

Born to Discover:

A Journey to Uncover Your Hidden Self

by

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Introduction

When was the last time you asked yourself: Who am I? Chances are, if you are like most Americans, you have probably been too busy to stop and ask yourself this question. I really can't say I blame you because we live in a very busy society and it is too easy to simply not have enough time.

There is only 24 hours in any given day. I mean, there's just so many things popping up in all areas of your life. There's just so many obligations taking up your time. It's no surprise that when it comes to priorities, self-introspection is mostly very low on the list.

Usually, when people do get around to asking this type of question, they are at some sort of crossroad in their lives. Maybe they are going to some sort of crisis like divorce, depression, job loss, or suffering from some sort of medical condition.

While it is a positive thing that people do ask themselves these types of questions at certain points in their life, it really is too bad that we often have to wait for something dramatic to happen. We realize at those points in time that we simply just allowed ourselves to ask this type of question. We've been able to do it all along, it's just that we were waiting for some sort of dramatic event.

The truth is, we simply don't ask ourselves this question enough. If we did, we might end up living more victorious lives. Do you feel that you are stuck in your life? Are you easily frustrated? Are you a very impatient person? Does it seem like everybody else is getting on with their lives and enjoying the best things in life while you are somehow, somehow left behind? Did you feel that other people are living their lives to their fullest potential while you are struggling and can't seem to get enough of the nice things that you deserve?

If any of these apply to you, I need you to understand that you are not any different from the successful and happy people you meet. In fact, chances are, you are probably more intelligent, sensitive, and compassionate than them. Despite that fact, you still end up with the short end of the stick.

This may seem unpleasant, but the reason might be due to your mindset. Your personal mental habits can hold you back. Your emotional habits can prevent you from living the kind of life you are otherwise capable of living. Mindsets also prevents us from enjoying the fullness of life.

Life all around us is full of possibilities and unfortunately, with the wrong mindset, even the most positive thing in the world would seem like a defeat. Sadly, too many of us, are easily the victim of our own personal fears and imagined limits.

A famous philosopher once said that, " the unexamined life is a life not worth living ". I want you to think about that quote because it sums up one of the most critical missions of your life. This is not just a call for philosophical inquiry, nor is it an empty exercise where people sit around and talk about big lofty concepts.

This is about something real. This is about who you are and who you choose to be. Make no mistake about it, the question of " Who am I? ", can be a personal touchstone that can lead to a tremendous amount of personal discovery, and yes, personal power.

Chapter 1

You Are Not Who You Think You Are

The funny thing about most human beings is that it's too easy for us to become victims of our own assumptions. I don't want to drop a tired cliché, but it's extremely relevant in this discussion. You have probably heard it before. When you assume, you make an ass out of you and me.

This is definitely on point when it comes to our identities. Most of the time we come up with some sort of idea regarding who we are, what we are capable of, our limits as people, the amount of personal power we have, the kinds of dreams that we allow ourselves to pursue.

What if I told you that all of those are illusions and artificial limitations that you put on yourself? What if I told you that all of that is a lie. That is right. You are not who you think you are, and this is why.

We Absorb Our Identities

You are who your parents say you are. I mean, at least partially. Depending on the culture you come from, this can count for a lot of your personal identity. In the United States, this is not as important as in Southeast Asia or other more traditional societies. In cultures where filial piety and family-based ethics predominate, your group, clan, or linguistic sub-group, define a large chunk of your personal identity.

Your parents definitely account for a large portion of who you choose to believe you are. Outside of that, peer groups, can also be a source of identity. I would say too many people choose to define themselves based on past negative experiences and trauma. They define themselves by the hurtful things that were said to them. They define themselves by how insulted and degraded they felt in the past. They define themselves based on how embarrassed and humiliated they were, or how many times they fail.

Another source of identity is, of course, cultural definitions. This is a broader term. However, it is still very powerful because every time we turn on the tv, you are being invited to program yourself unwittingly. Cultural programming is never neutral. There is always an agenda in the back and in many cases, the people programming you are simply playing a role.

They themselves are unaware of the fact that they are engaged in programming and are often simply passing on the programming that they themselves suffer from. Finally, when you go through certain phases in life, you trigger certain personal development processes that can define you.

For example, fraternities, establish deep and profound lifelong friendships because of shared experiences like Hell Week. They take the fraternity pledges into one room, or one car, and make them go through hell in the form of physical challenges, or hazing, or mental torture. Whatever the case is, this group of previous strangers learn to depend on each other and most importantly, they get one common experience that they can always point back to.

It is no surprise that fraternity brothers that haven't seen each other for thirty or forty years, hang out and have a good time like no time passed because of that shared experience. What happened was that the process defined a key part of their identity.

You go through that as well when you graduated college and you worked at your first job. That process defined part of who you were. When you got married, or got into a romantic relationship,

that process defined who you are and so on and so forth.

Besides what I mentioned above, there are many other experiences and factors that provide us with identities. We absorb identities from these factors.

We Become The Identities We Absorb

It's important to pay attention to the word that I used above: "absorb." It requires some sort of volition. Volition, of course, involves choice. Believe it or not, the life you are living, is the life you chose.

Now, you might be saying to yourself, "Dude, I am living in hell, how the hell could I have chosen this miserable life?" Well, you let it happen. You absorbed it either consciously or subconsciously but you still chose to absorb it. This is never neutral.

When you absorb an identity its going to have a tremendous impact. You may not choose to acknowledge or recognize it, but the impact is all too real. Just how big of a deal are identities? Well, first it impacts your sense of possibility.

There was a young native American boy who found a large egg in the middle of a prairie. He brought it home and put it under a hen. It turns out that this egg is an eagle egg, and sure enough after a few days, the egg hatched and out comes this beautiful eaglet.

However, the eaglet did not know it was an eagle because it hung out with chickens. Thus, it scratched on the ground, eat worms, seeds, and otherwise acted like a chicken. A few years later, right before it was about to die, the chicken yard was going crazy because there was this huge bird passing over their turf. The eagle then looked up and saw this majestic bird with a massive wingspan and curved beak flying overhead. Everybody headed for cover and the eagle turned chicken, headed for cover as well.

When the coast was clear, the eagle came out and breathed a sigh of relief and just did the same things that the chicken does. He never flew. He never soared the skies. He definitely never took on another bird because he thought he was a chicken. That was his identity until the day he died.

Our sense of possibilities impacted based on the identity we absorb. Just like that eagle that thought it was a chicken, we can easily absorb identities that drastically limit what is possible for us. This places a tremendous limit on what we can do, think, and what we allow ourselves to say.

