



Make Your Limiting Past
a Limitless Future

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Introduction

You have a miraculous innate potential to advance humanity! Even though your past may seem to limit or denote less than a miraculous side, it does not change the potential that is in you. If you feel deficient, like your life is dull and shallow and you believe that you are unable to climb up, these feelings are not reality. They are *your* reality. Conditioned thoughts of your past are leading you. The miracle of everyday life is continuously there right in front of you unfolding every moment within the everyday. But you have fallen into the trap of equating your thoughts with truth. You follow these thoughts, and that's why life feels shallow, dull and lifeless. You like many others are owned or possessed—directed by your thinking. Reality has become deadened and dull because everything is reduced, dehumanized to a concept—quickly and easily described mentally and minimized. Then your thoughts take you to another place, a new focus. The depth of the last moment is lost. The depth and beauty, the miracle of life in each moment are minimized, subordinated to the next thing, the next thought.

You are a miracle, and all of life is a miracle. Childbirth and the flowers in your garden are miracles, but the joy, creativity, love, and the wondrous mystery of life's spectacles are covered up, lost. Quickly interpreted, labeled and reduced to one concept, one word, we write it off and begin looking for the next thing, the next stimuli. This is a continual pattern of human existence. A life full of activity but very little in the way of real progress.

People who struggle with a problematic past and want to grow past it seek out more reading, more information, and more ways to move upward. More is not the answer. What happens is the pattern mentioned earlier persists. Occupied by the shallow and transient, we miss the depth and beauty of life. We mistake activity for progress.

Techniques, hacks, top 10 lists of what “successful” people do keep you busy by adding more information but are you growing? Are you surpassing your painful past? Do you have the tools and the core strength to create the life you desire? Too easily we mistake activity for progress and in the end are disappointed. Life becomes dull and tedious, and usually, you blame yourself. You come to believe the story that you are deficient, inferior; you're not like everybody else, and this only perpetuates the effect of your problematic past.

Feeling deficient, inferior and fearful is not the dysfunction. These feelings are created *by* the dysfunction. The only way to move upward is to work at the level of cause. Inferiority, fear, and feeling deficient are the effect of believing we are weak, and powerless to do anything about it. We think that somehow we are limited as a result of our past. This eBook will show you how to make your limiting past your limitless future.

About this eBook

This eBook is not intended to meet the highly specialized needs of those suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). If you have any [symptoms of PTSD](#) seek the help of a certified professional.

This eBook is for those who are struggling with modern life. Managing a career, family, partner relationships and finances are challenging especially if you have suffered from abuse, alienation or dysfunction of any kind. Life carries on. Those who suffered through

a difficult childhood still have the natural inclinations and drives for creating a family, increasing their contribution, growing, evolving and developing into the best version of Self. As you grow older, your life should become more comfortable, more meaningful and more purposeful. Your relationships should improve and deepen. This eBook is designed to help.

Context

It is true that we are called to create a better world. But we are first of all called to a more immediate and exalted task: that of creating our own lives. Thomas Merton

Modern life poses a series of challenges that are ever increasing in both number and complexity. Since many of these challenges create pain and suffering, they are avoided. Sometimes we do anything to sidestep pain and suffering. Looking the other way, ignoring and avoiding are a way of life for most. When Carl Jung said *neurosis is always a substitute for legitimate suffering*, he was referring to adults who have grown up in a relatively sane and healthy environment, mostly free from chaos, disorder, and abuse. Even for these adults, life is challenging. Typically, well-adjusted, "normal" adults will go to great lengths to avoid facing life's challenges. They procrastinate, ignore, avoid and self-medicate to help with apprehension or pretending problems do not exist or pertain to *me*.

When the pain of avoidance becomes more painful than the legitimate challenges, we add another layer of neurotic avoidance. Then the neurosis becomes the overriding problem. It is only the very few well-adjusted adults who have amassed enough strength, character, and Presence that finally surmount life's challenges head-on.

If the well resourced, well-adjusted adults have difficulty mustering the strength to take life by the horns then what of the adults who suffer from a childhood filled with disorder, chaos, and abuse? The fall out from childhood trauma can be severe and long-lasting. The adverse outcomes add up. But maybe the worst consequence is being cut off from your deeper Self. That is, access to the strength and capacity to face problems and learn, grow and evolve through the natural process of triumphing over life's problems. Facing challenges head-on and finding solutions is what gives meaning to life. Challenges are the excitement of life. They bring latent talent to the surface. They bring forth our courage and provide us with wisdom.

