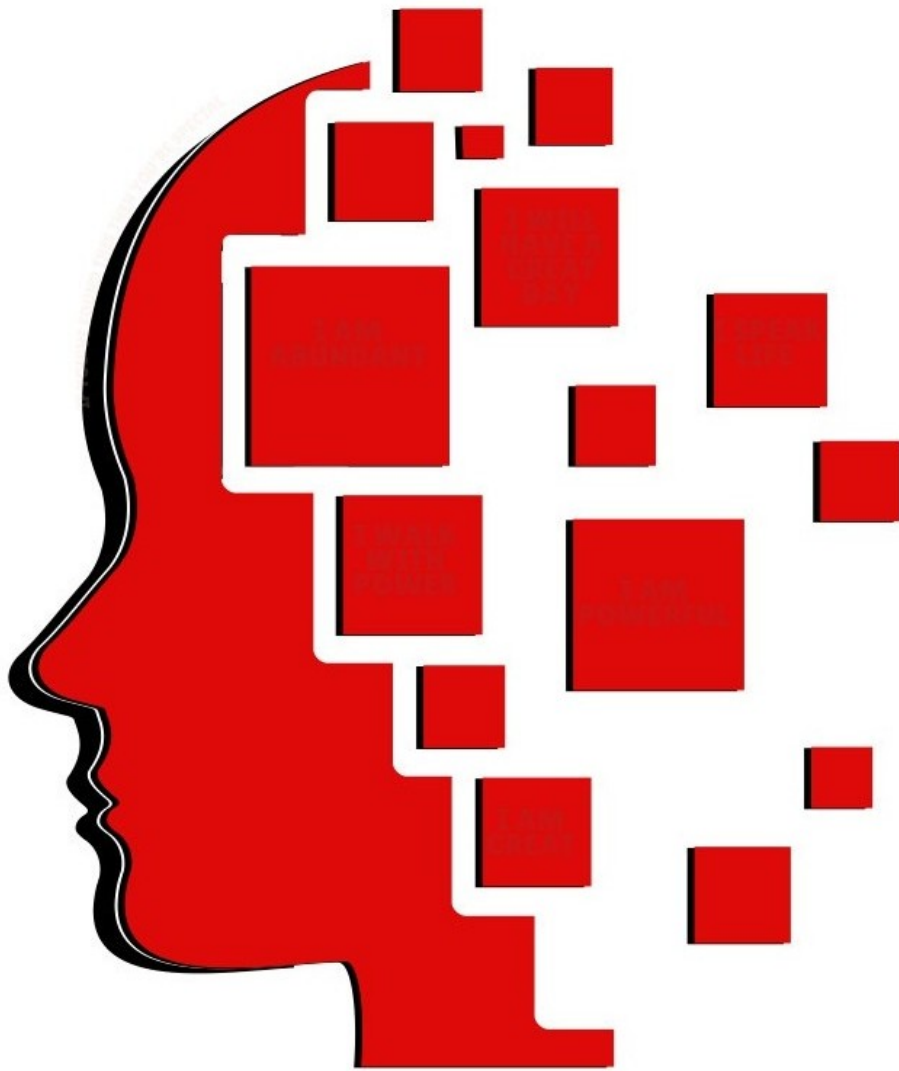


I Think, I Can... I Believe

Discover Your Super Powers



Ainsworth Shakes

I Think, I Can...I Believe is more than just a book—it's a beacon of light for anyone seeking to unlock their true potential. The author's ability to weave together introspective insights with practical exercises makes this a must-read for anyone committed to self-improvement. Whether you're facing life's challenges or simply seeking to elevate your current state, this book provides the tools to think bigger, believe stronger, and achieve more. Highly recommended!

Leahcim Semaj, Quantum Transformation Psychologist

I Think, I Can...I Believe

Discover Your Superpowers

Ainsworth Shakes

All rights reserved.

The characters and events portrayed in this book are fictional. Any similarity to real persons, living or dead, is coincidental and not intended by the author.

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without the express written permission of the publisher.