Unfortunately, most of us turn a blind eye to this. In fact, a lot of us choose to not even be aware of it. It impacts who we think we are. Believe me, who you think you are can impact how hard you work, the dreams you choose for yourself, and the kinds of things you hope for.

The big difference between very rich and dirt poor people is not IQ, intelligence, emotional quotient, or the willingness to work hard. The big difference really is mental programming. What is your sense of possibility? What kind of risks are you willing to take? There is a tremendous difference between classes as far as those things go.

When you talk to a very rich person, everything is possible. It's not because this person has a lot of money. He may be leveraged to his skills, but he still thinks in blue sky horizons. When you talk to a working person, on the other hand, he thinks in terms of living from paycheck to paycheck. See the difference?

Our identities impact our sense of who we are and this impacts our sense of possibility. Why is this a big deal? Well, it impacts who we think we can be. Again, there is no person in the world holding you back from becoming a multimillionaire. There's nobody holding a gun to your head and forcing you to be poor, miserable, and frustrated. You do it to yourself.

Why? You absorb the identity of somebody who is poor and struggling, and it is a choice. It impacted who you think you are, and who you're capable of becoming. This is not a negative thing because anything that you can choose, you can choose to let go.

Your Identity is a Choice

I know this might sound extreme. It may even sound crazy, but the reality you live is ultimately a product of your choices. A lot of people would definitely object to this because nobody would want to consciously suffer. No one would want to live a life where they're constantly frustrated and they feel that they are under a tremendous amount of pressure to make ends meet.

It really all boils down to choices, because the process may seem automatic to you, but you chose your identity. No one can force you to become someone you don't want to be. When you look at the history of many self made billionaires, a lot of them come from dirt poor backgrounds. They just found it in themselves to choose a different identity. They didn't want to go with the path of least resistance.

This is because the path of least resistance to somebody born at a certain class level, is to remain at that class level. If you were born poor, the path of least resistance is to practice the same habits, that keep you poor. If you are born middle class, like your father is a doctor, or a lawyer, the path of least resistance is to follow in dad's or mom's footsteps. The same applies to multi-billionaires and multimillionaires.

Most people choose the path of least resistance, and this may seem all automatic. It may seem that it just happened, but it's still a choice. The moment you choose a different path, your life will change.

You are a Heap of Identities

If you are completely serious about examining the question of who am I, you would realize that you are a different people to different people. For example, at work, you probably emphasize certain parts of your personality. When you are hanging out with your friends after work, on the other hand, they see your sense of humor. They see your sense of irony.

In other words, they see a different side to you because they are your friends.

When you are with your romantic partner, they see a different side of you as well, and so on down the line. All these different sides highlight the fact that you have many different identities. If you were to reduce all those identities into categories, three categories come to mind.

First, there is your obvious "waking self". This is the most obvious identity that you have. This is the one that you can clearly put your finger on and say, that's who I am. Unfortunately, that is just a small part of the overall picture. That is just what you choose to be conscious of. There are other parts to your identity that are not so obvious. These exist but they're below the surface.

The second part to you is your subconscious self. This is hidden, but believe me, it is real. Why? It manifests itself from time to time. When you find yourself in certain situations, your subconscious self impacts your decision. It impacts the things you think, say, and do.

Finally, there is your potential self. This doesn't exist. It's just a potential. I mean, you have the capability of acting a certain way. You have the means and the energy level to make certain things happen. However, this side of yourself doesn't exist because you are focusing on something else. You have a potential for greatness. It is possible for you to become something larger and bigger than who you choose to be. It will only stay stuck in potential form unless you train your mind to unlock that potential. It's not real, it's just an idea at this point in time.

Most People Choose to Tap Only the Obvious and Superficial

The problem is, most people chose to define themselves primarily in terms of what they can see, and what they can sense. In other words, they focus on the obvious. Sadly, this is also the most superficial. This is just the surface.

Think of it this way. If you are reading this and you are going through a tough time in your life, you may be thinking that life is really crappy. Life is just unnecessarily rough and it's very easy to think that there is no hope. You might even be tempted to think that this is who you are.

When you think this way, you are like a piece of gold wrapped in dirt. No matter, this piece of dirt, as you see it, is still a piece of gold. You take it to a jeweler or a person who deals with precious metals and the first thing that they would do is rub off the dirt and they know that they are holding something that is very precious. They know that they can melt it down, reshape it, mold it, forge it into something that reveals its true value.

But you focus on the dirt, the obvious, the superficial, the "skin level" reality of your existence. That is not who you are. I need you to think around these terms because you are that piece of gold. What is the "gold" that you can boast of? - your potential. Remember, the reality is that there's not much difference between you and Bill Gates.

I know you are probably going to laugh out loud. I mean Bill Gates is worth dozens of billions of dollars, and you are just barely scraping by to pay a rent. How can you be the same as that person? Well, your potential is the same. He just chose to turn his potential into a reality and you chose to sit on it. You chose to settle for an identity that is a tiny fraction of who you could be. You chose to operate at a fraction of your full capacity.

This book is going to teach you to tap into your hidden self. You may feel that you are the world's biggest loser right now. You may feel that whatever relationship you get into will lead to tragedy, or that you are not deserving of happiness, contentment, and the good things in life. Well, be that as it may. You may only be looking at the obvious and the superficial. You did not tap into the gold beneath.

This book enables you to peel away the obvious, the superficial, and the limiting beliefs to get at the hidden self that will enable you to achieve the success, power, and victory you have always wanted. It's a journey. It's not going to happen overnight, and in many cases, it is going to be quite emotionally turbulent. And the reason is, we choose the identities we chose because there is some sort of emotional payoff.

Make no mistake about it, taking the path of least resistance pays off, seriously. There's an old saying, hard work pays off in the future, but laziness pays off now. That is the essence of taking the path of least resistance. If you are feeling stuck, frustrated, or you feel that you are being left behind by everybody else, it is because you chose a self that is not optimal.

The good news is since you chose your identity, you can also choose a new identity. You can let go

of the old self and adapt an identity that will take you to where you wish to go. You are in control. There is nobody else to blame. There is no evil, mean person pointing a gun at your head, forcing you to make bad decisions. You are not trapped in your relationships. There is no evil person conspiring against you. It's all you. You chose your life.

Once you are able to accept this, then you would have the power to make better choices. The moment you stop blaming others, or stop believing that there is somebody else, or a situation to blame, then you will make progress. It doesn't matter whether you have been abused in the past, or something terrible happened to you and it emotionally crippled you. You have to let go because the more you hang on to this past trauma, the more you will be stuck in where you are with that sub-optimal identity you have chosen for yourself.

Chapter 2

Man is Born Free... But Everywhere He is in Chains!

If you recognize the title of this chapter, congratulations! You probably took Political Science 101 or some sort of philosophy or history class. The title of this chapter is borrowed from the great French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau.