Just as in school where problems are intentionally used as fuel for learning and developing. It is through the toil of confronting and resolving problems that we fulfill the human need to learn and grow. To satisfy the natural hunger for self-realization, we challenge the human capacity to solve problems. As the father of self-improvement, Benjamin Franklin said, *those things that hurt, instruct*. It is for these reasons that we not only should welcome but also pursue problems and challenging situations. The wise and successful people use all their grit to triumph over life's challenges. But alas, it is hard to muster grit when your soul is bruised.

Your Story

What is your story? Everyone has a story. Oppression, neglect, bullying or abuse of some kind touches almost everyone, sometimes from a young age. Psychologists report that chaotic and disordered homes are widespread with about 87% of families enduring some level of dysfunction. If you are unsure of your level of childhood trauma, I suggest you take the ACE Quiz. The [ACE Quiz](#) is a tally of adverse childhood experiences. The higher the score—up to 10, the higher risk there is for problems, disease, and difficulty functioning in the modern world later in life. We now know that 70% of our population has an ACE score of at least one.

Anyone who has had a disordered, adverse or abusive childhood is more likely to face vulnerabilities and limitations later in life. What a child sees his parents do day in and day out is conditioned in that child in the deepest fibers of his Being. Chaos, disorder or abuse of any kind is known as developmental trauma, and it conditions in the wrong direction, destructive over constructive. As a result, you are at risk for almost any type of physical health, mental health or social health problem that you can think of.

The physiology of children responds best to growth, constructive—an additive approach. Thus, children lack a frame of reference. They simply are not equipped to analyze or rationalize behavior. When trauma, dysfunction or chaos is present it is recognized as the only way, it's normal. Trauma and dysfunction stunts the growth and development of children. So the capacities to understand or respond appropriately to modern-day problems, injustices and negativity are skewed at best. Those who suffered from cruelty and abuse are unprepared to respond constructively to oppression and anger in adult life. At the very least we can say that they lack the resources to deal with these issues constructively.

Tension

As you progress into adulthood, you bump up against continual challenges in the workplace, partner relationships, all of life. If you are ill-equipped from childhood to function productively in a complex, challenging and ever-changing world, this leads to a rather unhappy, unfulfilling life. In fact, it perpetuates and adds to your collective developmental trauma. We could say on some level a deep frustration or tension exists because you know you are made for more. You have a sense of your destiny, sometimes quite vividly. It's a sensitive feeling and a picture you have of yourself—you know something about yourself no one else does. It's a fragile feeling that you hold close and private as you try to create your destiny. The tension comes from having the vision, but you continuously stumble. You feel inferior and frustrated, often belittled with an absence of direction. You dream of fulfillment but are never quite able to pull it off. This is why personal development is such a sensitive and guarded area.

You have probably tried things to grow yourself past these feelings—purchased self-help books; audio programs and maybe a few speakers have even inspired you. After the initial motivation and inspiration wore off you were right back where you were before wondering, *what could I do to stop feeling inferior and make a permanent change, feel like I fit in and move upward in life, become more valuable, make a larger contribution?*

Everyone has a fire burning inside. It's natural to have the desire to grow, improve, become more valuable, take on more responsibility and increase our contribution. Let's look at how we make it happen.

No matter how many books you read, programs you attend or even how long you can sit cross-legged; no amount of outer effort will help you create permanent change and move upward. You must begin at the level of cause. What is causing you to stumble?

- Do you struggle with the ever-increasing challenges of modern life?
- Do you feel that everyone is way ahead of you and you are just now at the starting gate?
- Do you feel different, always out of place?

These fears, inadequacies, struggles, and vulnerabilities manifest internally and work as a *modus operandi* a well-established approach or way of reacting to difficult challenges. From this vantage point, you can see the need to begin working with the inner causation. Fear, inadequacies, vulnerability, and inferiority are not the dysfunction. They are created *by*, the dysfunction. Without change at the level of cause we continuously re-create only slightly modified versions of the same world.

Stories

The First Step

Before we take any action, we must first determine where to put our valuable effort. You only have so much energy. Whatever you do your internal state, the changeless "I" in you is primary. Start here. Everything else you do is secondary. The *quality* of everything you do, the secondary will be determined by your internal state. You attract and manifest what corresponds to your inner state. Recognize that what you experience on the outside is a solid indication of what is going on internally. Your essence, the changeless "I" in you determines what flows into and colors *how* you do what you do. Essence determines the *quality* of what you do.

