

The Delulu We Live In

Escaping the Illusion of a Pre-Defined Life

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*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.

* * *

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One more thing, clearly:

This book is dedicated to education, and **100% of its profits will go to education.**

Not as a campaign.

Not as branding.

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

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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.
They scroll past it.
They rename it burnout.

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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.

* * *

At the center of most delusions is one belief:

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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.

What you repeat.

What you delay.

What you build.

* * *

This book is not here to comfort you.

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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.

* * *

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.

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* * *

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.

* * *

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

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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 usually not a thinking error.

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.

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

So the body resists.

Not with words.

With physiology.

* * *

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

It also checks your internal state.

Heartbeat.

Breath.

Tension.

Heat.

Gut pressure.

That small tightening that happens before your mind invents an explanation.

This is not mysticism.

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

* * *

So when someone thinks:

"This will work out somehow."

"I don't need to change."

“They still love me.”

If the belief is fragile but emotionally necessary, the body often reacts first:

Heart rate shifts.

Breathing becomes shallow.

Muscles tighten.

Attention narrows.

Then the mind does what it always does:

It explains the sensation with a story.

That story becomes “reality.”

* * *

This is why arguments rarely break delusion.

You’re not debating ideas.

You’re touching an identity-defense system.

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

Logic becomes a threat.

Evidence becomes an attack.

Truth becomes humiliation.

So the brain protects the belief.

Not because it’s smart.

Because it’s loyal.

* * *

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There is a name for this tension: Cognitive dissonance¹.

The discomfort of holding two conflicting truths at once.

And you can feel it without being able to explain it.

That is the body saying:

“One of these stories has to die.”

* * *

This is also why some people would rather stay in pain they recognize than step into a 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.

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

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* * *

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?