Rousseau was, of course, talking about political issues. But this quote actually is extremely relevant to most of us. You have to understand that when you came out of that womb, you have such tremendous potential. You can be whoever you wanted to be. You can do whatever you wanted to do. You can achieve whatever you set your mind to.

Despite all that possibility, and all that potential, you chose to live the life that you have right now. You are obviously reading this book because there is some sort of problem you are facing, or probably some kind of limitation that you are up against. Otherwise, you won't be reading this book which highlights my point.

We have all these potentials that we were born with, and we choose to walk around in chains. The most tragic part to all of these is that, not only are these chains invisible because they are all in our minds, but we also hold the key. Still, despite what we know, or could know, we refuse to turn the lock. We refuse to take the key out, unlock our shackles and live a free, unlimited and truly boundless life.

What's going on? Why do people freely choose to live their lives far below their fullest potential. Well, it really all boils down to limitations. These limitations are part of the identities that we choose for ourselves.

Limited Sense of Who They Are

People who are struggling or facing all sorts of difficulties regardless of their potentials and capabilities, have a very limited sense of who they are. They often look at themselves as much smaller and more powerless than the reality.

It's like a lion looking into a mirror and all he can see is a pussy cat or a kitten. Can you imagine how ridiculous that is? But that's how most people look at their lives. They think that they were born poor, so they're going to die poor; or that they were born with Daddy's money and they cannot step outside the shadows of Daddy's expectations.

While in one situation we're talking about poverty, and the other, we're talking about affluence, they're actually one and the same. They are cut from the same cloth. They both operate from a self-imposed limitations. You choose limitations and boundaries on who you are.

The good news is you could always push back and broaden your comfort zone. You can always see what else is out there. But guess what! We are all creatures of comfort, and we instantly flock into the path of least resistance.

It's easier to simply let your life to operate on autopilot by following the patterns set in front of you. It doesn't have to be that way. Just because your parents were poor, doesn't necessarily mean that you have to continue the pattern.

By the same token, just because your parents expected you to be a lawyer or a doctor, doesn't

necessarily mean that the same path would be right for you. You have to determine who you are. Determine your level. This is where the key comes in. Otherwise, you are going to continue to gladly wear those invisible chains.

Limited Sense of What They Can Do

When you develop limitations on who you think you are, the logical extension of that is you start putting limits on what you can do. You start narrowing down the actions that you feel you are capable of doing.

Let's put it this way. There's really nothing preventing most college students right now in America, to form a start up company. But they don't do that. Most of them choose to study, hope to graduate, drink a lot, and somehow, somehow, hope that it all turns out for the best. It rarely does.

There's just so many things possible and they just focus on one particular track. It is no surprise that a lot of people feel frustrated. A lot of people feel that they are living way below their fullest potential. This is due to the fact they first put arbitrary and totally unnecessary and irrelevant limits on who they are. This then limits what they think they can do.

The reality is that there is no limit to what you can do, seriously. Look at the person that you admire and study what they are doing. Chances are you could do the same thing. Sure you have less money, or a lesser education, but you can start the process of doing what they are doing.

Maybe Steve Jobs thought in high level concepts when designing new electronic products, but you can do the same at a much lower level. You can maybe talk about designing a much simpler product. It's just a difference in scale. The good news is, the more you start thinking along the same lines as them, you put in motion a process that can enable you to scale up to their level eventually.

Sadly, that doesn't happen with most people because we buy into this extremely debilitating and limiting sense of what's possible. We just say to ourselves, we don't have the money; I can't do it; I'm too dumb; I'm not smart enough; I don't have rich parents; and so on and so forth. These are excuses. These are not reality.

Limited Sense of Who They Can Become

You are not destined to be frustrated. You are not destined to live life by simply coasting or drifting from paycheck to paycheck. You are not meant to live life where you simply try to keep your head above the water. You can choose to become something bigger and better.

Unfortunately, if you pick the wrong identity, all that, goes out the window. The range of people you can become in the future gets narrowed. There's really a very small incremental difference between who you are now and who you can be in the future if you stick to the path of least resistance. If you stick to what's familiar and what's less threatening, it is no surprise that you will get more of the same.

A quote attributed to Albert Einstein goes something like this. Insanity is defined as doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result each time. Well, that is exactly what you are doing if you don't challenge the identity you have chosen for yourself. How can you become something bigger and better in the future when you are basing that future on something that is flawed and small. It's just not going to happen.

You keep repeating the same process and expecting something great to happen. It doesn't work that

way. You have to change what you are doing, so you can change the results that you are expecting.

The End Result? A Debilitating Sense of Boundaries

Now don't get me wrong, boundaries are crucial. I mean, if we did not have boundaries, people would be killing each other on the streets. People would end up harming each other. It can be a total mess. The problem is, when we internalize boundaries that are harmful to us and rob us of our full potential, then we only succeed in crippling ourselves. That's really what's going on.

You are debilitating yourself based on something artificial. These are mental chains that you chose to voluntarily wear. The great thing about this is that you can let go. What are concrete examples of debilitating boundaries?

A Crippling Sense of History

If you look at your life as a series of patterns that logically flow from each other, then it's going to be quite rough for you. Why? Most of us have something very negative that happened to us in the past. Maybe we did not have the best parents. Maybe we did not have the most supportive environment. Maybe our childhood was affected by abuse. Whatever the case may be, if you believe that you can only move so far based on where you came from, then don't be surprised if you don't get far at all.

What you're doing is that you are subscribing to a crippling sense of personal history. You believe in the past, and that it's set in stone. You can't change it. There is some sort of invisible gravity ray pulling you back and holding you down. You got abused in the past, you saw your Dad beat up your Mom, or whatever the case may be, this traumatic past is so heavy and has its own gravitational belt that while you can pull forward, you are constantly being shaped by that past.

The good news is that, there is another way to look at personal history. You can choose to look at it as a constant reinvention. The funny thing about the human mind is that we are constantly experiencing stimuli by the things that we see, hear, touch, smell, and taste. Every second, we are absorbing all these sensory inputs but we only chose to remember a tiny fraction of that.

Among the things that we remember, we feed this into an existing story of personal narrative that we choose. I need you to understand how this process works because if this is true, then this means that your history is a fabrication. It is something that you chose.

Let's face it, reality is neutral. I know this sounds crazy, and that a lot of people will find this unacceptable, but it's true. Take the case of two people walking by a house that is on fire. This building is on fire, all these people are screaming, and these two people are walking by. One person chooses to freak out.

He saw that these people are about to lose their lives so he just runs around in circles, freaks out, and is basically useless. The other person, on the other hand, chose not to freak out and rips out his mobile phone, calls 911, and sure enough the fire department arrives and takes care of the fire.