Blame, finger pointing—making people out to be enemies will only make the situation worse. Viewing others as wrongdoers cannot help but provoke a negative reaction. Dissonance will not carry you upward toward your destiny. When you encounter, difficult people don't judge. Pause and ask not, *what is wrong with you*—but rather, *what happened to you?*

Bill's Story

Bill was a typical child, sensitive, of average intelligence but by adolescence, he was problematic, impulsive, angry and defiant. He would skip classes, or school altogether. His impulsiveness spilled over into his social life. Bill's rage got him into frequent fights. He resented anyone intervening, giving him advice or pointing out how disruptive his behavior was or worse telling him to change.

Bill was deliberately distant. He refused to discuss his feelings or why he was angry and full of rage. His impulsiveness was severe and explosive at times, and it precluded even the friendly, warmest, nonjudgmental, non-threatening consultations.

Despite his maladjusted life as a child things progressed for Bill—marriage, children and it wasn't until ten years into his marriage and family life that the dysfunction he had been ignoring and sometimes adding to collectively since childhood came to a head. Bill's wife gave him an ultimatum, counseling or separation.

Counseling brought out what was boiling under the surface in Bill for all those years. His parents were the “do as I say not as I do type.” Discipline efforts were undisciplined. His father beat him and told him not to beat up his brother. Feelings of chaos, disorder, and neglect were a regular occurrence. The only relationship he had with his parents was one of being evaluated and corrected. *Clean your room. Make your bed. How can you live in such a pigsty? Brush your teeth. Eat your vegetables.* Bill was sent to a camp in the summer and directed to stay with relatives during other breaks. Even though his parents could have taken care of him, they chose not to.

Through counseling Bill finally understood that his fears, anger, rage, impulsive and defiant behaviors were dysfunctions as a *result* of developmental trauma. When Bill found the source of the symptoms that had been driving his behavior his entire life, he developed *his story*. He had undisciplined parents for role models, and he knew them only as custodians. He was dominated and controlled rather than nurtured and loved. Bill was not given the privilege to know his parents on the human level and now as an adult; he was struggling with the challenges of modern life. Bill blamed his parents for the feelings of insecurity, anxiety, worthlessness, and fear of loss. Constantly agitated he never experienced a sense of contentment and now he knew why. Bill finally understood that he lacked not only in foundational skills but access to parts of himself to build those skills.

Bill now recognized he didn't have the capacity his wife had for managing emotions, mood and subsequent behavior. Bill didn't have a clear understanding of the difference between distance and privacy. He lacked judgment of situations, the capacity to read the context and the finesse to maneuver nuanced feedback and complex interactions. This limited his ability to grow, realize his full potential and live a fulfilled life.

Bill was frustrated and riddled with tension—the desire to grow but sensing his lack of capacity. He wanted to become more valuable, increase his contribution, get promoted and grow as we are all designed by Nature to do. Bill felt that he was behind and it was his story that was holding him back.

Your Story is Not *the* Story

On some level, we all have a story like Bill's. Maybe not as stark, perhaps things were just missed, overlooked or swept under the carpet. Perhaps you lost a parent or loved one, and things went downward from there. Or maybe your situation was even worse.

You may believe that your past has contributed to your poor choices as an adult. But in fact, abuse and oppression happen regardless of where you are from. People endure disparaging treatment for merely looking or being different.

The point is your story—what happened to you, what you have endured, your experiences are *a* story, not *the* story. The more you tell your story, the more you own it. When you own your story, you identify with it on a deep, subconscious level. It becomes an

immutable chronicle of what will always be. Your memories absorbed into your sense of self and turned into a story become its own entity, a false you. You've elevated the power of a mere thought memory out of proportion. Identifying with your story keeps you in the past. If you haven't reconciled with it and moved beyond it, your story will continually reduce your power and minimize your potential. It becomes the limit to which you push. Your story becomes the point at which you yield to steep challenges and roadblocks, the point at which you stop. If you tightly identify with your story, you risk the fate that Oliver Wendell Holmes warned of—*dying with your music still in you*.

