

A person is shown in silhouette, standing on a wooden pier or walkway that extends into a body of water. They are holding up a string of warm white lights, which are glowing and creating a bokeh effect. The background is a vibrant sunset sky with shades of orange, yellow, and green. The horizon line is visible in the distance, with some land or structures faintly visible. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

THE ART OF LIVING IN THE MOMENT

How to Live a Better Life by Choosing to live NOW



Introduction

If you are in any way feeling stuck or powerless in your life, there is a solution. You can choose to live in the NOW or The Present Moment.

By understanding this skill and applying it to your life, you start slowing down the ‘treadmill’ of stress and pressure in your life. You're still running, you're still taking care of business, you're still being a responsible mature adult. That's not going to go away.

The big difference is you become more aware, so you are able to become more content and fulfilled in the present moment. You're no longer kicking the can down the road when it comes to your personal happiness and fulfillment. You learn how to live in the present moment and enjoy it and accept it for what it is.

Let me tell you, life is never going to be perfect. And if you are going to set yourself up where you will only agree to be happy when perfection enters your life, you're setting yourself up for a big letdown.

This book teaches you the valuable skill of living in the moment. Not tomorrow, not next week, and definitely not next year. Right here. Right now.

I'm sure you already know this, but the moment you close this book, you might get hit by a truck. You might suffer some sort of weird and nasty medical allergic reaction. You might eat some bad food. There are all sorts of things that may cut your journey through this life short.

Life is short. It is fragile. This book teaches you to enjoy every moment.

Hang on to it. Get a lot of meaning out of it. This is how you are able to keep running on that treadmill with a deep and abiding sense of peace and harmony within you.

Sounds awesome? Great. Let's jump in. See you in Chapter 1.

Chapter 1

Reclaim Your Power of Focus

Reclaim Your Power of Focus

Your focus is probably the most important factor in the process of overcoming whatever challenges you face.

A lot of people think that they have to have the right IQ, or they have to be born with certain advantages, or some sort of other excuse. They think that there's all these circumstances and factors outside of them that would explain their success or lack of it.

And unfortunately, the more you focus on things outside of you, and I'm talking about your circumstances as well as the situations you find yourself in or the people you surround yourself with, the more you lose sight of your focus.

In fact, it can get so bad that you might ignore the power of your focus altogether. You might even completely forget how important personal focus is.

Let's get one thing clear: what you choose to focus on, grows.

If you don't believe me, look at people who hit the gym all day, every day. These are people who may be obese. These are people who may look like they're made out of over-inflated dough. But the more they focus on working out, sticking to a certain diet and lifestyle, the sooner all that fat melts off.

Similarly, people who focus on making money, sooner or later, end up achieving their dreams. People who focus on attracting members of the opposite sex tend to, later on, connect the dots and meet with success more often than failure.

In other words, you get out what you put in. What you focus on attracts your attention, which of course attracts your energy. When you devote energy to any kind of activity, sooner or later, you get good at it.

Sure, in the beginning, it may look like it's impossible. It may look like it's just not going to happen. But the more you keep at it, the more you are able to figure things out. And, sooner or later, these baby steps turn into giant leaps forward.

What you choose to focus on, grows. It doesn't matter what it is. It doesn't matter how seemingly impossible it may be. As long as you give it the proper focus, eventually, it will give way. I can't stress this enough.

Unfortunately, people think that success is something that just falls into their lap. They think it's something that requires inhuman sacrifice and effort. No, it's not. Instead, it's just a choice of where you train your focus.

The Good News

Given how important focus is, I have some great news for you. Focus is a choice.

That's right. It's not something that you're forced to do. It's not something that you are tricked into or somehow coerced by your circumstances. It's something that you can choose. If you can choose it, then this means you have control over it.

There are so many other things you can choose to do, but you can choose to focus. This is power. This is control. This gives you some measure of input on how your life is going to turn out.

Real Focus is Never Desperate

A lot of people are under the impression that things will only change in their lives if they find themselves with their back against the wall. They think that once the chips are down and everything is desperate, that's when everything falls into place.

What they're really doing is they're looking for excuse after excuse to avoid lifting a finger to change their circumstances. That's all you're doing if you believe that you have to be pushed to make a decision.

Real focus is never desperate. It is never the product of desperate times. It's something that you willfully choose and it's something that you choose consistently and continuously over an extended period of time.

Don't think that it's some sort of magical superpower that you discover at the last minute. You will always have the power to choose and you will always have the choice of focusing. It is never desperate, no matter how bleak the situation may look.

Reclaim Your Ability to Focus

If you can wrap your mind around the idea that you can choose to focus, you can start reclaiming the power you get when you focus on certain things. Believe it or not, you can focus on your time to the extent that you can control the output you get when you spend your time on anything.

I know this sounds crazy because most Americans think that there are not enough hours in a day. There are a lot of people who wish that there were more than 24 hours in a day. That's how pressed for time they are. What they're really suffering from, however, is a lack of focus.

Believe it or not, you don't have to burn 8 hours at work to squeeze out 1 hour of productivity. Believe it or not, there are people out there who can put in 8 hours of work, and get 8 hours of production. I know it sounds crazy, but that is the power of focus.

Similarly, you don't have to waste a tremendous amount of your attention on many things in your life for you to maximize the results you get. You can focus intently on certain activities and have them produce a lot more results.

You don't have to sit around worrying about certain things that may or may not happen. By making a decision, giving it the proper attention it deserves, and focusing the right amount of resources and attention to detail, you end up getting the result you want without worrying yourself to death or mentally burning out.

