



MASTER YOUR DESTINY

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO REWRITE YOUR STORY AND
BECOME THE PERSON YOU WANT TO BE

THIBAUT MEURISSE

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About the Author

Are you in control of your life or do you feel that life is passing you by while you are unable to do anything about it?

If this book, you'll discover how to reclaim your power and become the hero of your own story. More specifically, you'll learn:

- how the story you tell yourself is preventing you from living the life you want (and what you can do about it),
- why your current story is fiction and how to replace it with a better one,
- five models of reality that can transform your outlook on life,
- how to create an empowering environment that brings the absolute best out of you, and
- much, much more.

So, are you ready to become the hero of your life and change the course of your destiny once and for all?

If so, read on.

INTRODUCTION

“ In reality, all men are sculptors, constantly chipping away the unwanted parts of their lives trying to create a masterpiece.

— EDDIE MURPHY, ACTOR.

Where we end up in life is, for the most part, the result of our beliefs. When we are guided by empowering beliefs, we go on achieving great things, often far beyond anything we thought possible. On the other hand, when we hold onto limiting beliefs, we find ourselves unable to achieve even a fraction of our true potential.

We can say that our beliefs determine the level at which we play the game called “life”. Empowering beliefs open up a whole new world where almost anything seems possible—assuming we put the time, effort, and energy required to achieve whatever we set our mind to. Conversely, limiting beliefs act as filters that narrow our field of possibility. They add all kinds of “I can’t” statements to our lives. Perhaps you find yourself saying things such as, “I could never do that,” “Others can but I can’t,” or “It’s just not who I am.” If so, you’re probably limiting yourself.

The beliefs you hold create what I call your “story”. That is, what you tell yourself is and isn’t possible based on who you think you are. Your story is your vision of the world, your model of reality. Your story is the narrative you rely on to make sense of the reality around you. Your mind cannot help but create stories using the daily information it receives. However, your

stories often consist of many inaccurate assumptions that do not reflect reality.

For instance, maybe you believe you can't become fluent in a foreign language. Perhaps you think you aren't smart enough to achieve your biggest goals. Or possibly you assume you must be dishonest to become wealthy. However, just because you think this way doesn't mean it is true. These are just models of reality you've developed based on both your personal experience and on the information to which you have been exposed.

In this book, you'll discover exactly what your current story is and how it is preventing you from living the life you want. More importantly, you'll see how to replace it with a more empowering one that will better support the ideal future you want to create.

In **Part I: Understanding Stories**, we'll discover how stories work and why we all tell ourselves stories. You'll become acutely aware of your own story. You also learn how it is holding you back and creating suffering in your life.

In **Part II: Changing Your Story**, we'll see what you can do specifically to change your story, whether this is by altering your thoughts and feelings, by taking new actions, or by creating a more empowering environment.

Finally, in **Part III: Integrating Your Story**, you will discover how to assimilate your new story at a deep level so that you can start moving confidently toward the ideal future you most desire.

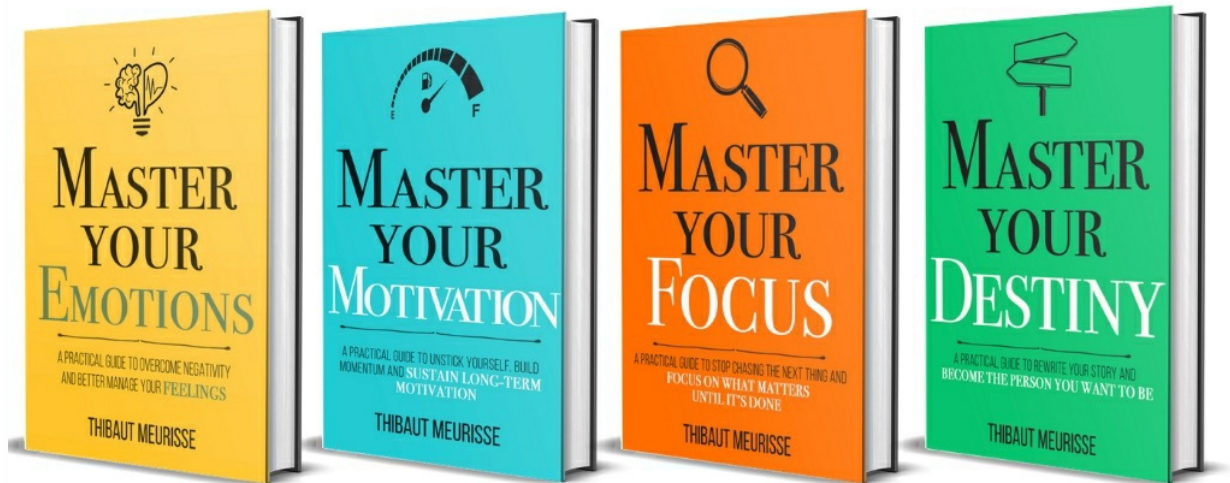
So, are you ready to take control of your destiny?

If so, let's get started.

Master Your Life With The Mastery Series

This book is the fourth book in the “**Mastery Series**”. You can check out the first book, “Master Your Emotions” below:

[Click here to learn how to master your emotions](#)



What readers say about Master Your Emotions:

“Changed my life”

"One of the best self help books I have ever read!"

“One Word: PHENOMENAL!”

YOUR FREE STEP-BY-STEP ACTION GUIDE

Your Free Step-By-Step Action Guide

To help you change your story, I've created a free action guide. Make sure you download it at the following URL:

<https://whatispersonaldevelopment.org/master-your-destiny>

If you have any difficulty downloading the action guide, contact me at: thibaut.meurisse@gmail.com and I will send you a copy as soon as possible.

PART I

UNDERSTANDING STORIES

YOU SEE WHAT YOU BELIEVE

We often say, “I’ll believe it when I see it.” Now, what if it’s the other way around? Supposing what you see is the result of what you believe? The truth is, your individual story acts as a filter that determines which information you ultimately accept or discard. In this situation, you tend to accept every piece of information that fits your model of reality, while you tend to ignore anything that challenges your view of the world. Let’s look at some examples:

- If the story you tell yourself is that you’re unattractive, you’ll only look for signs to confirm it. For instance, you’ll focus on the rejections you experience while ignoring any compliments you receive.
- If you tell yourself the story that you need luck to be successful, you’ll never do the necessary work to achieve any of your challenging goals. Why bother if you’re guaranteed to fail without the benefit of luck.
- If you tell yourself the story that you don’t matter, you’ll sell yourself short, and you will miss opportunities to impact the lives of people around you (and you’ll miss out on the joy of being able to do so).

I hope you now understand how important your story is. It defines the thoughts you have, the feelings you experience, and the actions you take as a result. In turn, your actions determine what you will (or will not) accomplish during your time spent on earth.

A. Why your perception of the world is probably inaccurate

Now, how accurate is your story?

One of the most fascinating things about human beings is that we tend to believe we're right. Over the years, we've developed our own model of reality (our story), and believe we see the world as it really is. But is this true? And is this even possible?

In truth, we perceive reality based on our unique experiences. If this is the case, how likely is it that our model of reality perfectly accounts for the world in all its complexity? I think you'll agree that this is highly *unlikely*. Yet, rather than refining our perception of reality, we often remain fiercely attached to our current model and, when people attack our views, we become highly defensive of them. For instance, two extremists from different religions cannot both have an accurate model of reality, but they are each convinced they hold the ultimate truth. Sometimes, they are even willing to use violence against anybody who disagrees with their vision of the world.

No story is 100% accurate. Many of our beliefs are wrong. And we won't be able to uncover our true potential unless we change them.

B. Does your story work for or against you?

Imagine if someone put you down, telling you that your goals are unrealistic, that you aren't smart enough, and that you will never amount to anything. Would you hang around that person?

Now, it might be what you're telling yourself, but will this story help you become the person you want to be?

To know if your story is the right one for you, look at your results. If you're dissatisfied with your life, your story is self-evidently working against you. If this is the case, identify all your disempowering beliefs and replace them with more empowering ones that serve you better.

We'll see how you can do this in, **Part II: Changing Your Story** and in **Part III: Integrating Your Story**.

C. The nature of beliefs

Why have some people developed extreme confidence while others are insecure? What's the difference? After all, beliefs are intangible.

There are no convincing reasons someone will not be able to develop new beliefs. Beliefs can be cultivated through repetition, whether it is by the repetition of thoughts, feelings, actions, or by the repetition of all three.

For instance:

- The constant repetition of feelings triggers corresponding thoughts and leads you to act.
- The constant repetition of thoughts influences your subconscious and creates the impulse to act.
- The constant repetition of actions reinforces related thoughts and further strengthens your beliefs.

In short:

- Feelings create thoughts
- Thoughts lead to action, and
- Actions reinforce existing thoughts and feelings.

When you combine these three, you create a positive feedback loop that, over time, strengthens your beliefs and changes your story.

For example:

- If you keep visualizing yourself persevering and feel pride for being a person who is determined to succeed, you'll think corresponding thoughts and your perseverance will increase (feelings).
- If you tell yourself you're a person who continues through to the end and you keep listening to audiobooks on perseverance, you'll find yourself persevering where you may previously have given up (thoughts).
- If every time you feel like giving up on something, you keep driving

through to completion, you'll reinforce your self-image of being a person who perseveres (actions).

The point is, the creation of beliefs obeys specific laws. The universe doesn't care about who you are or how you perceive yourself. If you keep thinking, feeling, and acting a certain way, you will cultivate the corresponding self-belief.

In a sense, we can say that believing is a skill. As with any other human being on this planet, you also have the ability to believe.

In Part III: Integrating Your Story, we'll discuss in greater depth how you can strengthen your belief in yourself.

HOW YOUR STORIES WERE CREATED

“ You are today where your thoughts have brought you; you will be tomorrow where your thoughts take you.

— JAMES ALLEN, WRITER.

Now, let's see how stories work in greater depth. But first, let's define what we mean by “story”.

For the sake of this book, I define story as, “a (seemingly) coherent web of beliefs that shapes your vision of reality and orients your actions in a specific direction.”

In short, your story is the narrative you rely on to navigate through life. It influences your thinking and dictates the decisions you make. As you go through this book, you'll realize that you tell yourself stories in all areas of your life, whether it be finance, career, relationships, or any other area.

Consider the following questions:

- Why do you believe what you believe?
- Why do your friends' beliefs differ from yours?

To answer these questions, let's look at the two main factors that shape our beliefs: repetition and interpretation.

Repetition

You adopted many of your beliefs during childhood. You made assumptions based on what you observed in the environment around you. For instance, if your parents told you over and over that you would never amount to anything, you might have developed the belief you're not good enough. Holding on to this particular story may have prevented you from pursuing your goals. Alternatively, you may have overcompensated by becoming a high achiever.

You've been conditioned to believe things that are neither true nor helpful. To design a more empowering story, you must get rid of who you *think* you are so you can become who you *want* to be. How? By eliminating illusory fears and artificial limitations. To do this, you must adopt new and empowering beliefs, by using the power of repetition. We'll see how to do this in the section, *Conditioning your mind*.

Interpretation

Nothing, in itself, has meaning. Meaning only happens as a result of interpretation. Now, the way you interpret things is entirely up to you. For instance, you can choose to believe something happened to you because you needed to learn a lesson, because you are doomed, or for no particular reason at all.

Imagine you had an interview for your dream job but weren't accepted. You may interpret this as a sign you're not good enough. You may also believe it wasn't meant to be, trusting that better opportunities will come along later. Alternatively, you may see it as an invitation to strengthen your character and further persevere.

Perhaps a good analogy would be to picture an infinity of universes you can tap into by changing your interpretation. When you give an empowering meaning to an event, you access higher quality thoughts which, in turn, lead to positive actions. By taking positive actions, you will start changing your reality (i.e., you gain access to better universes).

For instance, let's say you believe everything happens for a reason. If so,

when you fail to land your dream job, you'll learn whatever you can from the experience and will bounce back quickly. Such an empowering interpretation will allow you to maintain a positive emotional state. As a result, you'll take better actions, whether it be improving your presentation skills, fine-tuning your resume, or applying for other jobs immediately.

Your brain is a storyteller

Your brain continuously strives to make sense of the information to which it is exposed. It interprets why so-and-so said something, what they must have been thinking, how they must have felt, and so on. However, these interpretations are often inaccurate since your brain often misinterprets situations, overgeneralizes circumstances, or distorts facts.

Distortion in thinking is one of the key reasons people experience negative emotions. They tell themselves stories that are simply untrue and feel bad as a result. For this reason, you must train your mind to provide better stories. Do any of the sentences below seem familiar?

- I won't be happy until I get that job/get married/achieve that goal.
- Why does this always happen to me?
- I'm such a loser because I didn't get an A in this class.
- I will never find the right partner because women/men always reject me.
- I am a failure.
- And so on.

These are distortions of reality. The truth is, you've been telling yourself stories since childhood. You misinterpreted events, misjudged gestures, misheard words, blew so-called failures out of proportion, and you made incorrect assumptions based on limited data and insufficient reasoning skills. And you did the same thing over and over again. Furthermore, by leaving many of your assumptions unchallenged, you have created an inferior story that has prevented you from becoming the person you want to be.

Key factors contributing to your story

But you might wonder: what dictates the type of information you've been exposed to? And, why you interpreted it the way you did?

I would argue that there are mainly two factors at play here:

1. Your personality, and
2. Your environment.

1) Your personality

Your personality inevitably shapes your story since it influences the choices you make and, as a result, the situation you find yourself in (and therefore the information you're exposed to).

For instance, if it wasn't for my introversion, I might not have been drawn to personal development nor would I have written any books. Having time to think on my own, I discovered new ideas that guided my actions and shaped my destiny. The point is, our personality traits coupled with our natural talents affect our decisions and dictate our story.

What about you? Are you aware of the way your personality shapes your story?

2) Your environment

The information you receive from your environment influences your story as it becomes the foundation you rely upon to build your model of reality. Think about it this way: when you were born, you were a blank canvas. You didn't have models of reality you could use to think and make decisions. You had no religious or political beliefs, nor did you have a personal story. From the outset, all your beliefs have been shaped by the information to which you were exposed. And by information, I mean any conversation you've overheard and any positive or negative events that ever happened to you. In short, your environment has played and keeps playing a key role in the creation of your story.

We'll talk in more detail about the importance of changing your environment in the section, *Changing your environment*.

Now, let's discuss why your story is more fiction than fact.

WHY YOUR STORY IS FICTION

“ The greatest revolution of our generation is the discovery that human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives.

— WILLIAM JAMES, PSYCHOLOGIST.

You now understand that your story is a highly distorted version of reality. In short, it's fiction. Below are some of the ways you can distort reality:

- You blow some things out of proportion while omitting or understating others.
- You repeatedly misinterpret events.
- You make poor assumptions based on unreliable or insufficient data.
- You let your emotions affect your thinking.
- You accept lies told by society.
- You allow people to dictate what you can and cannot do.
- You lie to yourself, pursuing things that don't matter to you.

By doing some or all of these things, you create not only an inaccurate story, but a disempowering one. To you, your story looks so real, you're struggling to step out of it to embrace a better version.

Another characteristic of your story is that it is continuously evolving.

Your story keeps evolving

Nothing in life remains stable. Take the human body for example. While our body appears to remain the same from one day to the next, in reality, most of our body cells are continuously being renewed. It is estimated that two million cells are replaced every second. For instance, the cells that make up your skin are replaced every two to three weeks. The lifespan of white blood cells is less than a week. The cells in your stomach only live a couple of days. And the bones in your body regenerate every ten years or so.

This goes for your story as well. It is constantly changing. It only appears to be constant because you keep thinking the same thoughts. The good news is this: as you replace disempowering thoughts with empowering ones, you will start feeling and acting differently, thereby creating a better story.

Whose story are you embracing?

“ As long as you are alive, you’ll either live to accomplish your own goals and dreams, or you’ll be used as a resource to accomplish someone else’s goals and dreams.

— GRANT CARDONE, AUTHOR AND MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER.

As much as we like to believe we are independent thinkers, the truth is, our environment has a huge impact on how we think and behave.

Many studies have shown how easily we can be influenced. For instance, the Milgram experiment in 1963 revealed how most people blindly obey individuals perceived as authority figures. In this well-known experiment, participants were led to believe they were administering electric shocks to “students” to study how people learn. The real purpose of the experiment, however, was to observe how the participants would respond to orders that went against their conscience. In many cases, the participants blindly followed the “doctor’s” orders, even when the “students”—who were actors—explicitly demanded they stop, mentioning a heart problem. In short, under the instructions of the “doctor”, many participants were willing to endanger

the lives of the “students” rather than disobey orders from an authority figure.

Another interesting experiment is the Stanford prison experiment. To study how people reacted to a negative environment, the psychologist, Philip Zimbardo, turned Stanford’s psychology building, Jordan Hall, into a prison. He wanted to discover whether bad situations could turn good people into bad people or whether our attitudes, our values, and our morality could protect us from a negative environment. He hired twenty-four students—all deemed psychologically stable—to play the role of either guards or prisoners. While the experiment was originally scheduled to last two weeks, things degenerated so quickly that the experiment had to be canceled after only six days. After thirty-six hours, one “prisoner” started to act out of character and had to be released. One third of the guards exhibited sadistic tendencies and forced some prisoners to defecate or urinate in a bucket placed in their cell. They also demanded the prisoners repeat their assigned numbers over and over in an attempt to dehumanize them (alongside various physical punishments). Several “prisoners” were emotionally traumatized so badly, they had to be released. Philip Zimbardo, himself, who was acting as a superintendent, admitted later that he was so caught up in his role that he failed to realize the gravity of the situation. A graduate student in psychology who was involved in the study made him realize the experiment had gone too far. Who would have thought that what seemed like an advanced role-play activity could turn some of the participants into sadists in a matter of days?

These two experiments show how easily—and to what extent—people can be manipulated by their environment. If you believe you are immune, you may think twice as you read on. Now, let’s see how your external environment impacts upon your story.

A. How your environment affects your story

The business philosopher, Jim Rohn said, *“We are the average of the five people we spend the most time with.”* I believe this is fairly accurate. So, which five people do you spend the most time with, and are they supportive of your dreams?

When you spend time with positive people who inspire you and expect the best from you, you will up your game and begin to uncover your true

potential. However, when people around you are negative, they will drag you down and prevent you from achieving your goals and dreams.

Please realize, your story doesn't exist in a vacuum, it is influenced by your environment. People around you have developed their own story about you, and this story is based on the following factors:

- What you say to others.
- How you behave around them, and
- The way they interpret your words and actions based on *their* model of reality.

In other words, your story is a co-creation that takes place between you and the people around you. As a result, there is a constant tension between the story you tell yourself and the story people tell themselves about you.

For instance, your parents may believe you should pursue a specific career because it will best suit you. Or they may want you to become a lawyer or a doctor because it will make them proud. Your friends may believe you should be an accountant because you're good with numbers. Or they may think you're quiet and passive and expect you to remain that way.

The story people tell themselves about you can influence what you believe and, as a result, how you feel, think, and act. Unless you know exactly what you want your story to be, people's behaviors, thoughts, and actions will contaminate your story little by little without you even being aware of it.

In truth, there will always be friction between your story and the story people want you to adopt. When you decide to change, people will sometimes try to stop you. They may be afraid to lose you, or they may resent you for pursuing your own dreams. If you were to succeed, they would have to ask themselves why they haven't been pursuing their own dreams. In short, your success might threaten their story. Of course, not all people are like this and many of your true friends will be supportive.

But you cannot let other people decide what your story should be. If you do so, you are likely to pursue the wrong things and end up unhappy and frustrated. You *must* choose your own story. Other people won't be the ones on their deathbed regretting you didn't pursue your dreams, *you* will.

If I had let others decide what my story should be, I wouldn't be doing what I am doing today. Nobody encouraged me to become a writer. *I* made that choice. When I started, I had no mentor and didn't know anybody in my industry. I wasn't seen as an inspirational person either, and I certainly wasn't the confident guy with everything figured out—great career, amazing relationships, plenty of money, et cetera (and I'm still not). In fact, I might have been one of the last people you would have expected to become a self-help author.

Fortunately, instead of letting the world determine how my life should be, I looked within, decided what I wanted to do, and kept believing in myself. Knowing I was capable of achieving great things, I went my own way and pursued my unique story.

The point is not that you should *never* listen to your parents or friends. As external observers, they can help you identify your strengths and provide you with valuable advice. I'm simply telling you to pursue your own story as honestly and resolutely as possible.

B. Are your beliefs actually yours?

Have you ever considered that your beliefs may not be yours?

In fact, many of your beliefs are other people's beliefs that you've adopted because you didn't know any better at the time. When you were born, you didn't believe in anything in particular. You picked up beliefs and, over time, created your model of reality based on your interactions with your external environment.

You might also be surprised to hear that many of your goals aren't yours either. The reason you may pursue them is that you believe they:

- Will make you happy,
- Will allow you to get the approval of others, and/or they
- Look like a cool thing to do.

So, how many of your beliefs and goals are truly yours? If you could start from zero and adopt any beliefs you desire, which ones would you choose? If

you didn't try to impress anybody and didn't need to prove yourself to anyone, what would you do differently and what goals would you choose to pursue?

C. Be the hero of your story

When you let the outside world dictate your story, you have little power to change it. You're left at the mercy of your environment. This is what most people do. Most people are followers, disciples, extras in the movie of their lives. Instead of standing for what they believe in and making their own decisions, they look at what others are doing for clues—and do the same. They think, “Everybody is doing it so it must be the right thing to do,” but by doing so, they give away their individuality and lose their free will. In fact, they abandon their ability to take control of their life and design the future they desire. They let the world decide what their story should be.

Don't be like them.

Unless you want to follow the same path, avoid thinking the same way they do. As a reminder:

- According to a Rockport Institute survey, 70% of Americans “*go to work without much enthusiasm or passion*,” and
- According to the personal finance site, Bankrate, only 39% of Americans say they have enough savings to cover a \$1,000 emergency room visit or car repair.

Do you plan to become one of these statistics? If not, you must take responsibility and become the hero of your story.

* * *

Exercise: is your story yours?

Using your action guide, write down what other people and society want your story to be. Then, write what *you* want your story to be. Is there a

discrepancy? Are people trying to impose their vision of you onto you?