The Story

Society will tell you that if your parents have not given you the priceless gifts of self-discipline, self-control, dignity, love and security and the ability to direct your own life, you will struggle unsuccessfully to acquire them on your own. This projecting of one's ideas on others only adds to the confusion and suffering. It is dispensed from the same level of thinking of those who inflict childhood trauma.

Most people who experienced a problematic past believe they lost something. They overlook the fact that even before suffering through a traumatic childhood, they were endowed with a changeless “I,” your indestructible and unlimited power of essence. You may lose your keys or your wallet, but you cannot lose what you are. The changeless power necessary for self-realization is inborn. The source of all abundance is part of who you are.

The real story is more of what you show the world rather than what you *tell* the world. This is the story of how you transcended the trauma that has happened in your life. How you have come to terms with and triumphed over the dysfunction you were subjected to. You grasp with clarity, strength, and maturity; no one is to blame. You understand with compassion for everyone that most people are blind to what they do. They (including parents) act exclusively out of self-interest and their own limitations. They have no idea of the negativity that engulfs them and the pain and suffering that they spread and reproduce. It is the human condition, and the human condition is not personal. Understanding this Jean-Paul Sartre said, *freedom is what we do with what is done to us*.

With your current level of understanding, you sense the freedom beyond blaming. You now understand on a deep level that you are made for more. When you recognize the human condition you realize that nobody is deliberately trying to be hurtful and blame is ill-place energy. The abuse, disorder or chaos is only an outward expression of inner pain, struggle, and suffering. You understand that people can only operate in kind to their current capacities. Now that you know differently, you are free and empowered to create change. As you begin to create a better world for yourself, you recognize that you can influence a better world for all. Instead of creating more pain and suffering, you now transmute negativity, anger, and rage into a force, an energy that will create the changed world we all want to see. You become what is known as a “wounded healer.”

No matter where you come from life is challenging. Even if you had a careful and enlightened upbringing, you will be challenged by life beyond your current capacity. In the midst of the pain, suffering and unmet challenges, we grasp that we do not come to be fully developed, completely confident, with an intact self-image, self-disciplined, self-

directed, self-correcting and self-generating naturally from birth. A flash of insight hits you. Life's challenges are the impetus for growth. Embracing them, leaning into and facing life's challenges *will* make me stronger! The capacities to move upward, to swim upstream against the current of societal norms and mass culture must be honed and sharpened continuously—continuous growth in the spirit of mastery. You are now ready to grow. Not more information or more concepts. Deeper, not more... Grow at the level of essence. Grow your Presence power. In the words of Fred Rogers, ***life is deep and simple, and what our society gives us is shallow and complicated.*** Growth means knowing yourself on a deeper level and operating from that depth.

Inside Out

The Beggar

You may have heard of the beggar that was found sitting on a trunk helplessly pleading for money, food, anything to help him get through the day. When a passerby had nothing to give but asked him what was in the trunk he was sitting on, the beggar said, *I never looked in the trunk. There's no point in looking because nothing is in there.* The passerby persisted, *why don't you look in the trunk?* Finally, he relented. Upon opening the trunk, the beggar's eye's bulged, and his jaw dropped in shock and disbelief. Inside the trunk were jewels, diamonds, and gold.

Learned Helplessness

We are like the helpless beggar; conditioned, uninformed and disbelieving that we have the means, the capacity to help ourselves, even though we are sitting on untold wealth. Like the beggar, our helplessness is learned. We blindly follow the story we're told and the conditioning of our life. We look for external wealth, and we spin, squabble, backbite, claw and fight for mere morsels. We follow the communal message of negativity and scarcity, and it's completely acceptable, expected in fact. *They're all doing it!*

We have never looked inside to see our miraculous potential. Sitting on immeasurable wealth, we overlook the fact that even before our story began, we were destined. We turn our backs on the indestructible and unstoppable power we have been endowed. Your human essence is the indispensable, inherent life force available to create the life you desire.

But we live our lives as though the more we fight, resent, complain and force our way, the better experience we create. Believing the stories we are told, the communal narrative; we think mass culture has it right. Uninformed we mistakenly follow in a subordinate position looking outside, asking for wealth when we should be *creating* wealth from the inside.

It's easy to follow the mythical belief, the fallacy that success leads to happiness, external wealth leads to security and our circumstances create our experience. This is what we are *conditioned* to do. But this "following" way of life produces only illusions of achievement and a shadow of fulfillment. It keeps our wheels spinning; our lives are full of activity but lacking in progress. The resultant wealth is shallow, ephemeral, and thin. Just underneath the veneer are fear, anxiety, and stress. We can't reform our world or *the* world by forcing outer conditions to change because we are forcing this change on the effect rather than the cause.