Finally, you can choose to focus your resources to such an extent that you get a lot more bang out of every buck you spend.

One of the main reasons why Americans are trillions of dollars in credit card debt is because of inefficient spending. The problem isn't spending. The big challenge is that they spend on many things trying to get some sort of outcome. They didn't know that if they spent on the right things, they would have spent less money and gotten into less debt while getting a lot more results.

You have to reclaim your ability to focus on all these to start living a life of power, purpose, meaning and direction. Unfortunately, people who end up struggling by moving a lot while staying in the same place suffer from a total lack of focus or fuzzy focus.

The Bottom Line

The bottom line with focus is pretty straightforward. You only have so much mental resources in any given second. Make it count.

Learn the skills that you need to get the most out of the time that you put into any kind of activity, the attention that you put into any kind of project, or the resources you devote to your plans. If you're able to do this, you start to reclaim your life.

Chapter 2

Rediscover the Eternal Now



Rediscover the Eternal Now

I know what you're thinking. You're probably rolling your eyes and saying to yourself, "Yeah, it's very easy. Just focus."

I understand your skepticism. There is kind of a hollow ring to the phrase "Just focus." It's not all that far from "Just do it," the famous Nike slogan. But when you dig deeper, it's actually all you need to know regarding how to achieve greater control over your life.

Focus means directing your attention. Because where your attention goes, your time, resources and personal energy flows. And it all boils down to something that you have a tremendous amount of control over: your attention.

This is why it's really important to rediscover the concept of "The Eternal Now." Believe it or not, you are always living in the present moment. When a second passes, the next second is the present moment. Once that's up, the next second is the present moment.

Now, a lot of people think this is pointless. After all, that's how time is supposed to work. But they miss the big picture. They miss the fact that when you are in the moment, there are a lot of things that are actually possible within that frame of time.

We're not just talking about time and space. We're talking about mental, spiritual and physical states.

If you don't believe in the present moment and you think it's just a means to an end, it's easy to blow through your time. Seriously. It's easy to live through time in a way that you're not really paying attention to the things you should be focusing on.

Sadly, most people have forgotten the present moment. They're all in a rush to be somewhere. They're all in a rush to become somebody else. They start looking at themselves primarily as transitory beings.

In other words, who you are right here, right now, is something that you're not really all that happy with. Instead, you want to be somebody who is 50 pounds lighter, 10 years younger, \$10 million richer, and so on and so forth.

Your focus is burned up by the overarching need to go somewhere and become somebody else. The concept of the present moment completely escapes you except for certain schedules or dates or appointments. But other than that, it's just some sort of temporal stepping stone to who "you are supposed to be."

This is why so many people seem so busy, preoccupied and obsessed with motion. They can't wait to get from Point A to Point B. The problem is, desiring motion and that alternative identity of who we could be exacts a heavy price. They leave us empty.

The Eternal Now, which is one of the greatest gifts anybody can give us, is worthless to us. We look at it as basically a byproduct of living and not really a goal in and of itself. This is really too bad.

How come? The Eternal Now is the foundation of your future. It is the birthplace of who you can be and what you can become. In other words, it is the foundation of possibility and being.

Meditation Reveals the Power of the Eternal Now

When you practice meditation and mindfulness, you tap into the power of The Eternal Now. First of all, you become aware that you are living in a present moment. Once you are able to do that, you then slowly but surely come face to face with the power of your mind to shape your reality.

Instead of constantly trying to zip from one mental place to another, you realize that there's power where you are. You realize that you have all that it takes to get out from under whatever it is that's frustrating you.

It doesn't matter how stuck you may feel, if you are able to tap into the power of The Eternal Now, you can use the present moment to achieve important changes in your life. Best of all, you're able to this right here, right now.

You break away from the old and familiar game of kicking the can of your happiness down the road. You can choose to be happy, fulfilled and content right here, right now. All it takes is to train the way your mind is already configured to rediscover and celebrate The Eternal Now.



Chapter 3

Remember That the Big Picture is the Eternal

Remember That the Big Picture is the Eternal

Before I jump into the blueprint you can follow to tap the power of your mind for greater personal productivity, results, success and happiness, I need to establish one key principle. It's easy to look at mindfulness and meditation as simply tools that you use on your journey to get what you want. Fair enough. But it's very important to understand what it is you want in the first place.

Let's put it this way, even if you were equipped with the most powerful equipment in the world, if you don't know where you're going, your trip would be pointless. Chances are, you would be chasing your tail and be going around in circles.

The world existed before you, it exists now while you're in it, and will continue to exist long after you're gone. You have to be at peace with this eternal truth.

To fully wrap your minds around this, I need you to understand certain truths about how human beings have historically looked at the world and their place in it. With this understanding, your mind should be big enough to see your real place.

Everything Works in Duality

Did you know that everything in the world, both seen and unseen, works in duality? You can't have black without white. You can't have empty without full. You can't have up without down. You can't have in without out.

This is not an empty and shallow mental exercise. Instead, these dualities speak to the fundamental truth of what gives life meaning and power.

The Greeks got it partially right. Their philosophy is binary in nature. Male and female, good and evil, light and dark, and so on and so forth.

The problem is, the Greeks focused primarily on the 'good things,' the ideals, the forms, the essence. When they did this, they basically sidelined the other half of the equation.

It is a binary world. They got that part right. But by focusing only on the positives on the matter at the expense of the antimatter, of light at the expense of the darkness, they stripped away a significant portion of the power of duality.