Which person chose the right path of action? Which person interpreted the situation the right way? Well, it's too easy to say that it's the second person. But when you look at it, they both got the same facts. They both got the same sensory input but they just interpreted this neutral stimuli differently.

One interpretation lead to nowhere. The other interpretation, lead to lives saved. I need you to think of your past in these terms. Just because certain things happened to you in the past doesn't mean that

your interpretation is reality, especially if it works to hold you down, and keep you back from fully living life.

You can look at something traumatic as something that defined you or you can use it as something that challenged you. There are many cases of people born without limbs, and it's too easy to say that you just are unlucky because you were born without arms and legs. But there are also people who refused to define themselves based on their disability.

I am, of course, talking about Nicholas James "Nick" Vucijic. He's a famous speaker who doesn't have arms and legs. He is able to surf, swim, and do so many things that "able bodied people do". Believe it or not, the worst form of paralysis is mental in nature. It's when you allow yourself to be mentally and spiritually amputated. That is a fate worse than losing your limbs.

I need you to look at your personal history this way. It is not fixed. It is not set in stone. It is not one litany of personal tragedies and disasters. You can choose to look at it differently, or use it to challenge you. Instead of looking at your background of poverty as an excuse for not trying, use it as a source of inspiration.

History can be a source of cautionary tales, but it can also be a source of inspiration. Remember, a pack is useful not because it contains stuff, it's because it's empty, you can put stuff inside. That should be your attitude. Looking at your personal history negatively, only ends up binding you and doesn't push you beyond your boundaries. Stop looking at your past as history, start looking at it more as inspiration. It all boils down to your perspective.

Are You Stuck?

Do you feel stuck in a life you feel you did not create? Does it seem like your life plays out based on some sort of script that you didn't write? Do you often feel that you could have been something bigger or done something more substantial in your life?

Instead of looking at your past as history that is fixed, set in stone, and pulls you backwards, look at it as just one part of who you are, and look past the obvious. The solution is to uncover your hidden self. This is precisely what I will teach you in the following chapters.

Chapter 3

You Don't Have to Settle for What You Have

If you are feeling that you are living a life that is far from ideal, I've got some great news for you. You don't have to settle for it. You need not continue what you've been doing before. Just because you started out the day as miserable doesn't necessarily mean that you have to end the day in the same way. You can always choose change.

I know you probably heard of this. You may also think this is easier said than done, and I can't say I blame you. You are, after all, feeling stuck. If you allow yourself to believe that change is possible, it will happen. How?

First, you need to pay attention to the fact that your obvious or public self is not your only self. Your obvious self- the self that you are most aware of- is your "waiting self". This is your personal consciousness that you are most aware of. When you wake up in the morning this is the consciousness that kicks in by default. It is your routine.

Obviously, there is something wrong with your waking self because you are feeling stuck and frustrated. You believe sincerely that you could be living a much better life. There is something wrong with your obvious self. This is the self that is "stuck".

The good news is that you don't have to settle for your obvious or public self. There are other selves that you can choose. There are other areas of your personality that you can unlock to achieve greater levels of happiness, fulfillment, and contentment.

Your Subconscious Self

Your subconscious self is plugged into your full potential. Remember, your potential doesn't exist, but your subconscious self does. Still, this persona is joined at the hip with your full potential self. Accordingly, your subconscious aspect is not limited. It is not bound to the harsh realities your obvious self is grappling with.

It doesn't feel that it's ugly, dumb, doesn't have the money, or the right education, has no connections, it is just limitless. What's more shocking is that your subconscious self actually has capabilities that you thought you did not have. These were capabilities that you cultivated at some earlier stage of your life that you completely forgot about. At the very least, you just chose to not be aware of them.

Let's put it this way, if you are able to do, say, or think certain things in the past, you have the capability to do those things. That's obvious. But the problem is you chose to bypass or overlook them. This doesn't mean that you have gone away, or that you lost the capacity or potential to do them.

Instead, you just suppressed them and relegated them to an "older self". The more you ignore your older or hidden self, the more this self gets buried into your subconscious. As time goes by, it gets buried deeper and deeper, until you no longer recognize it. You will finally reach a point where you are not even aware of it, but it's still there. Your subconscious self, taps into your full potential, and know that it's always there. I need you to wrap your mind around this. I need you to believe this because this is reality.

For example, when you were younger, you were able to ride the skateboard, know that you still

have that capacity. Maybe you're a little bit rusty now because you are older, but you can choose to rediscover this part of yourself. It's still there. It just got buried and pushed down in your consciousness.

I need you to gain some sense of confidence from this. Why? The bottomline is you ARE able. You just forgot your ability. It is also true that you are limitless. If you just push back all the artificial barriers you set for yourself, there are very little limits, seriously. In fact, one of the most daunting of these self imposed limits is the limit of "maturity".

Once you are able to hurdle these two preliminary limitations of ability and self imposed limits, then you'd get to the final realization that you are unstoppable. You only need to look within you to see that all these are real. A lot of the things that you wish you could do, you already have the building block skills or abilities that can lead there.

When you look at the things that other people are doing in your life, and the freedom that they have, you also had those at an earlier stage in your life. What happened is that you chose to put limits. You chose to buy into boundaries that slowly but surely caved in on you.

Make no mistake about it, your circle of comfort, if left unchallenged, can become a prison. The boundaries of what you think are possible can start caving in on you if you are not careful. It is no surprise that most people now feel that they are not able, are greatly limited, and are not unstoppable. The more you believe this, the more they become true. It is your choice to free yourself from these limitations by simply choosing to believe otherwise.

Chapter 4

Unlock Your Sense of Possibility Through Mindfulness

If we get constricted by our daily waking self, it's easy to lose a sense of possibility. It's easy to get stuck in a routine. In fact, most people believe that they can only do a certain amount of things. If something new comes along, they feel threatened, confused or scared.

Accordingly, they don't take new opportunities. They don't push the boundaries. They'd rather stick with the tried and proven. This can cause quite a number of serious problems. At the very least, you're not going to be living your life at its highest level. You will always be falling back on your comfort zone.

As I've mentioned previously, your comfort zone has walls. Unless you keep pushing them outward, eventually, they are going to cave in on you. Eventually, your comfort zone will start feeling more like a prison with invisible walls. You need to unlock your sense of possibility. You would be able to take better risks, you would be able to explore new opportunities, and most of all, you would feel a tremendous sense of control and power over your life. You owe it to yourself.