A continual effort to add more is not only ineffective, but it is also unsustainable, and it threatens our well being and health. We mistake activity for progress, and we end up no further along after the effort. Every day we run in place exhausting ourselves by trying to fix the wrong thing.

The way out or the hand up here requires only a look inside. The real achievement, a life of fulfillment, happiness, and inner peace—the real wealth of life from which everything else is derived comes from within. Happiness flows *into* everything you do. Internal security is your true and authentic wealth and the life you experience comes from your thoughts.

The Absolute Truth is:

Happiness leads to success
Security in Self leads to wealth
Thoughts create our experience

Set the Tone for Growth

As you begin to look inward, there must be an overall quality to your growth. Only constructive energy will sustain and persist. There is no room for the destructive. We are building. Personify growth using these three approaches.

- 1. Develop a heightened sensitivity to your moods** and the unhappiness, anger, and rage or the apathy in you. Recognize your thoughts and how they ignite your emotions and push you to act. Does your thinking ever high jack you? Don't judge or label—good, bad; I like this, I don't like that, just observe, that is enough. Be vigilant. Pay close attention to your moods, what is coming up.
- 2. Notice the unhappiness, anger, and rage in society.** As you observe life, watch the news and read the headlines notice people fighting over ideas, opinions, and positions held. Ask yourself; do these ideas and opinions matter? Are these people leading their lives or are their thoughts leading them? Don't judge, recognize. Just seeing it is enough.
- 3. View yourself with compassion.** Understand that your shortcomings and struggles are part of the human condition you are witnessing. View others in the same light. They are not evil just as you are not evil. They are lost, unenlightened and unable to manifest anything higher than their current level of awareness. Nobody tries to be wicked. What you are seeing is an outward expression of inner pain, feelings of inadequacy, struggle, and suffering, a sense of being lost and left behind...and total unawareness. When you recognize anger, rage, and negativity in you, you haven't failed. You have succeeded, and now you know how to move upward.

For you, forward movement is defined as constructive and useful not destructive and destroying. The blueprint for looking at the human condition is something I learned early in my development as a coach: *Everyone is dealing with something you know nothing about*

Lead Your Life

The most important knowledge is that which guides the way you lead your life. Leo Tolstoy

Lead Don't Follow

The word leadership has been conceptualized to death. Mention leadership and what comes to mind is a pre-conceived notion of a CEO in a three-piece suit or a position in the C-suite. The human aspect of leadership is lost under a mound of concepts. Even Webster defines leadership as a position or office. Years of theorizing and conceptualizing by academics and researchers have de-humanized the idea of leadership.

Since it is a demonstrated fact that the power of leadership comes from the individual, I am reconnecting leader with the human. It involves more humanity than concept—one who leads from their indestructible and changeless “I,” the human endowment of essence. You were a leader long before you had a story. You know that following means conformity, commodity, status quo, and dullness. You are comfortable moving against cultural norms and communal negativity, and you write your own script. You grasp that leadership from essence is the one thing that can change everything. Your limiting past becomes a limitless future when operating from your “essence leadership.”

Be Your Own Thought Leader

Thoughts turn into words; words give rise to emotions and emotions drive behavior and your physiology—your make-up, the functioning Self!

You may feel that shifting your thinking is a small, insignificant thing. But it is the most significant and most powerful change you can make. It literally will transform your life.

[Cleveland Clinic Researchers](#) found that each person has an average of 60,000 thoughts each day. That's one thought per second, non-stop all day-everyday. Also, those thoughts were found to be completely repetitive; the same thoughts repeated every day. On average 80% of those habitual thoughts are negative. These thoughts are of course not only incessant but completely automatic. You have no control over them.

The number one reason why people's efforts to improve fail or fizzle out is the undeveloped mind is unreliable and all over the map, subject to change, quickly pulled off course and readily influenced by negativity. So you see, if you are not directing your thoughts, your thoughts are directing you. This is where the true adage *the mind is a terrible master, but an excellent servant* originated from. The most powerful thing you can do is to make your mind your servant. Use your mind rather than allow it to use you.