In fact, the Western mind has historically viewed the other side of these equations as suspect or weak or somehow untrustworthy. It's easy to celebrate the masculine side of a personality, but we're suspicious about the feminine side. It's easy to see the value of the light, but we're scared of the darkness.

Do you see how this works? This is the Greek or Western mindset.

Yin and Yang Make the Universe Turn

Thankfully, there is an alternative to the Greek black and white mindset. I am, of course, talking about the Chinese idea of yin and yang.

When you look at the yin and yang symbol, it's obvious that it acknowledges the binary nature of reality. But unlike Westerners, the Chinese see an equal value in the other side of the equation. They understand that "full" or "substance" would be meaningless without the complementary reality of "emptiness" or "nothingness."

One good example of this is in the Tao Te Ching, the primary scripture of Taoism, where it highlights the importance of the empty hole in a pot. Usually, people don't even think about the empty hole in the pot. They think about how big the pot is, they think about the price, they think about what the pot is made of.

Usually, people don't think about the empty hole. But the Tao Te Ching points out that it's the emptiness inside that pot that gives that pot value. After all, that's where you store stuff.

A solid pot with no hole in the middle is completely worthless. In other words, it's the void or the nothingness that exists in a binary relationship with "somethingness" that gives life value.

The Chinese get it. They understand that the darkness is not to be feared. They understand that emptiness is not something to cry over. It all depends on context and how the seemingly negative elements work with other factors.

This is how you get a big picture of the eternal. You go past duality and understand and ultimately embrace the power of the void.

A lot of Americans are scared of death. They're scared of the good times ending. A lot of people don't like to watch movies end, but believe it or not, death is what gives life meaning.

Let's put it this way, if you knew you were going to live forever, do you think you would live a life of meaning? Do you think you would be kind to people? Do you think you would look to heal the wounds of your past? Do you think you would try to be compassionate and understanding?

Of course, not. When you get a deadline, you get perspective.

The idea of duality communicates this loud and clear. You can't just live your life looking at the "something" of life. These are things that you can see, touch, taste, smell and hear. You should also pay attention to the void. This is something that you can only grasp with your mind, but it's real nonetheless. It complements the something to produce real power in your life.

The key that turns the ignition on this process, however, is focus.

Chapter 4

Your Mental Self-Reclamation Blueprint

Your Mental Self-Reclamation Blueprint

This book is set up to use the power of mindfulness and mental focus to help people reclaim their lives. It doesn't matter whether you are feeling stuck, feeling frustrated, or you just feel that your life is meaningless. When you follow this blueprint, you start living your life with a renewed sense of purpose.

How come? You gain perspective. It turns out that if you're like most people, you spend your life in such a way where you're pouring a tremendous amount of your focus and energy on things that actually keep you stuck. You don't devote them to things and activities that can actually take you where you want to go.

You have to reclaim yourself because nobody else is going to do it for you. It doesn't matter how much they say they love you, it doesn't matter how much they say they know you or accept you, at the end of the day, everybody's got enough problems of their own.

You have to do this yourself. You have to take the initiative. Nobody else will do it for you.

Please pay attention to the blueprint below. This blueprint proceeds on a step by step basis. You have to master and fully carry out the previous step for the next step to make sense and produce results.

In the coming chapters, I will talk about the following self reclamation steps.

Step #1: Take stock

Step #2: Get real

Step #3: Get quiet

Step #4: Refocus

Step #5: Scale

One Final Word

What I'm going to teach you in this book is not magic. It is not mysticism, nor does it involve religion.

The techniques that you will learn here works with how your mind is already configured. You're not doing something new to your brain. You're just tapping abilities that it already has.

It really all boils down to shifting your focus and your energy. Everything else will flow because your mind already has these abilities.

Chapter 5



Zero in on your life's objective

Zero in on your life's objective

To truly reclaim your life by focusing on living in the moment, you have to have a destination. Remember, the ability to live in the present moment is just a tool. It's just a practice that you use to achieve some sort of objective. Don't confuse the two. A lot of people think that if you practice mindfulness, meditation or engage in any sort of activity that helps you fully utilize the moment, then you are living life to the fullest. That's not true.

You still have to have objectives, goals and a destination. With that said, knowing the power of living in the moment makes the process so much more meaningful. Instead of just simply chasing your tail and ending up in this mental fog, every moment feels like an adventure. It feels that you're doing something with your life. It feels that you were put on this earth for a reason.

That's a very empowering feeling. It is the 180-degree opposite of feeling stuck, feeling like another face in the crowd or feeling like your life really has no meaning. The moment that you start thinking that your life has no meaning or purpose, it becomes very easy to imagine life without you. In other words, it's easy to think that you are an accident or whether you live or die doesn't really matter because you're really not making that much of an impact.

You see the rabbit hole that you fall into once you start that line of thinking. The mental self-reclamation blueprint that you're following starts with the most important part. It answers the question why. The problem with life is that a lot of people are focused on answering what, when and how.

Don't get me wrong. These are important questions to ask, but they have to lead somewhere. They're preliminary questions. They're not the final question. The final question is why. This is all about understanding your understanding of the meaning of life. I know that's kind of a funky sentence, but that's the best we can do.

At the end of the day, life is our understanding of what life is about. It's not like you can look into the purest form of reality of life. Again, this is not mysticism. This is not a religion. Instead,

this is practical psychology. What we're looking at is your perception or your read of the ultimate objective of your life.

Now, this might seem like a tall order at this point and I would agree with you. It's like trying to unravel a thick ball of yarn in one step. It usually doesn't work that way. You have to slowly unwind that ball and this where the following process comes in.