Thankfully, there is a fairly easy way to do this. Now, don't get excited about "easy." I'm saying that this is relatively easy compared to the other things you can do. This low impact approach is mindfulness. Before I step you through the process of using mindfulness to uncover your hidden self to tap into a greater sense of possibility, let me give you some background information on how your mind, emotions and decisions work together.

Your Mental Roller Coaster

You may think that a lot of the things that you do in your daily waking life are completely intentional. While it's true that there's a lot of intent and purpose there, they also actually involve a lot of automatic processes. If you're unclear about how these automatic processes work, it's no surprise that you tend to make the same decisions over and over again.

As you already know, when you take a certain action, a certain result appears. If you're not happy with the results that you're getting, you need to take different actions. Now, this is where most people experience difficulty. It's very hard to break out of the patterns governing our behavior. We have certain mental habits that lead to us taking the same actions over and over again if we are met with certain stimuli.

To reprogram yourself and get off a less than optimal track and get on the road to better decision making, you need to understand that your mind is a roller coaster. It all starts with the stimuli that your body picks up. Every single second your body is being hit by thousands of stimuli. These are the things that you can see, hear, smell, touch and taste. In and of themselves, these stimuli are neutral. What makes them negative or positive is your mindset.

You have to remember that your mind is only choosing to pay attention to a fraction of the stimuli you are picking up. This selection or editing process is not an accident. It's a reflection of your mindset. Different people can get the same set of stimuli, but focus on different subsets. This difference in focus is a reflection of their different mindsets. Your mindset determines what you absorb and also the judgment you put on the stimuli you chose to absorb.

Judgment is never emotionally neutral. It always triggers a certain emotional state. Once you are in a certain emotional state, this in turn triggers certain actions. When you take action, you shape your

reality. Do you see how this works? Neutral stimuli ultimately lead to the reality that you choose. But the important point here is that the stimuli in and of itself is neutral. The big factor here that explains differences in our personal realities is our mindset.

The good news is that we can choose to reprogram our mindset. We can choose different mindsets. You're only as stuck as your mindset. If you're feeling stuck, if you're feeling that nothing seems to change in your life, regardless of what you do, it's because of your mindset. Your mindset, in turn, is a reflection of the self you chose.

This is all about choice. You are in control over your life. Nobody can make you live a better life. You have to choose that. By the same token, nobody is forcing you to live a miserable or less than satisfying life. You chose the life that you have.

Retrieve Your Hidden Selves to Create a Different Reality for Yourself

The good news is that you only need to retrieve the hidden selves that you've accumulated through the years to create a different reality for yourself. This is not much different from going to an online software store or app store. If you want a different function for your computer, you only need to download a different software and install it. Once you open the software and activate it, your computer behaves differently. You're still dealing with the same hardware. The only thing that's different is the software that you're running.

The same applies to people. They have the same basic hardware, head, two eyes, torso, nose, mouth, you name it. Physiologically speaking, they don't differ all that much. What makes the all the difference in the world, however, is what they choose to believe in.

You can retrieve your hidden selves to reprogram yourself, and one of the easiest and most effective way to do this is to practice mindfulness. Mindfulness practice enables you to "rediscover" your inner self. As I've mentioned in an earlier chapter, you go through different selves as you mature. Unfortunately, as we get older, we tend to suppress our past selves and their capabilities until we forget about them.

When you practice mindfulness, you can reconnect with these hidden selves. These are not empty shells from the past. They're not just neutral memories stored away in the distant, foggy recesses of your mind. They pack quite a bit of power. Why? They contain different mindsets.

Once you access those mindsets, you take advantage of different judgments which produce different emotional states. These emotional states can then lead you to take different actions which, you guessed it, produces different results. Change your results and you change your reality. Isn't that awesome? You're already walking around with the solution to your problems. You're just not aware of it. Put more precisely, you just choose not to be aware of it.

What are Your Hidden Selves?

Your hidden selves are composed of the following. First, they are your older selves. Ask yourself this question: Am I the same person now as I was several years ago? The obvious answer is no. You are an organic, thinking and evolving process.

As you mature and as you are subjected to different stimuli, different people, and different contexts, your sense of self changes with it. Not only did you change your reality, but your reality changes you as well. This is especially true if you experience very positive or very negative emotional stimuli or physical stimuli. These can't help but change you.

What happens to your former self? They get stored away. They don't go away. They are stored in your memory and you just need to access them. They have different capabilities precisely because they have different mindsets. You can get back in touch with those younger mindsets with a much broader sense of possibility.

Your hidden self also acts as a gateway to your fullest potential. Again, your potential doesn't exist. It's not stored away. But accessing your older self enables you to adopt mindsets that are more likely to make full use of your fullest capacity.

For example, if you are in your mid forties and you have children and you feel that you're stuck in a job, it's a good idea to access the hidden self you have from 20 years ago. 20 years ago, the world was probably an open book to you. There's just so many possibilities. There's just so many paths you could take. It was much easier for you to get excited about new opportunities. It didn't take much effort for you to get the focus and excitement you need to go in one particular direction.

When you tap into that older self or previous self, you gain the energy and focus you need to push your present capacity to its fullest potential. The bottom line here is that your hidden selves are more powerful because they are more curious. They can focus on a wider range of opportunities. They can also lead you to different assumptions. Remember, a big part of why you are feeling stuck or less powered now is because of the assumptions you chose. These are limiting beliefs that hold you back from living life at a peak level.

Free Yourself From Limiting Beliefs

By accessing your hidden self, you can free yourself from beliefs that hold you back. These are beliefs about your capabilities. There are certain scripts that you are telling yourself over and over again regarding what you are capable of. They're not true. These are just neatly drawn lines that you set for yourself so you can preserve energy. The problem is, a lot of the times, these lines are drawn very tightly and they limit you from your full capability for success and happiness. Which brings me to limiting beliefs about your limits.

We tend to set the bar really low when it comes to our limits. If you're really honest with yourself, if you're faced with some sort of life or death situation, you would quickly discover that you're quite limitless. There are many cases of people lifting very heavy objects because their son or daughter was pinned under the heavy object. Whether the heavy object is a car, a bed, or something else, the point is that they found the power and energy they needed to break past limits. Everybody has a limit, the problem is we set the bar really low. The worst form of limits involves risks that we can take, things that we can do, and thoughts that we can think.

Limiting beliefs also impact your ideas of what you deserve. It's not uncommon for people to think that they don't deserve the best things in life, or that they don't deserve all that much. Also, it's all too common for people to think that they deserve a lower level of respect. This can get really dangerous because it can erode your self respect, self confidence and self esteem.