ISBN: 978-976-655-093-6

Published by Ainsworth Shakes

16 Taurus Terrace, Smokey Vale

Kingston 19, Jamaica

shakesoffice@gmail.com

Cover design by: Ainsworth Shakes

Dedication

To my wife, Diana: from an early age, she learned how to soar without wings.

**Though lonely and afraid,
she was bold enough to fight.
To rise above her circumstances,
reaching for the light.
Reaching deep inside, she summoned,
sometimes for hours.
Oblivious to her... potent superpowers.**

To my children, Ainsworth Jnr and Ayanna. You have both tapped into your infinite reservoir of power, but there is so much more within you.

As you continue on your path to greatness, I speak prosperity, peace, and joy into your lives, as well as the lives of the generations that will come from both of you. I declare that you are both blessed, and so too shall your children and their children's children.

Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful to Professor Garfield Young for his diligence in assisting with the proofreading of this book.

Prologue

Not at a rushed or hurried pace, this book is intended to provide maximum value when "digested" slowly and with your full attention while in a relaxed state of mind.

So, remove yourself from the noise; find your favorite spot and get physically comfortable.

Next, prepare for a journey of transformation by closing your eyes; yes, really close your eyes and inhale deeply and slowly for a count of five seconds, hold for five seconds, and then slowly exhale for another five seconds. Repeat this three times.

Do this before reading any part of this book, and your mind will be ready to absorb and enjoy the kernels of change it offers

*“You have power over your mind—not
outside events. Realize this, and you
will find strength.”*

Marcus Aurelius

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1 Introspection.....	3
Chapter 2 The Power of Choice	14
Chapter 3 Thoughts	27
Chapter 4 Words - I Am	42
Chapter 5 Your Creative Power	55
Chapter 6 Reality	68
Chapter 7 The (Re)Programmed Mind	75
Chapter 8 The Power of Failure.....	89
Chapter 9 Euphoria.....	100
Epilogue	103
References	104

Introduction

He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city (Proverbs 16:32).

What you hold in your hands is not just any book; it is an instrument of light that will illuminate your world on any given day.

Despite the perennial nature of life's challenges, there is a reservoir of strength within you, ready to be tapped. The pages of this “gift” to you contain avenues of light to guide you toward that place of inner strength. As you read, observe how the words leap off the page and how eagerly your soul absorbs these nuggets of hope, direction, and life.

However, this book is not for everyone. It is not for those who are afraid to think outside the box or who are immersed in skepticism about our abilities as humans. If you are skeptical to the point that your views are polarized, then go no further; this book is of no value to you.

That said, the contents of this book have been meticulously prepared for the brilliant mind eager to better understand the superpowers we have been gifted

with, the intrepid sojourner on this earthly journey who realizes that *flying* doesn't require wings, and those who are audacious enough to dream, think, and believe that we are more than the sum of our tangible experiences.

If you believe that greatness resides within you, waiting to be summoned, then turn the page and indulge...a new *you* awaits.

Chapter 1

Introspection

Who are you?

As you gaze at this page and your eyes follow each word, reflect on your identity and your place in this world. Focus not only on your achievements but also on the circumstances that have molded you, like malleable clay, into the individual you are today. The following questions provide an opportunity for self-assessment. Think carefully about each before responding. Be sure to write down your responses so that you will be able to refer to them as you immerse yourself in the metamorphosis offered in this book:

How did you get to this stage of your life? What route did you take?

How has that journey shaped you?

Has it truly made you a better person, or did you have to compromise your morals?

Have you ever truly lived, or are you merely existing?

Where is the real joy from your successes?

Look beyond the façade of what others see or the image you try to project. Regardless of your social status, focus on the issues that gnaw at your psyche and try to understand their origin; look into the “mirror” and assess the real you.

Before you continue, take a moment to relax by closing your eyes for at least sixty seconds while taking deep breaths, and then begin to honestly assess yourself (*this is very important before moving forward*).

What do you really see?

Are you entirely comfortable with what you have unearthed?

Are there residual issues from the past that still affect you?

Ignoring or being negligent toward your issues will not serve you well. This behavior only provides fertile ground for them to take root in your psyche as you continue to harbor them, making them your place of *comfort*. Before proceeding, revisit the question above (*Who are you?*) and reread everything you have gone through—take your time. Change requires both tolerance and patience. As you read those words again, do so slowly, reflecting on what you are being asked to do.