WHAT YOUR STORY REALLY CONSISTS OF

“ Everything starts with thought so you must be wise and careful what you think about because that starts everything.

— JIM ROHN, AUTHOR AND MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER.

Let's delve deeper into the concept of “story” and explore what an individual's story really is.

We rely on concepts to make sense of the world. That is, we attribute specific words to objects, emotions, or anything else we seek to understand. Then, we use these words and concepts to construct thoughts. When connected to us in a coherent way, these thoughts create our model of reality.

For instance, we use the word “money” to describe the pieces of paper, coins, or numbers on a screen we use to exchange for goods and services. Then, around the concept called “money”, we attached beliefs and emotions. Along with many other concepts, “money” creates the story we're telling ourselves, and the narrative we rely on to make sense of the world around us.

The point is, the story you tell yourself is mainly the result of the relationships you develop with key concepts. Furthermore, the thoughts you develop around these concepts generate emotions and influence your actions.

For instance, do you know your real relationship with the following concepts?

- Yourself
- Money
- Time
- Love
- Success
- Work

To begin with, let's look at the concept of money.

What is your relationship with money? What thoughts spontaneously arise when you think of money as a concept? Is it that money is scarce, that it is the root of all evil, or that it is hard to make? Is it that you need to be greedy or dishonest to make more? Or perhaps you feel there is something noble in staying poor. And what emotions does the concept of money trigger? Fear? Anxiety? Frustration? Joy? Excitement?

Your relationship with the concept of money determines how you think and feel, and it dictates many of your decisions. If you believe that money is the root of all evil, you might distrust people who have a lot of it. And, as a result of this attitude, you will not have a lot of it or won't be able to keep it.

What about time? What thoughts come to mind when you think of time? Is it that you never have enough of it? Is it that you should enjoy every second of your life? Or is it that you need to sacrifice your time now to create a better future? What emotions do you experience when you think of time? Is it a sense of being overwhelmed? Is it a strong determination to make good use of your time?

Someone who fails to value time will probably make poor use of it, with unintended side effects such as being unproductive at work, postponing their dreams, or being unable to spend enough time doing what they love.

Here's the bottom line. Your story is the sum of the relationships you have with key concepts such as yourself, money, time, success, love, and work. Therefore, to change your story, you must change your relationships with these key concepts. As you think and feel differently about them, you will inevitably take different actions and obtain different results.

In the section *Writing down your story*, we'll see how to change your

relationships with key concepts.

WHY YOU'RE ATTACHED TO YOUR CURRENT STORY

“ Every human is an artist. And this is the main art that we have: the creation of our story.

— DON MIGUEL RUIZ, AUTHOR.

Have you ever wondered why you are attached to your current story and why it's so hard to change it? This is mostly because of the emotional benefits it provides you.

As human beings, we do things for emotional reasons. For instance, I may procrastinate on writing this book because it allows me to avoid facing my fears of not doing a good enough job. Watching videos on YouTube instead might provide me with immediate gratification, which sounds like a better deal in the moment. Alternatively, I may binge eat sweets because it makes me feel good and masks some internal dissatisfaction (such as not making progress with my writing).

It also works the other way around. We usually stop doing the things that fail to bring us emotional benefits. The same goes for your story. It must be serving you in some way or you would have ditched it for a better one, right?

So, how exactly is your story serving you?

You probably use your story as an excuse to escape your responsibilities and avoid making difficult decisions. This is what most of us do. The narrative we rely on allows us to hide and avoid facing our fears. For instance, we tell

ourselves that we are inadequate in some way. As a result, there is nothing we can or should do, right? Alternatively, we blame our environment, our parents, or society for the situation we find ourselves in.

Please don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that a dysfunctional household, a violent neighborhood, or a disability can't be serious obstacles preventing you from living the life you want. Some issues in your life are not your fault. However, it is your responsibility as an adult to do something about them whether it is:

1. Accepting these issues (if you can't or aren't willing to change them),
2. Doing something about these issues (this could be by having an honest conversation with someone for instance), or
3. Changing your story about these issues (by giving them a more empowering meaning).

For example, do you plan to spend the rest of your life blaming your parents because nothing you ever did seemed to be good enough for them? Or are you going to love yourself and celebrate all your accomplishments?

Will you keep using your lack of confidence as an excuse to avoid facing your fears, or will you do something about it?

The point is, we often keep acting as victims because it provides us with emotional benefits. These emotional benefits are mainly:

- **Comfort.** We would rather escape our responsibility and stay within our comfort zone than take the actions needed to better our lives.
- **Approval.** We like to invite people's compassion because it makes us feel good and validated.
- **Righteousness.** We trick ourselves in believing we're right. We're the victims here and it feels good to be right, doesn't it?

What about you? How exactly is your story serving you? If you were to change your story, what would happen? What emotional benefits would you lose?

You hold onto disempowering aspects of your story for various reasons.

Once you understand why you're entertaining the same old story, you will find it easier to replace it with a more empowering one.

* * *

Exercise: uncover hidden benefits from your story

Using your action guide, write down all the hidden benefits you receive from perpetuating your current story.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CURRENT STORY

“ We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.

— MAYA ANGELOU, POET, WRITER AND CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST.

Are you fully aware of your current story? In this section, we'll have a look at your story and see how it might be holding you back. We'll also start rewriting a better story more in line with the ideal life you want to create. Let's get started.

A. Evaluating your current story

Do you like the story you're currently telling yourself? Do you feel as though you're heading in the right direction and making the most of the time you were granted on earth? Or do you feel lost, frustrated, or unhappy, knowing you're capable of more?

Before you work on creating a more empowering story, you must assess where you are right now. You can use the following criteria to evaluate your current story:

- Your level of excitement.
- Your level of fulfillment.
- Your level of growth.

- Your level of alignment.

Let's have a brief look at each criterion.

Your level of excitement.

Are you excited every morning when you wake? Or do you feel numb and lacking drive and energy? If you are excited, it is a good indication that you're doing the right things. On the other hand, if you're unmotivated, it's a sign you might need a better story.

Your level of fulfillment.

Are you genuinely happy, or are you pretending? If you're happy and at peace with yourself most of the time, your story is great. If you aren't, you probably hold onto disempowering beliefs that prevent you from doing what you really want to do.

Your level of growth.

In the world, stagnation doesn't exist. We either grow or decay. When we feel as though we're growing—because we're learning new skills, facing our fears, or reaching higher levels of understanding—we feel good about ourselves and tend to be happier. On the other hand, when we refuse to challenge ourselves and confront our fears, the price we pay is often lack of fulfillment and poor self-esteem. So, are you growing or decaying?

Your level of alignment.

Do you feel as though you're being true to yourself? Do you honor your personality, values, and natural gifts? Can you look in the mirror and know you're doing the right things?

If you live a life out of alignment with the person you truly are, you risk feeling empty inside. Thus, you must identify what makes you come alive. Then, you must do more of that each day (see the item on doing more of what you love in the section, *Acting in the present*).

* * *

Exercise: evaluate your story

Using your action guide, rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 for each of the following:

- Your level of excitement.
- Your level of fulfillment.
- Your level of growth.
- Your level of alignment.

If you scored high, well done. You're telling yourself an empowering story that is moving you forward. If you scored low, your story is most likely holding you back. Don't worry though. This is only to be expected. Otherwise, you wouldn't have purchased this book in the first place, would you?

Now, let's work on identifying your current story.

B. Writing down your story

In this section, we'll spend time to identify your story as well as its most limiting aspects.

The easiest way to do this is to look at the stories you're telling yourself in key areas of your life. What narrative are you relying on in your current relationships? What's your relationship with your work? What meaning do you give to money? As we've seen before, your story consists of your relationships with key concepts in major areas of your life.

I invite you to answer the questions below for each area of your life (career, family, finance, health, personal growth, relationship, spirituality). Let's use "career" as an example:

- What's your relationship with the concept called "career"? How do you perceive your work? What does it mean to you?
- What emotions do you experience the most in this area? Is it excitement and joy? Or is it apathy and frustration?

- How would you summarize your career in one sentence?
- What better story could you tell yourself so that you reach a 10 out of a 10 in this area?

Below are my answers regarding my relationship with the concept called “career”.

What’s your relationship with the concept called “career”?

Years ago, when I was working in Japan, my supervisor told me work wasn’t meant to be enjoyed. I should just take my paycheck and enjoy my free time. This was his personal story about work. I almost bought into it. I guess at that time, part of me believed it was okay not to enjoy my job, but part of me thought another way was possible.

What emotions do you experience the most in this area?

When I was an employee, I felt mostly frustrated, unhappy, and inadequate.

How would you summarize your story in one sentence?

It might be okay not to enjoy my job as long as it pays the bills (when I was an employee).

What better story could you tell yourself so that you reach a 10 out of a 10 in this area?

My current story is as follows: My career is a way for me to express my skills and talents to the fullest so that I can make a difference in as many people’s lives as possible. I seek to enjoy my work as much as I can. Whenever I don’t enjoy my work, I ask myself where the misalignment comes from and take the necessary actions.

Your turn now. What is your story about your career?

Once you’ve answered these questions for your career, repeat the process for each area of your life (family, finance, health, personal growth, relationships, spirituality).

Now, look at your answers. Can you find commonalities? Are there specific emotions you experience over and over in various areas of your life?

Based on your answers, what would you say is the overarching story of your life? Is it an overall lack of motivation? A sense of inadequacy? A feeling of being overwhelmed or confused? If it helps, you can refer to the next section describing the most common stories people tell themselves.

* * *

Exercise: write down your story

Using your action guide, write down your story in each key area of your life. Then, look for commonalities in terms of emotions experienced.

C. Six common stories we tell ourselves

While the stories we tell ourselves are unique, they tend to fall into broad categories. Let's look at what the most common stories are.

1) The victim-based story

This is probably the most “popular” one. Let's face it, we all like to see ourselves as victims, blaming other people or circumstances for the problems we face in our lives. Some people do it only in certain areas of their lives and with moderation, others are addicted to this story and overuse it.

Below are some key characteristics of people who buy into this story:

- **They feel powerless.** Because they believe their circumstances or people around them are the reasons why they are struggling in life, they feel powerless.
- **They blame everyone and everything.** Because they believe they can't shape their lives by using their mind, changing their thoughts, and taking different actions, they must necessarily blame outside forces to explain their current situation.
- **They seek the approval of others.** They want other people to validate their story. To do so, they may try to get people to feel sorry for them or they may seek to get people to agree with their vision of

the world.

The victim-based story can take many forms. For instance, you may believe that, due to your difficult childhood, you'll never be able to achieve a certain goal, be happy, et cetera. Or you may believe you have no talent and, as a result, can't achieve anything significant. In short, by acting as a victim, you give away your power and let external circumstances determine your life. As you do this, you deny yourself access to countless empowering thoughts that could transform your life. This is the easy way out, since you don't need to change anything—at least, in the short term. However, it will inevitably and invariably prevent you from designing the life you want.

Are you playing the victim? If so, what can you do to reclaim your creative power?

2) The fear-based story

Is fear holding you back?

Fear is another factor that influences your story. It acts as a powerful filter that severely reduces your field of possibilities. When you have too many fears that you fail to address, you can't express yourself fully, and your story becomes limiting. Fear prevents you from going beyond your comfort zone and destroys your potential for growth. As you repeatedly avoid facing fear and discomfort, you build a story that falls out of alignment with who you really are. Remember, behind your fears is the person you want to be. You can't become yourself unless you face your fears.

We all have fears. It is unrealistic to expect yourself to get rid of all of them, but I invite you to start moving beyond your comfort zone and test your limits. Deep down, you know you're capable of more, right? The good news is that every time you embrace discomfort, you open yourself up to new opportunities. The fewer fears you hold onto, the more options you have.

Imagine how much more interesting and exciting your story could become if you were to eliminate some of your fears.

3) The selfless story

Another story you might tell yourself is that you need to sacrifice yourself for the benefits of others. Your underlying assumptions may be:

- Self-sacrifice is noble and will benefit other people.
- Self-sacrifice is the most effective way to exert a positive impact on the lives of others.

But is it true that self-sacrifice is a noble and selfless act? We could argue that, on the contrary, self-sacrifice is selfish. If, instead of seeking to become your best self, you deny yourself happiness, education, and a proper personal or professional life, you risk having a less positive impact on the lives of people around you. As a result, in most cases, self-development is better than self-sacrifice.

What about you? In what way are you sacrificing yourself? And do you want to keep this part of your story?

For instance, are you sacrificing yourself too much for your kids? Remember that children see you as the role model. Do you want them to become like you and neglect their own needs in the future? It's okay to take time for yourself. It's okay to let your children do some chores. It's okay to provide them with more independence. When I was a child, my mother did everything for me, but it didn't help me become self-reliant. In fact, it took me years of personal development work before I could feel like I was a mature adult—and I'm still working on it.

Are you sacrificing yourself too much for your career? Now, is this sacrifice really necessary? Could you achieve similar results while taking more time for yourself?

Beware of your beliefs. If you believe sacrificing yourself is the only way to go, this is what you'll end up doing, but it is not necessarily the best option. People around you want to see the best version of yourself, not the unfulfilled one.

4) The proud story

Are you letting pride influence your story negatively?

Perhaps, you hold onto certain assumptions such as:

- Asking for help is a sign of weakness.
- Admitting my mistakes will make me lose credibility.
- I don't need to learn because I already know what I need to do.

Because of pride, you may refuse to apologize or become defensive when someone gives you honest feedback. Asking for help or admitting you don't know something isn't easy. It is, however, a necessary step in order to grow and develop your talents and skills. Also, being willing to swallow your pride and show vulnerability makes it easy to relate to other people. After all, we're all imperfect human beings.

The point is, there is nothing wrong with being proud of your accomplishments. However, when you start believing you're better than others and refuse to ask for the necessary help, this is when your story becomes disempowering.

Ask for help, admit your mistakes, realize there is always more to learn, and you will regain power over your life.

5) The “I’m not good enough” story

We often tell ourselves that we are lacking something, that we can't design the life we want because we don't deserve it. We need to do X, Y, or Z before we can feel good enough and finally enjoy our lives. But whatever we do, it never seems to be enough. If we aren't careful, we can spend most of our lives trying to be “good enough”.

What about you? Do you feel as though you're not good enough? How does this manifest in your life? What thoughts lead you to feel this way?

The truth is that even the most successful people on earth can feel like frauds. They dread the day people will finally find out they are imposters. The writer,

Neil Gaiman, was once invited to a gathering of artists, scientists, and writers. He felt like an imposter, fearing the moment people would realize he didn't belong there. The second or third night at the event, he talked to a nice gentleman who told him something along these lines: *"I just look at all these people, and I think, what the heck am I doing here? They've made amazing things. I just went where I was sent."*

Neil Gaiman then said, *"Yes. But you were the first man on the moon. I think that counts for something."*

Did you guess? This gentleman was Neil Armstrong, the first man to set foot on the moon. Suddenly, Neil Gaiman felt a little better. Because if Neil Armstrong felt like an imposter, perhaps everybody else did, too.

Perhaps you prefer the following quotes from famous Hollywood actresses.

"When I won the Oscar, I thought it was a fluke. I thought everybody would find out, and they'd take it back. They'd come to my house, knocking on the door, 'Excuse me, we meant to give that to someone else. That was going to Meryl Streep.'" Jodie Foster.

"You think, 'Why would anyone want to see me again in a movie? And I don't know how to act anyway, so why am I doing this?'" Meryl Streep.

Do you feel a little better now?

6) The "I don't have enough" story

We are already rich. Our standard of living far exceeds that of people who lived only a few decades ago. Most of us have a place to call home, food on the table, and a few family members or friends we enjoy spending time with.

But do you feel as though you have enough? Or do you find yourself constantly looking for more? Often, we feel this way because we haven't determined what having "enough" means for us. We feel like we need more if we want to keep up with the Joneses. We want nicer cars, bigger houses, and newer gadgets. Although there is nothing wrong with wanting to enjoy the nicest things the world has to offer, the problem arises when you believe you need these things to make you happy. Fulfillment rarely, if ever, comes

from acquiring things, no matter how wonderful these things may be.

Here is what usually happens: we buy something new—an expensive car for instance—and feel great about our purchase. But it doesn’t last. After a few days or a few weeks, we become used to it and start taking it for granted. Now, we need an even more expensive toy. And we keep repeating the same cycle.

Not feeling as though you have enough can be a powerful motivator and allow you to accomplish more. However, as you strive for more, make sure it comes from a genuine desire to experience more of life, not from a sense of lack and unworthiness.

To start moving away from the “I don’t have enough story,” I invite you to cultivate gratitude. Gratitude is the ability to appreciate what you already have instead of always be looking for more. It helps you move beyond the “scarcity” mindset. Strangely enough, appreciating what you already have can often lead you to receive more. After all, if you can’t appreciate what you have, why would the universe give you more?

These are six common stories people tell themselves. What about you? Do you play the victim, succumb to fear, sacrifice yourself, fail to swallow your pride, or feel as though you aren’t good enough or don’t have enough? If so, what can you do about it, starting today?

* * *

Exercise: identify common stories you tell yourself

Using your action guide, write down how each story plays out in your life.

D. Key assumptions that form your story

You currently hold onto many assumptions, which are the result of thoughts you’ve entertained over and over (often during your childhood). The sum of these assumptions constitutes the main architecture of your story. As you replace them with more empowering ones, the way you feel will change,

leading you to take different and more positive actions.

For instance, to re-use a previous example, if one of your assumptions is that the only purpose of a job is to pay the bills, you probably won't strive to design a career you're passionate about.

An effective way to identify your core assumptions is to look at the way you feel. You'll find that, oftentimes, a few major assumptions cause most of your challenges.

I encourage you to complete the exercise in your action guide. It's one of the most important exercises in this book, so make sure you take the time to work through it.

As examples, let me share with you the negative emotions I've been experiencing myself for a while.

Personal examples

In this section, I'll share with you six assumptions that have been causing me unnecessary anxiety. For each assumption, I'll share empowering beliefs I will replace them with. See if you hold onto similar beliefs yourself.

Like many people who are, or aspire to be, self-employed, one of my biggest fears is having to return to a 9-to-5 job. One way it shows is in my relationship with money (i.e., the fear of running out of it). I've also noticed that I tend to link my self-worth to the amount of money I make, which is a terrible idea. Here is the first assumption I've been holding onto:

1. I need to make more money with my books to feel good about myself.

Here are some better beliefs I can adopt instead:

- I can choose to feel good right here, right now.
- The better I feel, the more money I'm likely to make (not the other way around).
- I can always make more money by working part-time or through other ventures.
- I trust myself and the universe, knowing that money will come my

way when needed. Meanwhile, I focus on using my strengths to do great work.

Note that this assumption is rather illogical, since I'm the one who decided to make most of my income from selling books even though I could have chosen a different avenue.

2. I need to make more money and retire early to finally be free and enjoy life.

New empowering beliefs:

- I can and must enjoy life now. Tomorrow might never arrive.
- I love working and will keep doing so for many decades. Therefore, why try to escape and buy into the myth that one day, I'll finally be happy? Why not be happy now?
- I can both work and enjoy my life. In fact, I will likely be happier this way than by "retiring".

3. I need to think or worry about my business all the time.

Another belief I've been holding onto is the idea that I need to worry about my business the whole time, as if worrying would help me in any way.

New empowering beliefs:

- I focus on the process, i.e., what I do every day during my working hours.
- I live one day at a time and make the most of each day. There is no need to try to do tomorrow's work today.
- The more present I am, the happier and more productive I become.
- I can be relaxed and highly productive at the same time (worrying doesn't help).
- I'm already successful and there is nowhere else I need to go.

4. I need to and am willing to sacrifice myself for others.

Yet another belief I have is that I must sacrifice myself to serve others.

New empowering beliefs:

- I'm committed to becoming the best version of myself, so that I can serve others at the highest level possible.
- The happier I am, the more energy I have to help others in need.
- The happier I am, the happier the world becomes.
- My family and friends want me to be fulfilled, and they benefit from seeing me happy.

5. I'm not qualified to write a self-help book.

Many writers hold onto this belief. There is a little voice inside their head that says, "Who am I to write this book?" This belief isn't limited to writers though. It affects many of us. You have probably felt the same way at some time in the past.

New empowering beliefs:

- All I need to do is help one person improve his or her life in some minor way.
- If someone can benefit from this book, it is my responsibility to write it.
- It's unrealistic to expect myself to become a great writer overnight. Where am I now is exactly where I need to be in terms of my skill levels. I have decades to learn how to write exceptional books.
- I received great reviews in the past. This shows that people find my books useful. I just need to keep doing what I already know how to do.

6. I need to be successful to make other people proud of me.

Another assumption that creates suffering in my life is the idea I need the approval of other people to be a success. It's a belief many of us hold. This belief can lead us to make the wrong decisions and pursue the wrong path in life. Not to mention that it can seriously disturb our peace of mind.

New beliefs:

- I need to do what feels right to me so that I can be proud of myself.
- I don't need to prove anything to anybody.
- The only thing I need to do is follow my path with honesty and courage.
- There is no such thing as not being good enough (in my eyes or in the eyes of others). Life is about growing at my own pace in my own time.
- What I do at any time is exactly in line with my capacity at the time. By doing this, I'm successful in my own way.

* * *

Exercise: identify your 5-10 most limiting assumptions

Your turn now. Write down your five to ten most limiting assumptions. To do so, look at negative emotions you experience often and identify the underlying assumptions (thoughts) that trigger these emotions. Try to answer the question, "What underlying belief(s) lead me to feel this way?"

Identify your most limiting assumption

Over time, you can replace most of your negative assumptions with empowering beliefs that will positively impact your life. But for now, I encourage you to focus on the one assumption you've identified as the most limiting. This way, you'll avoid feeling overwhelmed as you work on changing your story.

What is the ONE assumption causing you the most emotional suffering, whether it is guilt, shame, fear, or a feeling of inadequacy? To put it differently, if you were to eliminate ONE assumption, which one would have the biggest positive impact on the way you feel in your daily life?

* * *

Exercise: write down your most limiting assumption

Using your action guide, write down your most limiting assumption. Then, produce as many empowering beliefs as you can to discredit that assumption.