Take a mental inventory

At any given second, what are you thinking about? What are you worried about? What do you obsess over? What do you focus on? Write all this down and record the first thing that comes to your mind. There are no right or wrong answers. What's important is you just write down everything that comes to your mind. Get it in writing.

Do you see a pattern? Do you focus primarily on process instead of objectives or vice versa? Do you focus on timelines instead of the things you're supposed to do? Again, there's no right or wrong answer. I just want you to be aware of the things and concerns that you carry around in your mind every single moment.

When you do a mental inventory, it's as if you brush the fur of your dog. Throughout the day, your dog will pick up certain debris from your yard, from your carpet, from any interior space of your home. But when you brush the fur of your dog or your cat, for that matter, it ends up with a fresh coat. It ends up clean.

The same applies to your mind. If you don't do a mental inventory, you'd be surprised as to how cluttered, clogged and overburdened your mind gets. It's as if you're living your life day to day and you're picking up all these worries, concerns and anxieties and you are the last person to know.

Take a Focus inventory

Your mental inventory is kind of a broad survey of what you stuff into your mind. The next step is to drill a little deeper. We're going to be a little bit more particular. In this step, we're going to look at what you devote your focus on. In any given second, where does your focus mostly go? Are you focused on things that happened in the past or are you worrying about things that have yet to happen?

Are you focused on the tasks immediately ahead of you? Do you spend a lot of time thinking about whether you've forgotten something or not? Do you feel anxious about forgetting something or not doing something that you're supposed to be doing? Again, there's no right or wrong answer here. There's no one-size-fits-all solution. Just write down what you spend your focus on.

It's important to note that different people focus on different things. People, after all, have different priorities. We have different values. We come from different backgrounds. We also have different experiences.

Take a life inventory

For some people, this is going to get a little bit uncomfortable. For this stage, I want you to write down what you think you've achieved with your life. It doesn't matter whether you're 20 years old, 40 years old or 80 years old. It doesn't matter whether you have a degree, you dropped out of high school, you have a couple of million dollars to your name. Just write down what you think what you have achieved in your life.

It doesn't have to presently exist. Maybe it's an experience that you had. Maybe one of your greatest personal achievements was you visited Rome, Italy or Paris, France. Write that down. Whatever you think you have achieved, list it. Again, this should be a stream of consciousness exercise, so don't edit yourself, don't think that an answer is stupid or doesn't have a place on your list. Just write down whatever comes to mind. If it feels like it answers the question, list it down.

What truly matters?

Now, at this point, you're going to do some sorting. You understand that your life has an objective. That is, after all, the first step of this process. With your objective firmly in mind, look at your mental inventory list, your focus inventory sheet and your life inventory tally. Go through all those listings with your life's objective in mind.

Always refer back to your ultimate objective as you read through these materials. Get comfortable with the objective as your primary frame of reference.

Use that razor

Now, here comes the tough part. Look at all your different lists and then start scratching out items that do not lead to your grand objective. Your plan is simple. Either it leads you to the objective or you lose it. In other words, on all the lists that you have set up, cut out things that are obviously not going to lead you to your objective.

That is your goal. Because if you were to do this, you practice personal clarity where everything in your life leads to one place and one place alone. I remember the first time I did this, it was really quite eye-opening. If anything, it made me realize that a lot of the things I was working for, a lot of things that I spent a tremendous amount of emotional, financial and physical resources on were pointless.

It's like being assigned a big project at work and you spend most of your time checking your Facebook updates, your Instagram feed and your emails. Don't get me wrong. At some level or other, those tasks are important. But ultimately, you're not going to keep your job depending on how well you answer your email. You're not going to get a raise because you are very prompt in checking up on your Facebook notifications. Do you understand where I'm coming from?

Focus on what's important. Focus on what you are here for. In other words, zero in on your life's objective and make sure your mental inventory, your focus inventory and your life inventory line up to grand objective. If you were to do this, you'd start living a life of meaning, direction and purpose.



Chapter 6

Get real

Get real

At this point, a lot of people are going to have a nasty wake up call. In chapter 5, I talked about identifying your life's objective. This is a very exhilarating process because as I've mentioned in the previous chapter, it's too easy to live your life like a lost person. You think you have a purpose, you think you are trying hard, you are being a mature and responsible adult, but it's it turns out that despite how hard you try and how much you plan and how seemingly focused you think you are, you end up going around in circles.

This, of course, is due to the fact that you don't really have a grand objective. In the previous chapter, you zeroed in on the grand objective of your life. You zeroed in what you want your life to produce. Think of it this way, when people show up to your funeral and they see your body in a box, what would you want people to think about the life you lived?

Would you like them to say he/she was a kind person, or he/she helped a lot of people, or he/she revolutionized the world or discovered something? Think about those things. This should form your grand objective because you're using other people's impressions of you as some sort of objective mirror for what you think you want for yourself.

Now, if that seems clear enough, here's a monkey wrench. You have to ask yourself, "Are my grand objectives really mine?" I know this seems kind of a bit of a letdown because, after all, in chapter 5, we talked about the great revelation of your life's meaning or central focus. However, we can't do this blindly.

We can't just say, "Because I do have this grand objective, then that's all I need to focus on." Well, there's another level of analysis. You have to ask yourself, "Is this really mine or did I just pick it up from somebody else?" This is not an easy process to go through. It actually requires some preliminary steps.

Do a memory detox

A lot of people think they have grand objectives because they have certain memories of the past that lead to these objectives. Maybe you remember telling your mom that when you grow up, you'll be an attorney, a doctor or a politician. Maybe you told your dad that when you become a grown up, you'll be a professional athlete.