If what you uncover requires attention, then give it the priority it deserves. It is of no value to you if you continue to neglect or ignore unresolved issues. In fact, the longer you take to address such issues, the more you are robbed of the quality of life you truly deserve.

This is not an attempt to berate or belittle you, but rather a call to awareness regarding the factors that have been negatively impacting your psyche, often without your realization. If you are not honest with yourself about your issues, or if you lack the will to do what it takes to change, nothing this book offers will be enough to penetrate the wall of resistance you have built over the years. You must be willing to step out of your comfort zone to create fertile ground for the “seeds” in this book to take root. Growth will never occur in your comfort zone.

As resilient beings, we have the capacity to endure life's storms, but the residual effects of those storms can have implications for our future selves. Nonetheless, we march forward, dragging along the painful baggage of the past that our deluded mindset chooses to ignore. Consequently, neglecting those issues causes them to become part of the foundation on which we function, ultimately influencing our decisions, as they still prompt us below the level of consciousness.

What we therefore perceive as strength may actually be to our detriment, as the resulting behavioral traits we exhibit can negatively impact our relationships, our jobs, and more. For instance, when words are spoken before the mind is consulted, and the weight of those words wounds vulnerable souls, this may be perceived by the speaker as strength or confidence. However, such a posture is devoid of a balanced or rational approach to life's situations. As a result of this, the individual is unconsciously influenced by intolerance, impatience, and passive anger that fuel emotionally driven decisions. Hearts are then broken, and souls are crushed by this illusion of mental strength. And even though the recipient grieves, the deluded mindset of the speaker derives empowerment from each interpersonal *victory*, resulting in them being continuously programmed to attack even in the absence of an enemy.

If this has been your experience, then you are not alone. Almost everyone you interact with daily faces some challenge. The multitude of experiences we've had and the resulting impact of traumatic episodes sometimes leave us feeling fragmented. However, we move on with whatever strength we can muster, and over time, we forget... or so we think. The truth is that we carry more baggage than we care to admit or are even aware of, and we often feel burdened by the mental shackles of our

past. We migrate from job to job, relationship to relationship, but despite these changes, the weight of gloom still affects our quality of life.

Despite this, do not be disheartened; everything you need to remedy these issues is available to you, and you will emerge on the other side with enough power to face your battles. However, to reach this point, you will need to shift your focus. The way you approach life and its challenges must change... you must change.

Therefore, the self-evaluation suggested at the beginning of this chapter is a crucial precursor to the transformation this book offers. Additionally, the following narrative presents an approach that has the potential to shift an individual's perspective from negativity to limitless possibilities.

It's Monday morning, and I feel that familiar dampening in my spirit. I think about the week ahead with all its anticipated challenges: deadlines, bills, time management—ugh! As I sit in my workspace, I take a cursory glance at my familiar surroundings—my home away from home. "I spend so much time in this place," I mutter to myself.

The quality of my day typically depends on how my morning begins; it is also largely determined by my attitude and how I perceive the things that affect me. "I

need to shift gears," I tell myself, almost chidingly. I am the master of my thoughts and the captain of my destiny; whatever I think, dream, or imagine takes root subconsciously and ultimately becomes my reality. Yes, my day may appear gray and cloudy right now, but starting at this exact moment, I will begin to focus on all the positive things in my life. I have God-given power within me to change my circumstances and dictate my reality. This power was dormant just a few minutes ago, but through the power of my mind, I will summon it; I will tap into its reservoir.

Thinking positively, even in the face of negativity, is not as difficult as it seems; it begins with consciously and deliberately shifting your thought process when gray clouds appear. However, we may sometimes feel overwhelmed by the weight of past events that constantly haunt us, to the extent that we cannot see beyond negativity. So, we need to release the effects of past traumas and replenish our psyche with building blocks of positivity. Given that we are prodded and poked by remnants of our past that inform our decisions at the subconscious level, if there is a flood of negative experiences included, we may be missing out on the quality of life that we deserve without even being aware.

