness – We strive for peacefulness and let go of violence.
16. Good Faith – We act with honest motives.

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17. Humor – We learn to see how life is funny and how we are all on a great journey.
18. Love – We send and receive the greatest power of all. We love ourselves enough to grow and push ourselves to be better. Love is about being dedicated to the expansion of others' spiritual growth.
19. Patience – We allow things to go at the right pace. We refrain from pushing others and are tolerant of others.

### **What do you stand for?**

What are your first principles?

What makes us feel justified to deviate from our core values? When do we give ourselves permission to go off track or blow up?

At the point when we know that we might go off track or blow up, can we choose not to?

### **Why are Values Important?**

- A. Who taught us values?
- B. Can we teach ourselves values?
- C. Can we reinvent ourselves? Can we be a different way and create a new history?

### **How has Emotion Sidetracked your Higher Values?**

- A. How have Emotional Responses gotten in the way of good choices?
- B. How have your unmet needs influenced you into making bad choices?
  1. Need for affection
  2. Need to fit in and be a part of something
  3. Need for resources, money

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## CHAPTER 9 : DISCOVERING PURPOSE

Every person has a calling, even if he or she doesn't know what it is. Your "first" purpose is to become the best version of yourself that you can be. You are a unique individual. There is no one like you who has ever lived, or will ever live. No one can replace you.

The pity is that most people do not think that they are special. This is completely wrong. Every person is divinely unique. Each person has special gifts to give this world. However, it's easy to see how a person can end up feeling bad about herself. If you do not have support or loving parents, you would grow up feeling as though you don't matter.

At some point, you have to decide to work on your feelings of value and work on defining your contribution to the world. You may have to "re-parent" yourself, by giving yourself a good foundation of support and doing things that are good for you. You may need to focus on taking care of yourself and putting your needs first. You may also need to work on self esteem issues and consciously build up your **core sense of self**, which is a non-negotiable sense of value and worthiness that each person has.

Once you find your purpose, you will feel directed and motivated. Feeling purposeful is a wonderful feeling. Part of your self development must focus on finding your purpose.

A **good clue to what your purpose is** are the things you are good at. Our purpose is usually aligned with those things we are good at. Your purpose is also consistent with your life path or life journey. Life tends to put you in a place that is right to launch into your purpose.

## CHAPTER 10: GOALS AND GOAL SETTING

The most successful people in the world set goals for themselves. There is something about setting a goal that helps you to move forward and push yourself a little bit.

### Benefits of Goal Setting:

There are many benefits to settings goals. One is that you will suffer less anxiety and stress. Once you have a plan, you will feel

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purposeful and know what to do with your time. When you have a plan, you can start to get organized with your resources, including your time. A lot of times, we are anxious because of fear of the unknown: we don't know what is going to happen next. Set some goals and start working toward them and you will see your anxiety fade.

Having a plan is a relief. Just knowing that you are going to do something affirmative for yourself is helpful to your mental state. Taking control of your direction is a powerful way to gain self mastery and decrease feelings of helplessness.

Another benefit of setting goals is that you will have better concentration and focus. Your goal serves the purpose of helping you to measure all of your activities by whether those activities further your goal or hinder it. Having a goal also serves to focus your attention. If you don't know where you are going (i.e. have a goal), how can you get there (or anywhere worth going)?

**Having a goal keeps you focused** and provides **clarity and direction**. When your effort is consistent, you are more likely to succeed.

Yet another benefit of having a goal is to increase your self confidence. All successful people set goals for themselves. Once they meet a goal, they set another goal. A byproduct of reaching a goal is that you will learn that you are capable of reaching your goals. You will begin to have confidence that you can reach all of your goals. Success breeds success. Once you set a goal and reach it, you will teach yourself that you can succeed.

When you hit your goals, you will feel a sense of accomplishment. Goal hitting gives you a sense of ownership over your life and helps you become more pro-active instead of passive.

Another benefit of setting goals is that you will give a better performance. Setting expectations for yourself raises the standard for your performance. This is why people who set goals accomplish more than people who do not set goals.

