

ESCAPING THE ILLUSION OF A PRE-DEFINED LIFE



# THE DELUU WE LIVE IN

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# **The Delulu We Live In**

Escaping the Illusion of a Pre-Defined Life

Israel Goytom Birhane

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[delulubook.com](http://delulubook.com)

*To those who helped people change by reminding them their  
destiny was never the ceiling.*

# Author's Note

This book came out of a personal frustration:

Not with failure—but with the quiet life most people drift into without ever choosing.

The delulu we live in is rarely dramatic. It looks like normal adulthood.

Routines you didn't design. Goals you inherited. Standards you never set.

I wrote this to name that script—and to break it.

\*\*\*

This isn't a motivational book. It's a confrontation.

A reminder that clarity is not a feeling. It's a decision.

And that responsibility isn't a moral lecture—it's leverage.

\*\*\*

One more thing, clearly:

## THE DELULU WE LIVE IN

This book is dedicated to education, and **100% of its profits will go to education**—not as a campaign or branding exercise, but as a principle.

I'm not interested in the book making me richer. I'm interested in it making someone else freer.

If you found value in these pages, know that it will extend beyond you.

Thank you for reading.

*Israel Goytom Birhane*

# Contents

Author's Note	iv
Introduction	1
I The Illusion	7
1 Delusion Is a Nervous System, Not a Thought	9
2 The Delusion of a Pre-Defined Life	14
3 Your Start Is Context, Not a Sentence	18
4 The Blaming-Others Virus	22
II The Lies We Live By	27
5 We Are Creatures, Not Creators	29
6 Fake It Till You Make It	34

7	What You Have Isn't Normal	41
8	The Universe Isn't Revolving Around You	43
9	Technology Doesn't Break Delusion—It Amplifies It	49
10	How the Spiritual World Sees Delusion	55
III	Responsibility Is Power	60
11	Learn How to Judge Yourself	62
12	Your Brain Is Wired to Survive—Not to Tell the Truth	66
13	The Heart Speaks—We Just Don't Listen	69
14	Choose Your Battles	76
15	Love Hard Times	80
16	Right Is Right and Wrong Is Wrong	83
17	Responsibility in an Unfair World	87

**IV    Playing the Game Without Losing Yourself**  
**93**

**18 Hate the Game, Not the Player** **95**

**19 From Awareness to Action** **99**

**20 Becoming the Author** **104**

**V    The End of the Delulu** **108**

**21 Reality Doesn't Negotiate** **110**

**A 30-Day Alignment Test** **119**

**Closing** **125**

# Introduction

You were handed a script.  
You didn't write it.  
You just started living it.

\*\*\*

At some point—quietly, usually alone—the story you've been telling yourself starts to feel thin.

Not obviously wrong.  
Not dramatically broken.  
Just insufficient.

You did what you were told.  
Followed the advice.  
Trusted the process.

And yet something inside you knows: this isn't it.

\*\*\*

Most people ignore that moment.

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They scroll past it.

They rename it burnout.

They blame timing, luck, or other people.

This book exists because I didn't.

\*\*\*

“Delulu” is Gen Z slang for *delusion*. Online, it's playful. Self-belief taken too far. Fantasy dressed up as confidence.

That's not what this book is about.

This book is about the older, quieter delusion we've been living inside long before it had a name.

The comfort lie.

The one that makes staying still feel reasonable.

\*\*\*

Delulu, as used here, is the internal model of reality you build to feel safe.

It's the story that explains why your life looks the way it does. Why certain things feel “not for people like you.” Why waiting feels smarter than acting. Why blaming feels easier than choosing.

Delulu isn't stupidity. It isn't weakness.

It's adaptation.

And that's why it's dangerous.

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\*\*\*

At the center of most delusions is one belief:

That life is mostly pre-written.

School.

Work.

Relationships.

Retirement.

Death.

If life is pre-defined, then drift becomes destiny.

Mediocrity becomes acceptable.

Responsibility feels optional.

\*\*\*

Yes indeed, some things are pre-defined.

You don't choose where you're born.

You don't choose the body you inherit.

You don't choose your starting conditions.

\*\*\*

But you do choose what you tolerate.

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What you repeat.

What you delay.

What you build.

\*\*\*

This book is not here to comfort you.

It will not tell you everything happens for a reason.

It will not promise transformation without confrontation.

It will not validate every feeling as truth.

It will remove the lies that make discomfort pointless.

\*\*\*

If you're looking for reassurance, stop here.

If you're ready to trade comforting explanations for uncomfortable clarity—keep reading.

Once you see the delulu clearly, pretending becomes impossible.

That's the cost.

That's also the freedom.

\*\*\*

## THE DELULU WE LIVE IN

Most delusion doesn't look like madness.

It looks like adulthood.

It looks like routines you didn't choose. Standards you never set.

Goals you inherited and never interrogated.

Delulu is rarely loud.

It's quiet agreement.

It's how people become predictable without noticing. How they become "realistic" without realizing they're just afraid. How they become busy without becoming better.