Finally, limiting beliefs hold you back as far as your view of reality goes. Too many of us are walking around with the idea that reality is, by default, something harsh, oppressive and small. It doesn't have to be that way. If that is the truth, then why are there many people living their lives to their fullest potential? Why are there many people who are very happy and well-adjusted? Maybe their definition of reality enabled them to achieve that kind of existence, on the other hand, your beliefs about reality led to your present situation. Limiting beliefs flow naturally from the selves we choose.

Using Mindfulness to Unlock Hidden Selves

The simplest mindfulness technique you can adopt is to sit in an empty, dark room for at least 20 minutes. Close your eyes and sit comfortably. Breathe slowly in and out until you achieve a sense of calm. Once you calm down and the speed of your thoughts have slowed down, pay close attention to your breath. Breathe out slowly and then count a few seconds, then breathe in again. Hold your breath for a few seconds, and breathe out.

Focus your attention like a laser to the breath coming in, and the breath coming out. Keep at this for a couple of minutes until you achieve a much deeper level of relaxation. At this stage, focus on the thoughts forming in your mind. Every second you're alive, you have the capacity for thought. Thoughts form based on the stimuli your body picks up. Even though you're in that dark, silent room, your body is still picking up stimuli. Your mind is still forming thoughts.

Now, treat your thoughts like it were clouds passing overhead in the sky. Remember when you were a kid and you would lean back against the grass and stare up at the sky? You would marvel at the clouds passing by. You probably also imagine that the clouds look like all sorts of things. Maybe a cloud looked like a bunny, and another cloud looked like a tree, but you would look up and you would see these clouds passing by.

I want you to think of your thoughts like clouds. Acknowledge that you are thinking these thoughts. Describe them. For example: I'm thinking about my wife, I'm thinking about my son, and so on and so forth.

Now, here's where it gets real. Acknowledge your thoughts but do not judge them. This is important. Do not judge them. When a thought forms and it's somebody you normally find unpleasant or irritating, just acknowledge it. For example, say "I acknowledge that I thought of Jim," or "I acknowledge that I thought of Mary." Leave it at that. Don't follow up with "Jim is a jerk" or "Mary makes me feel lousy." Instead, just acknowledge the thought and then move on to the next thought.

You probably will need to go through this exercise quite a few times to get to the point where you divorce thoughts from emotional judgments, but if you keep at it, you will reach that point. You need to get at that point because the next step is to start sorting through your past memories.

The next step is to think of who you were 10, 15, or 20 years ago, depending on your age. For example, if you are in your mid fifties, then you have a lot more material to work with than if you were in your 20's. Still, all of us have a past. All of us have past selves that lived at different times in the past. You just need to look back through the years at your different selves. You need to clearly identify certain personas you had in the past. The first time you do this, you're simply just running a rough inventory. You're basically testing yourself whether you remember who you were all those years ago.

After going through that several times, the next step is to zero in on a particular self from a particular time. This is where things get a little bit dicey because you're going to turn your judgment back on. It's going to be very hard to pick a hidden self that enables you to tap more efficiently into your full potential without judging because all these selves that you had in the past, they're not equal. Some are focused on certain things, others are not, and you need judgment to be able to make these differentiations.

You identify a particular self and then you reconstruct that hidden self's mindset. This is your goal. You're trying to tap into that buried software from the past. That mindset is not neutral. That mindset is going to trigger certain emotional states that can help you in the here and now.

Everybody's memories are different. This is where I leave you off. You need to take the next steps on your own. I cannot give you some sort of cookie cutter, one size fits all answer as to the "ideal self" to pick. You have to make that call yourself. It is a judgement call. This is why at this stage, after perhaps a week or two of mindfulness training, you can identify that past self and would be better equipped to help you with the issues that you are facing now.

Chapter 5

Unleash Your Curiosity for Greater Success

When you access that past self, you adopt a new mindset. This mindset impacts your sense of curiosity. You need to unleash this curiosity to achieve greater success in all areas of your life.

Your Hidden Self is More Curious than You Are

When you tap into a self from the past, you can bet that it is more curious than you are right now. Unless you've gone through a tremendous personal change recently where you exploded your sense of boundaries and you have totally redefined your approach to risk taking, chances are, you were more curious in the past.

This should not be a surprise. When we were in high school or in college, we didn't have bills to pay. We didn't have taxes to worry about. A lot of us didn't have full-time regular jobs. The world was an open book and was full of possibilities. Not surprisingly, we were in a position to entertain our curiosity.

As we get older and we are faced with obligations like family, mortgages, work responsibilities, our sense of curiosity begins to shrink and get refocused to more technical things. You can still have a tremendous amount of curiosity now, but it's restricted to the things you do at work. You need to tap into your hidden self's curiosity because it can solve quite a number of problems that you're facing now.

Lack of curiosity, not low IQ, is the root of ignorance. Older people are ignorant, not because they're dumb. It's not because they're stupid or completely incapable of comprehending new information. Instead, they ignore other interpretations or facts because they're comfortable with their existing conclusions.

Similarly, they may be fearful of going beyond certain lines. These are all self-imposed limits, and as I keep mentioning, comfort zones, when left unchallenged, start caving in on you. They start functioning more like invisible prisons. Unfortunately, people are ignorant because of these factors, not because they have low IQ. It really all boils down to lack of curiosity.

Success requires taking advantage of opportunities. It requires overcoming challenges and obstacles. This is only possible if you have the power and passion brought about, in a large part, by curiosity. Just how important is curiosity? Pay attention to the following implications.

Relationships and Curiosity

Curiosity is the key to empathy. If you want to deepen your relationships, practice empathy. Empathy, for lack of a better definition, is simply all about getting into the shoes of the person you're trying to relate to. They respond to things because of their mindset. They respond to things because of what happened to them in the past which shaped their mindset.

When you stop looking at your interaction with that person solely from your point of view, you'd be surprised as to what you can learn. If you step into their shoes, you may be able to figure out why they respond the way they do. You will be able to understand the reason for their decisions.

Curiosity is required to step into the shoes of other people. This leads to genuine concern. A lot of people say that they care about you, but in many cases, they care about you to the extent that you benefit them. In other words, they're looking at the relationship from their point of view.

Empathy is all about destroying that self-centered approach and looking at the relationship from the other side. This is an important step to selflessness, which leads to compassion. If you want to deepen your relationships, you have to stop looking at things in terms of I, me and mine, and focus more on we, you and us. This is tremendous because compassion enables you to feel things the way they feel, and this deepens understanding.

Now, this doesn't mean that you become the other person. This doesn't mean that you have to give up on yourself just so you can have a more harmonious relationship. It doesn't involve that. Instead, it means that you consider where they're coming from. You give them the respect that they deserve. This leads to a greater chance of win-win situations.