Many of us sacrifice much to become who we are today. We have endured numerous challenges, and with each

step, we may have left behind a piece of our true selves. So much so that by the time we reach our intended destination, we may forget our real purpose and who God actually intended us to be.

The decisions we make and our behavioral tendencies stem from a deep place, often unbeknownst to us. We must recognize that we are not just the sum of our lived experiences but also how we choose to respond to those events, especially those beyond our control. Therefore, it is safe to say that we have tremendous power over how we navigate life's challenges and ultimately, the quality of life we choose.

“The unexamined life is not worth living” (West, Plato's Apology of Socrates, 1945).

As a consequence of the foregoing, it is reasonable to infer that the degree to which individuals respond negatively or positively correlates with aspects of their uniqueness. This is within the context that the quality of one's mental state—having emerged from the jarring complexities of a negative situation—differs among individuals, depending on how each person chooses to respond to the same event. This existential process shapes our persona based on our responses, ultimately setting parameters for how we will function in the future. As a result of this, decisions about being single or in a

relationship, with whom to share life, where to live, and so on, emanate from this unique position.

Whether you are aware of it or not, your individuality is linked to unconscious promptings due to your malleable psyche.

Regardless of what transpired in the past, coping mechanisms exist to help resolve issues that may have negatively affected you. However, as stated earlier, you must first be willing to self-assess in order to identify these issues and then earnestly seek workable solutions. As you delve deeper into this book, you will find information that will aid you on your journey toward those solutions. You will also gain a better understanding of your own superpowers — those often overlooked — and come to realize that you are a walking powerhouse capable of achieving anything. Believe in yourself.

Uniquely You

*When you compare yourself to
others*

*And if you frequently do,
You may often feel belittled as you traverse life's
avenue.*

*Your purpose is special, and this
makes you quite unique,
So have no fear—be different, even when you
face critique.*

*Identify your purpose and the mission
you are on.*

*No one else can take your place.
You are special, so take your stand.*

Activity

Highlight your areas of interest from the chapter you just read and make notes of their applicability to you:

What areas of your life have been ignored and need attention? Be very honest with yourself; these are your personal notes to come back to.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

What do you plan to do about the areas identified?

Suggestion: make short-term and long-term plans.

Short-term: steps to take immediately

.....

.....

.....

.....

Long-term: follow-up actions from short-term plan

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Chapter 2

The Power of Choice

Superpower 1

Bethany's protruding stomach belied the frequent vehement denials she had made to "itching" ears; the reality of her pregnancy was just part of her sorrowful state. She clutched her plump stomach while gazing at her reflection in the nearby mirror. The shadows had grown long, and to her, the dimly lit room needed no illumination, as darkness aptly suited her state of mind. Despite the shadows, her reflected face was still visible and resembled those who had scoffed at her over the past few weeks; admonishing herself had become the norm.

Her family and friends had distanced themselves from the "embarrassment" she had become, and the resulting isolation provided opportunities to reflect on the genesis of her current state. The situation worsened after the father of her unborn child became a phantom, having expressed his paternal doubts. By that time, she had realized that there was no hope of returning to her matrimonial home, as her husband, Junior, had long accepted the reality of her absence. He had decided that the embarrassment of losing his wife to another man was

a trauma he did not want to relive. The other victims of this ordeal were their two teenage children, who had become quite troubled since she left home just over six months ago.

The exposed wounds of this bleeding family seemed beyond healing; they had originated from a place where free will is unhindered—the human mind. Limited by nothing but one's perspective, the power of choice unequivocally dictates and determines our quality of life. Perhaps Bethany needed a more adventurous and fulfilling life because her husband had become abusive, unattractive, uncaring, etc., or maybe she had simply become intoxicated by someone else's charm. Her actions may have stemmed from a fleeting thought or an uncontrolled impulse that eventually manifested through a series of decisions, the consequences of which she had not calculated. Regardless of the reasons, the choices she made dealt a disastrous blow to the lives of her family members and herself.

“Don’t lose your way with each passing day; you’ve come so far, don’t throw it away” (Ross 1988).