\*\*\*

And here's the part nobody wants to admit:

Delulu isn't just something you *believe*.

It's something you *practice*.

You practice it every time you avoid a hard conversation. Every time you delay what you know you should do.

Every time you choose the safe version of yourself because it gets less resistance.

That's why delulu is hard to break.

It's not a thought.

It's a lifestyle.

\*\*\*

## THE DELULU WE LIVE IN

If you take one thing from this book, take this:

You don't break delusion with ideas.

You break it with proof.

Proof that you can do what you said you would do.

Proof that your emotions don't own you.

Proof that your circumstances are real—yet not sovereign.

**Reflection.** What is the oldest lie you still repeat because it keeps you comfortable?

# Part I

## The Illusion

## THE DELULU WE LIVE IN

Delulu is usually inherited before it's chosen.

It comes from family language.

Cultural defaults.

What gets praised.

What gets punished.

The first illusion is not that you're weak.

It's that your life has already been decided.

And if life is already decided, then effort becomes decoration.

This part is where we remove the decoration.

We name the script.

## Chapter 1

# Delusion Is a Nervous System, Not a Thought

Most people think delusion is intellectual.

A wrong belief. A bad idea. A misunderstanding.

That's not how it works in real life.

Delusion is rarely a thinking error.

It's a defended belief.

It's your nervous system protecting a story.

\*\*\*

A delusion becomes powerful when your body is emotionally invested in it.

Not because it's true. But because it feels safer than the alternative.

Truth can cost identity. Truth can cost hope. Truth can cost the version of you that still wants to be innocent.

So the body resists.

Not with arguments.

With physiology.

\*\*\*

When a belief is threatened, your brain doesn't just evaluate information.

It checks your internal state.

Heartbeat. Breath. Tension. Heat. That small tightening before your mind invents an explanation.

This isn't mysticism.

It's interoception—your brain constantly reading the body to decide what is safe.

\*\*\*

That's why arguments rarely break delusion.

You're not debating ideas.

You're touching an identity-defense system.

And when the nervous system goes defensive, reasoning loses bandwidth.

Logic becomes a threat. Evidence feels like an attack. Truth feels like humiliation.

So the brain protects the belief.

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Not because it's smart.

Because it's loyal.

\*\*\*

There is a name for this tension: cognitive dissonance.<sup>1</sup>

You can feel it before you can explain it.

It's the body saying:

"One of these stories has to die."

\*\*\*

This is why people stay in pain they recognize rather than  
step into freedom they don't understand.

Familiar suffering feels controllable.

Unfamiliar growth feels like danger.

So the nervous system chooses the known prison over the  
unknown door.

That is delusion at a biological level.

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<sup>1</sup>Cognitive dissonance is the mental tension that arises when your beliefs and behavior don't match.

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Your body does not care about your philosophy.

It reacts to attachment.

Touch the belief that holds your ego together —

and your system responds instantly.

You can't "manifest" your way out of a threat response.

You can't "positive think" your way out of a defensive state.

The body tells the truth about what you are still clinging to.

\*\*\*

The body doesn't detect whether a belief is false.

It detects whether it is defended.

That's the difference between a mistake and a delusion.

A mistake can be corrected.

A defended belief fights back.

\*\*\*

So if you want to locate your delulu quickly, don't look for what sounds irrational.

Look for what makes you tense.

Look for what makes you over-explain.

Look for what makes you emotional when it's questioned.

That's the signal.

That's the story your nervous system is afraid to lose.

\*\*\*

Here's the clean summary:

Delusion is not just a false belief.

It is a defended belief.

And defense always shows up in the body first.

**Reflection.** What belief do you protect emotionally even when you know it's costing you?

**Rule.** You don't argue delusion away. You out-train it with proof.

**Test.** The next time you feel defensive, pause and ask: what identity is being protected right now?

## Chapter 2

# The Delusion of a Pre-Defined Life

Delusion doesn't arrive loudly.

It doesn't knock. It doesn't warn you.

It arrives quietly—wrapped in tradition, reinforced by repetition, disguised as what's *normal*.

It hides inside the sentence that has killed more potential than failure ever could:

*“That’s just the way things are.”*

No one chooses a small life.

We inherit limitation the way we inherit language—early, unconsciously, before we can question it.

I did too.

\*\*\*

As a kid, adults asked:

*“What do you want to be when you grow up?”*

The question assumed two things:

That I would grow into a *role*, not a *person*. And that the options were already written.

Doctor. Engineer. Lawyer.

Sometimes I said those.

Other times I said what I was actually curious about.

Astrophysicist. Computer scientist. Hacker.

And some days, something simpler:

A musician. A pianist. A driver.

Just work. Presence. Craft.

\*\*\*

The reaction was never curiosity.

It was correction.

Some answers were rewarded.

Others were edited.

Not because they were wrong.

But because they weren't legible.

Curiosity without credentials sounds irresponsible to a world that confuses naming with knowing.

\*\*\*