Success and Curiosity

Curiosity is also important when it comes to personal success because you focus more on what is possible and what can be. Compare this with how most people typically respond to challenges. They always fall back on thinking that "that's just the way things are." No. You don't have to accept it. You don't have to take all of this lying down. You can focus on workarounds. You can focus on alternatives.

In a Stanford commencement speech, Apple Computers' Steve Jobs said that one of the things that you need to learn in life is the ability to connect the dots. You can only do this looking back. He related the story of how a seemingly random calligraphy class he took after his one semester of college eventually led him to new font types for the Mac computer. Steve Jobs' vision regarding fonts revolutionized desktop publishing and how content looks, whether in printed form or on the internet.

Steve Jobs said that he was only able to do this because he connected the dots of his past experiences to his present challenges. You could do the same if you have a high degree of curiosity. If Steve Jobs just focused on how things are, he would not look for workarounds by digging through the past. He would not have found the energy to connect the dots.

Focus and Curiosity

As the old saying goes, where your focus goes, your energy flows. You will need focus to be successful in anything you do in life. You need to find the energy and drive you need to obtain a certain outcome. Tapping into your hidden self and accessing mindsets with a tremendous amount of curiosity can help you find these resources. You can find the drive and energy you've been missing. You can then use this energy to discover new stuff about yourself and your situation.

Accessing the right mindset would enable you to be driven by the process instead of setting yourself up for lower energy. How does this work? Well, most people think in terms of destination. For example, I will only be happy if "X happens." In other words, I set up a schedule for my happiness and contentment. It's only going to happen if "X" materializes. Sure enough, when I put in the work and I happen to arrive at "X" I'm not happy. Why? I've redefined "X" to another point in the future. It goes on and on and on until I die.

That's how a lot of people define happiness. They look at it as some sort of fixed destination. One common example of this is our attitude towards work. We say to ourselves, okay, if I get promoted

and I make \$50,000 a year, I will be happy. What do you think happens? You reach \$50,000 a year and then you buy all this stuff, you buy a bigger house and sure enough, you are barely making ends meet.

Mortgage payments are no joke. So you tell yourself, okay, if I make \$75,000 I will be happy. You put in all this work and you reach that income level, and sure enough, you're not happy because you're not traveling all over the world, you're not buying designer clothing or driving a really fancy car. So you do those things and once again, you're barely getting by. So you say, okay if I make \$125,000 I would be happy, and on and on it goes.

It's really amazing to see how this progression plays out because if you were to jump back to the past when you're a struggling student in college, the picture is entirely different. If you were a typical American college student trying to get by on student loans or scholarships, \$20,000 a year is a lot of money. Eating ramen instant noodles every night is a delicacy and very filling. You were most likely very happy back then. What changed? Your mindset.

Your mindset sets your expectations and your sense of possibility. The problem is, when you focus on destinations, it's too easy to lose power and focus. Unlocking your sense of curiosity solves this problem. You regain the energy and drive you've been missing because you've started looking at life as a series of destinations instead of a process.

When you're curious, you focus on the process. You focus on the things you will discover, you focus on how things connect with each other. You start becoming more content and happy in the present moment. You're no longer kicking the can down the road as far as your happiness is concerned.

Chapter 6

Realize Your Full Potential by Tapping Your Power of Definition

If you use mindfulness to access your hidden self, one of the greatest benefits you will get is that you might access a mindset that recharges your power of definition. Make no mistake about it, you're always shaping your reality. You may not be completely aware of it but you play a large role in how your reality shapes up.

Now, this is probably going to shock a lot of people. A lot of people are saying, well, isn't there such a thing as objective reality? This reality doesn't care about what you think. This reality doesn't care about what your personal definitions and assumptions are. While technically that is true, keep in mind that you're always interpreting reality.

This is really important because the way you interpret objective reality triggers emotions, which trigger actions that help you shape your reality. It's a call and response process. The bottom line here is that the stimuli are neutral. What makes all the difference in the world is how you choose to process that stimuli. This is how you edit your personal reality.

There are millions of stimuli points your body is receiving at this point in time. However, if you pay close enough attention, you would realize that your body only recognizes some of those stimuli points. Among those points being recognized, you only choose to remember a fraction. You feed this into your personal narrative or personal script and you only choose to process some of the stuff that you chose to remember. Do you see how this all works out? This leads to you taking certain actions. This leads to you feeling a certain way.

There is nothing neutral with the vast majority of this process. The raw material may be neutral, but the processing isn't. It's all a matter of choice. Your body is a collector of neutral stimuli. It's what you do with it that shapes your reality. You're constantly editing your personal reality, and what makes this very challenging for many people is that they do so in an unconscious way. They choose their reality, but they go on autopilot. This is very important because this process of choice is the way you define your reality.

If you feel that you're not happy with your life, listen up. There's tremendously good news. The good news is that you can choose another definition. The good news is that you can take another path. It all boils down to how you process the stimuli life is bouncing to you.

You do not have to follow your past decisions, you do not have to walk the same road as before. You can explore different paths ahead. You can choose to do things differently so you can enjoy different results. Do you see how this all works out? Do you see how these things flow into each other?

You're part of a process. Isn't it time you took ownership and control of the process? Again, as I keep mentioning, people are born free, but they're walking around in chains. You can choose to take off your mental chains. You can choose a different tomorrow for you.

Your Definitions Have to Serve You

The reason why so many people feel stuck is that they define themselves so narrowly and so negatively that they act accordingly. Remember, the world doesn't care about your feelings. It couldn't care less about your intentions. All it cares about is what you actually do. Put simply, all the world cares about are objective results.

You need to always remember this because this highlights the fact that what you do matters. Isn't it time to pay attention to what you do? Isn't it time to do the right things so you can get your desired results? If you are unhappy with the results that you're getting with your life, it's because you're doing the wrong things.

The good news is that you hold the key in your hand: You just need to change your definitions. Your definitions have to serve you. Sadly, we think that our reality is preset: That's just the way things are. The rich get richer, the poor get poorer. I'm just born unlucky or that's just how the cookie crumbles.

Stop believing those things. The power to define is the power to shape your life. The power to define is the power to choose your reality. You have to make sure that your definitions serve you. You have to make sure that your definitions work for you instead of against you.

Limiting Definitions Do Serve Us... In All the Wrong Ways

When people define themselves in a way that they end up robbing themselves of power, it's not because they're masochists. It's not like they have nothing else better to do. Limiting definitions do serve people because they deliver some value. This value, however, is very minimal compared to the value you would have gotten if you've chosen other definitions.

People pick limiting definitions because of fear. What is the payoff when you act out of fear? Well, you get to avoid the things that you're fearing. That's the payoff. But you give up a lot for that very shallow benefit. Similarly, limiting definitions are due to laziness. Laziness pays off now, but the payoff is pitiful compared to the payoff of not being lazy.