These are heartwarming when people say them now, but are they based on the truth? Do a memory detox. In other words, when you say your grand objective to yourself, think of past memories that this triggers. Zero in on one memory and ask yourself, "Did this really happen?" Now, if the answer is yes, you're going to analyze it some more.

But if the answer is no, then you need to start having second thoughts about your grand objective. This might be an assumed memory. You don't want to build a house on a foundation of sand. Now, assuming that memory is actually based on facts and things did happen, ask yourself, "Am I exaggerating things?"

You have to remember that people say stuff all the time, but what we choose to remember might actually be quite different from what actually took place. Ask yourself, "Do I remember this correctly or is this exaggerated? Am I blowing things out of proportion?" Again, if this is the case, then you need to be suspicious of your grand objective.

It might be based on fiction or exaggeration. Neither of these is good. If it isn't exaggerated, ask yourself if there are missing pieces of the memory. If this is the case, then be very suspicious. You might be filling in the memories to produce a certain mental state that you are looking for. This usually happens in cases of abuse.

Whether mental or physical, they kind of work the same. It was so traumatic that you only remember in fragments. You have to detoxify your memory. Finally, if your memory is based on fact, ask yourself, "Is this the only interpretation? Are there any other grand objectives I can derive from this memory?"

Please don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that you are not entitled to your personal grand objective. I'm not trying to rob you of your big dreams. However, all I'm doing is walking you through the process of realizing what your grand objectives rest on. Are they real memories or are you exaggerating them? Are you filling stuff in or are you just interpreting them to lead to a certain outcome?

Just be aware of how this plays out, so you end up totally owning your life's grand objectives. You start seeing it with your plain eyes. You don't choose to filter it with rose-colored glasses.

Do an attitude detox

Memory is one thing, attitude is another. Believe it or not, your attitude plays a big role in how your life turns out. If your attitude is that of a victim, then you find yourself feeling small, stuck, powerless. Worse yet, you feel that you are life's martyr. Everybody takes turns victimizing you. You feel disrespected and deep down you don't really feel worthy of respect.

The worst part of all of this is if you feel like some sort of victim, it's too easy to excuse yourself to be really harsh or even cruel to other people. After all, if you're hurting so badly, it's too easy to get numb to the pain so that you lose sight the pain you, yourself, dish out. Try to explain your attitude to yourself.

Given what's happening in your life, are there any other ways to interpret what's going on? For example, if you think your job is a daily humiliation where you clock in, spend 8 hours, and then clock out, ask yourself, "Is this the only way to look at this situation?"

My job does give me a paycheck. I do hang around with interesting people. I do get to use my muscles or my brain for my work. Obviously, it's interesting enough, otherwise I would have quit a long time ago. Ask yourself, "Is the way I'm looking at this part of my life the most optimal one?"

This is really an indirect way of asking yourself, "What is my attitude?" The problem with attitude is, sometimes, they're like sunglasses that we put on and we forgot that we have them on. Everywhere you turn seems like everything is a little dark. But it turns out, things look that way because you have your 'mindset' sunglasses on.

Your attitude works the same way. You might think that you're just perceiving your reality or living your life, and everything is objectively neutral. No, they're not. Everything you perceive from the outside world is filtered through the prism or lens or your attitude. Believe it or not, if you change your attitude, the world's appearance and your perception of your world starts to change.

You can either look at the end of the tunnel as the beginning of freedom or you could look at that light at the end of the tunnel as a train headed your way. These are two totally different things courtesy of differences in attitude. I need you to do an attitude detox. I want you to take off your lens or filter and look at what's going on in your life in the most objective way possible.

Is it really that bad? Are your relationships really that poisonous? Is your childhood really that messed up? Oftentimes, the limitation that we feel hold us back and drag us down are actually chosen. They're not chosen by other people, mind you, you chose them. You wear those invisible shackles by choice.

Reclaim your power to choose

You have to understand that your life is a choice. I hate to break it to you. The way you dress, even your IQ, how much money you have in the bank, how good you look, the style of your hair, the size of your car, the size of your house, whether you rent or own a house and all the other details of your life, all those are choices.

A lot of people would have a problem with this. After all, who in their right mind would choose to be poor, oppressed or burdened? Who in their right mind would choose to live a life of powerlessness and limited choices? Well, these are illusions. Ultimately, your external life, I'm talking about things that people can readily observe, is a product of your internal choices.

If you start choosing internal realities differently, sooner or later, they will bubble up to the surface. It's not going to happen overnight, but these changes are undeniable as long as they're consistent. As long as your mind has totally shifted direction, sooner or later, your thoughts will be manifest in the reality you live.

You start dressing differently. You start talking about different things. You start expressing a different kind of attitude. Sooner or later, you start behaving differently. As I keep saying throughout all my books, the world doesn't care about your feelings. It really doesn't care at all about your emotions.

The world doesn't care that you have certain emotional issues and that's why you're 50 pounds overweight. All the world sees is that you have extra weight. The world doesn't know nor care that you are scared of certain things and that's why you have the job that you have and pays very little. All it sees is a person making very little money.

That's why it's really important to reclaim your power to choose because, ultimately, if you want your life to change and produce certain outcomes, these will all flow from your internal choices. This is why it's really important to make those internal choices. There are only really three questions that you need to wrap your mind around.

What are your ideals? What are your values? Does everything line up? Only you can answer these questions. Everybody is different. Some people are content with a few bucks and food on the table. Other people want to travel. They want to learn all they can learn. They want to experience the very best that life has to offer.