Direct your thoughts and you direct your life. This is the level of cause. There is no other. Pay attention to what comes up in those 60,000 voices in your head each day. Watch how

repetitive your thoughts are. Note the patterns. Become aware how your mind escalates a small incident into a story. *He didn't call me back. That's because he doesn't like me. I knew it. Well, I'll show him. The next time he won't have a chance.*....and on and on the human mind goes spinning and ruminating for weeks and months after a minor occurrence. Most of these thoughts go unobserved. The unobserved mind and the undeveloped mind are one in the same. Typically people do not pay very close attention to their thinking, and they readily believe their thoughts, take them as fact and act on them. This is a fatal flaw.

Take control and responsibility of your unobserved mind. Sit in neutral awareness of your thoughts. Pay close attention and analyze what makes specific thoughts come up. Don't judge them as good, bad or evil, like or dislike. Just watch. Awareness is enough. Your awareness brings enough light to reassess and shift your thinking—to not follow, identify or react to mere thought. When you recognize the incessant thinking in yourself, you have succeeded. Awareness helps you realize the meaningless negative thought patterns that pervade your thinking thus, giving you the opportunity to shift from being directed to becoming the director.

Consider how some people defend their sports team, political party or a brand they like. They will argue, fight, and ruin family gatherings all in the name of defending a name or brand that they have become so identified with that they made it part of the Self, who they are. Their thinking is the “small me.” Can you see how this is the level of cause? When you consider who you are at your essence, you are so much more than the thoughts you have about a name or brand. Your higher Self, “I” has so much more potential. What you are capable of at your essence is without measure.

Become the highly sensitized watcher of your thoughts. If you are in a sour mood, attentively observe. If you wake up and feel bad like a dark mood or a funk is coming over you or a bout of depression is near, just pay attention. Don't say *I don't want this*. At the level of essence, your most profound Self, create a space and channel what I call your *inner Mr. Rogers*. Talk to the entity—*oh, hello friend. There you are again*. Force a smile..... Say, *okay, we will spend some time together today*. Be the place and space for this dark entity; allow it. You are leading. You are directing. Feel it from the depth in you...hmmmmmm, okay. Know it is there. This is *not* a story. Feel the real, primary you, the “I” in your essence engaging and growing in Presence.

Through this process, through your inner Mr. Rogers, you begin to bring light to the dark entity. You weaken the entity and at the same time strengthen your Presence. Eleanor Roosevelt, a staunch advocate for humanity, witnessed pervasive darkness in her family life and while serving as the first lady during the Great Depression. She pinpoints the truth by saying; *it is better to light a candle than curse the darkness*. Don't tell the entity to go away, instead turn *your* light on. When your Presence is larger than the voices in your head, more powerful than the negativity that surrounds you and has a stronger pull than your conditioning, you are no longer directed by your thoughts. Conditioning stops, and you stop reacting. You no longer give power to the situation, or we could say *you* are now in control. You are leading your thoughts and thus leading your life. This is the definition of authenticity. Inner peace, real freedom, and joyfulness await you.

Discipline

One of the hallmark tools required to grow upwardly and face life's challenges is discipline. We all recognize and admire the outward manifestation of the hardest discipline of all, self-discipline. When we praise washboard abs what we are applauding is the self-discipline it took to get them. Likewise when we meet someone who has remained thin throughout life or has managed to lose weight and permanently change his or her lifestyle, what we respect is the effort it takes. We admire the discipline.

It is self-evident that with a little discipline we can face some of life's challenges and with total discipline, we can face all of life's challenges. We know what good discipline can do.

Returning to Bill's story. He never experienced his parents showing restraint, acting with dignity or having the ability to order the family's life. Bill came to know disorder, lack of discipline and disruptiveness as a way of life. The *only* way that he knew.

Discipline is a learned behavior. Ideally, the process begins in childhood where children are instilled with the capacity through self-disciplined parental role models. But what if like Bill, you didn't have good, self-disciplined role models and an ordered childhood? Can you develop discipline as an adult? Yes, it is possible to build discipline on your own. It may be more work, and it may take longer, but the upside is as an adult you are in control to lead your life. Also, once you get a feel for what works and taste the good rewards discipline brings there is no going back. That's why Emerson said, *the mind, once stretched by a new idea, never returns to its original dimensions.*

Developing good discipline has widespread impact. Other shortcomings that result from a disordered or traumatic childhood are surmounted through the effort of building self-discipline. Begin in small ways by keeping promises to yourself and do what you say you will do. Your confidence will soon increase by means of these small successes. While you are working toward becoming the disciplined person you've always wanted to be, your self-image improves dramatically. You suddenly realize I can do this! As you increase your self-discipline and surpass previous limits, what you believe about yourself changes, along with good discipline, you develop new stronger convictions about what you are capable of.