Types of Goals:

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1. Personal goals: Goals regarding health, fitness, independence, self determination, self expression, personal safety and personal development.
2. Career goals: Goals regarding your career path, income, education and training, new skills and job transitioning.
3. Relationship goals; Goals surrounding intimacy, partnerships, friendships, renewal of relationships, repair of relationships, development of relationships, and creating positive relationship patterns.
4. Financial Goals: Goals that relate to financial security, budgets, your children's education fund, saving to own a home or start a business, and funding retirement plans.

### Criteria for Effective Goals:

In order for a goal to be effective, it needs to meet certain criteria.

1. Goals must be clear and specific. If it is unclear, you won't reach your goal.
2. Goals should be appropriately difficult and challenging. You need to push yourself a little bit.
3. Goals should specify a time frame. If you don't give yourself a deadline, chances are you may procrastinate and delay reaching your goal, if you reach it at all.
4. Goal achievement should be measurable. If you can't measure it, then you won't be able to tell when you have reached your goal.

Feedback and evaluation should be built into the process. What this means is that every once in a while, you should ask yourself, "how close am I to reaching my goal? What can I do better?"

### Developing Strategies to Meet Your Goals:

- I. Identify your parameters for success, and your Vision. Determine what success looks like. Write a description.
- II. Research the goal and what you need to do to get there. Do some homework on what successful people who have already reached your goal have done.
- III. Take a baseline measure of where you are at: Determine where you are and how far away from your goal you are. This gives you a baseline against which to measure progress.

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- IV. Plan to take action in increments over time. Set up a schedule of action so that you can systematically take steps toward reaching your goal.
- V. Take action. You must actually do something each and every day that brings you closer to reaching your goal.
- VI. Monitor and Adjust along the way. From time to time, take a look at (review) all of the steps you have taken, and consider what more you need to do. This gives you a perspective on how close you are to reaching your goal and what more needs to be done to reach it.

Strategies are the building blocks of reaching a goal. Strategies are the process of looking at where you are, deciding where you want to be, and deciding on what you need to do to close the gap between you and your goal, and then taking decisive action.

### Making an Action Plan:

Once you decide what your goals are, you need to put together an action plan to make it happen. Without action, goals are just dreams.

**With action, goals become dreams with deadlines.**

Focus is critical. Action provides focus. It's great to set goals and make plans, but you must TAKE ACTION. In order to take action, figure out what the steps are. Here are some guidelines.

There are certain methods you can use to make an action plan. Consider the following:

1. List all of the steps. Think of all of the activities that are required to reach your goal. List them on a piece of paper. You do not have to list them in the order in which they occur. Just brainstorm and write down everything you can think of.
2. Organize the list of steps into groups of action that are related. This organization part is critical. A lot of the action that you are going to take is related to other actions, which you can do together. Some steps also need to be broken down into smaller steps.
3. Make priorities of what needs to be done first for each group of action.

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4. Decide when you are going to accomplish each of the task groups. Use a calendar and set up target dates.

### **WRITE DOWN THE STEPS and USE A CALENDAR**

There is something very powerful about the act of writing something down on paper. Literacy is the ability to read and write and literacy was not always available to everyone. That's because it is incredibly powerful as a tool for focusing your mind and beginning your creation. Write it down and make it happen.

Historically, slaves and servants were not allowed to learn to read and write because of the power that would be theirs if they had the ability to transmit and receive information in writing. Writing and reading are extremely powerful tools of personal development.

**Use your literacy to reinforce your goals by writing them down, writing about the steps and processes and recording your journey toward reaching your goals.**

## **CHAPTER 11: YOUR CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE:**

We all have an affect on each other. We know this is true because we know that we are effected by other people.

The fact that we can affect others give us power. Any time there is power, there is responsibility to use it well. We can affect people for the better.

We can use our higher sphere of influence, circle of influence, to bring about positive change.

When you open yourself up and put yourself in positive circulation, your value automatically goes up. Why? Because you are out there exchanging energy with other people places and things and there is an aggregating, building affect.

This exchange is the currency of life. We are here to interact with each other. That is the point. Aha. We don't live in vacuum. We live in an ever growing, always changing social environment.

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**CONSIDER:** Wherever we find ourselves each day, we have a choice. We can look at our life as a valuable contribution to the world and work on improving our circle of influence for the higher good. We have the privilege of being able to make ourselves the very best that we can be and hold each other to a higher standard of conduct.