Others like challenges. They like adventure. They like to discover new worlds. Again, everybody is different, but what's important is that you are mindful of what you want for yourself. What's important is that you have a clear idea of what your purpose is. Unfortunately, when you think that you have a grand objective, chances are you picked this up somewhere.

It's not unusual for children to live the lives of their parents. It's not unusual for children to inherit the conflicts and frustrated ambitions of their parents. I'm telling you, life is too short for that. You shouldn't live your life for your parents. You should live your life for yourself. They had their chance. Let that go. Focus on what makes sense to you. This is your purpose.

You have all these deadlines and big projects that need to be completed. Unfortunately, the more you complete them, the thicker the fog. Eventually, it starts to dawn on you that what you're doing is pointless. It doesn't matter how "mission critical" the project is. It doesn't matter how much money you will make with the project. You still end up in the same place.

When you live with purpose, all this fog clears up and you see that straight line to where you'd like to go. Similarly, purpose flows from integrity. Integrity is one word you don't hear much nowadays. Usually, when people use the word integrity, they often talk about the ability to tell the truth. They talk about living life with character.

While that's important and everything, I use the word integrity in a very limited sense. When you live with integrity, you focus like a laser on the outcomes you would like for your life and you act accordingly. Everything you do leads to that outcome. That is a life of integrity because your actions line up with your ideals, your values and your grand objectives.

Believe it or not, living life with integrity and prizing integrity, leads to a real life. You feel like your actions have consequences. You feel that every moment that you waste chasing your tail has a consequence and just like having some sort of personal GPS, you keep getting redirected to where you need to go.

Each step that you take has more meaning. It's not just something that you do as part of the course. You don't feel like you're just going through the motions. In fact, if you become so disciplined, every breath you take feels like an opportunity and a blessing at the same time. That's the power of a life of integrity, flowing from purpose.



Chapter 7

Get Quiet

Get Quiet

What if I told you that you're always interrupting yourself? What if I told you that you have a conscious goal and a subconscious mind? What if you get your wires crossed? What if you think you are pursuing certain goals and then up sabotaging yourself or undermining yourself?

This actually happens quite a bit. People think that they are being focused, that they have a set goal in mind that they are doing things intentionally. Unfortunately, for the life of them, nothing seems to work.

They think that they're going through the right process and they're focusing on the right things, but regardless of how much time, effort and energy they put in, they keep tripping up, things take a lot longer, they make serious mistakes, it takes a lot more effort. In many cases, they end up in a far worse spot than when they started. What's going on?

Well, it boils down to people interrupting themselves. They can't help it. They feel that they just go through their thought process in an automatic or semiautomatic way only to produce the same results each and every time.

To break free of this, you only need to do one thing: get quiet. I know it sounds simplistic. A lot of people will quickly dismiss this idea, but the truth is if you get quiet first a lot of the things that you're struggling with become easier. You start getting a big picture view of what it is you're doing despite your conscious goals and objectives.

You put yourself in a position where it becomes easier for you to take action that will finally get you out of the tough spot you're in. It all boils down to deciding to get quiet first.

Stop Editing Your Thoughts

One common way people trip themselves up and interrupt their ability to focus so clearly that they turn their thoughts into reality involves editing. Believe it or not you're constantly editing your thoughts. Maybe this is due to other people's expectations of you. Perhaps you're thinking

of thoughts that you think you shouldn't be thinking. Possibly, you are willfully trying to impose a certain interpretation on your thoughts.

Whatever the case may be you're engaged in one form of editing or other. Stop it. Your first goal should be to think as clearly as possible. You don't really know what your real thoughts are when you're always editing them. How can you get a clear understanding of your mental processes when you can't even bring yourself to admit the raw, uncut, unfiltered version of your thoughts?

You quickly realize that there's really nothing to apologize for. Sure, you may be thinking about really horrible stuff. This stuff might even be embarrassing or trigger some sort of guilt from the past, but they're your thoughts. Nobody can see them. They only exist in your mind.

Let them flow. Stop trying to filter them. Stop trying to warp, distort or somehow control them. Instead, focus on clarity. What exactly are you thinking?

It may be scary at first but that's a small price to pay for the power that will arise from clarity. Choose to be clear first. Stop editing your thoughts.

Stop Editing Your Feelings

When thoughts flash in your mind, it's too easy to try to impose some sort of meaning onto it. In other words, it's too tempting to analyze them as they materialize. The reason people do this is because thoughts are never emotionally neutral. Once a thought appears in your mind, it triggers a range of emotions. This can be positive or negative, but there are always feelings involved.

It is no surprise that once people perceive some sort of mental image they quickly jump to the feelings that they're getting and guess what? They try to control those feeling. It's like when you're walking through a mall holding hands with your kid and you see another person. Your kid starts to laugh and you turn around and tell your kid not to laugh. That's what you're doing with your feelings.

You perceive certain things in your mind and you know that you have developed an emotional reaction so you try to stop or edit that feeling. Either you're trying to cut it out altogether or reshape it to something more acceptable or something more expected.

This is a problem because when you do that, you're not being honest. If a certain mental image flashes in your mind or a certain memory appears in your head, let the emotions come. There's nothing to be embarrassed about. There's nothing to apologize for. These are your emotions.

Again, your first objective is to be as clear as possible regarding what you're feeling. Later on, you can work on implications. You can work on focusing on what this all leads to as well as lining these up with your grand life objectives.

Watch Your Thoughts like Clouds

One of the best ways to get quiet on different levels is to simply watch your thoughts like clouds. Here's how you do it.