This is one of the most powerful experiences you can have because you discover for yourself, through your own trials the strength you have and what works. It is comforting to read about a concept. But it is *liberating* to make it happen and truly own the experience.

The Secret Sauce

To develop discipline, you must have a strategy especially in these modern times where distractions are widespread. You have to make up your mind that you have had enough of turmoil, tension, reacting to life, enough of being stuck. You want to finally end the one step forward, and two steps back syndrome.

As a part of your strategy begin applying my [Application, Repetition and Reinforcement Plan](#). Application means you actively put into practice what you are reading here. Repetition requires that you repeat your efforts regularly, like going to the gym.

Reinforcement is the help you seek out to support your efforts. Engaging friends, colleagues, coaches, and others on your journey.

Be intentional and place yourself in positions to exercise your self-discipline muscles. You can't have self-discipline if you have never controlled your impulses. Your self-discipline muscle grows much the same way a bodybuilder builds muscle. By adding minuscule muscle with each day's workout, the bodybuilder grows to enormous strength and proportions. Your self-discipline strength builds the same way. You add small amounts of discipline each day that add up to make you look on the inside the way the bodybuilder looks on the outside.

Remember, you can't have patience if you've never had to wait. In the same way, you can't have self-discipline if you've never exhibited self-control. Start with small things. Deny your impulses one small thing at a time. Subordinate the present for a better future. Stay in composure when your buttons are being pushed. Don't try to take giant steps. Be intentional and methodical and apply a long-term view. Visualize yourself accomplished and living the life you desire and work toward that image.

Know that your mind will resist the change in favor of what is already conditioned in you. The answer here is to embrace the discomfort. Recognize it, feel it...ahhhhh there it is. Know it is there. Acknowledge it, be the space for the pain and continue persisting along. Recognize the activity of your mind for what it is, not fact but mind activity, mere thoughts. Acknowledge that it will take time to feel comfortable and for a new routine to feel natural. Have faith it will happen and keep plugging away at it. With your heightened awareness and increased sensitivity feel the changes you are making. There is immense power in discovering things for yourself. Use each day as an opportunity to bring your vision to reality.

Negativity

You can't move upward if you are unhappy. Negativity leads to dissatisfaction, and that dissatisfaction leads to unhappiness. Unhappiness is at epidemic proportions in our society and at the root is negativity. Negativity cannot make you feel good or happy. It does not indicate upward growth. It is destructive, not constructive. Avoid it at all cost. Apply overall energy that is constructive and additive.

Negativity is a form of stress. Most everyone in modern society is operating under a great deal of stress and negativity. Stress and negativity—which is just negativity piled upon itself, a double dose if you will, are readily accepted in our society as a cultural norm. If you are successful then you must be stressed out, it's a given. As I mentioned earlier, *they're all doing it!*

Fear, anxiety, sadness, dislikes, arguing, holding a grudge, blaming, are the big ones. These are obvious negativities but still accepted as part of everyday life. More subtle daily experiences also contribute to accumulated negativity. The uncertainty of everyday life and inability to see goals to completion, a lack of understanding how things work, unpredictable circumstances and constant change or lack of consistency leads to

frustration, disappointment and carrying around resentment. These are all forms of more refined negativity, less visible but readily (and wrongly) accepted as part of everyday life.

Negativity amasses in you and collectively in society. It's the source of what you see outpouring as overreactions, arguments, and fights on airplanes, at rallies, sports events, and other gatherings, even on the roadways.

I mentioned earlier the enormous amount of incessant thought everyone endures—60,000 each day. On average, 80 percent of those habitual thoughts are negative. Collectively, 80% of 60,000 = 48,000 so that means each person you encounter in your office, the community where you live, your world is managing or enduring 48,000 negative thoughts each day. Clearly, an effort to observe the unobserved mind would create a better experience globally.