In **Part III: Integrating Your Story**, we'll discuss in greater depth how you can replace your limiting beliefs with more empowering ones.

To learn more about key assumptions that prevent you from living the life you want, you can refer to my book, *[Crush Your Limits](#)*.

E. What is your story depriving you of?

What positive emotions are you denying yourself because of the story you cling to?

Are you denying yourself the right to be happy? Are you preventing yourself from experiencing the peace of mind you deserve? Are you missing the fulfillment life has to offer?

The way you feel has more to do with the story you're telling yourself than with what is happening in the world around you. While emotions often arise as a result of outside events—an insult, the loss of your job, an inconsiderate gesture, and so on—the way you interpret these events leads you to feel a certain way. Put simply, the thoughts you have determines the way you feel. Furthermore, your thoughts come from within, not from the outside world.

So, what positive emotions do you want to experience more often? Is it excitement? Fulfillment? A sense of being alive? Is it the feeling you're making a difference? The joy of growing and learning new things?

Now, what thoughts do you need to focus on to experience these positive emotions more often? And what action(s) do you need to take?

* * *

Exercise: write down what your current story is depriving you of

Using your action guide, write down the emotions you're not experiencing often enough. Then, look at the main assumptions that could be stopping you from experiencing these emotions. How are you preventing yourself from

feeling good?

For instance:

- Do you believe you need to achieve a certain goal before you can give yourself permission to be happy?
- Do you feel as though you can't be happy because of something you did in the past?
- Do you deny yourself the right to be happy because you "shouldn't" be happier than your parents or friends?
- Do you believe you need to sacrifice yourself for the sake of others?

We are often our own worst enemy when it comes to being content with our lives. We're always looking for the one thing outside of us that is going to make us happy—the ideal partner, the perfect house, the next promotion, et cetera. This type of thinking usually comes from the belief that we need something external to make us happy. However, is this true or is it another story we're telling ourselves?

What about you? What underlying thought process or narrative is responsible for your lack of fulfillment?

* * *

Exercise: write down your thought process

Using your action guide, write down the different assumptions that prevent you from experiencing more happiness, a greater sense of being alive, and greater fulfillment in your life. Then, ask yourself what new assumptions you could put in place to experience more of the positive emotions you're looking for.

SIX MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN CREATING YOUR NEW STORY

Is your story as empowering as it could be? Let's answer this question by looking at the six mistakes to avoid when creating your story.

Mistake #1—Pursuing a story that isn't yours just to earn the approval of others

One of the biggest mistakes people make is to pursue a story that is based on what they think others expect them to do. In short, they worry too much about what people think of them, which prevents them from doing what they genuinely want to do.

The truth is, we all worry about what people think of us. We all seek approval in some way or another. However, to live the life you want, you must develop the courage to pursue what you want while ignoring people's opinions. You weren't born to be a follower or to live up to the expectations of other people—many of whom don't even care about you.

In *The Entrepreneur Roller Coaster*, Darren Hardy mentions an interesting article. This article stated that, on average, only ten people will cry at our funerals. This means you can work hard your entire life to please others but only a handful of people will care enough about you to cry at your funeral. But it gets even worse. According to the same article, the number one factor that determines how many people will go to your burial site is ... the weather. Yes, if it's raining, more than half of the people attending will break off from the funeral procession and go directly to the party. Bear this in mind before

caring too much what people think of you.

The point is, if it's really going to be your story, *you* must be the one deciding how it's going to unfold. Nobody has the right to decide that for you.

Mistake #2—Pursuing an uninspiring story because you think it's all you can achieve

Another common mistake is to set half-baked goals because you don't believe in yourself or in your potential. The truth is, you will never uncover your potential until you get out there and start taking action. The human mind is one of the most powerful machines on earth. Therefore, you can probably achieve far more than you imagine.

So, go after what you really want and see where it takes you. You might not reach your ultimate goal, but the journey toward the achievement of that goal will turn you into an entirely new person—a wiser, stronger, and smarter one. As the business philosopher, Jim Rohn once said, *“The real value in setting goals is not in their achievement. The major reason for setting goals is to compel you to become the person it takes to achieve them.”* The same can be said for your story. The value of your story is the way it allows you to feel and who it allows you to become in the process of embracing it.

Make sure your story is the best and most inspiring one you can adopt and strive to live by it each day.

Mistake #3—Letting your past determine your future, and not seeing what you could become

Your past is not an indication of the future you're about to create. One of the characteristics of being a human is that you have the ability to change your destiny at any time. You can adopt new beliefs and take different actions, starting today. You can implement new daily habits or rituals that, in a few months, will take you to a new place emotionally, physically, and/or spiritually.

If your past truly determined your future, no one would have a success story.

Every single person in the world would remain the same, never changing their lives. But we know that this is not true. Your past does not determine your future. What matters, is the way you choose to see your past and how you connect it with a compelling future.

Mistake #4—Pursuing a story that sounds good, but only on paper

Another mistake that is easy to make—and sometimes inevitable in the short term—is pursuing a story that sounds good but isn't.

Usually, this happens because of the way we're conditioned by society. For instance, you may believe that you need to become a millionaire and have a certain lifestyle. Yet, once you finally get there, you realize it doesn't make you happy and you're getting bored. This is actually pretty common, because having money or living a certain lifestyle isn't what gives you a real purpose in life.

So, make sure you are being honest with yourself and take time to decide what you *really* want, not what you *think* you want.

Mistake #5—Not conditioning your mind every day over a long period of time

Changing your current story for a better one takes time. It is likely you've been holding onto the same beliefs for years. Consequently, you must be patient with yourself and keep conditioning your mind every day until you start noticing changes in the way you think or feel. You need to keep believing that the new story you envision is possible or even inevitable in the long term. Of course, there will likely be setbacks along the way, but these are part of your story. Remember, people before you transformed all aspects of their lives far beyond anything you can imagine. Never assume that because you haven't done something before, you can't do it at all. Challenge your limitations. See them as an invitation to grow. As you keep focusing on the person you want to be and the life you want to design for yourself, you will move closer to your destination little by little.

Mistake #6—Creating a rigged story that doesn't allow you to be happy right now

The point of your story is not to chase an illusory future where you will finally be happy. You want your story to improve your present situation while you move toward an even better life in the future. This means your story should be inspiring and should shift your current and ongoing emotional state. These new feelings of excitement will lead you to take inspired actions and change your story—and your life. If your story is not improving your present reality and making you feel better right now, you might need to make some adjustments.

In the next section, we'll look at how you can make those adjustments effectively and choose a more empowering and inspiring story.

PART II

CHANGING YOUR STORY

The greatest discovery of all time is that a person can change his future by merely changing his attitude.

— OPRAH WINFREY, BROADCASTER AND ACTRESS.

In this part, we're going to discuss what you can do specifically to start changing your story and design a more empowering story—a story you will want to be the hero of. Let's get started.

THE FIVE KEY COMPONENTS OF AN EMPOWERING STORY

Do you wonder what an empowering story looks like? If so, let's have a look at the five key components of a great story.

1) Empowering beliefs

As we've seen before, your story is "a (seemingly) coherent web of beliefs that shapes your vision of reality and orients your actions toward a specific direction."

The more empowering beliefs you can adopt, the better your story will become. Empowering beliefs will give you more options and expand your field of possibilities. For instance, if you believe you can learn anything you set your mind to, there will be far more options available to you than if you believe you need talent.

2) Inspiring vision

An empowering story is only possible when you have an inspiring vision to follow. It's hard to feel motivated when you have no vision for your life. Why even bother? On the other hand, when you know what you want your life to look like in five years and why, you'll be inspired to take daily actions to move toward your dreams.

3) Strong core values

Your core values influence many of your decisions. Unless you know what matters to you, you can't take the appropriate actions and act in a way congruent with who you are.

For instance, if autonomy is a key value for you, you might not want to be tied to a 9-to-5 job with a boss micro-managing you. Your desire to live according to this value will drive you to look for a career that provides more autonomy.

4) Effective reframing

To design an empowering story, you must learn to rely on powerful models of reality that enable you to stay positive while expanding your field of possibilities. In the section, *Exploring different realities*, we'll review different models of reality you can use to regain power over your life and eliminate self-imposed limitations.

5) Healthy self-compassion

Things don't always go as planned. When they don't, you might be harsher on yourself than you should be. Beating yourself up doesn't work, though. The only thing it accomplishes is to put you in a negative state that distorts your thinking. Then, you will doubt yourself, lose motivation, and feel guilty for lacking the energy to do the things you want to do.

To avoid falling prey to negativity, I invite you to embrace self-compassion. Consider negative emotions as part of your story, not separate from it. Then be self-compassionate. For more on self-compassion, refer to the section, *Cultivating self-compassion*.

* * *

Exercise: is your story empowering?

Using your action guide, rate yourself on each of these five components on a scale from 1 to 10.

CREATING YOUR AVATAR

“ Many people put more energy, creativity, and commitment into deciding which house to buy or where to go on vacation than into deciding what to do with their lives.

— NICHOLAS LORE, CAREER COACH AND FOUNDER OF
ROCKPORT INSTITUTE.

What kind of hero do you want to be? What journey do you want to embark upon?

In this section, we will talk about your “avatar”. When you play a video game, you often have to choose an avatar, which has specific strengths and weaknesses as well as exciting quests to accomplish.

In the real world, you are the hero of your story. Therefore, you must choose the type of avatar you want to create and what you aspire to achieve with it. It is also your responsibility to choose at what level you want to play the game. Do you want to play it small by staying within your comfort zone, or do you want to level up, face your fears, and take on bigger and more exciting missions? This is something you must decide for yourself.

The great news is that you have the power of choice. You can choose what aspect of yourself to focus on, which strengths to cultivate, or what fears to overcome. You can choose the new beliefs to install and the obsolete beliefs to eliminate.

In the end, your avatar is not so much determined by your environment but by your absolute commitment to embody it every day. No one can stop someone who made the commitment to change, become better, and move toward their vision with total conviction. At worst, they can only slow his or her progress.

When you decide who you want to be, you become the leader of your life. You don't rely on society to tell you what to do with your life. Instead, you become the hero of your story—you become your avatar. As you embrace your story and move toward your destiny, people around you will be inspired and begin to change. This is what happens when you become a leader.

So, are you ready to create your avatar? Let's get started.

A. Living according to your values

Your values act as a compass that guides you through each life decision. Without clear values, it's hard to make sound decisions. As a result, you become easily influenced by other people or by circumstances, or you indulge in temporary whims. On the other hand, with crystal-clear values, you can make decisions better and faster. Suddenly, you will see things clearly. Living according to your deepest values also enhances your self-respect. Since you're doing what feels right to you, you have nothing to hide.

Do you know your core values? If not, I invite you to write down your top five values. You can find a list of values by clicking [here](#). You can also refer to the following article on my blog, [Identify Your Core Values — Who Are You?](#)

Below are a couple of things to bear in mind when you select your core values.

1) Your values should be specific. Perhaps you stated that freedom matters most to you. Or maybe you value safety over anything else. If so, what exactly you do mean by “freedom” and “safety”? Your definition of freedom is likely to differ from mine.

For example, freedom could mean:

- Being self-employed and not having a boss telling you what to do,
- Having the ability to take a vacation whenever you want, or
- Having autonomy at work.

Safety could mean:

- Working for the government or a major conglomerate with little or no risk of being sacked,
- Living in a neighborhood where you can go out at any time of the day or night without fear for your safety, or
- Having the confidence in your ability to switch jobs or find a new job easily because of the experience and the skills you have developed over the years.

As you can see, the same values can mean different things to different people.

2) Your values should be non-negotiable. Your core values are the things that matter most to you. They act as guiding principles. For instance, if honesty is your most important value, you will go the extra mile to ensure your behavior and decisions are consistent with this value.

If freedom—manifesting as being self-employed—is your most important value, you'll fight hard to maintain or create that situation. You'll only work for someone else if you have no choice or if it is part of your long-term goal to becoming self-employed (e.g., the desire to learn a new skill or gain experience).

The point I'm making is that values are something you naturally strive to live by. Your values aren't:

- Things you believe you *should* do (which implies external pressure to conform to something you aren't naturally drawn toward), or
- Dreams and desires (which implies things you aren't living by right now).

* * *

Exercise: identify your core values

Using your action guide, write down your top five core values.

B. Choosing your quest

Where is your avatar going and what does it try to accomplish?

Put differently, what do you need to create an avatar for? Why is it important for you to become a better version of yourself? What will it allow you to accomplish?

Until now, your story might not have been an empowering one. You might have been blaming your past, resenting people, or doubting your ability to achieve your goals. But it's now time to create a better story. Think about it this way, what story do you want to tell your grandchildren one day? What would have been the main theme of your life? What kind of person would you have become? What would your life have been about?

One of the worse feelings you can experience is regret. What would you regret if you were to die today? To avoid regret, you have to muster the courage to do what you know you should be doing deep down in your heart.

How to choose your quest

The purpose of your quest is to allow you to become the person you aspire to be while having the impact you want to have in the world. It must enable you to express yourself and to live by your core values most of the time. In short, it must allow you to live authentically.

So, if you were already your best self and could accomplish anything you wanted, what would the story of your life be and how would you explain it to others?

* * *

Exercise: write down your quest

Using your action guide, I invite you to write down, in one or two paragraphs, the story of your best self (your new avatar). Write what core beliefs it relies on, what feelings it experiences, and what it is accomplishing in this world. Think of how you would describe your new story to someone.

C. Impacting the world the right way

What message do you want to leave to the world after you're gone? Imagine people could read a biography of your life. What is the one nugget of wisdom they would learn from it? What would be your epitaph?

* * *

Exercise: how do you want to impact the world?

Using your action guide, answer the questions below:

- What message do you want to leave to the world after your death?
- What is your epitaph?
- How is the world better off having had you in it?

D. Expressing yourself

How do you want people to feel when they are around you? This is a great question to help you understand what you're really about. We all aspire to make a difference and to change the world in some way, and this often starts by finding out how we want people to feel in our presence. For instance, do you want them to feel inspired? Confident? Happy? Loved? Relaxed?

* * *

Exercise: how do you want to express yourself?

Using your action guide, answer the questions below:

- How do you want to express yourself?
- What makes you feel alive?
- How do you want people to feel when around you?
- How do you want people to feel as a result of your work?

E. Cultivating the appropriate inner beliefs

When you watch a movie and the story is not credible or enjoyable, what do you generally do? You stop watching, right? The same goes for your story. If you don't believe in it, your story won't unfold the way you want. You'll end up choosing another story instead, whether consciously or unconsciously. And often, this revised story still won't be particularly inspiring.

Therefore, you must develop the inner beliefs required for your avatar to complete its quest successfully. So, what would you need to believe for your story to unfold the way you wish? What rock-solid beliefs would you need to adopt?

* * *

Exercise: develop your inner beliefs

Using your action guide, write down the inner beliefs your avatar would have. Don't censor yourself. Write down anything that comes to mind. If you were to adopt **one** belief only, which one would make the biggest difference?

In **Part III: Integrating Your Story**, we'll see in more detail how to develop these inner beliefs into rock-solid beliefs that will help you to achieve your goals.

F. Developing the qualities of your avatar

What is your avatar good at? What innate talents does it have? What qualities does it need to cultivate to complete its quest? Is it courage? Discipline? Honesty? See your avatar as something you can mold the way you want. If so, how do you want to shape it?

* * *

Exercise: decide the qualities of your avatar

Using your action guide, write down the qualities you want your avatar to develop. If your avatar were to develop **one** quality, which one would have the biggest positive impact on your story?

G. Learning skills

Your avatar needs to develop the skills required to get from where it is today to where it wants to be. Remember, almost anything is a skill you can develop. Too often we believe we can't do something because of X, Y, or Z, and this is usually not the case.

Are you a terrible public speaker? Has your confidence hit rock bottom? Do you lack discipline? None of the things you're struggling with are life sentences. Whatever you *need* to learn, you *can* learn. For instance, you can learn to be:

- A great public speaker,
- A leader,
- Attractive,
- Charismatic,
- Confident,
- Courageous,
- Creative,
- Decisive,
- Disciplined,
- Happier,
- Influential,
- Proactive, or
- Self-aware.

We often assume we can't do something because of a perceived lack of talent or our singular personality. Yes, it is true that something apparently easy for

someone else can be challenging for us, but if we keep working at it, we'll eventually become good at it.

What determines whether you should spend time working on a particular skill is:

1. How the skill relates to your quest: i.e., how important it is for you. The less important it is, the less you may need to spend time cultivating it.
2. How you feel about being unskilled. For instance, if your self-esteem suffers because you can't cook, drive, or speak in public, you might benefit from improving these specific skills. On the other hand, if you don't mind being bad at something, then you probably shouldn't worry about it.

So, what critical skills does your avatar need to develop to pursue its quest successfully? Does it need to be better at speaking or writing? Does it need to learn marketing or sales?

Unless you learn something new and start doing things differently, your story will stay the same. You must develop the skills needed to become the hero of your story.

* * *

Exercise: identify critical skills

Using your action guide, write down the few critical skills your avatar must cultivate for your compelling story to unfold the way you want.

H. Filling in the gap

Where do you stand in regard to your avatar? The gap between where you are now and where you want to be, represents the character and skill development needed to embrace your new story. Take the time to identify the gap between your present and your future self. This will help you determine

what you need to do to close that gap and reach your destination.

* * *

Exercise: fill in the gap

Using your action guide, identify the characteristics and skills required to close the gap between where you are and where you want to be.

CHANGING YOUR STORY

“ Growth is painful. Change is painful. But nothing is as painful as staying stuck where you do not belong.

— N. R. NARAYANA MURTHY, BUSINESSMAN.

Your story can always be changed, because you can choose at any moment to think different thoughts, which will drive new actions and produce better results. Now, it doesn't mean it's an easy process that will occur overnight. But, more likely, it will happen gradually and inevitably as you start changing your beliefs, reframing the way you perceive reality, and take action accordingly.

You can change your story by:

1. Changing your past,
2. Acting differently in the present, and
3. Envisioning a different future.

I understand the only reality we ever have is the present. When we change our past and envision a new future, we do so in the present. But for clarity's sake, in this section, I will treat past, present, and future as if they exist independently.

1. Changing your past

“ The happiness of your life depends upon the quality of your thoughts.

— MARCUS AURELIUS, ROMAN EMPEROR AND PHILOSOPHER.

What if I told you that you could change your past? Would you believe me? Okay, I have to admit, you can't really change the past. However, what you can do is:

- Choose to remember different memories whenever you think of your past, and
- Change how you *interpret and feel* about your past.

What you call your past is the sum of the memories stored in your mind. And the type of memories you remember is largely determined by your personal story. Thus, the way you remember your past is biased because:

- You focus your attention only on some events, while ignoring others, and
- You give a subjective meaning to these events.

In short, the story you're telling yourself dictates the memories you've created and stored in your mind. This is why two people can react totally differently to the same event. For instance, if you're a pessimist, you'll tend to remember negative events. Alternatively, optimists will give more attention to positive events. As a result, optimists will store more positive memories and, by doing so, will create a better "past".

The point is, what you call your past isn't objective nor set in stone, it's biased and subjective. As you shift your focus and recall different memories, the way you feel about your past will change and your story will become more empowering. This what I mean when I say you can "change" your past.

Changing the memories on which you focus

To change how you feel about your past, you must change the memories you focus on, which can be done by repeatedly:

- Celebrating your accomplishments,
- Revisiting your most joyful moments,
- Focusing on the things you did well,
- Acknowledging your positive intentions,
- Remembering the times when you displayed courage,
- Feeling proud of yourself for all the people you helped, and
- Expressing gratitude to people who support and love you.

A. Celebrating your accomplishments

Your brain is not designed to make you happy but to ensure your survival so that you can reproduce. It does this by constantly scanning your environment for potential threats. For this reason, your mind gives more weight to negative events than positive ones. After all, what's the point of being happy if you're dead? Thus, up until now, you may have spent too much time and energy focusing on negative events and traumas. You may have dwelled on past failures, causing you to feel like a "failure". To fight your mind's tendency to look for what could go wrong, you must learn to focus on the positive. The first step is to acknowledge all the amazing things you've accomplished over the years. You're probably not giving yourself enough credit for your past achievements. If so, why not take time to celebrate them now?

When you cultivate the habit of revisiting positive memories, you will begin to alter the way you perceive your past. You will start feeling as though you've accomplished many things you ought to be proud of—and rightly so. For instance, perhaps you made a presentation at school or work despite your fear of public speaking. Perhaps you passed a difficult exam. Perhaps you won a contest. Whatever it may be, you want to get into the habit of celebrating your accomplishments—small and big.

* * *

Exercise: write down your past accomplishments

Using your action guide, write down all the past accomplishments you can think of. Write down exams you passed, contests you won, jobs you landed, and anything you ever did that felt scary or uncomfortable. You should easily come up with at least twenty accomplishments, but try for many, many more.

B. Revisiting your most joyful moments

You can keep dwelling on the terrible events you went through or you can focus on the most joyful moments in your life. Which do you think will make you feel better?

Unfortunately, we have the tendency to dwell on the past. Every time we do so, we give power to past events that exist nowhere but in our memory. The more we think of these events and associate a specific feeling to them (or relive them), the larger footprint they leave in our mind. This is why we can find ourselves dwelling on past events for months, if not years.

On the other hand, if we refuse to give any thought to an unpleasant event when it happens, it will leave no footprint in our mind and we will soon forget about it. This is the main difference between someone who holds resentment for years and someone who just shrugs it off.

Now, I would like you to relive the most joyful moments of your life. Is it your wedding day? Is it when you finally landed your dream job? Or perhaps it is when you won a contest.

Remember, you reinforce the memories you recall. So, if you are to think about your past, make sure you recall great memories that make you feel good about yourself.

* * *

Exercise: relive the most joyful moments in your life

Using your action guide, write down three to five joyful memories. Then, spend a couple of minutes to relive each of them as vividly as possible. As you do so, try to feel as good as possible.

C. Focusing on the things you did well

Another way you can change your past is by focusing on the things you do/did well. The differences between people with high self-esteem and low self-esteem mostly come from the way they direct their focus.

People with high self-esteem focus on all the things they're doing well. When they face setbacks, they encourage themselves by knowing they will do better next time. By continuously focusing on the positive side of things, they create great memories day after day.