Find a dark room, make sure that you won't be interrupted for at least fifteen minutes, close your eyes and slowly breathe in and out deeply. After about three to five repetitions, you should be feeling relaxed.

Next, focus your mind's eye on the thoughts appearing in your mind. Once the images appear, do not interpret them. Do not analyze them. Just watch them. This means you're going to acknowledge them, but you're not going to judge them. These are two totally different things.

For example, when you were a kid in elementary school, maybe you got abused by bullies. Perhaps there was a guy named Jeff who was really harsh on you and, for the longest time, you always remember Jeff and you feel really, really negative, angry, upset, powerless when the mental image of Jeff appears in your mind.

When you watch your thoughts like clouds, you let Jeff's image appear. Just like a cloud overhead. But instead of allowing yourself to instantly feel angry, upset or feel powerless and weak, you let Jeff's image come. You acknowledge to yourself that is Jeff from junior high.

Notice how neutral that statement is? You didn't follow it up with "That was my oppressor in junior high. That is the guy who stole my childhood. That is the guy who makes me feel so weak and impotent to this very day." You don't say any of that. Instead, you just say that's Jeff.

When you do that, you take ownership of the memory. This actually happened. This is part of you whether you like it or not. Most importantly, you don't impose any judgment on him. Just like a cloud passing by, it's neither good nor bad. It's just passing by. Let it pass through.

When you do this, you take power over your mental state. You then count your breath and you repeat the process with another memory. This way, with enough repetition, your memories no longer have a negative hold on you. You no longer feel triggered so that you respond in a very negative emotional way.

You feel in control. It's not like you're denying these memories or sweeping them under the rug. You accept them. They actually happen but you let them pass. Sooner or later, it dawns on you that these negative memories that you did not choose, by the way, don't have to have a hold on you. They don't have to bring out the very worst in you.

Instead, just like clouds, they appear and then they disappear and pass on. Sooner or later, if you keep repeating this and you plug into the quite calm made possible by your breathing exercise, you start having a more productive relationship with your past as well as your future.

How come? Well, you can also effectively deal with your worries about the future using the technique above. It all boils down to saving the eternal moment. When you focus on the present moment right here, right now, you get power because in this very second, you don't have to do things the same way you've always done them.

You don't have to feel sad when the mental image of your father who broke a broom on your back when you were a kid flashes into mind. You just say, "That's my dad".

You don't have to step into a rabbit hole of rage when the picture of your mom who slapped you in front of a lot of people when you were all of five years old flashes in your mind. You just say, "That's my mom".

Do you see how this works? That's the power of the eternal moment because the eternal moment gives you choice.

Finally, if you keep repeating this process, you stop chasing after answers. You stop asking "Why? Why me? Of all the kids, why did I have to live that life?" and other related questions. Once you stop chasing after the answers and you practice getting quiet, you quickly realize that the answers come to you instead.



Chapter 8

Refocus

Refocus

Practice mindfulness to reclaim your power of focus. The reason you're feeling stuck, powerless, weak and confused is because your focus is going to where it shouldn't go. Remember where your focus goes, energy flows. Whatever you focus on grows.

So, if you focus on things that upset you, make you feel small, make you feel weak or otherwise make you feel flawed, you end up amplifying your negative emotions and judgments. Be careful where you invest focus.

This is why it's really important to practice mindfulness. Here are some techniques that have helped me tremendously throughout the years. There's no particular order to these. Just try them all out at once including the “thought-watching” technique I described in Chapter 7. Pick the most effective one and stick to it.

Counting Your Breath

The most basic way to practice mindfulness is to simply count your breath. You just need to close your eyes, find yourself in a quiet room and just count your breath. Count the breath coming in and coming out.

Eventually, you should focus your attention on the part of your nostrils that the air is coming out of. That's all you should notice. You stop focusing on the appearance of things around you. You stop paying attention to the sounds around you. You just focus on the air slowly coming in and out of your nose.

This heightens your focus and awareness. A lot of people think that when they slow their minds down to a standstill that they're eventually going to fall asleep. Well, if you feel sleepy, you're doing it wrong.

Believe it or not when you're counting your breath or practicing any kind of mindfulness exercise, you're actually super-aware. It's kind of like drinking five cups of coffee for your brain but without the frantic nervousness.

Breathe-Hold-Breathe

This mindfulness technique was originally formulated for US Navy SEALs looking to relax during highly sensitive combat missions. If you are a SEAL Team member, a lot of lives are depending on how well you do your job. It goes without saying that these guys have a lot of pressure on them. Talk about a stressful job.

The breathe-hold-breathe technique enables Navy SEALs soldiers to quickly relax right before they make a very important action. Maybe they're going into a firefight. Perhaps they're about to go into the water and dive for an extended period or possibly they're going to be doing something very sensitive involving explosive.

Whatever the case may be they need to relax so they can focus right here, right now. Most importantly, they need to relax ASAP. Breathe-hold-breathe delivers instant peace of mind guaranteed.

How does it work? Breathe slowly and deeply out, hold for four to eight seconds and then slowly breathe back in and then hold for four to eight seconds and repeat this process several times.

With enough slow repetition, you feel really, really relaxed and, most importantly, you feel focused. All distractions leave you.

The best part to all of this is that you can do this very quickly. It doesn't take much time. Usually, for most people, it takes anywhere from three to six repetitions to get relaxed enough so they can do what they need to do.

Secular Transcendental Meditation

Transcendental meditation is somewhat controversial in some circles. A lot of people have second thoughts about this particular type of mindfulness practice. It really is too bad because transcendental meditation is one of the most powerful meditation techniques you can ever adopt if you are looking to let go of painful past memories or useless present worries or otherwise are seeking a deep reservoir of inner peace.