The highest conduct starts with:

- Kindness
- Patience
- Striving upward
- Honorably doing our best every day

There can be nobility in the humblest of occupations, because, every job counts and there is no one more noble than a person working honestly and earnestly.

We all affect each other. We are all connected. How you act affects the people around you. You can decide to uplift people and move them forward in progress on their own life journey, or you can interfere with their progress.

### APPLICATION:

Being responsible for how we affect others is a result of consciousness. When we are conscious that we affect others, we take care to make sure that we affect others in a positive way. It's as simple as giving someone a smile, or acknowledging someone's contribution or achievement, saying a "thank you", or being a positive presence by emanating peacefulness. When we are confronted with a difficult situation we can first strive to not make things worse, and cause no further harm. We can ask ourselves every moment, "is what I am about to do reflective of my highest good?"

### **10 Ways YOU MATTER to Your Community:**

You matter to your community because you affect everyone that you come into contact with. Whether you are conscious of it, or not, you are a teacher. You teach with your life. Your life is your message. You are a living example of your "message," whatever it is. The following is a list of ways that you matter to your community.

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1. YOUR IDEAS: You have ideas about how to improve your community. Share them with other members of your community and with community organizations. One good idea can start a revolution. You also have ideas about life and how to improve your life. Share your ideas to help others. Sharing ideas is how we help each other make connections about the meaning of life.

2. YOUR VOICE: You have a unique way of seeing the world. Use your unique voice and your unique perspective to express yourself in creative and constructive ways. Be heard by exercising your right to vote, the ultimate voice in democracy. Speak up when you see injustice. Write letters to representatives in local, state and national politics. Be dignified no matter what, as you speak your truth. Your community is waiting to hear from you.

3. YOUR LEADERSHIP: You have a personal circle of influence consisting of everyone you come into contact with everyday. By making good choices and behaving well, you can lead others to do the same by your example. Your emotional leadership in a tense situation can lead to a peaceful resolution.

4. YOUR ENVIRONMENT: When you take care of your property by keeping it maintained, and when you respect the property of others by not littering, you are keeping the environment in your community clean. You can make a difference by teaching the principles of pride in our environment. This benefits everyone.

5. YOUR ATTITUDE: Positive people attract positive situations and opportunities. Radiate peaceful strength as often as you can. Your positive attitude and dignified manner can uplift an entire community. Be the highest version of your self that you can be in any given moment.

6. YOUR PERSISTENCE: When you demonstrate perseverance and persistence to attain your goals, you show others what it takes to succeed. Don't give up and remember that what you do counts and influences others.

7. YOUR DISCIPLINE: Your disciplined mind, disciplined body and disciplined spirit contribute to the overall health of your community on multiple levels. By your disciplined presence you bring up the standards

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in your community. Your discipline can teach others, particularly young people. Show people your discipline by being consistent.

**8. YOUR INTEGRITY:** If you want justice, be just with others. Personal justice is about integrity, a code of conduct that is truthful, fair and dependable. Do what you say you will do. Be there on time. Don't let people down when you commit to action. Your integrity builds trust and good will in the community. Be just.

**9. YOUR SELF-IMPROVEMENT:** People who work on improving themselves are role models for others. We are all a "work in progress." All successful people keep learning and trying new things their whole life. Work on improving your mind by learning and reading. Improve your vocabulary, expand your mind, and the world will open up to you with more possibilities. If you can read and write, you are in the top percentage of people in the world. Read to children, teens, and adults from the books and resources you find interesting.

**10. YOUR REASON:** When you "think it through", you are using reason. Your ability to reason is the most powerful tool you have in life. Share your reasoning with others so they can learn to reason and understand the process of rational decision making. Use your reason to sort out values and make decisions. Use your reasoning skills to notice patterns and re-evaluate actions as you progress.

## **CHAPTER 12: SHOW YOUR CHARACTER: TAKING POSITIVE ACTION IN NEGATIVE SITUATIONS**

**"The only time we get to show what we are made of is when times are tough. Your character is defined by how you approach difficult situations." L. Kay Wilson**

**"Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved." Helen Keller**

**"If you are distressed by anything external, the pain is not due to the thing itself, but to your estimate of it; and this you have the power to revoke at any moment." Marcus Aurelius**

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**“What man actually needs is not a tensionless state but rather the striving and struggling for some goal worthy of him. What he needs is not the discharge of tension at any cost, but the call of a potential meaning waiting to be fulfilled by him.” Victor Frankl**

Anytime you are confronted with a difficult situation, or even a devastating situation, you still have the power to take responsibility for how you respond to that situation. You still have choices about how you show up and present yourself. If you respond poorly, you can make the situation worse. If you respond well, you help not only yourself, but everyone present.