People with low self-esteem remember a totally different past. Since they keep focusing on their failures and traumas, they develop a negative relationship with their past, which can keep them stuck and make them feel inadequate.

Consequently, instead of dwelling on your so-called inadequacies, you should focus on all the things you did well. At the end of each day, ask yourself, "What three things went well today?" By doing this, you'll deposit more and more positive thoughts in your mind and will start feeling better. It will gradually change the way you interpret your past. Why? Because what you focus on today will become your past tomorrow.

Keep acknowledging the things you're doing well and start improving the way you feel.

* * *

Exercise: focus on what you do/did well

Using your action guide, write down:

- Five things you did well this week,
- Five things you did well this month, and
- Five things you did well this year.

Then, allow yourself to feel proud of your accomplishments. Appreciate each of them and let the positive emotions sink in.

D. Acknowledging your positive intentions

You can tell yourself you are a failure, or you can focus on the positive intentions behind your actions. Which option will make you feel better?

Things might not always go as planned but, more often than not, you're well-intentioned. Therefore, rather than beating yourself up, acknowledge your good intentions, learn from your mistakes, and move on. There is no rule saying you must feel terrible about your past. When you look at the intentions behind your actions and recognize you didn't know any better at the time, you can start changing the way you feel about your past.

* * *

Exercise: acknowledge your positive intentions

Look at two to three of your biggest failures. Select the ones you're beating yourself up about the most about. Then, ask yourself:

- "What were my intentions at that time?"
- "What lesson(s) can I learn from that event/failure?"
- "What empowering meaning can I give it to fit the new story I want to tell myself?"

Remember, your past is never a life sentence. Learn lessons from each of your failures and focus on your positive intentions. As you do so, the way you feel about your past will change.

E. Remembering times when you displayed courage

Do you remember all the times you did something in spite of being afraid? If you ever managed to face your fears and succeeded in doing something scary in the past, you can be sure you have the ability to do similar things in the future. If you passed one exam, you can pass another. If you learned a language you can learn one more. If you landed a speaking gig, you can land another one. By acknowledging the times you displayed courage, you remind yourself that you're capable of more than you believe. So, make sure you don't forget how courageous you are.

* * *

Exercise: remember the times you displayed courage

Using your action guide, write down five times when you faced your fears and did something scary or uncomfortable. Then, realize that if you acted courageously in the past, there is no reason you can't do so in the future too.

F. Feeling proud of yourself for the people you helped

We can often feel insignificant. We tell ourselves we don't matter and can't make any difference. But is this true? I call it the "myth of the powerless creature." That is, the idea we have no power to change our life or the environment around us. This myth is pervasive and continuously reinforced through the media. We are led to believe we need a "savior", whether it is a politician, an economist, a thought leader, or any other kind of guru.

In truth, you have an almost supernatural ability to transform your life and the lives of countless other people beyond anything you can imagine. This power is mostly limited by the amount of effort you're willing to put into mastering your mind. When you continuously work on yourself and learn to control your mind better, you can overcome most of your fears, limitations, and any other self-sabotaging behaviors. As you do so, your ability to transform your life and the lives of others will grow exponentially.

As the anthropologist, Margaret Mead said, *“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”*

Realize you’ve already helped many people and will help many more in the future. Therefore, who you are and what you do matters. You *are* powerful and significant, so why not choose to adopt a compelling and exciting story that matches this truth?

* * *

Exercise: who did you help?

Using your action guide, write down the name of all the people you’ve helped and how you helped them. It doesn’t have to be anything big. For instance, it could be something as simple as carrying something for someone, helping your friend move to a new apartment, or doing a favor to a stranger.

G. Expressing gratitude to people who support and love you

Do you often dwell on the past? Do you resent people for what they did to you?

Yes, some people may have hurt you, but others have loved and supported you. Instead of resenting people who wronged you, why not focus on the people who have been encouraging you? This would make for a better story, wouldn’t it?

Think of all the people who supported you in the past. Think of everything your parents did for you. Recall all the times your friends helped you. Remember your favorite teachers and what they taught you. Revisit the numerous times store clerks assisted you and answered your questions. Then, thank all these people for their support.

You may believe you can do everything on your own, but the truth is, you are supported by countless people, many of whom you’ll never meet. Acknowledging how you are being, and have been, supported is a wonderful

way to experience more gratitude. The point is, you're not alone. Whatever story you want to create, many people will support you whether you realize it or not.

* * *

Exercise: express gratitude

Using your action guide, write down the name of three people who helped you. Then, write down what specifically they did for you.

Additionally, as part of your morning ritual, close your eyes and spend a couple of minutes thinking of the various people who helped you.

So, keep thinking of positive things that happened in your past. As you do so, you'll start changing the way you feel about your past. You'll realize you're doing better than you thought.

Reframing your past

Another way you can change how you feel about your past is through reframing. Reframing means revisiting past events to give them a more empowering meaning that better serves you today and in the future.

But before we see how to reframe past events, let's look at why you often frame events in a disempowering way as a result of the assumptions you make.

Avoiding making assumptions

Because of the nature of our mind, we can't help but make assumptions. However, the more assumptions we make, the more likely we are to distort facts. But it gets even worse. Due to our tendency to focus on the negative, we often give disempowering meaning to a variety of events happening in our lives. For instance, if your colleague didn't greet you today, you might make some of the following assumptions:

- My colleague is mad at me,
- My colleague doesn't really care about me, or
- My colleague is trying to avoid me.

However, the truth is that your colleague might have been lost in his own thoughts or he may have personal issues bothering him. Now, if you assumed that he didn't *want* to talk to you, you might start ignoring him. Your colleague might then do the same, turning the whole situation into a self-fulfilling prophecy. Many relationship issues are the result of incorrect assumptions. Therefore, avoid trying to read people's mind. It's almost always a bad idea.

The point is, you probably made poor assumptions and misinterpreted situations over and over, which led you to develop a distorted view of reality. With time, this accumulation of poor assumptions may have contributed to creating a past that consists of resentment, anger, frustration, et cetera.

Now, let's see what you can do to avoid making incorrect assumptions.

How to avoid making negative assumptions

Below are three tips you can use to avoid making negative assumptions—or make fewer of them.

- 1. Be mindful.** Notice whenever you try to read people's mind or judge a situation without having all the necessary information, then ask yourself whether your assumption is accurate.
- 2. Clarify.** Gather more information before jumping to conclusions. Ask people questions to clarify the situation. The more facts you collect, the more accurate your assumptions will be.
- 3. Choose more positive assumptions.** When you lack information to make a well-educated guess, select the most empowering assumptions you can think of. Make sure you give people the benefit of the doubt. To discover powerful models of reality you can use to reframe situations, refer to the section, *Exploring different realities*.

Reframing past events

Sometimes, bad things happen and there's nothing you can do about it. But you can always choose the meaning you give to them. When used intelligently, reframing can change your outlook on life. In his classic book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, psychologist, Viktor E. Frankl relates his experience in a concentration camp during the Second World War. He considers meaning to be one of the main reasons he was able to survive in such a cruel environment. Below is a great example of the reframing he used with one of his clients:

“Once, an elderly general practitioner consulted me because of his severe depression. He could not overcome the loss of his wife who had died two years ago and whom he had loved above all else. Now, how could I help him? What should I tell him? Well, I refrained from telling him anything but instead confronted him with the question, ‘What would have happened, Doctor, if you had died first, and your wife would have had to survive you?’ ‘Oh,’ he said, ‘for her this would have been terrible; how she would have suffered!’ Whereupon I replied, ‘You see, Doctor, such a suffering has been spared her, and it was you who have spared her this suffering—to be sure, at the price that now you have to survive and mourn her.’ He said no word but shook my hand and calmly left my office. In some way, suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning, such as the meaning of a sacrifice.”

What about you? What events could you reframe so that they give meaning to your life instead of making you suffer?

* * *

Exercise: reframe past events

Think of three major issues you faced in the past and write down the meaning you gave them. Then, write down the new and empowering meaning you could give them instead. Ask yourself:

- What's great about these issues?

- What lesson did/could you learn?
- In what ways were these issues necessary to build your character?

2. Acting in the present

“Action is a great restorer and builder of confidence. Inaction is not only the result, but the cause of fear.” Norman Vincent Peale, American minister and author.

Changing your story entails changing not only your thoughts and your feelings but also your actions. Your beliefs and models of reality are important but, if you try to change your life by thinking alone, you’ll often find yourself in one of the following situations:

Ruminating. You might worry about the same problems over and over without doing anything about them.

Getting stuck. You might trick yourself into believing you’re making progress but, after a while, it will become clear you’re not doing anything. Ultimately, you can’t get results without taking action.

Over planning/studying. You may be doing tons of reading and creating advanced strategies or plans. However, knowledge not acted upon is, for the most part, useless.

Many people spend an insane amount of time dwelling on problems instead of taking action. Often, the simple—but not always the easy—solution to solve many of your problems is to act. Failing to act can lead you to experience all kinds of negative emotions whether they be guilt, shame, self-hatred, or powerlessness.

A. The benefit of taking action

As Nike’s motto goes, *Just do it*. Well, nothing new here. You already know that, right?

Or do you?

Many of the most important life concepts have become clichés. And clichés

are dangerous. This is because once we've heard something enough times, we automatically filter it out. In our mind, we think, "I already know that."

The sentence, "I already know that" is one of the most dangerous in the English language. Notice when you hear yourself saying this sentence, and you'll soon discover you don't know as much as you think. The question is not whether you know something, but whether you're applying it in your day-to-day life and doing it *consistently*.

For instance, we all know we should eat more healthily, exercise more often, avoid smoking, and get enough sleep, but that doesn't mean we're doing these things.

Now, let's discuss the benefits of taking action.

1) Action destroys fear

Why aren't you doing what you should be doing? Possibly because of fear—fear of the unknown, fear of not doing a good job, fear of being ridiculed, and so on.

Fear is sometimes referred to as, *False Evidence Appearing as Real*. This is because, while your fears may appear real, in most cases, when you confront them, they turn out to be illusions. Fears are a product of your imagination. They exist only in your mind, which is why trying to overcome fears using thinking alone is often not the solution. Your mind will only increase your fears. In his book, *The Magic of Thinking Big*, David J. Schwartz wrote that, "Action cures fear," because actions happen in reality, not in your imagination. Actions shed a light on the truth: your fears are not real.

For instance, have you ever done something you were scared of, only to realize afterward it wasn't such a big deal? This is the power that actions have to cure fears.

2) Action changes your model of reality

Your model of reality is continuously evolving based on your thoughts, feelings, and actions. Any action you take has the power to shift your model

of reality. Obviously, the more challenging and uncomfortable an action is, the more power it has to redefine your reality. For instance, you may believe it's impossible to give a speech in front of a large audience, but if you start by recording your speech at home, you might gain confidence and start believing it's actually possible. I've been a member of *Toastmasters*, a public speaking organization, for a few years, and I've been amazed at the progress people make once they challenge themselves a little.

3) Action generates momentum

Action begets more action, and momentum is an important part of any changes you want to make in your life. Therefore, to change your trajectory, you must start taking consistent action. The good news is that, when it comes to momentum, it's not the scale or intensity of your actions that matters. The important thing is that you simply start and keep taking small actions. For instance, I don't try to write a 150-page book all at once. I write one paragraph at a time. Similarly, you just need to write your story one page at a time. Having the end in mind is great but there is no need to feel overwhelmed by your long-term goals. The simple truth is this: no matter how hard you work or how driven you may be, you can only ever complete one task at a time.

Keep in mind your story and where you're going. Meanwhile, take action at your own level—starting today.

4) Action changes how you feel

Taking action doesn't just impact on how you think, but also, and maybe more importantly, it affects how you feel. For instance, when you manage to go beyond your comfort zone and do something challenging, you will develop a sense of pride. When you take actions consistently every day—even when you're tired or don't feel up to it—you will build your self-confidence and boost your self-esteem.

So, Nike's motto, *Just do it*, is spot on. It might be a cliché, but it doesn't mean you should ignore it. When you feel stuck, demotivated, or confused, try the following: complete one task or a series of tasks you've been putting

off for too long. This is what I recommend in my book, *Master Your Motivation*, and my readers love it.

When in doubt, take action. Then take some more and start closing the gap between where you are and where you want to be.

Bonus 1 - doing more of what you love

I believe that to change the story we are telling ourselves, it is important to shift our emotional state. When we are in a negative state of mind, we lose perspective and fail to realize all the opportunities and possibilities lying ahead of us. An effective way to start improving our emotional state is simply to identify what we love doing and do more of this every day. As simple as it sounds, we often know what we enjoy doing but, for some reason, we don't do it.

So, here is a question you can ask yourself: "Which specific things do I need to do to almost guarantee I have a good day?"

They don't need to be big things. Small things are often the ones that make the difference. For instance, is it reading books in your favorite genre? Is it talking to a friend? Is it going for a walk?

Personally, I've noticed that when I do the following activities, I tend to have a good day:

- Reading,
- Writing,
- Learning something new,
- Going for a walk, and
- Talking to a friend in real life or on Skype (or at least chat with one friend online).

As you can see, none of these are complicated things but they can make all the difference between a good day and a bad one.

So, what key activities do you need to do to ensure you have a pleasant day?

* * *

Exercise: do more of what you love

Using your action guide, write down the activities you can do every day to ensure you have a good day.

B. Pushing the reset button

When you wake tomorrow, you don't need to feel the same way you did when you woke this morning. Albert Einstein said, "*The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results,*" and he made a good point.

The plain truth is, you can only ever live one day at a time. The present moment is all you have and all you will ever have. Sadly, many of us spend an incredible amount of time dwelling on the past or worrying about the future. As we do so, we fail to savor the new day in front of us. Since we keep having the same worries about the past or the future, it seems as though we're reliving the same day over and over again.

Also, instead of making each day a new, exciting experience, most of us are casual with our time. We disrespect the day ahead of us, treating it as if it didn't matter. After all, we have so many of them left, right? Or do we? Maybe. Maybe not. But I wouldn't bet on it.

As the business philosopher, Jim Rohn said, "*Casualness leads to casualty.*" If you're casual with your day, you will pay the price. You will make poor use of your time. Worse, you may feel as though you're reliving the same day over and over again as in a cheap version of the movie *Groundhog Day*, but without the happy ending.

Now, it doesn't have to be this way. You can push the reset button and make today matter. How? By letting go of what happened in the past and focusing *only* on the day ahead. I believe it starts by choosing the thoughts you have first thing in the morning. To make your day matter and to experience more joy and generate a greater sense of being alive, here is what you can do as soon as you wake up:

1) Smile. I find smiling first thing in the morning to be effective. So, as soon as you wake, smile. Then, maintain that smile for at least thirty seconds. Don't worry if it seems forced or unnatural at first. We're just practicing being happier here. If you notice unwanted thoughts creeping in the back of your mind, refocus your attention on your smile. It's hard to smile and think negatively at the same time. If you want to laugh, smile and contract your abdominal muscles to simulate a laugh until you actually find yourself laughing. Go on, try it out. It works.

2) Celebrate a new day. As you smile, reflect on the following things:

- **How grateful you are to have a new day.** Think of a few things you're grateful for and focus on a few specific things you're looking forward to during your day.
- **The fact that today could be your last day** (because one day it *will* definitely be your last). Again, express gratitude for having a new day to experience. While performing this "meditation", you might feel the desire to thank people who helped you in the past. If so, thank them in your mind or thank them directly (later) by telling them how you appreciate their support.
- **The fact that you only have to live one day at a time.** Because you can only live one day at a time, let go of your past and stop worrying about your future
- **What it would take to make this day the happiest day of your life** and how you would feel as a result. Don't forget it could be your last day, so you want to make sure you make the most of it. Don't be casual with it.
- **How you would feel if today were your birthday.** Remember how you feel when it's your birthday and practice feeling the same way.

3) Get out of bed immediately. As soon as you wake, smile and get out of your bed immediately. Don't hesitate. Just get up!

I highly encourage you to repeat these three things for at least seven days and see how it boosts your emotional state. It will only take you a few minutes, and you'll be amazed at the positive results. As a reminder to savor your existence, why not set a timer two or three times during the day and repeat

the routine.

After this simple routine, you can perform gratitude exercises, go for a run, or write down your goals. Just keep experimenting and see what allows you to feel the happiest and most productive. To discover the seven most powerful habits and learn how to implement rock-solid habits, refer to the section, *Implementing rock-solid habits*.

Remember, if you keep feeling the same way every day, it is because you've been conditioned—or have conditioned yourself—to feel that way. Start your day with new thoughts and invite in new feelings. Then, see how it affects your emotional states (and the actions you take).

The point is, you can only change your story by thinking, feeling, and acting differently today. Learn to take action now and make the most of your day rather than being casual with it. You can start reaping the benefits of your new story today. So, go do that now.

3. Envisioning a different future

“ We always attract into our lives whatever we think about the most, believe in most strongly, expect on the deepest levels, and/or imagine most vividly.

— SHAKTI GAWAIN, AUTHOR.

You've been given the incredible power to project yourself into the future and see yourself becoming the person you really want to be. By visualizing something over and over, you can tell your subconscious where to direct its power. As a result, it will look for ways to help you move from where you are to where you want to be. By doing so, you will start thinking in a new and positive way, a way that will lead you to take different actions, producing the results you desire over time.

What future does your story lead to?

One of my favorite questions is, “If I keep doing what I’m doing today or this week, will I end up where I want to be in five years?”

If the answer is no for too many days, I know I need to change something. What about you? If you stick to your current story, where will you end up in five years? Is it where you want to be? If not, you need to change something.

* * *

Exercise: where will you be in five years?

Based on your current story, where are you likely to be five years from now? Write down your answer in the corresponding section of your action guide. To make it easier, answer the same question for each key area of your life.

- What will your career likely look like?
- What will your relationships be like?
- What will your finance look like?
- What will your health be like?
- And so on.

Become pulled by your future

When you can envision a compelling future, you’ll feel pulled toward it. Instead of waking up every day doing the same old thing or wandering through your day mindlessly, you’ll have a clear direction to move toward. In short, having a clear vision will dramatically boost your focus. This is why it’s so critical you clarify what you want your future to look like. Once you’ve put in your mind a vivid picture of where you’re going, your motivation will skyrocket.

If you want to learn in more depth how to develop a laser-sharp focus and skyrocket your results, refer to my book, *[Master Your Focus](#)*.

* * *

Exercise: visualizing your future

Using your action guide, visualize the most compelling future you can think of. Then, write down what your ideal situation looks like in each major area of your life (career, finance, health, personal growth, relationships, and spirituality).

CHANGING YOUR ENVIRONMENT

“ You must surround yourself with people who see greatness in you.

— BO EASON, FORMER AMERICAN FOOTBALL PLAYER AND
PUBLIC SPEAKER.

To change your story, in most cases, you’re going to have to change your environment. In this section, we’ll see what you can do to create a more empowering environment, one that supports your new story.

Is your environment working for you or against you?

Is your current environment right for you? The best way to know is to ask yourself the following question: “If I keep my current circle of friends and acquaintances, will I become the person I want to be?”

If your answer is no, you might have to make changes in your current environment. Remember, if you’re not in the right environment, it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for you to grow and become the best person you can be. A negative environment will destroy your potential, kill your motivation, and make your dreams impossible. The best advice I could ever give to someone stuck in a negative environment is to do *whatever it takes* to get out of it, whether this is moving to a different city or cutting negative people out of their lives. Your environment is far more powerful than your willpower. Therefore, use your environment as the main catalyst

for change, not your willpower. Now, I'm not saying you *can't* succeed if you're surrounded with the wrong people, but it will be far more challenging to do so.

To be completely honest, I don't think my current environment is the absolute best environment for me to flourish and achieve my biggest goals and dreams. This is still something I'm working on. The point is, I want you to see that transforming your environment as a long-term project. Keep looking for the right people to surround yourself with. Keep asking yourself what you really want and who you need to become in order to reach your goal. Then, search for the people who can help you become that person.

Your environment is so critical because a large part of the way you think and feel (and thus act) is determined by your interaction with the people you spend the most time with.

In your brain, you have what are called "mirror neurons". This means you are hardwired to mimic the behavior of the people around you. You mirror their behavior and adopt their mindset. For instance, if all your friends are couch potatoes, you'll have little incentive to work hard, and you will struggle to make progress on your major goals. Conversely, if you're around driven people with an insane work ethic and ambitious goals, you'll be more likely to work harder yourself. This is why people are sometimes willing to pay thousands of dollars to join mastermind groups.

Let's see now what changing your environment actually means. I believe it entails the following:

1. **Reducing the impact of negative people in your life.** This might mean cutting negative people out of your life entirely or reducing the time you spend with them.
2. **Surrounding yourself with people who will help you become your best self.** This entails finding like-minded people, mentors, and/or coaches who will support your vision.
3. **Developing a solid mental environment.** You do so by feeding your mind with the most inspirational and highest quality material possible, and you do this daily.
4. **Optimizing your physical environment.** It means making desired

behaviors easy to implement while making unwanted behaviors and bad habits hard to engage in.

Let's have a look at each of the four points above.

1. Reducing the impact of negative people in your life

If you are surrounded with unsupportive people who drag you down, you might have to make a difficult decision and cut them out of your life entirely. On paper, this sounds good, but how do you actually do it? How do you limit the negative influence of such people? Let me offer you some practical tips below.

A. Have a serious talk

Ideally, people who care about you should want the best for you. However, sometimes your family, friends, or acquaintances are actively trying to stop you from pursuing your goals. If so, you might have to ask for their support by taking the following steps:

a. Tell them what you're trying to do.

People around you may not necessarily understand what you're trying to achieve and why it matters to you. Consequently, the first step is to tell them what you're trying to achieve and why it's so important to you.

b. Ask for their support.

The second step is to tell them how important it is for you to have their support. Make it clear you want them to stay in your life and need their help to achieve your goals.

c. Tell them exactly how they can support you.

The final step is to tell them what you expect them to do to support you. If they're still unwilling to support you, you might need to spend less time with them or stop seeing them altogether, which brings us to our next point.

B. Reduce the time you spend with negative people

You don't necessarily need to remove unsupportive people from your life completely. The first step can be to start distancing yourself from them. For instance, instead of seeing them two or three times a week, you might decide to meet them only once a week. When possible or necessary, you can let the relationship fade over time.