The confusion arises from transcendental meditation's use of mantras. Mantras, after all, have historically been used by Buddhists and Hindus as part of their meditation practice. This raises a red flag to a lot of people who are looking for a mindfulness technique that is completely secular and non-religious.

Well, a lot of people overlook the fact that transcendental meditation is all about using nonsense words as mantras. This is the key. In fact, if you study transcendental meditation, its teachers actively discourage people from using words that have meaning as their mantra.

The whole point of transcendental meditation is for your mind to destroy thoughts. You're so focused on the present moment that you cannot even form thoughts. That's how powerful and relaxing transcendental meditation can be.

By definition, it is secular but people miss the memo on that so once they hear the word “mantra”, all sorts of mystical imagery comes to their minds. It really is too bad because like I said transcendental meditation is one of the most powerful mindfulness practices out there.

Here's how it works. Find a quiet room that you will not be disturbed in. Reserve that room for at least fifteen minutes.

Find a comfortable place to sit and just sit. No need to assume the lotus position. No need to take a pose like some sort of Buddhist or Hindu mystic. There's no need to do that. You're not practicing yoga. You're just relaxing. Sit normally.

Once you've done that, close your eyes and follow the instructions for counting your breath. You have to enter that deep level of relaxation.

Once you get to that point, the next time you breathe in, say a word that doesn't have any meaning to you. You can say “shoosh” or something like that. It has to be a word that has absolutely no meaning. After you've done that, hold your breath for half a second so you can focus on the word that you just said and then breathe out and say the word again.

Eventually, you will hit a pattern where you are paying attention to your repetition of the mantra. If you keep this up long enough, you reach a point where you're not developing thoughts. The moment a thought starts to form, it gets destroyed by your mantra.

If you keep this up long enough over an extended period of time in many practice sessions, you feel a deep, deep sense of peace and inner harmony. There's nothing to be afraid of. There's no future to worry about. All you have is the present moment.

Embrace the Moment

Regardless of the meditation technique or mindfulness practice you adopt, make sure they all lead to the same place. Make sure they all enable you to embrace the moment. Rediscover the eternal now.

The key here is to occupy the space around you with your presence. I'm not talking about your physical presence. I'm talking about your mental presence. This is how your awareness can help you achieve greater levels of peace, serenity and calm.

When you're in this space, you appreciate it for its emptiness. You don't have to be anybody. You don't have to go anywhere. That's right. No one to be; nowhere to go.

When you're able to wrap your mind around these concepts, you don't feel left behind. You don't feel like you're missing out on something. Instead, you feel complete.

Operate Out of Freedom

If you practice the techniques above correctly and you went through the steps outlined in this book, you will learn to operate out of your mental free space. This is a tremendous process for letting go unnecessary stress and drama of your life. You no longer look at your thoughts as something you deal with or you no longer look at your goals as "something to do".

Instead, you stop compartmentalizing your life and you realize that every single moment is a gift. It's an opportunity. It ties you in to the eternal now, which is full of potential.

Chapter 9

Scale

Scale

In the beginning, making progress achieving inner peace may seem like an uphill climb. This is perfectly natural. After all, you're working against your habits. This is not how your mind is normally set up.

As I mentioned earlier, everything in your life is a choice. As unhealthy as your current thinking patterns may be, at the end of the day, you chose them at some earlier point in time.

Now that you have adopted the practices described in this book, you are deprogramming yourself. Don't expect a lot on Day 1 or even Day 100. Just take it one day at a time. Eventually, as you get used to it, things will start to improve. Things get easier and easier over time. Eventually, you will be able to achieve a deep sense of inner peace.

At first, this inner peace is something that you experience when you are consciously practicing mindfulness. This means you schedule a certain amount of time at a specific place when you do it. However, once it becomes second nature to you and you know the steps like the back of your hand, you can then let your inner peace spread to other areas of your life.

Please understand that the skills that you learn in managing your thoughts can apply across the board. You can apply it to your relationships, your body image, your personal ambitions and goals and everything else.

Living with Integrity

Once you have achieved a tremendous amount of peace and focus thanks to the art of learning how to be quiet, you can then start to live with integrity. You know what your grand objectives are. Everything must line up to it; otherwise, you're not living a life of integrity.

The good news is when everything lines up, every day is an adventure. Every day is full of great promise. Every day can lead to happiness and joy.

Please note that this happiness and joy are not something that you enjoy in the distant future or after you achieve certain things. No. You enjoy them in the here and now.

From inner peace comes real confidence because everything lines up. Everything has meaning. Everything has purpose.

Create an Upward Spiral

When you work from confidence, you become more competent. This is obvious. Why?

Well, when you're confident, you try a lot more things. When you try a lot more things, sometimes you fail; sometimes you succeed but, sooner or later, you learn how to succeed more often than you fail.

This then leads to greater competence because now you are able to do things the right way so you succeed more often, which then makes you feel more confident. You're able to try out more and experiment more, which leads to even greater levels of confidence, competence and on and on it goes.



Conclusion

Living a life of confidence and competence thanks to the power of integrity takes time, focus and energy. This book lays out a solid blueprint that anybody can follow to reclaim their lives.

It doesn't matter what your past looks like. It doesn't matter how small, weak, powerless and voiceless you feel now. What matters is you are willing to tap the power of the eternal now and the eternal present to remake your reality.

If you are looking for a way out of a life of struggle, frustration and anxiety follow the blueprint laid out in this book. You owe it to yourself.