Anecdotal as it may be the foregoing aptly illustrates the reality of misusing one of the greatest gifts known to man—free will. This power to choose, bestowed upon us by Almighty God, enables us to shape our destiny,

ultimately determining whether we truly live or merely exist.

As higher-order beings, we are presented with choices that carry consequences or rewards, empowering us to select the avenues in life that yield the greatest satisfaction for ourselves and others. Such a gift is immeasurable in its significance; yet many remain unaware of its profound impact on their future and the degree of happiness they hope to attain.

This ability is neither temporary nor limited; the power of choice is infinite in its offerings and equally assigned to each individual, just waiting to be summoned. However, given our ability to draw on it with little or no effort, it is often taken for granted or deemed unworthy of attention due to its ever-present nature. It therefore appears that the rarities of life tend to draw greater attention and deserve a more esteemed position than those of an ever-present nature, such as choice. The latter can seem as “ordinary” and “basic” as taking a breath; yet, in reality, its worth far exceeds that of rubies. For some, a temporary sojourn in an atmosphere of autocracy may be necessary for the value of choice to be realized.

Choice is viewed by some social pundits as a cognitive process reliant on the analysis of benefits and rewards that an option offers, while in other circles, it is

considered more intuitive, lacking conscious reasoning (Frederick 2002). Regardless of how it is perceived, choice remains a major determinant in our lives, and its significance cannot be overstated, as it has far-reaching implications for our future selves and the achievements we envision.

Many desire a life marked by wealth, and some understand how powerful their choices are in attaining it; however, they often lack understanding regarding the pursuit of joy and happiness because they are unaware of the roadmap for such endeavors. According to recording artist Akon, “I’m having more problems successfully dealing with all that comes with success than I had when I was poor. I was actually happier when I was poor.” In his interview with TMZ (2021), the entertainer, whose net worth is estimated at eighty million dollars (US\$80,000,000) according to Forbes magazine, underscored his stance by highlighting his experiences on both sides of the financial divide. While

Akon’s statements may seem counterintuitive to many, the truth is that as we look toward the future and the various accomplishments we intend to achieve, we often do so with the hope of finding happiness in material possessions. However, happiness should not be seen as a destination to be reached but rather as a choice we ought to make... right now.

Choose to be happy now, rather than pursuing a utopian ideal of happiness as the result of your relentless efforts. While a vacation or the purchase of a new car may provide some degree of fulfillment, happiness should not be contingent on such attainments; it is perennial, but its realization hinges on the decision to realign our minds. The absence of this realignment is evident in the many celebrities and millionaires who remain "empty" despite their great wealth; they frequently report that "something is missing," yet no effort is made toward mental or spiritual realignment.

Happiness can be viewed as a state of mind contingent on our subjective view of the world. We have the power to choose where, when, and with whom we want to be happy. For this reason, many individuals, even when faced with situations that would make others crumble, manage to find happiness despite their circumstances. However, for a mind that frequently dwells in negativity, this may be difficult at first because that individual's psyche has been programmed to gravitate toward darkness, even when the light is within reach. Nevertheless, through repeated, conscious, and deliberate efforts, the decision to be happy will eventually become a healthy habit that fosters a life of contentment.

Given how humans are wired, we are creatures of habit, and the behaviors we choose to engage in frequently become automatic over time. For example, habitually snacking on delicious chips may raise your threshold for that type of junk food, resulting in you instinctively reaching for a pack. Conversely, deliberately choosing to consume healthy food would likely prompt you to automatically head to the health food aisle of the supermarket each time you visit. The same principle may be incorporated into your formerly established functions at work, your delegated tasks, and the resulting standard you ultimately create for yourself in the eyes of your peers. Those behavioral traits you demonstrate have their origins somewhere and are constantly reinforced with each choice made.

If you are unaware of what you want, you may have to settle for whatever the world or your misguided psyche offers. However, when you consciously and deliberately make the right choices regularly, your mind will eventually transform from one that floats on every tide to a lighthouse that remains unwavering in the storm as you seek to fulfill your purpose. Your constructive actions will then become habits, resulting in a new you emerging from the ashes of mediocrity, procrastination, and excuses. The critical success factors for goal accomplishment become easily identifiable, and the

decision to take crucial steps toward success will be made again and again... almost effortlessly.