Share only what you need to share

If you can't spend less time with negative people, avoid sharing any ideas or goals they might not support with them. Sometimes, keeping your goals to yourself is your best option. Meanwhile, stay focused on your exciting story and keep visualizing it and thinking about it. Then, take consistent action toward the future you want to create.

Now, let's see what you can do to surround yourself with *supportive* people.

2. Surround yourself with people who will help you become your best self

One of the most effective ways to change how you think, feel, and act is to change the people you hang around with.

You want to be around positive and successful people who will push you to become your best and demand more of you. These people will see you for who you can become, not who you currently are. One reason for that is because they (or someone else) had to see their own potential before they could achieve success in their own lives. And now, they're able to see your potential (while you may not). Another reason to be around successful people is because of what I call "the power of proximity". This is the impact of being around positive—or negative—people. Remember, your environment is more powerful than your willpower. For instance, which of the following situations would make it easier for you to achieve your goals?

- a) Being surrounded by negative people who keep telling you that you're going to fail—and who actually expect you to fail.
- b) Being around positive people who encourage you and have absolute faith in your ability to achieve your goals.

In the first scenario, you'll have to exert tremendous willpower to stay motivated and keep believing in yourself. In the second, you'll be inspired to keep progressing and your self-confidence will increase dramatically.

Now that you understand the importance of your environment, what can you do to be around the right people? I want to offer you a few tips. They aren't quick fixes, but they will make a difference in the medium to long term.

A. Joining groups of like-minded people

To travel from where you are to where you want to be, you need to surround yourself with people who are on the same path and, if possible, ahead of you. For instance, if you're an entrepreneur, you might want to join a group of entrepreneurs in your town. If you are an aspiring writer, you might decide to take part in conferences for writers or join Facebook groups dedicated to writers.

I have to admit I haven't done a great job in surrounding myself with like-minded people yet, but the few actions I did take paid off. For instance, a fellow writer I contacted a couple of years ago introduced me to my current editor and inspired me to become more professional. Another writer helped me sell the foreign rights to my books and gave me the opportunity to be published in Japan, one of the biggest book markets in the world (let's hope this will happen). Yet another writer invited me to a book giveaway event allowing me to reach far more readers with my work.

The point is, don't be afraid to contact people who are on the same path as you. The people who helped me the most are people I contacted myself, *not* people who contacted me. So, make sure you're proactive and take the first step. Even a few encounters can make all the difference in your life.

So, what group(s) could you join? Who could you contact?

B. Investing in programs and joining communities

Programs or courses can be expensive and sometimes of poor quality. However, the value they provide can often go beyond their actual content. In fact, people will often buy courses just to be part of a community of like-

minded people. For example, I recently went to dinner with other French entrepreneurs. One of them bought a course of questionable quality mostly to become part of the community. While participating in a local event reserved for members, he met a successful entrepreneur. This encounter alone transformed his mindset and allowed him to dramatically improve his results.

I bought a course on self-publishing mainly because it came with a free one-on-one coaching session with a self-published author who sold millions of books. During our coaching call, he invited me to be part of one of his events.

Sometimes, the best way to reach successful people (or their community), is by buying their programs. Yes, it will cost you money, but it might be more than worth it in the long term. That's your call to make.

C. Creating your own event

If you can't find your tribe, why not create an event targeting people you want to be surrounded with? For instance, last year, I created a mastermind group with two other authors. I knew that if we were to work together, we would create synergy, helping each other achieve better results. Because I was the one choosing who I wanted to invite, I could pick people I believed would be the right fit.

What about you? Who do you want to attract in your life and what kind of event could you organize that would appeal to them?

D. Looking for a mentor

Having a mentor is one of the most effective ways to accelerate your success. Among other things, a great mentor will be beneficial because they will:

- Help you shift your mindset,
- Tell you what to do (and not to do), saving you months or years of work,
- Ask you smart questions and offer you invaluable guidance, and
- Open their network for you (potentially).

However, finding the right mentor can be challenging. The more successful a person is, the busier they are—and the harder it will be to reach them.

There is no magic way to find a mentor, but there are a few things you can do to help you get started. The most important thing to do is to put yourself in the shoes of your future mentor. You want to think as he/she thinks. For instance, if I were to mentor someone, the main question I would ask myself is how committed that person is. I don't want to waste my time with someone who will disappear in a few months. Here is how I would judge someone's commitment:

- **Do they have a track record?** As a mentor, I want to know whether the aspiring mentee has already invested serious time and effort in their goal or mission. They don't need to be "successful" as such, but I want to see that they have produced quality work and that they are highly motivated. I'm not interested in people who talk but take no action.
- **Will this person stick around?** I would also want to know if this person is likely to still be around in the coming years. I don't want to invest my time helping someone who will disappear overnight. Have they been persevering for months or years already? Do they have a strong drive behind their goals? Remember, from the point of view of your future mentor, there is a cost in working with you. So, ask yourself why they must choose *you* instead of someone else.
- **Does this person want to help me?** It's important for the person to be interested in what I'm doing and that they seek ways to support me (at their own level). I've had people asking for my help again and again but with no intention of reciprocating in any way. Please, don't be one of these people.
- **Will this person become a burden?** Successful people are busy. They don't want you to contact them every time you have a question or a problem. You must be resourceful and do whatever it takes to come up with solutions to your problem before asking your potential mentor for help. You need to value your mentor's time. For instance, I don't like when people write me long emails or ask me basic questions they could have easily found answers to by looking online. Don't ask your potential mentor to do the thinking for you. Think

first, then communicate clearly and intelligently. This way you'll save your mentor time and make it easier for him/her to help you.

- **Will that person execute?** When I offer advice or make recommendations to people, I expect them to try out what I suggest, and to do so as fast as possible. People I work with should be coachable and willing to learn. I don't want to work with people who always have excuses and fail to perform.

The bottom line is, you must be a good investment for your mentor. Many successful people like to help others and are happy to share their knowledge and wisdom, but they want to make sure it will be worth their time. Bear this in mind when you look for a teacher. Help yourself first by working on your vision diligently. Then seek to add value to your mentor and maybe they will decide to work with you.

F. Networking

Whenever you look for a mentor or attempt to network with people, think long term. To be honest, I don't really like the idea of "networking". I'd rather think in terms of making new friends. However, below are a few tips on thinking long term:

- **Make friends, not connections.** Instead of "networking", focus on building relationships that will last for years. Just one long-term relationship with the right person can dramatically improve your personal/professional life. It can be more effective than dozens of loose "connections".
- **Build relationships ahead of time.** One of the worst things you can do is contact people immediately before you need their help (I've made this mistake before). When you do this, you're sending them the message, "I don't care about you, just about what you can do for me." Nobody likes to be treated this way. To avoid the situation, plan ahead of time and focus on building long-term relationships on an on-going basis, which leads us to our next point.
- **Give first, then receive.** Rather than trying to get something from people, offer to help them first. Continuously think of ways to add

value. To do so, put yourself in other people's shoes. Discover what they want and what problems they face, then think of ways you can help solve their problems and achieve their goals.

G. Hiring a coach

Another effective way to make changes is to work with a coach. The good news is that it's easier to find a coach than to find a mentor. By investing your hard-earned money in a coach you'll also have some skin in the game, making it more likely you'll take action—and generate results.

3. Developing a solid mental environment

What if you can't find the right people to hang out with? If so, you must feed your mind with the right information on a daily basis instead. You might not have real-life mentors to guide you, but you can access books, courses, or seminars from the most successful people on earth. Consequently, bombard yourself with inspirational and educational materials over and over again. Build a strong mental environment that aligns with your new story. This repeated exposure to relevant material will enable you to develop powerful models of reality and transform your life.

For instance, when he was a university student, the personal development blogger, Steve Pavlina would listen to educational audiobooks for two hours a day or more. During that time, he decided he would only take three semesters to graduate, instead of the usual four years. Listening to educational material helped him program his mind to perform at his best, while remaining optimistic. Similarly, during the years I tried to make it as a blogger and writer, I never stopped filling my mind with daily positivity, which allowed me to maintain a good attitude and keep persevering. To this day, I keep feeding my mind with positivity.

The bottom line is, your environment might not be ideal, but you can always choose what books to read, what audiobooks to absorb, and, of course, what thoughts to think. The more you feed your mind with positivity, the better the results you'll obtain—provided you take action.

So, what will you do to develop a powerful mental environment that allows you to achieve your goals? Remember, you *must* condition your mind for success and happiness. Otherwise, you will absorb the poor attitude and disempowering beliefs of people around you.

4. Optimizing your physical environment

Changing your environment isn't just about being around the right people or feeding your mind with positivity. It also entails optimizing your physical environment in a way that encourages desired behaviors while discouraging unwanted behaviors.

For instance, if your new story is that you're a healthy person, you might want to remove junk food from your house and keep only healthy snacks in strategic places. Or you might have your sports gear ready so that you can go running first thing in the morning.

So, what changes could you make in your physical environment to facilitate the desired behavior? What would help you become the person you want to be?

* * *

Exercise: changing your environment

Using your action guide, write down what you will do to design an empowering environment that will bring about the changes you desire.

EXPLORING DIFFERENT REALITIES

The different beliefs you hold create your model of reality. Now, it is important to realize there are many ways to see the world. You can choose from dozens of models of reality, and the more empowering these models are, the better results you will tend to achieve.

In this section, I will introduce you to powerful models of reality that will help you change your vision of the world and write a more compelling story. As you experiment with each of these models, your beliefs will change. And as your beliefs change, you will feel and act differently.

Let's get started.

1) Subjective reality vs. Objective reality

“ A man cannot directly choose his circumstances, but he can choose his thoughts, and so indirectly, yet surely, shapes his circumstances.

— JAMES ALLEN, AUTHOR.

A. Subjective reality

We often believe we are part of a bigger world that exerts its will on us, but we don't necessarily have to see the world that way.

If you think about it, there is no way to know for sure if there is a world existing outside of us. What we see with our eyes is no more than information decoded by our brain, not the direct experience of reality as it is. Furthermore, the human eye can only perceive a tiny fraction of the electromagnetic spectrum reality consists of.

Seeing the world through the lens of subjective reality means that you see the world around you as a projection of the world within you. Instead of seeing yourself as part of the world, you see the world as something inside you.

When you experiment with the subjective reality model, you'll find yourself thinking, feeling, and acting differently. Why? Because you will rely on different assumptions such as the ones below:

- Reality is subjective, therefore, by changing how I think, feel, or behave, I must inevitably change the world around me.
- The external world is the projection of my inner world. As a result, the only way to change it is to change my inner world. If there is violence in the external world, I must look for any sign of violence within me. If there is greed, I must look for ways I may be greedy. If there is mental suffering, I must look for mental suffering within.

You may think this model is silly, but what would happen if you assumed everything happening around you was the result of your inner state of being? How would that change the way you see the world? What would you do differently?

When you view the world through the lens of subjective reality and act accordingly, you'll see that everything starts changing for you. So, do you want to be a victim of your environment or do you want to become the shaper of your reality? Remember, whatever you believe tends to become your reality. By believing you are the creator of your life, you'll often end up designing a better life—a life that is closer to the one you really want.

To sum up, living your life through the lens of subjective reality allows you to claim back your inner power. When it comes to taking responsibility for your life, nothing beats subjective reality. Experiment living your life as if reality was subjective and see how things change for you.

Specific examples of subjective reality

Perhaps you find people around you boring. If so, here's the key question: is your environment boring, or is it you? If people are enjoying themselves but you aren't, are they the ones being boring? By looking for ways you're creating boredom within yourself, you might discover that it has nothing to do with the external world but everything to do with you.

Or perhaps you just moved to a new country and find people unfriendly. But is it locals who are unfriendly or is it you? Are you making an effort to understand the culture and speak the language? Are you committed to being part of your new country or do you spend most of your time with other expats, already thinking of the next country to visit?

You can blame other people for your situation, but how is this going to help you? Hint: it won't. This is why the subjective reality model is so powerful.

However, it is important to realize that it takes time before your environment changes and adapts to your new thinking, which is perfectly normal. Imagine if every thought you had instantly became your reality. How many people would you have hurt due to anger, jealousy, or resentment? Considering most of our thoughts are negative, it's really fortunate they don't immediately become our reality. Only thoughts that are repeated over a long enough period of time will lead to changes in our external circumstances. And, if they are to change our lives, these thoughts must be acted upon.

For example, the repeated thought, "I want to visit Mexico," could lead you to buy tickets, book the hotel, and eventually visit Mexico for your next vacation.

When entertained enough times, the thought, "I want to change my career," can lead you to take the first step in that direction. Then, as similar thoughts arise, you find yourself taking more actions—sending resumes, learning new skills, and so on—until one day you land a new and better job.

Those things take time and don't happen overnight. And the bigger the changes needed to achieve your goals, the more time and effort you'll usually need to exert. For instance, changing your career or becoming financially independent isn't the same as buying a ticket to Mexico.

How to adopt the subjective reality model

Below are a few tips to help you make the most of the subjective reality model:

First, suspend your disbelief and be open-minded enough to play with the model. Second, ask yourself, some of the questions below:

- Assuming the world around me is a projection of my inner state of being, what thoughts can I think, feelings can I experience, or actions can I take to improve it?
- What changes could I make in me that would have the biggest impact in the world?
- What can I do to improve the outer world (and my inner world at the same time)?

Third, act consistently, based on the belief that the world is entirely subjective. For the next seven days, see yourself as responsible for the world around you. Keep thinking you can change everything around you by changing everything within you. Then, act accordingly whenever possible.

B. Objective reality

Another way you can look at your life is through the lens of objective reality. To experiment with this model, you must let go of your subjective interpretation of events to focus only on facts. In short, you must look at things as they are without adding your interpretation to them.

For instance, “I lost my job” is a fact. Any thoughts you have in regard to that fact are your interpretation. You can feel depressed and powerless, worrying you’ll never find a similar job, or you can see it as a sign to start looking for a more fulfilling job.

Resisting reality leads to suffering, but you can reduce this suffering by accepting the facts and focusing on what to do about them. Now, look at your current situation. Do you feel lonely because you’re single? Are you unhappy at work? Do you feel bad because you’re overweight?

Separate the facts from your interpretation. If you experience emotional reactions, interrupt any judgment. Try to let go of any emotional reaction to focus solely on the raw facts. Imagine you're an external observer who knows nothing about your inner world and simply state the facts.

Finally, ask yourself, "What can I do about it?" There are only two valid answers: the first is to take action to improve the situation, and the second is to accept your situation as it is for now. Everything else is just mental noise.

Note that you can also change the way you perceive any situation, using the power of reframing. For more on this concept, please refer to the section, *Reframing your past*.

Remember, from the standpoint of objective reality, nothing is good or bad. What makes you suffer is not what is happening to you, but your interpretation of it. So, start looking at your situation objectively and see how it improves the way you feel.

C. Third-person reality

You can also look at your story through the eyes of people who know you well, whether they be your parents, spouse, friends, or colleagues.

The truth is, we tend to be harder on ourselves than we are on others. For instance, would you dare to talk to your best friend the way you talk to yourself? What would your family or friends say if they could see the story you're telling yourself? They would most likely tell you to give yourself a break.

Let's do an exercise.

Select the most positive person around you. Imagine they know everything about your story. What would they say regarding your challenges and worries?

The bottom line is that you tend to be too harsh with yourself. Thus, it might be valuable to look at your story from a third person's perspective. Doing so will make you realize you should probably give yourself some slack.

* * *

Exercise: experiment with subjective/objective/third-person reality

Using your action guide, complete the exercises below:

- **Subjective reality:** For the next seven days, live your life through the lens of subjective reality.
- **Objective reality:** Select a situation that makes you suffer and look only at the raw facts as though you were an external observer.
- **Third-person reality:** Select the most positive person around you and write down what they would say regarding your challenges and worries.

2) Conspiracy from the universe

“ Live life as if everything is rigged in your favor.

— RUMI, POET AND SUFI MYSTIC.

Some people believe the world is against them. They think people want to scam them, ridicule them, or prevent them from succeeding. When they travel too far along this path, they are called “paranoid”.

But have you ever thought of adopting the opposite belief? That is, the belief that people around you are conspiring to *help* you succeed and become your best self. This is referred to as “pronoia”.

This is what the conspiracy from the universe model is about. When you adopt this model, you see the universe as a benevolent force that conspires to help you design the life you want. You expect good things to happen to you and see people as mostly supportive. Furthermore, when seemingly bad things happen to you, you believe they are happening for a specific reason that will serve you well in the long term.

For instance:

- Not getting the job you wanted might be an indication there is an even better job waiting for you.
- Not being asked for a second date with that seemingly ideal prospective partner is a sign that an even better match is out there.
- Facing setbacks and not getting what you want is an invitation to strengthen your character and make your story more interesting.

In short, when you adopt this model of reality, you trust that the universe knows what's best for you and that everybody is here to help you.

Think about it this way. When you write a book, deliver a speech, or make a presentation, do you think people want you to fail? No. Most people want you to succeed. Your readers want to read a great book, your audience wants to hear a wonderful speech and your prospects want to understand what you can do for them.

Most people want you to succeed because they benefit from your success or want the best for you. Therefore, next time you do something for other people, realize they are on your side. See them as co-conspirators to your success. Then, use their support as fuel to do an even better job.

What about you? How could your life change if you started believing the entire universe was conspiring to help you? What would happen if you see the challenges facing you as an invitation to learn and grow?

* * *

Exercise: let the universe help you

Imagine the world is conspiring to help you grow and become your best self. What are the three main lessons the universe is hinting at right now? Write them down in your action guide.

For a moment, imagine that you know *beyond doubt* that the universe wants you to succeed. What are three things you would do differently? Write these

down, too.

3) Love vs. fear

“ You are ready and able to do beautiful things in this world, and as you walk through those doors today, you will only have two choices: love or fear. Choose love, and don’t ever let fear turn you against your playful heart.

— JIM CARREY, ACTOR AND ARTIST.

Do you act out of fear or out of love?

The love vs. fear model invites you to observe each of your actions and identify when you act out of love—love for yourself and others—and when you act out of fear—fear of rejection, fear of failure, or the fear of not being good enough.

When you act out of love, your focus is on giving. You want to contribute your time, energy, and ideas to making the world around you a better place. Your main goal is to express yourself and share your gifts with the world. Free of ego (at least partially), you feel whole and complete. Instead of seeing everybody else as your competitors, you see them as co-creators.

On the other hand, when you act out of fear, your focus is on receiving. You want to get that man/woman, approval, money, or fame. Scarcity becomes your default mode. You must take before there isn’t enough left. Your story is that you’re not good enough and need something external to make you complete.

In reality, most of us never act completely out of love or fear. We alternate between love-based behaviors and fear-based behaviors.

For instance, one moment I may be writing this book because I’m genuinely seeking to make a difference in other people’s lives (a love-based behavior). The next, I may be imagining myself selling thousands of books and receiving approval from people (a fear-based behavior).

What about you? Are you mainly acting out of love or fear? If you were to act out of love more often, what would you do differently?

* * *

Exercise: identify love-based and fear-based behaviors

Using your action guide, write down when you're acting out fear. Then, write down what you could do to act out of love instead.

4) Interesting vs. boring

“ A strong story can move me to tears, and it doesn't matter whether it's a science-fiction or fantasy world. It's about what happens to a person, the choices they make. That's what's interesting.

— JENOVA CHEN, DESIGNER.

If I were to make the movie of your life, would it be a massive success or a big flop?

Another way to look at your life is through the lens of the interesting vs. boring model of reality. Personal development blogger, Steve Pavlina has a wonderful analogy. Imagine your life is a movie aliens can watch from space. Would they enjoy the movie, or would they be bored and throw popcorn at the screen?

If the movie of your life is not exciting, you might not be spending enough time doing what you love. Fortunately, there is no rule to say your story must be boring. At any time, you can make different choices and start designing a more enjoyable life. Deciding whether your story is boring is subjective. The key question is: are *you* excited about your story? Do *you* feel like you're living a purposeful life? Do *you* know why you wake up every day?

A boring life can also be a sign you're not setting yourself enough

challenges. You might be too comfortable. Perhaps, your job has become too easy. Perhaps, you've been following the same routine for too long. In this case, boredom may be an indication that you must modify and upgrade your story.

As a human being, you have far more potential than you can imagine. Never underestimate your ability to create an exciting story. But to do so, you must move beyond your comfort zone. The more you overcome your limitations, the more you'll grow and the more alive you'll feel.

* * *

Exercise: make your story interesting

Using your action guide, answer the questions below:

- How can I make my story more interesting and exciting?
- What does the universe want me to do next? Am I being nudged in a certain direction?

5) Destiny vs. meaning

“ I'm a believer in fate and in fulfilling your destiny. I've always had a kind of inner voice that I have learned to listen to.

— TOM FORD, DESIGNER.

“ Our obligation is to give meaning to life and, in doing so, to overcome the passive, indifferent life.

— ELIE WIESEL, NOVELIST.

Do you believe you were born with a purpose or do you believe life has no meaning?

You can choose to believe life is meaningless but is this the best way to create a thoroughly enjoyable life? Fortunately, there are better options. The first is to believe you have a destiny to fulfill, that you came to earth with a specific mission—and the tools to accomplish it. The second is to believe that your mission is to give meaning to your life. One way you can do this is by leveraging your present condition, past experiences, and existing talents and skills to create a compelling vision.

I invite you to play with both options and see which one resonates more with you.

A. Fulfilling your destiny

Let's assume you came to earth to fulfill your destiny. What would that destiny look like? What are you here to do? If you already knew what your purpose was, what would it be? I invite you to take a few minutes to answer these questions.

Living with a sense of destiny can give purpose to your life. People who feel responsible for fulfilling their destiny are more driven and often happier. Also, by having a clear purpose, they can channel their energy in a specific direction, allowing them to accomplish more than the average person.

What is your destiny?

B. Giving meaning to your life

Let's assume life has no meaning except the one you give to it. If so, what meaning are you currently giving to your life, and is it as empowering as it could be?

In short, what's your story? What determines the actions you take every day? What dictates your goals? Choosing to give your life a specific meaning allows you to narrow down your options and focus on the goals that matter the most to you.