Other people choose limiting definitions because of family obligations or expectations. Again, there's a payoff there. The people that you are trying to live up to or the people that you're trying to impress, look highly of you. The problem is, you suppress your real self. You suppress satisfying yourself or fully expressing yourself. Something would have to give. There will be this built-in tension and you eventually reach a point in your life where you realize that you're living your life for somebody else's benefit.

All this leads to willful ignorance. We simply edit out large chunks of the stimuli that we get because we just want to stick to the tried and proven. Well, if you are a slave to fear, laziness and obligations, the rewards, as pitiful as they already are, will continue to decline in value over time.

You need to break free. You need to pick different definitions. Limiting definitions do have a payoff, but the payoffs are small compared to what you gain.

Uncover Your Hidden Self to Take Control Over Your Power to Define Your Reality

The problem with limiting definitions is they become self-fulfilling prophecies. You define yourself as small, so you act in a small way. People then treat you as small. This then further reinforces your belief that you are incapable of most things and you get smaller and smaller and smaller through this process. Do you see how this works? It's a vicious downward spiral.

You need to uncover your hidden self to take control over this process. Take control over your power to define your reality. Free yourself from unproductive or even harmful narratives. Adopt a different narrative, one that pushes your life forward leads to greater happiness and greater fulfillment.

Everybody has a personal narrative. This is their story. This is their script. Whenever they encounter something new or perceive stimuli from the external world, they judge that material, they edit, they filter it, and then they plug it into this narrative. It has to fit the narrative. The problem is, if you have the wrong narrative, you will pick up the wrong sets of stimuli to reinforce that negative narrative.

Isn't it time you took control over this process and start redefining your reality by picking a more productive narrative? You can do this by accessing your hidden self because, remember, your hidden self has mindsets that you used to have. You can then use that to tap into your fullest potential and get a clearer idea of what you're capable of. This can help you overwrite your present negative narrative.

Your Hidden Self can Give You an Alternative Way to Edit Your Reality

By accessing your hidden self, you can choose your values more carefully. You can choose how you judge thoughts in a way that it would lead to more positive results. Ultimately, this leads to choosing the right narrative. What is the right narrative? Only you know the answer.

Everybody has different sets of circumstances. Everybody has different experiences. We all look at the world from different sets of eyes. Only you know the answer, so it's really important to access your hidden self through mindfulness exercises. Zero in on the mental software you need to install so you can shape reality according to your needs.

It's time to get out of that cave. It's time to stop cowering in fear. It's time to create a new life for yourself and it all begins in your mind.

Chapter 7

Practice Mental Hygiene

All the tips that I've outlined in this book are going to be unraveled very quickly if you do not practice mental hygiene. You need to rid yourself of certain mental practices. These are mental practices that keep you enslaved to the narrative that you currently have. Lack of mental hygiene helps preserve the negative mental patterns that you're trapped in.

You need to practice mental hygiene so you can short circuit negative or limiting thoughts as you them forming. Here are just some tips on how to practice mental hygiene. You should pick and choose because some work better for other people. I suggest you try all of them and then pick the technique that works best for you.

Practice Mindfulness

The first thing that you can try is to practice mindfulness regularly. Use the technique I described in this book. View your thoughts as clouds passing overhead. Now, once you attain that skill, you should then practice mindfulness with some judgment in mind. What this means is that you are going to judge your thoughts based solely on whether they are neutral, positive, or negative. Once you determine that your judgment is taking a negative turn, actively short circuit that process by actively looking at alternative judgments.

For example, if somebody shoved you while you're waiting in line, the default thinking would be to view it as offensive. You should then quickly look for an alternative. Maybe they got tripped, they were in a hurry, maybe they suffered some sort of personal emergency, it doesn't really matter. Just come up with an alternative that robs the negative judgement of its power. The key here is to see the negative judgement forming from far away and then counteract it with an alternative reading.

This is really important because the more you do this, the more you dismantle your limiting thoughts. They get their power from negative thinking. That's how they stay alive. The moment you develop this mental hygienic habit of robbing negative thoughts of their power as you see them forming in your mind, the more positive you become. Positivity leads to greater power and focus.

"Flip" Everything You Perceive

Instead of seeing limits, focus on the possibilities. When you see certain situations developing, try to always focus on the positive element in that situation. This is very helpful when it comes to talking to people.

Usually when there's a conversation, at some point somebody will say something that can trigger a negative response. Now, once you become aware of this, try to flip everything into something more positive. Try to use more open ended words. Try to say something more ambiguous so as to avoid the negative connotation. This enables you to avoid limits because it's these limits that we set for ourselves that makes us defensive.

Avoid Toxic People

Another great way to practice mental hygiene is to avoid toxic people. These are people that are just black holes of negativity. It doesn't matter how positive you are, it doesn't matter how well you edit your personal reality, these people will drag you down.

While this is not always practical, if you do have an opportunity to avoid these people, do so. If you can't avoid them, make sure that you really pump yourself up as far as positivity goes, so that whatever negative signals you get can at least be reduced to neutral signals by the time they reach you.

Actively Question Your Biases

Whenever you perceive something, ask yourself: Am I responding based on a bias? Did I get the whole information? Is this information complete? Where is it coming from?

Ask yourself tons of questions. Seek to understand before you try to be understood by the other person. You'd be surprised how well this works. In many cases, a lot of the things that we perceive as "truth" are actually just products of our personal biases. They're like mental illusions.

Question "Accepted Truths"

This is all about conventional wisdom. When you're talking to somebody, in many cases, there's this common assumption that certain things are true. Well, you might want to question those truths.

What do they lead to? Who do they serve? Do they serve limiting beliefs? Do they act in a way that when you believe them you end up robbing yourself of power? These are important questions that you need to ask because if you blindly follow and accept other people's "accepted truths," you may be traveling down a slippery slope of assumptions that can prove to be quite toxic.

Conclusion

Living a better life is a profoundly personal project. Nobody else could do it for you. Nobody can force you to be happy. Nobody can force you to be fulfilled. Nobody can force you to live life according to your fullest potential. You have to do it yourself.

I know this is scary because we live in a world where pizza is delivered in 15 minutes or less. We live in a world where weight loss supposedly comes in a pill. We live in a world where our minds are fixated on convenience, comfort, and quickness.

There's nothing comfortable and convenient about self-transformation. It is difficult. It requires that you challenge your old ways of thinking. It requires that you stare your assumptions and expectations right in the eye and challenge them.

As difficult as it may be, the payoff is tremendous. Whatever frustrations you're feeling with your life right now, the solution is simple. You already have the answer. By tapping your hidden self, you can take your life to the next level. I wish you nothing but success and happiness.