Rule number one; don't make it worse.

However bad a situation may be, you could make it worse if you allow fear to take over and drive you further into misery or negative behavior. Any situation, no matter how bad it is, can be an **opportunity to show character**. You show your character when you act calmly and decisively, to make the situation better. The following points can help you get your power back and show your character in tough times.

1. Own the situation, be present to it; Do not run from the situation by drinking, drugging, abandoning ship or going into denial. Stick around and be of service. Don't leave others to the task of dealing with what needs to be done. Pitch in, and stick around. People notice your presence and willingness to lend a hand. This teaches other's how to show their character and strength. This is leadership.
2. Identify choices made: If it's a situation that involved decision making on your part, look at the circumstances of the choices that you made and why you made them. Don't condemn yourself. Look compassionately at how you contributed to the situation, if at all.
3. Commit to better choices: Once you have reviewed the choices that you have made with compassion, commit to making better choices. Decide that you will use more reason to think it through the next time. Say out loud, "I can do better."
4. Take immediate and appropriate corrective action: Take whatever immediate action needs to be taken to fix the situation. If

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something is broken, fix it or replace it. If money is owed, pay it back. Correct what has happened through immediate action. You know what you did. You know what needs to be done, even if it is not your fault. Pitch in. Make it right.

5. Find meaning, learn all the lessons: There is a meaning behind what took place. Consider what triggered you, if anything. Look for the “behind the scenes” meaning to the action, choices, and behaviors that took place. Maybe the situation is not your fault. You can still analyze it and learn from it. Why did people do what they did? And can they make better choices in the future?
6. Find perspective. Remember; this, too, shall pass. No matter how terrible the situation is, remember that all suffering eventually ends. You are a spirit, experiencing this world. But you are not defined by what you experience. You are a spirit, that feels certain emotions in this world, but you are not defined by those emotions. Your spirit endures beyond all circumstances. You are eternal.
7. Serve as Inspiration: Show your courage by being the calm one in a crisis. Be the person who is strong and reassuring. Take a constructive attitude toward helping others brave it out.
8. Refuse to define yourself by the situation. Don't let the situation define you. Remember, what ever it is that you are experiencing is just that, an experience. It is not you. Again, you are not an experience, you are an eternal being that will survive long past this situation.

Remember, all conflict or tragedy is an **opportunity to show your character and be of service to others**. Ultimately, we are here to help each other. We are here to learn and grow. We grow through challenges.

## CHAPTER 13: MANAGING YOUR FEARS

Fear and anxiety are about feeling that we are threatened and that we are not safe. Before we can start to master our fears, it is sometimes helpful to just try to relax a little. Consider using one or more of these techniques:

1. relax shoulders, neck and stomach

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2. take a few deep breaths, in and out just a little slower and deeper than normal
3. visualize a peaceful image
4. use a powerful positive affirmation, such as “peacefulness” or “tranquility”

Once you are more relaxed, start to take a look at what is bothering you. Break down whatever it is that is causing you fear into components. Identify what it is exactly that is making you afraid. Why do you feel threatened? What is threatening you or making you uncomfortable?

Once you identify what it is that is bothering you, just label it as “thought”.  
“Oh, I’m worried about the mortgage. There’s that thought again.”

Consciously remind yourself, “That fear is a thought. That is not me. That fear is just a thought that I am experiencing.”

Consciously remind yourself, “Other thoughts are possible.”

Consciously choose another positive thought. “I can get through this. I can find a way. I have choices.”

Use visualization to imagine that you are successfully doing the thing you want to do. Visualize yourself as peaceful and full of self possession and confidence. Feel what it would feel like to be confident and know that you have value.

**Courage is not the absence of fear but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear.** Ambrose Redmoon

**Courage is the price that life exacts for granting peace.** Amelia Earhart

**Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complex, and more violent. It takes a touch of genius – and a lot of courage – to move in the opposite direction.** E. F. Schumacher, English Economist.

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