There are many ways to do this. One is to give meaning to your past challenges by deciding to help people facing similar challenges today.

For example:

- Someone who used to be shy may decide to help other people struggling with shyness.
- Someone who was bullied at school may choose to help reduce bullying by creating a Nonprofit organization or by giving speeches at various schools.
- Someone who suffers from alcoholism may help others overcome that addiction.

What about you? What challenges have you overcome? Could you make helping people facing similar challenges part of your story?

You can also look at issues that make you angry. For instance, if global warming, poverty, or child abuse angers you, perhaps you need to step up and make solving that particular issue part of your story.

The point is, you can believe in destiny or you can choose to give meaning to your life. Either way, the key is to design a story that empowers you and brings you fulfillment.

SEVEN POWERFUL BELIEFS YOU CAN ADOPT TO CHANGE YOUR STORY

As a human being, you can adopt any belief at any time. To become of the hero of your story, you must adopt rock-solid beliefs that will give you the confidence to move forward and design the life you want.

In this section, let me share seven empowering beliefs you can cultivate to change your story.

Some of these empowering beliefs come from my book, *Success Is Inevitable: 17 Laws to Unlock Your Hidden Potential, Skyrocket Your Confidence, and Get What You Want from Life*. Others are specific to this book.

Belief #1—If one, then one million

This is one of the core beliefs I've cultivated over the past few years. Below are some examples:

- If I can sell one book to one person, then I can sell one million books to one million people. It is just a matter of finding a way to reach them.
- If I can make one dollar online, then I can repeat the process and make \$100, \$1,000, \$10,000, et cetera.
- If I can find one client, I can find many more.

Instead of doubting yourself as many people do, you can merely seek to make your first sale or land your first client. Then, you know ninety percent of the work is done. From this point onward, you can simply repeat the process. Can you see how powerful this belief is?

Belief #2—If others can, I can

This is another simple, yet incredibly powerful, belief I hold. I always assume that if other people can, I can (and I will).

- If others are making money online, I can.
- If others are making a living as self-published authors, I can.
- If others are retiring early, I can.
- If others are having it all, I can.

The truth is, what other people can do, in most cases you can also do. This belief will boost your confidence and bring more certainty in your ability to reach your goal. As soon as I see thousands of people around the world succeed at something, I know I can and will achieve the same goal—assuming I want to. All I need to do is apply the processes I share in my book, *Success is Inevitable*, and be passionate enough about what I'm doing.

In short, I always assume that what others can do, I can, too. It may take tons of work and require more time than it did for other people but, eventually, I will achieve similar results.

What if you adopted the belief that what others can do, you can, too? How much more certainty and confidence would this give you? What different actions would you take, starting today?

Belief #3—I can get better

I used to beat myself up for not being good enough, but then I realized something very powerful. Whatever I do *right now* is exactly what I'm supposed to do *right now*. This is reality. I'm good enough *for now* and I can and will get better if I keep practicing.

In short, I shifted my focus from short- to long-term thinking. I gave myself some slack and reminded myself that I have time. The realization that I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be *right now* allowed me to relax more and stop beating myself up.

I now believe I can improve in each area of my life. I can overcome any major obstacle along the way, and so can you. After all, if other people can, you and I can, right? How? By practicing consistently, by remaining patient, and by managing challenging times effectively.

How much better would you feel if you realized you're good enough for now and simply have to keep going?

Belief #4—Others will give up, therefore, I will succeed

Many people give up as soon as they encounter major setbacks. Few have the perseverance to “fail” again and again and keep going until they achieve their goals. As such, most of your competitors aren't really your competitors, because they will give up at some point, while you will keep going and improving until you achieve your goal, won't you? Understand that your ability to stay focused on the process despite all the inevitable ups and downs will contribute significantly to your long-term success.

Others will give up, but you will persevere. Therefore, you will succeed.

Belief #5—Success is inevitable

Success is inevitable. This is a mantra I repeat to myself every day. I choose to believe success is inevitable because, after reading countless self-help books, I discovered that what determines our level of success is our belief in ourselves and in our vision. At least this is true for the most part.

In truth, I wasn't always confident in my ability to achieve my goals. Like most people, I continually doubted myself. However, as I kept progressing toward my goals, I developed more confidence in myself and in my vision. I did so by adopting new empowering beliefs like the ones in this section.

While I repeatedly failed to reach all of my targets, I still achieved many

goals. I also adopted a morning ritual. This discipline boosted my self-confidence. By shooting YouTube videos, doing Facebook Live, and joining the public speaking group, Toastmasters, I expanded my comfort zone, which built my self-confidence.

By developing more confidence, you will be in a better position to achieve most of your goals. And once you believe success is inevitable, giving up becomes impossible. You stop caring what people say you can and cannot do. Instead of worrying about the “how” you focus on the “why” behind your goals, trusting that you are resourceful enough to solve any future problem. Temporary “failures and setbacks” become learning experiences you can use to reach your long-term goals. You come to realize that, as long as you keep going, the game is still on. Life is a marathon, not a sprint. You have years to improve your way to success.

Belief #6—People want me to succeed

This is similar to the conspiracy from the universe model of reality. Most people want you to succeed. So, start seeing the world as a benevolent place that wants you to grow, improve, and fulfill your destiny. Remember, what you believe tends to become your reality. If you believe the world is a horrible place, this is what you’ll focus on every day. And what you focus on tends to expand. Therefore, learn to relax. Trust that people around want you to succeed. They want you to become better, nicer, smarter, wiser, and stronger. They want you to be able to impact other people’s lives, including theirs.

Since people want you to succeed, don’t be afraid to ask for help. Don’t let pride stand in the way of your success. When you need help with something, ask for it. As Jack Canfield wrote in *The Success Principles*, become an askhole. Keep asking, knowing that others want you to become the best person you can possibly be.

Belief #7—I’m the creator of my own life

As human beings, we are creators of our own lives. We have the power to reprogram our mind and change how we feel, think, and act to design the life

we want. We can implement new habits that will change the course of our life. Sadly, we are too often stuck inside our current identity, models of reality, and personal story, and are unable to see the possibilities ahead of us.

In the past few decades, scientists have discovered to what extent the mind is malleable. They have shown we have the ability to reprogram our mind and physically change our brain using the power of thought. Therefore, if you believe you can't change how you think or feel because you're too old or set in your ways, you're probably wrong. Remember, you're not a victim, you're a creator. The more responsibility you take for your life, the more power you have to change it.

Changing just one core belief can have a massive impact on your life. Never underestimate the power of belief. People with extraordinary beliefs can create extraordinary lives and make an extraordinary impact on the world.

You can develop rock-solid beliefs and become the hero of your story.

* * *

Exercise: come up with your favorite core beliefs

Using your action guide, identify the core beliefs that would have the most impact on your life, if you were to cultivate them daily.

NINE EMPOWERING ASSUMPTIONS

In this short section, I'll share with you some empowering assumptions. I invite you to reflect on each in turn and adopt the ones that resonate the most with you.

1. You're exactly where the universe wants you to be *right now*.
2. The universe is on your side; it always encourages you rather than blames you, judges you, or punishes you.
3. Your story is a gentle invitation from the universe to become all you can be.
4. Your story will unfold in the best possible way when you let go and stop trying to control everything.
5. Your story doesn't need to be similar to anyone else's story.
6. No one else can tell you what your story should be.
7. The unique purpose of your story is to serve you and to create a perfect alignment between who you are and what you do.
8. Your story boosts your creativity, makes you feel good, inspires you, and open you up to new possibilities.
9. If you feel pulled toward a certain vision—even a crazy and “unrealistic” one—it can be the universe telling you to take the first step in that direction. Perhaps, you need to embrace this story.

In **Part I: Understanding Stories**, we discussed what a story is and how we often tell ourselves stories that limit our potential and create suffering in our lives. In **Part II: Changing Your Story**, we saw what you can do

specifically to start changing your story and replace it with a more empowering one. In **Part III: Integrating Your Story**, it's time to look at how you can integrate your new story so that it becomes part of your day-to-day reality.

Shall we get started?

PART III

INTEGRATING YOUR STORY

In this part, we'll see what you can do specifically to make your new story yours. As you start embodying your new empowering story, you'll start feeling, thinking and acting differently leading you to witness more positive results in your life.

CONDITIONING YOUR MIND

“ Let a man radically alter his thoughts, and he will be astonished at the rapid transformation it will affect in the material conditions of his life. Men imagine that thought can be kept secret, but it cannot; it rapidly crystallizes into habit, and habit solidifies into circumstances.

— JAMES ALLEN, AUTHOR.

To make your new story a reality, you must condition your mind using the power of repetition. Repetition is one of the most powerful tools you can use to change your life. For example:

- Repetition of the same thoughts allows you to cultivate powerful core beliefs that will affect how you feel and act.
- Daily repetition of simple habits leads to exponential results over time.
- By reading the same book or taking the same course over and over again, you squeeze the value out of it and gather powerful insights that can change your life.
- By practicing the same move or playing the same song, you become great at what you're doing.

At first, every master has to be a master of repetition. Martial arts experts practice the same punch thousands of times. World-class speakers practice

their speeches over and over. Professional golf players rehearse their swing tirelessly.

You will never become a master of your life if you don't become a master of repetition.

You will never become the hero of your own story unless you refine your model of reality, strengthen your beliefs, and sharpen your skills daily. And it starts by conditioning your mind to ensure you have the right beliefs in place.

How to reprogram your mind

To change your story, you must adopt new beliefs. And the way you adopt these new beliefs is by reconditioning your mind through—guess what—repetition!

In the neuroscience field, there is a common saying, “Neurons that wire together, fire together.” Which means, when you repeatedly entertain a specific thought and associate it with the desired feeling, you create new neurological pathways (or strengthen existing ones). Furthermore, the stronger your pathways are, the easier it is for a thought to arise and generate the associated feeling.

A good analogy is to compare your brain to a forest. Your thoughts create pathways throughout the forest, connecting the neurons associated with these thoughts. As you entertain a specific thought over and over, you build a wider, firmer, and more defined pathway, which makes it easier to access associated thoughts and feelings.

This is why disempowering beliefs can be hard to eliminate. For instance, if you constantly worry about your finances, just thinking about money may generate an instant fear of running out of it. Before you realize it, you may find yourself envisioning worst-case scenarios no matter how unlikely they may be. This is because you had similar thoughts many times before, so negative thoughts about money—and the associated feelings—easily arise.

On the other hand, unfamiliar thoughts don't arise that often: e.g., feeling as though you have enough money and that everything is going to be all right. You'll need to think these thoughts over and over again for them to become

part of your model of reality.

Note that thoughts and beliefs are often irrational. There are people with millions of dollars in their bank account who fear running out of money. A while ago, I listened to an interview with a successful entrepreneur who had sold his company for 100 million dollars. With that much money in his bank account, he surely didn't need to worry about money and could spend as much as he wanted, right? In theory, yes. But he refused to spend more money than he was making in any given month. Also, did I mention he was checking the price of gasoline, looking for the best deal in town? On the other hand, there are people with very little money who never worry about their finances. This shows our problems are often the result of how we think and are not a reflection of reality.

Let me give you another example. Imagine you've been resenting someone for years because they never repaid the money they owed you or they betrayed you in some way. Why do you think this feeling of resentment lasted for so long? The answer is simply repetition. By replaying the scene in your mind over and over, you've created a strong emotional connection with the event and the associated emotion (resentment). If you had shrugged it off right away, refusing to replay the scene in your head, you wouldn't have experienced so much resentment, if any.

Now, let's see how you can adopt empowering beliefs that will support your story.

To learn in greater depth how to manage your emotions better, you can refer to my book, *Master Your Emotions: A Practical Guide to Overcome Negativity and Better Manage Your Feelings*.

ADOPTING NEW EMPOWERING BELIEFS

“ If you limit your choices only to what seems possible or reasonable, you disconnect yourself from what you truly want, and all that is left is a compromise.

— ROBERT FRITZ, AUTHOR.

To change the story you’re telling yourself, you must change your beliefs. Earlier, in the section, *Creating your avatar*, you wrote down empowering beliefs for your avatar. It’s now time to refine these beliefs and work on implementing them.

So, what would you need to believe to ensure your story unfolds the way you want in the coming months and years? An effective way to uncover these beliefs is to ask yourself, “Why am I not yet living the life I want? What’s holding me back?” You might want to ask yourself these questions for each major area of your life (career, family, finance, health, personal growth, relationships, and spirituality). As you answer these questions, you’ll probably come up with all sorts of excuses. These are usually limiting beliefs that need to be challenged and overcome.

For instance, if your excuse is that you don’t have enough time, your new belief could be:

“I make the time to do whatever I’m committed to.”

If your excuse is that you don’t have enough experience, then your new belief

could be:

“I do whatever is necessary to acquire the experience needed to achieve my goals.”

To implement new beliefs, you need to keep repeating affirmations that support these beliefs every day, as we’ll see later.

* * *

Exercise: write down what holds you back

Using your action guide, write down everything you believe is holding you back in each area of your life.

A. Challenging your beliefs

The next thing you want to do is to challenge your beliefs. To do so, start by asking yourself the question, “Is this belief absolutely true, all the time and under every circumstance?” The point of this question is to look at personal examples that contradict the limiting beliefs you’re holding on to. This will help you weaken these beliefs. Let’s look at each element in the question.

Is this belief absolutely true?

The nature of our mind can lead you to overgeneralize or exaggerate. However, things are rarely black or white. Reality is usually far more nuanced. Many of your beliefs are a way for you to simplify reality and sometimes to give yourself excuses not to do something. For instance, perhaps you believe you don’t have enough time to do something. But is this absolutely true? Is it truly impossible for you to find the time to do something that matters to you? How much of this belief is true, and how much is an excuse you tell yourself? When we want something badly enough, we usually make the time for it.

When you ask yourself whether your limiting belief is absolutely true, you’ll find out that it usually isn’t. This is how you start challenging your beliefs and weakening them.

Try asking yourself the following questions:

- Is this belief absolutely true?
- How much of this belief could be untrue or inaccurate?
- If I were to believe the opposite, what arguments or examples would I come up with? For instance, if your belief is “I don’t have the time,” how would you defend the opposite belief, “I have plenty of time to do whatever matters to me.”?
- What would it take for you to believe the opposite? For instance, “I have plenty of time to do whatever matters to me.”

Is this belief true all the time?

Your belief might appear true today, but has it always been so? Can you find previous examples that directly contradict your current belief? Limiting beliefs are rarely, if ever, true *all the time*. When you realize that your belief doesn’t withstand the test of time and is being challenged by past examples, it will lose some of its power. For instance, if your belief is that “you don’t have the time,” has this always been the case? Can you think of times in the past when you drastically changed your schedule to make the time for something important to you?

To help you in this process, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is this belief true all the time?
- What past examples/experiences clearly challenge this belief?
- What can I do differently now to challenge this belief?

Is this belief true under every circumstance?

Your belief might be true in certain cases, but it’s unlikely to hold true under every circumstance in your life. For instance, you may believe that you’re not good enough or smart enough, but this belief is unlikely to be true across the board. It might only apply to certain areas of your life or to specific situations. Maybe you don’t feel good enough at your current job, but you feel confident when you play sport, drive your car, or give a speech. This means your belief, “I’m not good enough” isn’t true for every circumstance.

In fact, not feeling good enough often comes from a lack of experience. When you're excellent at something, you feel confident, don't you? Not feeling good enough can also be the result of your focus. If you fail to acknowledge your successes and beat yourself up whenever you make a mistake, you'll probably feel inadequate. For more on this, refer to the previous section, *Changing your past*.

Ask yourself:

- Is this belief true under every circumstance?
- What examples or past experiences in other areas of my life directly contradict this belief?
- How can I leverage my experiences in other areas to alter my belief?

As you can now see, your beliefs are rarely, if ever, as true as they appeared to be in the first place. Using the question, "Is this belief absolutely true, all the time and under any circumstance?" allows you to start challenging your limiting beliefs. The more counterexamples you can come up with, the better you'll be able to weaken that belief. Later, we'll see how you can use positive affirmations to replace your limiting beliefs with more empowering ones.

Now, let's further challenge your beliefs by looking for specific case studies.

B. Looking for case studies

The next step to implement new beliefs is to look around for evidence. You want to find people who overcame similar limitations, which will help you shatter your model of reality and reassess your existing beliefs.

An effective way to remove limiting beliefs is to meet people whose behaviors, actions, and results directly challenge your beliefs. You cannot always meet such people in person, but you can watch their interviews, watch videos they posted online, and read their books. Other people aren't that much different from you. If they can do something, you most likely can too.

For instance, maybe you keep complaining about not having enough time. If so, look for people who achieved similar goals despite having a busy schedule. By doing a search online, you can probably find examples of

people who created a successful side business while having three kids, a full-time job, and a parent to take care of. I remember reading about a woman who worked full-time as a schoolteacher, had two young kids, and still managed to write twenty-six novels in only one year (and made a large amount of money doing so). Others would have complained they didn't have enough time to write and give up (or not start at all).

A word of caution: avoid using these case studies as a means to beat yourself up and get discouraged. There will always be people out there who are more productive, more disciplined, or smarter than you, which is okay. Use these case studies as sources of inspiration and see what is possible for you as you start believing in yourself and demanding more of yourself. It's highly unlikely you're operating at your very best right now. In short, you can usually do far more than you think you can.

So, keep looking for case studies that invalidate or challenge your negative and disempowering beliefs. They have the power to shift your thinking and inspire you to do more with your life.

* * *

Exercise: look for case studies

Using your action guide, write down two or three case studies that challenge your beliefs. You can also use a specific notebook or file to record any case studies and other inspiring stories you come across.

C. Creating affirmations to support these beliefs

Now that you have your list of limiting beliefs and have started challenging them, it's time to create affirmations to replace these negative beliefs with more empowering ones.

Affirmations are statements that affirm the opposite of your limiting beliefs. Below are examples of limiting beliefs and potential affirmations you can use to challenge them:

- I don't have enough time. —> I make the time to do whatever I'm committed to.
- I'm not good enough. —> *I am* good enough and I enjoy becoming better and better every day.
- I don't know how to do it. —> I learn everything I need to achieve my goals.
- I'm too old. —> My life experience gives me an edge over other people.
- I don't have any connections. —> My determination and consistent work opens one door after another.

How to use affirmations effectively

Below are a few simple steps you can follow to make your affirmations as effective as possible:

- State your affirmation in the present tense.
- Avoid using negatives and state your affirmation in the positive form. For instance, say "I'm courageous" rather than "I'm not afraid anymore."
- Aim to change your physiological state. Engage your body and experiment with different vocal tones. This will add power to your affirmation.
- Use the power of visualization. See yourself in specific situations that relate to your affirmation, then try to feel as though what you want is already there. Engaging your emotions this way will make your affirmation significantly more powerful (see also the section, *Leveraging the power of visualization*).

Bonus

To help eradicate some of your limiting beliefs and rewrite your story, you can use the sentence below:

I used to be ... but I now allow myself to

Example: I **used to be** shy, **but I now allow myself to** be more and more

confident with each passing day. It feels great to reach new levels of confidence I've never experienced before.

* * *

Exercise: create your own affirmations

Using your action guide, create the affirmations you will use daily to replace your disempowering beliefs with empowering ones.

IMPLEMENTING ROCK-SOLID HABITS

“ You’ll never change your life until you change something you do daily. The secret of your success is found in your daily routine.

— JOHN C. MAXWELL, LEADERSHIP EXPERT AND PASTOR.

For the most part, what you do every day determines where your avatar will end up five years from now. Therefore, to alter your story, you must condition your mind and implement rock-solid daily habits that are in line with your story.

We tend to put highly successful people on a pedestal and treat them as if they were “superhumans”. In reality, many of them are merely “ordinary” people who’ve developed extraordinary consistency in what they do every day. For instance, the Olympic swimmer, Michael Phelps trained every single day from age twelve to eighteen. How’s that for being consistent!

What can your avatar do every day to ensure your new story is unfolding smoothly? What does he or she need to practice?

A. Everything is a habit

Few people truly realize that almost everything in life can be developed through habits.

Habits aren’t just limited to meditating, exercising, or setting goals. They are

much more than that. You can implement simple habits that, over the long term, will allow you to learn almost anything such as:

- Boosting your creativity.
- Becoming decisive.
- Being more present.
- Building confidence.
- Developing charisma.
- Feeling more grateful.
- Thinking more critically.
- Turning yourself into a pro-active person, and so on.

For instance, you can enhance your creativity by coming up with ten new ideas every day on how to make money, boost your productivity, or better serve your customers. Or you can decide to put yourself in a confident state every time you enter a building or a room. The high-performance coach, Brendon Burchard uses these types of triggers throughout his days. As he wrote in his book, *High Performance Habits*, “Every time I walk through a doorway, I say to myself, ‘I will find the good in this room. I’m entering this space a happy man ready to serve.’”

* * *

Exercise: cultivating daily habits

What daily habits does your avatar need to cultivate to live its story fully? Using your action guide, write down the habits of your new avatar.

In my book, *Habits that Stick*, I mentioned seven habits that, I believe, are some of the most powerful ones you can adopt. Consider experimenting with a few of the following habits:

#1 Setting daily goals

Setting goals every single day will dramatically boost your productivity. To set goals, just take a pen and a piece of paper and make a list of three to five tasks you want to accomplish during the upcoming day. Then, prioritize your

tasks by numbering them in order of importance. Start by working on your first task and don't move on to the next until you complete the first. Repeat the process. If you can do this daily, you'll get a great deal done. Note that it can take some time before this process becomes a habit. Be patient.

Also, make sure your daily goals are in line with your story. What you do every day should move you closer to your ideal vision.

#2 Reading your goals every day

When things get busy, it's easy to forget about your goals, but reading them daily can prevent this from happening. It's equally important to take a moment to visualize your goals and to remind yourself how achieving them would make you feel.

I recommend you set 90-day goals. However, you also want to have annual goals as well as a long-term vision (three years or longer). The clearer you can make your vision, the better. Don't worry though. Your vision is never set in stone and can be refined over time.

#3 Meditating

Meditation provides a vast number of benefits. I won't go through them all, but you can check out the following article to learn more about them: <http://liveanddare.com/benefits-of-meditation/>. It mentions over seventy scientific benefits.