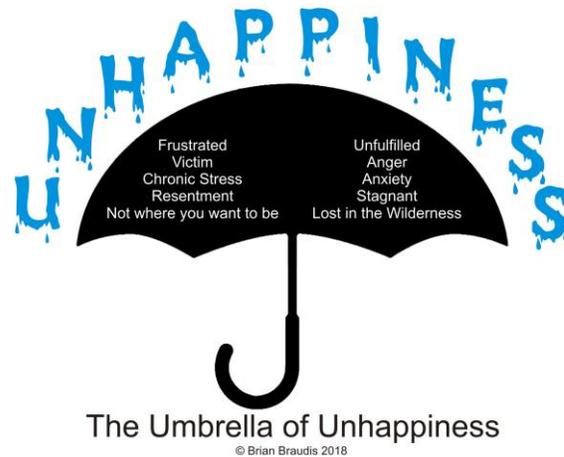
Un-reconciled negativity accumulates in individuals and collects in you and society collectively. This negativity contributes to the epidemic of general unhappiness that we witness every day.

It's essential for you to recognize that at the root of unhappiness is the opportunity for life's education. That is learning and develop awareness of what is real, essential to overcome and yet hidden in plain sight—hard to talk about but influencing us constantly. Pervasive unhappiness surrounds us like water surrounds a fish. It colors our moods, our every effort and every attempt to rise to the high road.

One leads to the other.

Remember this simple formula. **Negativity→Dissatisfaction→Unhappiness**

The “**Umbrella of Unhappiness**” colors every effort we make. It is utterly impossible to grow, move upward and be successful while operating from a place of unhappiness.



Every factor that is under the Umbrella of Unhappiness is a byproduct or a consequence of surrendering the reins—being the servant to your circumstances rather than the master of your destiny.

- **Frustrated**—things don't go as planned and you feel powerless.
- **Victim**—this always happens to me.
- **Stress**—stress increases as your control decreases.
- **Resentment**—a result of a position of weakness and insecurity.
- **Unfulfilled**—making a living, not a life.
- **Anger**—your buttons are easily pushed.
- **Anxiety**—you are uncertain and afraid.
- **Stagnant**—stuck in this place.
- **Not where you want to be at this stage of life.**
- **Lost—not blazing your own trail**—no self-realization.

The Umbrella of Unhappiness is the umbrella under which everything else falls. Unhappiness disrupts your performance and effectiveness. It detracts from your self-image, how others view you, the influence you exert. With more in-depth analysis you could say that unhappiness is in fact, a symptom of a more significant, more fundamental issue—not leading your life.

Outer Reflects the Inner

Outer behavior always reflects the inner state. A curt response, overreacting or shooting the messenger—what you see on the outside is provoked from the inside.

When you are full of negativity and spinning about yesterday's meeting, last year's performance evaluation or the promotion you deserved but didn't get, how you were wronged, what shows up or what comes out is angst, negativity, and tension. You are in pain, and you are spreading your suffering. People can't experience the best you. They can only see the state you're in. You appear bitter and unable to handle life. People see you as ineffective. The pointer here is to reduce negativity don't internalize it.

It is an observable fact that in our current world negativity will find *you* without any effort on your part. If you want something else...say growth, productivity or achievement, it takes an enormous effort on your part to find it and make it part of your life. I call that an investment. Invest in your most valuable asset, YOU!

The Way Upward

The idea is to have the strength of Self to know what the right way is for you and pursue that. Don't look for external validation. Understand from your deeper Self, essence, that the script you are writing is on the right track.

As you connect with and engage your changeless "I," essence, you start to grow in Presence. You will begin to notice brief periods of stillness and inner peace that will become longer and more frequent as you grow and evolve. You are using the gifts you have been endowed with to grow your Presence. Soon Presence will enlarge enough to supplant your conditioning. Eventually, you will amass enough Presence to fulfill the overriding purpose of life. That is to add your lasting contribution to family, society and all of humanity.

You now see what so many cannot see. The purpose of life is additive—to make goodness attractive, to fulfill the nobility of humanity. Anything else degrades the human experience, and we are all left unfulfilled. You are on your way upward!

About the Author

Brian Braudis speaks from experience, not research or data but the human experience. He writes from inside the subject rather than outside. Each word in this eBook stands as truth based on his experiences.

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We cannot advance humanity without addressing the cause of the problems we face. This eBook is a beginning. It is a precursor to an extended full-length work yet to come. If this short piece has stirred any thoughts, please add to the conversation. Send your ideas and feedback. Your input is desired and encouraged. You can reach Brian at brian@thebraudisgroup.com