You can begin by spending just a few minutes a day. There are many ways to meditate, but it can be as simple as closing your eyes and focusing on your breathing. There are also several good books for beginners to help you get started.

#4 Practicing gratitude

Forgetting to express gratitude is a major cause of unhappiness. We tend to take everything for granted, failing to appreciate the little things in life (or even the big ones).

Every day during my morning ritual, I ask myself what I'm grateful for. I then spend a few minutes thinking about everything that crosses my mind. Or I read through my gratitude journal, which consists of positive reviews I

received for my books and compliments of all kinds.

Now, you don't have to come up with anything major. Below are a few examples of things you could be grateful for:

- Being granted one more day on this planet.
- Having family members and friends who care about you and who you care about in turn.
- Having food, shelter, running water, and electricity.
- Having access to an endless supply of knowledge at little to no cost thanks to the internet.
- Being able to communicate with your friends and family with your phone, and so on.

#5 Consuming motivational books and videos

In the words of Zig Ziglar, *“People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing—that's why we recommend it daily.”*

Feeding your mind with inspirational material on a daily basis will help you stay motivated for the long haul. If you can't find the time to read, you can listen to uplifting audiobooks during your daily commute. Remember, if you don't choose to feed your mind with positivity, someone else will feed it with negativity.

#6 Self-reflecting

Self-reflection is one of the best ways to supercharge your growth. Why not take a few minutes every evening to reflect upon your day? Consider asking yourself the following questions:

- What did I do well today?
- What could I have done better?
- What can I learn from today?
- What will I do differently in the future?

#7 Exercising daily

You already know you should exercise each day, but are you doing it? No

need to buy fancy gym equipment or even to get a gym membership. Simple activities like walking or running can be enough, as is recommended in an article on Harvard Medical School's website:

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/walking-your-steps-to-health>

“As a rough guide, the current American Heart Association/American College of Sports Medicine standards call for able-bodied adults to do moderate-intensity exercise (such as brisk walking), for at least thirty minutes on five days each week or intense aerobic exercise (such as running), for at least twenty minutes three days each week.”

The article further states:

“In a report that included findings from multiple well-done studies, researchers found that walking reduced the risk of cardiovascular events by 31%, and cut the risk of dying by 32%.”

So, even if you hate physical activity, why not go for a walk every day? You can even use that time to feed your mind with educational and/or inspirational material by listening to audiobooks.

Note that each of the seven habits mentioned above will improve your emotional state. For example:

- Working on inspiring goals every day will motivate you.
- Achieving small daily goals consistently will boost your self-esteem.
- Practicing gratitude, meditating, and/or exercising will enhance your well-being.

Why does it matter? Because your ability to condition your mind and take control of your emotional state is key to changing anything in your life. The better you feel, the more creative, resilient, and productive you will become. As you feel better, you'll have more fuel in your emotional tank to move beyond your comfort zone and make positive changes in your life. Have you ever tried to make difficult changes when you were tired or depressed? It's damn hard, isn't it?

If you were to stick to one new habit every day, which one would make the

biggest difference in your life over the long term?

To learn more on this topic, refer to Shawn Achor's book, *The Happiness Advantage: How a Positive Brain Fuels Success in Work and Life*.

If necessary, re-read the part in this book entitled, *Pushing the reset button* in the section, *Acting in the present*.

B. How to implement habits that stick

Now, let's see briefly how to implement habits you can stick to over the long term.

1) Define your habits clearly

The first thing to do is define the new habits you want to implement with as much clarity as possible. Make sure they are measurable: i.e., make sure you know whether you performed them or not. For instance, they could include a specific number of repetitions (doing ten push-ups), or a duration (meditating for five minutes).

2) Start small

The second thing you want to do is to start small. A good question to ask yourself is, "Am I confident I can stick to this habit every day even when I'm tired or don't feel like doing it?" The idea is to make your habit small enough to avoid self-sabotage while staying consistent over the long term. For instance, you could decide to meditate for a couple of minutes or to go for a 5-minute run.

* * *

Exercise: write down small habits

Using your action guide, write down small habits you could implement easily.

To learn more about the power of tiny habits you can refer to Stephen Guise's book, *Mini-habits*.

3) Set triggers

It's easy to skip habits. To avoid doing so, make sure you have a clear trigger for your habits. A good example of a trigger is "waking up". For instance, you may decide to meditate as soon as you wake up. Another example could be, "going to work". You may choose to visualize your ideal future as soon as you leave your house on your daily commute.

When setting triggers, the key is to make sure they are reliable: i.e., they should be something you do every day such as taking a shower, waking up, eating breakfast, or leaving home. You want them to act as anchors. If your triggers are inconsistent, you are more likely to forget about your daily habits.

So, what specific triggers will you use for your small habits?

4) Stack your habits

Another powerful thing to do is to stack, or group, your habits together. This will prevent you from skipping them. For instance, you could implement a morning routine. I love morning routines which, I believe, are some of the most powerful things you can do to improve your life. Imagine if you could stack the most powerful habits together and do all of them first thing in the morning? How would this change your life over time?

To give you an example, while writing this book, my morning ritual is:

- Getting out of bed immediately and smiling,
- Meditating for twenty minutes,
- Drinking two glasses of water,
- Stretching,
- Practicing gratitude,
- Setting goals for the day, and
- Writing for at least forty-five minutes.

Now it's your turn. How could you stack your habits together?

5) Undertake a 30-Day Challenge

30-Day Challenges can be incredibly powerful. This is because they force you to stay consistent and help you build momentum. Look at the habits you stacked together previously. Make them part of your morning ritual and commit to performing this ritual for at least the next thirty days. Then, see how it impacts your life.

To learn in more depth how to implement rock-solid habits, you can refer to my book, *Habits That Stick*. To learn how to create an exciting morning ritual, refer to my book, *Wake Up Call*.

USING SELF-TALK TO CHANGE YOUR STORY

“ It’s the repetition of affirmations that leads to belief. And once that belief becomes a deep conviction, things begin to happen.

— MUHAMMAD ALI, PROFESSIONAL BOXER.

When things are difficult, do you encourage yourself or do you beat yourself up?

To a large extent, your internal self-talk determines whether you will become the hero of your story or the victim of your circumstances. Remember, you shape your story by the way you think, feel, and act. What you say to yourself affects your thoughts and feelings. This is why it’s essential you learn to control your self-talk.

The martial artist, Bruce Lee and the boxer, Muhammad Ali both understood that the words they used shaped their reality. For instance, Muhammad Ali said, *“I am the greatest, I said that even before I knew I was.”* Bruce Lee developed unshakeable confidence that, in his own words, went beyond even faith. *“I feel I have this great creative and spiritual force within me that is greater than faith, greater than ambition, greater than confidence, greater than determination, greater than vision. It is all these combined. My brain becomes magnetized with this domination force which I hold in my hand.”*

What about you? Is your self-talk empowering you, or is it holding you back? By paying more attention to your self-talk, you’ll better understand the story

you're telling yourself.

A. Practicing positive self-talk

Your ability to talk to yourself positively will make a major difference in your life. Of course, you won't always be nice to yourself, but there are many things you can do to improve the quality of your self-talk and make sure you remain positive and optimistic even when things do go as planned (and they sometimes won't). Let's review some specific ways you can talk to yourself in your day-to-day life.

1) Talking to yourself with compassion

The impact of your words depends heavily on your emotional state. For instance, if you're feeling sad or mildly depressed, saying to yourself, "I'm totally confident," or "I can achieve anything I want," might not help. This is because the gap between your emotional state and the emotions you are trying to induce with your words is too wide. In such situations, it is more effective to talk to yourself in a compassionate way. For instance, you could say things such as, "It's okay. Just relax," or "I know you're not feeling great right now, but you have good intentions and things will improve soon."

Now, when it comes to self-talk, the most important component is self-compassion. Self-compassion will allow you to bend but not break. It will help you bounce back quickly instead of being depressed for days on end. Personally, learning to talk to myself with compassion has been a major breakthrough for me and has been extremely beneficial in the past few years. By showing yourself compassion, you acknowledge the fact you're imperfect and struggle to grow, just like anybody else.

To transition effectively from beating yourself up to treating yourself with compassion, you must get rid of a huge misconception—the idea you need to be harsh to yourself lest you become lazy. Is this true? No. You won't become lazy overnight just because you suddenly stop beating yourself up. In fact, you're probably getting tasks done *in spite* of beating yourself up rather than *because* of it.

Not convinced, yet? Try this. For the next week, I encourage you to undertake a seven-day self-compassion challenge. During these seven days,

as soon as you notice you are beating yourself up, stop. Then, talk to yourself with compassion. As you practice compassionate self-talk, you'll become more resilient and your mental suffering will lessen.

Below are some examples of sentences you can tell yourself:

- I'm doing okay.
- I'm doing great.
- I have good intentions.
- I'm not alone. There are other people with similar issues.
- I just have to do what I can and keep moving forward at my own pace.

When you talk to yourself with compassion, imagine you're talking to a loved one. Use the same words and emotions you would use with them.

To learn in greater depth how to develop self-compassion, refer to the section, *Cultivating self-compassion as part of your story*.

2) Giving yourself options, not commands

How often do you “should” yourself? That is, how often do you tell yourself you *should* do X, Y, or Z, whether it is working out, waking up earlier, or eating more healthily? I understand there are tons of things you *wish* you could do better (and so do I), but continuously blaming yourself for all the things you *should* do isn't particularly motivating. If anything, you'll only end up feeling guilty. Of course, we all “should” ourselves, but I invite you to do it less and less frequently. A good way to do so is to use “could” instead of “should”. For instance:

- I should work out. —> I could work out.
- I should work harder. —> I could work harder.
- I should wake up earlier. —> I could wake up earlier.

Using “could” allows you to let go of your current expectations and reduce feelings of guilt. It can help you lessen inner resistance and, as counterintuitive as it may sound, may lead you to take more, not less action.

Could vs. want

Once you've replaced "I should" with "I could", you can go on to replace "I could" with "I want".

I should work out. —> I could work out. —> I want to work out.

Then, ask yourself, "Why do I want it? Why is it important?" Come up with a list of reasons why it's important. When you have specific reasons for doing something, you'll usually end up doing it.

On the other hand, if you feel resistance, you can challenge your "should".

I should work out. —> Should I?

You'll often discover that some of your "shoulds" are expectations you've internalized rather than things you really need or want to do.

Need vs. want

You can do the same exercise replacing "need" with "want".

I need to work out. —> I want to work out.

Then, challenge that statement as well:

I need to work out. —> Do I?

So, do you "should" yourself more than necessary? The word "should" is often the reflection of self-imposed standards you expect to meet before you can be happy. As you frequently fail to meet them, you end up feeling guilty and unhappy.

Practice replacing "should" with "could" and "need" with "want" and see how it changes the way you feel and act.

Alternatively, you can also replace "should" with "could" for things that don't concern you directly. For instance:

- There should be no war. —> There could be no war.
- People should be nicer. —> People could be nicer.

My friends should be more supportive. —> My friends could be more supportive.

When you use “should” to describe things outside of your influence, you fight against reality and always lose. Reality just is, and it shouldn’t be any different. On the other hand, when you use “could”, you acknowledge that things could be different in the future if you (or other people) do something to affect the situation. This is a much more empowering statement.

3) Appreciating yourself (and the world)

Gratitude is another powerful tool that can dramatically change the way you think, feel, and act. It helps you focus on all the things you have instead of all the things you lack. If we don’t practice gratitude consciously, we’ll tend to adopt a mentality of entitlement, failing to appreciate all the gifts we receive from the world.

You can use some of the sentences below to express your appreciation:

- Thank you (a great mantra to adopt).
- I like the fact that For instance, “I like the fact that I’m pursuing my dreams instead of giving up on them.”
- I’m really grateful for For instance, “I’m really grateful for having a roof over my head/friends who care about me et cetera.”
- I acknowledge myself forFor instance, “I acknowledge myself for trying to become better or having good intentions.”

4) Celebrating your accomplishments

Do you take the time to celebrate all your accomplishments? Most people don’t, but they willingly criticize themselves for all their so-called failures.

It’s okay to be proud of yourself and what you’ve been able to accomplish in your life. Don’t wait for anybody else to be proud of you because you can sometimes wait a long time.

You can start celebrating your accomplishment using the sentences below:

- I’m proud of myself because

- I did a good job with
- I feel good about

So, what are you proud of?

5) Encouraging yourself

A real coach can only be with you from time to time, but you are with yourself 24/7. Therefore, you must learn how to be your own coach and encourage yourself. There are better ways to motivate yourself than to beat yourself up.

Here are some examples of sentences you can use to encourage yourself:

- I can do this (a good mantra to adopt).
- It's possible.
- If others can, I can.

So, what could you tell yourself to keep your motivation high and persevere when the going gets tough?

6) Avoiding distorting facts

We often distort facts, and this can lead us to experience unnecessary mental suffering. It can be the case when we play the victim or when we overgeneralize. For instance, a common way we do this is when we use “always” and “never” as in the examples below:

- Why does this always happen to me?
- I'm always late.
- I never do things right.
- I never finish what I start.

These types of statements are seldom accurate but can have a major negative impact on your emotional well-being. So, start noticing whenever you use “always” or “never” and ask yourself whether it is true.

Below are some alternatives:

- Why does this always happen to me? —> It may have happened a few times but it's not always the case.
- I'm always late. —> I'm sometimes late, but I'm usually on time.
- I never do things right. —> I believe I could have done a better job this time.
- I never finish what I start. —> Sometimes, I leave projects unfinished.

Can you see the difference? Notice when you distort facts and change it up by using sentences that put things into perspective and better reflect reality.

7) Believing in yourself

The way you talk to yourself is a great indication of your level of confidence. The stronger your self-confidence, the more likely you are to achieve your goals. As we've seen before, your self-talk is directly related to the models of reality you choose to adopt, whether consciously or unconsciously. A good way to improve your self-talk and boost your confidence is to repeat specific phrases that reflect your core beliefs (or your models of reality). We already discussed some of them in the section, *Powerful beliefs*.

Below are some examples:

- If others can, I can.
- I can always improve.
- Success is inevitable.
- I am responsible for everything in my life.
- I need to get better for things to get better.

You might want to take the time to review the most powerful core beliefs you currently hold (or want to hold) and remind yourself of your core beliefs daily.

8) Transforming yourself

This goes hand in hand with the previous point. You want to replace your limiting beliefs with empowering ones. One way to do this is to repeat your affirmations every day. By now, you should have already crafted your

affirmations and, as a reminder, some examples are:

- I don't have time. —> I make the time to do whatever I'm committed to.
- I don't know how to do it. —> I learn everything I need to achieve any goal I have.

So, keep repeating your affirmations in the morning (and throughout your day), and see how it changes the way you perceive yourself.

B. Asking yourself better questions

Self-talk is a conversation you're having with yourself and, as with most conversations, you ask and answer questions. But do you know what type of questions you're asking yourself?

The reason questions are so powerful is that they guide your thinking. Great questions invite great answers. Poor questions invite poor answers. Here are examples of what I mean by poor questions:

- Why does this always happen to me?
- Why am I always the one who *fill in the blank*?
- Why can't I do anything right?
- What did I do to deserve that?

Are there any good answers to these questions?

The point is, your mind will come up with an answer to any question you ask. So, make sure you ask intelligent questions. Below are some examples of good questions to ask yourself.

1) "How" questions

"How" questions are great because they foster creativity and invite ideas and solutions. For instance, whenever you catch yourself using the words "I can't," immediately replace these words with a question starting with "How can I?"

- I can't make money doing what I love. —> How can I make money doing what I love?
- I can't improve. —> How can I become better at this?
- I can't do this. —> How can I make it work?

Similar expressions are “What could I do to...” or “What would it take to...?”

- What could I do to make money doing what I love?
- What would it take to make money doing what I love?

2) “What if” questions

“What if” questions are also effective at stimulating your imagination and boosting your creativity. They open you up to new possibilities without requiring immediate answers.

- What if I could make money doing what I love?
- What if I could become better at this?
- What if I could make this thing work?

A word of caution: avoid asking negative questions such as, “What if it doesn't work?” Instead, replace them with their opposite, in this case, “What if it does work?”

Similar expressions are, “What if it's possible...?” Or “Imagine if...?”

- What if it's possible for me to make money doing what I love?
- Imagine if I could make money doing what I love?

3) “Who” questions

There are people out there who can help you change your life. They have the knowledge, mindset, skills, and resources you need to move from where you are to where you want to be. Below are some good “who” questions:

- Who do I need to be surrounded with to become the person I want to

be?

- Who has already achieved the goals I am trying to achieve?
- Who has the resources I need?

In essence, the “who” questions boil down to, “Who can help me?”

4) “Where” questions

These questions aim to help you find the right environment and/or the right people to surround yourself with. Some examples are:

- Where can I go to meet my tribe?
- Where should I spend most of my time to achieve the results I want?

Writing down your answers

Our mind is great at coming up with ideas, but it does a poor job at sorting them out and processing them effectively. This is why you want to write down your questions and answer them using pen and paper. The writing process will help you organize your thoughts, giving you a more solid ground on which to base your thinking. This, in turn, will allow you to produce better answers. So, keep asking yourself empowering questions. Then, for the really important questions, make sure you put it in writing and spend time coming up with as many great answers as possible.

To sum up, your self-talk has a major impact on how you feel, think, and act. Make sure you’re continuously encouraging yourself and asking yourself empowering questions.

Now, let’s see how you can use the power of visualization to make positive changes to your story.

LEVERAGING THE POWER OF VISUALIZATION

“ We have to see ourselves there long before it happens.

— ERIC THOMAS, MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER.

Visualization is one of the most powerful tools you have. Anyone who has ever achieved extraordinary things understood the power of visualization and used it to their advantage. Professional athletes, chess players, army generals, CEOs, and other successful people use visualization on a daily basis. Personally, I used visualization and imagination to turn myself into a full-time writer. I didn't wait for the approval of others. I didn't expect people to support me or believe in me. I visualized what I wanted my life to be and I worked every day to make that vision a reality. Like anybody else, you have the same power: the power to turn your vision into reality, the power to change from who you think you are (or should be), to who you want to become. And it all starts by using the power of your imagination. It is often said that imagination is more powerful than willpower, because your willpower is limited but your imagination is limitless.

You might say you don't know how to visualize. However, the truth is that you visualize every day. The problem is that you often visualize the future you're afraid of instead of the one you desire. For instance, what we call “worrying” is a type of visualization. It happens when you project yourself into the future, seeking to anticipate what may happen. When you imagine yourself failing to achieve your goals or getting fired from your job, it's also

visualization. What you want to do is to reclaim your imagination and use it to create the life you desire. Below is an example that illustrates the power of visualization.

In the 1960s, an experiment was conducted to evaluate students on their ability to make free throws in basketball under various conditions. Students were divided into three groups. The first group was asked to train twenty minutes a day for twenty days, a second was asked not to train at all, and the third was asked to imagine themselves making free throws, for twenty minutes a day over twenty days. Interestingly, the group of students who practiced only in their imagination performed almost as well as those who practiced in reality. Specifically, those who practiced in reality improved their scores by 24% while those who visualized improved by 23%. As expected, the students who refrained from both visualization and physical training showed no improvement. This experiment has been replicated many times since and has continued to produce similar results.

A. Rehearsing your future

Imagination is a preview of your future. You can use it to rehearse your ideal future. Studies have shown that your mind can barely tell the difference between an imagined experience and a real one. Consequently, the more you visualize something, the more neural connections you create in your brain and the more real it feels to you. When you believe something is already happening, it impacts how you think, feel, and behave, making it more likely for you to achieve the results you're after. This is why having a compelling story is so important. You must know where your avatar wants to go so that you can rehearse your ideal future and prepare for it.

Whatever your vision, it must be in your thoughts for months or years before it actually happens. You need to be prepared so you can seize opportunities the moment they arrive. You must accomplish it in your mind thousands of times with intense clarity until you're absolutely certain that it's going to happen.

If, for instance, you want to become the CEO of a company, you should constantly be thinking of what you'd do if you were the CEO of that company. What would your hiring process be? What would the core value of

your company be? How would you motivate your employees? What kind of corporate culture would you create? What would you do differently? What would your typical day look like? And so on. The more specific your thinking, the more believable it will be to you.

Now, let's look at a few simple steps you can take to visualize effectively.

B. How to practice visualization

Below are a few simple steps to get started with visualization.

1) Relax

The first step is to relax. The more relaxed you are, the more effective visualization will be. As you put yourself in a deep state of relaxation, you'll gain better access to your subconscious. As a result, your subconscious will accept what you visualize more readily and without the mental noise and objections you often get from your conscious mind. Also, remember that your mind is at its most receptive first thing in the morning and last thing at night (before you go to bed). These are great times to practice visualization.

2) Visualize what you want

The second step is to visualize what you want. Your imagination is limitless. Therefore, there is no situation you cannot create in your mind. Whatever you decide to visualize, try to make it as specific and clear as possible. An effective way to do so is by creating a mental movie. You want to be there as if it were happening right here, right now. Remember, your mind can barely tell the difference between an imagined experience and a real one.

Think about it this way: when you think of past events, do you remember specific memories or just fixed images? You want to create mental movies similar to the memories you would have if what you desire had already happened or was actually happening. For instance, if you want to travel the world, don't just think of the name of the countries you want to visit, see yourself walking in the street, visiting famous monuments, and eating at local restaurants. Be specific. Where are you staying? What are you eating? Who are you with?

Visualizing is *not* merely daydreaming. The “One day I will” type of thinking seldom, if ever, materializes. This is nothing more than wishful thinking. Conversely, with visualization, there is desire and commitment. It doesn’t mean you need to be tense or stressed about it though. Just relax and trust that your desire and commitment will help you get where you want to be.

3) Feel as if you’re already there

Emotions drive actions. When you feel good, you’re more creative, more resourceful, and more productive. You readily take the actions you need to achieve your goals. Therefore, whenever you visualize, engage as many of your emotions as possible. Feel excited about your vision. More specifically, feel as if you were already the person you want to be, having the things you want to have. For instance, if you want your avatar to be confident, see yourself being confident in a variety of situations. Create a mental movie and revisit it over and over again. Feel confident while you make a presentation at work. See yourself relaxed as you attend a social event. See people around you being friendly and receptive.

Instead of trying hard to reach somewhere you’re not, realize you can be there in your mind right now. Why? Because you have the incredible ability to feel the way you would feel if you were already there. The reason feelings are important is because they allow you to shift your beliefs quickly and profoundly. As your beliefs change, your subconscious will seek to align the reality around you with your new reality. As a result, you’ll find yourself taking more actions to close the gap between where you are and where you believe you must be. As the motivational speaker, Les Brown said, *“You don’t get what you want in life. You get who you are!”* And you can change who you are by changing the way you feel.

If you feel any resistance when you visualize, acknowledge it, let it go, and refocus on the object of your visualization.

4) Focus on what you want as often as possible

Here again, repetition is key. Spend time every day to visualize the person you want to become. Step into your vision first thing in the morning and see yourself being the person you want to be. Keep visualizing throughout the day. Then, do the same, at night before going to bed. Keep feeling as though

you're already that person. Assume that the qualities you seek to develop are already inside you, just waiting to be uncovered.

The repetition of an emotionalized vision will lead you to take different actions. Over time, these new actions will move you closer to the person you want to be.

These are the four simple steps to effective visualization.

The bottom line is this: you can tap into your imagination 24/7. Therefore, make sure you use it to create the life you want, not to revisit unhappy memories or worry about your future. What you think about often and for long enough will tend to become your reality—but only if you take action, of course.

* * *

Exercise: practice visualization

Using your action guide, practice visualizing the person you want to be every day, each time you wake and/or each time you go to bed. To begin with, you can focus on one specific feeling or the one particular belief you want to adopt.

CULTIVATING SELF-COMPASSION AS PART OF YOUR STORY

“ Remember, you have been criticizing yourself for years and it hasn’t worked. Try approving of yourself and see what happens.

— LOUISE L. HAY, AUTHOR AND FOUNDER OF HAY HOUSE.

Life seldom proceeds as planned. You may fall short of your goals, fail to follow through your commitment, and, at times, become angry at yourself for your mistakes. You may even get sucked into a whirlpool of negativity, feeling as though you’re never going to escape from it.

However, this is never the case. Your mind is merely playing tricks on you. You can be depressed for days, weeks, or even months but this negative state is often temporary—like clouds in the sky. You are the sun hiding behind these clouds. Just because you’ve been depressed for months doesn’t mean you’re a lesser person now than you were before. Your essence hasn’t changed.

I encourage you to cultivate self-compassion and to make it part of your story. As you move toward your vision, you will inevitably experience negative emotions. This is normal. And while it may seem to be preventing you from living your story, it’s a natural step and, by no means does it invalidate the story you want to be the hero of.

Know that everybody on this planet experiences self-doubt. That includes successful people you may look up to. In fact, some of the most

accomplished people see themselves as frauds. They live in constant fear of being unmasked. You too may sometimes experience feelings of inadequacy. Perhaps your hopes and aspirations have been crushed time and time again. Perhaps you compare yourself with the millions of people out there who are smarter, wiser, stronger, happier, or more successful than you will ever be.

I experience self-doubt and temporary lack of motivation. And, as the author of books such as *Master Your Emotions* and *Master Your Motivation*, I can easily start beating myself up and call myself a fraud. However, I also understand that I'm just a human being. As such, I don't expect myself to be happy all the time. More importantly, I refuse to let a temporary lack of motivation or moments of self-doubt stop me from pursuing my vision. Giving up is neither in my interest nor in the interests of people who will read my books.

Perhaps not feeling good enough is part and parcel of being human. But don't take it as an invitation to entertain the story that you might be inadequate. Instead, accept these feelings of inadequacy as they arise and treat yourself with compassion. Always.

The point is, no one is perfect. Taking a step back, looking at the broader picture, and acting with self-compassion are key components of our story. When we refuse to embrace self-compassion, we end up in dark places. We harm ourselves and make ourselves miserable. As a result, instead of being a tiny part of our story—an inconsequential blip along the way—our failures and setbacks become our entire story: the story that says we are failures.

So, whenever you start being too harsh on yourself, recognize the situation and give yourself some slack. Realize that negative emotions distort reality and make things seem far worse than they really are. Then, talk to yourself with self-compassion. What you say to yourself matters, especially in these situations.

Below are a few specific strategies you can use to manage your feelings better and act in a more self-compassionate way:

A. Remember how you felt and what you thought before you start experiencing negative feelings

Sometimes, you may start feeling sad or slightly depressed without really understanding why. Perhaps you were tired and overdramatized things. Perhaps you've been dwelling in the past. Perhaps you've been disappointed by your lack of success. Whatever it may be, I invite you to remember the moment you started becoming negative.

First, try to identify the specific event or thought that may have led you to change from being happy (or neutral) to feeling sad. Did someone say something to you? Did you dwell on a past event? Did you sleep badly and now feel tired?

Second, ask yourself whether this is really a big deal? Is it really worth being sad for days?

Finally, try to remember how you felt before slipping into negativity. Return to the place where you were feeling good and optimistic. Remember the feelings you had at that time. Focus on the positive thoughts you were having and remember the specific tasks you were working on at the time.

This process can help you improve your emotional state and return to a more positive place more quickly.

B. Remember past times when you felt bad

Remember times when you felt terrible and realize that all of them eventually passed. No matter how bad you feel now, this shall pass too.

C. Look at the bigger picture

Take a step back and study the bigger picture. You might have encountered a setback, but if you look at the long-term situation, is it really that big of a deal? Will it matter in one year? Five years? Twenty years? It's easy to lose perspective, which brings us to our next point.

D. Get an external perspective

As a writer, I spend more time alone than most people with a regular 9-5 job.

As a result, I can easily lose perspective and start worrying about petty things that don't really matter. When this happens, I find it particularly useful to talk to friends who will help me see the bigger picture, remind me of how much progress I've already made, and make me feel much better about myself.

The point is, as soon as you find yourself ruminating about something negative, try to have a chat with your friend(s). However, make sure you choose someone who is positive and will uplift you, not someone who risks dragging you further down.

E. Understand you're not alone in this situation

Part of being self-compassionate is realizing that you are not alone. Whatever issue you have, there are many people around the world who face, or have faced, similar issues. You don't need to suffer alone or feel like things unfairly happen to you (and only you).

So, remember that many people are in the same situation as you and it is okay. Avoid adding oil to the fire by beating yourself up about it.

F. Give yourself a break

When you're in a negative state of mind, the last thing to do is to beat yourself up. It will only make things worse. Instead, give yourself a break. If you want to criticize yourself, you can always do that later. This is what I call, adopting an, "I'll beat myself up later" approach.

G. Talk to yourself with compassion (see Using self-talk to change your story)

As we've previously seen, the way you talk to yourself has a huge impact on the actions you will take (or fail to take), and the results you'll get in your life. Thus, learn to talk to yourself with compassion. Avoid buying into the idea that criticizing yourself will help you in any way—in my experience, it doesn't—and be your best supporter instead.

H. Avoid comparing yourself to others

If you want to be depressed, there is nothing better than comparing yourself to others. Just look at all the people who are smarter, wiser, wealthier, or more successful than you. Add to that your friends who share their amazing life on social media and you have the recipe for prolonged unhappiness and frustration.

However, in reality, most people aren't as happy as they appear to be and, even if they are, what does it have to do with you?

Happiness is an inside job that comes mostly from working toward worthy goals, acknowledging your progress, nurturing your relationships, and celebrating all the good things in your life.

I. Accept the struggle

Failures are inevitable. However, they're part of your story and can become invaluable lessons, but only if you're willing to learn from them and keep moving forward. While many people are sitting on the bench, you are in the field, fighting your battles. Treat setbacks and struggles as the proof that you are embracing your story. Therefore, accept your challenges, be self-compassionate and keep putting one foot in front of the other.

If you feel sad or depressed for too long and find yourself unable to cultivate self-compassion, I would invite you to ask for help. Part of being self-compassionate means being able to ask specialists for their support when needed, knowing you're worthy of being helped.

CONCLUSION

Thank you so much for reading this book until the end. By doing so, you have demonstrated your commitment to become the hero of your story. Now, you must pursue your journey on your own.

So, keep upgrading your model of reality by adopting empowering beliefs. Make friends with your past by remembering wonderful memories and your great accomplishments. Use your imagination to step into your ideal future and surround yourself with positive people while feeding your mind with positivity. Finally, remember to treat yourself with compassion. Always.

As you change the way you think, feel, and act, you will change who you are, what you do, and what you can achieve.

Therefore, go write the story you want to tell your grandchildren one day—the story *you* are the hero of. It's your story and only you can live it—only you can tell it.

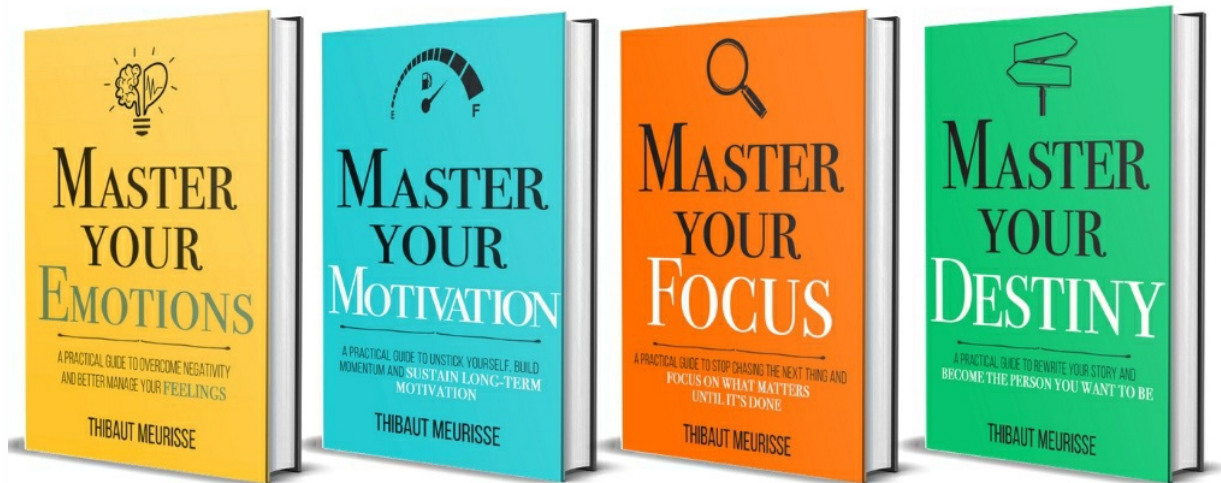
Warm regards,

Thibaut Meurisse

Master Your Life With The Mastery Series

This book is the third book in the “**Mastery Series**”. You can check out the first book, “Master Your Emotions” below:

[Click here to learn how to master your emotions](#)



What readers say about Master Your Emotions:

“Changed my life”

"One of the best self help books I have ever read!"

“One Word: PHENOMENAL!”

[Click here to learn how to master your emotions](#)

Or turn the page and read the preview.

MASTER YOUR EMOTIONS (PREVIEW)

“ The mind in its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of Hell, a hell of Heaven.

— JOHN MILTON, POET.

We all experience a wild range of emotions throughout our lives. I had to admit, while writing this book, I experienced highs and lows myself. At first, I was filled with excitement and thrilled at the idea of providing people with a guide to help them understand their emotions. I imagined how readers' lives would improve as they learned to control their emotions. My motivation was high and I couldn't help but imagine how great the book would be.

Or so I thought.

After the initial excitement, the time came to sit down to write the actual book, and that's when the excitement wore off pretty quickly. Ideas that looked great in my mind suddenly felt dull. My writing seemed boring, and I felt as though I had nothing substantive or valuable to contribute.

Sitting at my desk and writing became more challenging each day. I started losing confidence. Who was I to write a book about emotions if I couldn't even master my own emotions? How ironic! I considered giving up. There are already plenty of books on the topic, so why add one more?

At the same time, I realized this book was a perfect opportunity to work on my own emotional issues. And who doesn't suffer from negative emotions

from time to time? We all have highs and lows, don't we? The key is what we *do* with our lows. Are we using our emotions to grow? Are we learning something from them? Or are we beating ourselves up over them?

So, let's talk about *your* emotions now. Let me start by asking you this:

How do you feel right now?

Knowing how you feel is the first step toward taking control of your emotions. You may have spent so much time internalizing you've lost touch with your emotions. Perhaps you answered as follows: "I feel this book could be useful," or "I really feel I could learn something from this book." However, none of these answers reflect how you feel. You don't 'feel like this,' or 'feel like that,' you simply 'feel.' You don't 'feel like' this book could be useful, you 'think' this book could be useful, and that generates an emotion which makes you 'feel' excited about reading it. Feelings manifest as physical sensations in your body, not as an idea in your mind. Perhaps, the reason the word 'feel' is so often overused or misused is because we don't want to talk about our emotions. So, how do you feel now?

Why is it important to talk about emotions?

How you feel determines the quality of your life. Your emotions can make your life miserable or truly magical. That's why they are among the most important things to focus on. Your emotions color all your experiences. When you feel good, everything seems, feels, or tastes better. You also think better thoughts. Your energy levels are higher and possibilities seem limitless. Conversely, when you feel depressed, everything seems dull. You have little energy and you become unmotivated. You feel stuck in a place (mentally and physically) you don't want to be, and the future looks gloomy.

Your emotions can also act as a powerful guide. They can tell you something is wrong and allow you to make changes in your life. As such, they may be among the most powerful personal growth tools you have.

Sadly, neither your teachers nor your parents taught you how emotions work or how to control them. I find it ironic that just about anything comes with a how-to manual, while your mind doesn't. You've never received an instruction manual to teach you how your mind works and how to use it to

better manage your emotions, have you? I haven't. In fact, until now, I doubt one even existed.

What you'll learn in this book

This book is the how-to manual your parents should have given you at birth. It's the instruction manual you should have received at school. In it, I'll share everything you need to know about emotions so you can overcome your fears and limitations and become the type of person you really want to be.

You'll learn what emotions are, how they are formed, and how you can use them for your personal growth. You'll also learn how to deal with negative emotions and condition your mind to create more positive emotions.

It is my sincere hope and expectation that, by the end of this book, you will have a clear understanding of what emotions are and will have all the tools you need to start taking control of them.

More specifically, this book will help you:

- Understand what emotions are and how they impact your life
- Identify negative emotions that control your life and learn to overcome them
- Change your story to take better control over your life and create a more compelling future, and
- Reprogram your mind to experience more positive emotions.

Here is a more detailed summary of what you'll learn in this book:

In **Part I**, we'll discuss what emotions are. You'll learn why you are wired to focus on negativity and what you can do to counter this effect. You'll also discover how your beliefs impinge upon your emotions. Finally, you'll learn how negative emotions work and why they are so tricky.

In **Part II**, we'll go over the things that directly impact your emotions. You'll understand the roles your body, your thoughts, your words, or your sleep, play in your life and how you can use them to change your emotions.

In **Part III**, you'll learn how emotions are formed. You'll also learn how to

condition your mind to experience more positive emotions.

And finally, in **Part IV**, we'll discuss how to use your emotions as a tool for personal growth. You'll learn why you experience emotions such as fear or depression and how they work. You'll then discover how to use them to grow.

To start mastering your emotions today go to

mybook.to/Master_Emotions

I. What emotions are

Have you ever wondered what emotions are and what purpose they serve?

In this section, we'll discuss how your survival mechanism affects your emotions. Then, we'll explain what the 'ego' is and how it impacts your emotions. Finally, we'll discover the mechanism behind emotions and learn why negative emotions can be so hard to deal with.

1. How your survival mechanism affects your emotions

Why people have a bias towards negativity

Your brain is designed for survival, which explains why you're able to read this book at this very moment. When you think about it, the probability of you being born was extremely low. For this miracle to happen, all the generations before you had to survive long enough to procreate. In their quest for survival and procreation, they must have faced death hundreds or perhaps thousands of times.

Fortunately, unlike your ancestors, you're (probably) not facing death every day. In fact, in many parts of the world, life has never been safer. Yet, your survival mechanism hasn't changed much. Your brain still scans your environment looking for potential threats.

In many ways, some parts of your brain have become obsolete. While you

may not be seconds away from being eaten by a predator, your brain still gives significantly more weight to negative events than to positive ones.

Fear of rejection is one example of a bias toward negativity. In the past, being rejected from your tribe would reduce your chances of survival significantly. Therefore, you learned to look for any sign of rejection, and this became hardwired in your brain.

Nowadays, being rejected often carries little or no consequence to your long-term survival. You could be hated by the entire world and still have a job, a roof and plenty of food on the table, yet, your brain is still programmed to perceive rejection as a threat to your survival.

This is why rejection can be so painful. While you know most rejections are no big deal, you nevertheless feel the emotional pain. If you listen to your mind, you may even create a whole drama around it. You may believe you aren't worthy of love and dwell on a rejection for days or weeks. Worse still, you may become depressed as a result of this rejection.

In fact, one single criticism can often outweigh hundreds of positive ones. That's why, an author with fifty 5-star reviews, is likely to feel terrible when they receive a single 1-star review. While the author understands the 1-star review isn't a threat to her survival, her authorial brain doesn't. It likely interprets the negative review as a threat to her ego which triggers an emotional reaction.

The fear of rejection can also lead you to over-dramatize events. If your boss criticized you at work, your brain may see the event as a threat and you now think, "What if I'm fired? What if I can't find a job quickly enough and my wife leaves me? What about my kids? What if I can't see them again?" While you are fortunate to have such an effective survival mechanism, it is also your responsibility to separate real threats from imaginary ones. If you don't, you'll experience unnecessary pain and worry that will negatively impact the quality of your life. To overcome this bias towards negativity, you must reprogram your mind. One of a human being's greatest powers is our ability to use our thoughts to shape our reality and interpret events in a more empowering way. This book will teach you how to do this.

Why your brain's job isn't to make you happy

Your brain's primary job is not to make you happy, but to ensure your survival. Thus, if you want to be happy, you must take control of your emotions rather than hoping you'll be happy because it's your natural state. In the following section, we'll discuss what happiness is and how it works.

How dopamine can mess with your happiness

Dopamine is a neurotransmitter which, among other functions, plays a major role in rewarding certain behaviors. When dopamine is released into specific areas of your brain—the pleasure centers—you get a high. This is what happens during exercise, when you gamble, have sex, or eat great food.

One of the roles of dopamine is to ensure you look for food so you don't die of starvation, and you search for a mate so you can reproduce. Without dopamine, our species would likely be extinct by now. It's a pretty good thing, right?

Well, yes and no. In today's world, this reward system is, in many cases, obsolete. While in the past, dopamine was linked to our survival instinct, the release of dopamine can now be generated artificially. A great example of this effect is social media, which uses psychology to suck as much time as possible out of your life. Have you noticed all these notifications that pop up constantly? They're used to trigger a release of dopamine so you stay connected, and the longer you stay connected, the more money the services make. Watching pornography or gambling also leads to a release of dopamine which can make these activities highly addictive.

Fortunately, we don't need to act each time our brain releases dopamine. For instance, we don't need to constantly check our Facebook newsfeeds just because it gives us a pleasurable shot of dopamine.

Today's society is selling a version of happiness that can make us *unhappy*. We've become addicted to dopamine largely because of marketers who have found effective ways to exploit our brains. We receive multiple shots of dopamine throughout the day and we love it. But is that the same thing as happiness?

Worse than that, dopamine can create real addictions with severe

consequences on our health. Research conducted at Tulane University showed that, when given permission to self-stimulate their pleasure center, participants did it an average of forty times per minute. They chose the stimulation of their pleasure center over food, even refusing to eat when hungry!

Korean, Lee Seung Seop is an extreme case of this syndrome. In 2005, Mr Seop died after playing a video game for fifty-eight hours straight with very little food or water, and no sleep. The subsequent investigation concluded the cause of death was heart failure induced by exhaustion and dehydration. He was only twenty-eight years old.

To take control of your emotions, it is essential you understand the role dopamine plays and how it affects your happiness. Are you addicted to your phone? Are you glued to your TV? Or maybe you spend too much time playing video games. Most of us are addicted to something. For some people it's obvious, but for others, it's more subtle. For instance, you could be addicted to thinking. To better control your emotions, it is important to shed the light on your addictions as they can rob you of your happiness.

The 'one day I will' myth

Do you believe that one day you will achieve your dream and finally be happy? This is unlikely to happen. You may (and I hope you will) achieve your dream, but you won't live 'happily ever after.' This is just another trick your mind plays on you.

Your mind quickly acclimates to new situations, which is probably the result of evolution and our need to adapt continually in order to survive and reproduce. This is also probably why the new car or house you want will only make you happy for a while. Once the initial excitement wears off, you'll move on to crave the next exciting thing. This phenomenon is known as 'hedonic adaptation.'

How hedonic adaptation works

Let me share an interesting study that will likely change the way you see happiness. This study, which was conducted on lottery winners and paraplegics, was extremely eye-opening for me. Conducted in 1978, the investigation evaluated how winning the lottery or becoming a paraplegic

influence happiness:

The study found that one year after the event, both groups were just as happy as they were beforehand. Yes, just as happy (or unhappy). You can find more about it by watching Dan Gilbert's Ted Talk, The Surprising Science of Happiness [here](#).

Perhaps you believe that you'll be happy once you've 'made it.' But, as the above study on happiness shows, this is simply not true. No matter what happens to you, you'll revert back to your predetermined level of happiness once you've adapted to the new event. This is how your mind works.

Does that mean you can't be happier than you are right now? No. What it means is that, in the long run, external events have very little impact upon your level of happiness.

In fact, according to Sonja Lyubomirsky, author of *The How of Happiness*, fifty percent of our happiness is determined by genetics, forty percent by internal factors, and only ten percent by external factors. These external factors include such things as whether we're single or married, rich or poor, and similar social influences.

This suggests, only ten percent of your happiness is linked to external factors, which is probably way less than you thought. The bottom line is this: Your attitude towards life influences your happiness, not what happens to you.

By now, you understand how your survival mechanism impacts negatively your emotions and prevent you from experiencing more joy and happiness in your life. In the next segment/section we'll learn about the ego.

To read more visit my author page at:

[amazon.com/author/thibautmeurisse](https://www.amazon.com/author/thibautmeurisse)

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