It is clear then that the choices we make ultimately determine our outcomes, regardless of the challenges we face. However, as invaluable as this power is, it can lead to harmful consequences when misused. Too often, a reaction or response chosen in a situation outweighs the issue itself, wasting valuable energy on the resulting chaos. For instance, when we choose to react to a challenge with anger, intolerance, or impatience, we only exacerbate the existing situation. On the other hand, a reaction rooted in patience, love, and understanding provides a platform for collaborative efforts toward an amicable solution.

Regardless of the options that come to mind, we have the power to choose how we respond, as each decision has a cascading effect on the future. What is important here is consciously and deliberately choosing the best reaction from the myriad of emotions that arise when faced with challenges. There is also great value in understanding that the best decisions are not made when the mind is in a euphoric state or when anger is at the door. Such extremes distort the mechanics of a functioning mind, leading to words and actions that may cause unintentional damage.

If the mind is left unprotected, the influence of external stimuli may render an individual powerless to resist existing lures, rather than being equipped to make conscious decisions. Too often we hear, 'I felt compelled to take it' after someone steals an item, or 'I don't know what came over me', following infidelity. This therefore begs the following questions: Are we powerless to a default setting (Shane, 2002) whenever we are instinctively led to participate in an activity or impulsively purchase something? Are we still operating within the parameters of choice, or are we now intoxicated by an external force? As debatable as this may seem, choice remains the driving force behind our actions. What is lacking here is self-control and an understanding of the power and implications of free will in the face of numerous options, especially when the eyes, ears, and heart are captivated by the enticing allure all around.

When an individual lacks self-control, many doors remain ajar even when danger looms, to the extent that the "thief" is only observed after irreversible damage has been done. By that point, the pleasure of the moment has already faded, and in retrospect, better choices could have been made. As cognitive processes return to their state of equilibrium, guilt, regret, and embarrassment overwhelm. The exception applies to individuals with

mental imbalances, but for those who do not suffer from such conditions, a lack of selfcontrol is evidence of an uncultivated mind that frequently operates on autopilot. In these cases, the power to choose was never fully understood, harnessed, or properly utilized, resulting in lost opportunities for growth due to the lack of impulse control.

Individuals must continually seek ways to cultivate a mindset that fosters proper choices, ultimately leading to good habits. In short, the reprogramming of one's mind may be necessary at times if a different outlook on life is desired. This may seem daunting to some persons; however, despite this perception, following the formula below can yield varying degrees of success over time:

$$\mathbf{RCD + FAA = GH}$$

(Repeated, calculated decisions + frequent associated actions = good habits)

Barring unforeseen circumstances, your outcomes can therefore be predicted with great accuracy if you wish to reprogram your mind toward deliberate choices.

Reflection: Moments in Time

Today, I watched the sun shining in all its glory, illuminating everything in its path and pushing darkness to distant corridors. Then I saw its brilliance gradually fade to a mere whisper, akin to a glowing candle.

This evidence that time was slowly passing reminded me that another moment had slipped away—one unique in its own way; a priceless nugget that would never be experienced again.

It became quite obvious that each moment is priceless, having its own unique situations and possibilities, and that the choices made should maximize each segment of time to its fullest potential.

So many opportunities are lost due to poor choices, and then... too late! We realize the reality of all the possibilities that could have been explored if there had been greater prudence.

When I reflect on my decisions over the past few days, could I have chosen to be more productive?

Could I have positively impacted my life or society?

Oh, how priceless is my power to choose in these moments of time.

Your Activity: 1

Answer True or False to the following:

1. The choices I make may affect my quality of life.
2. How I choose to react to situations may impact my happiness.
3. My over-the-top reactions to situations only make such situations worse.
4. The actions I perform regularly will never become habits.
5. True happiness exists in my house, car, and money.
6. I can be happy when I choose to be.
7. When I make good choices, I develop sound habits.
8. Lack of self-control may cause problems for my future.

Your Activity: 2

Highlight an experience in which your choice(s) could have been better.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

How has this affected you?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

What could you have done differently?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Chapter 3

Thoughts

Superpower 2

Deliberate and consistent thoughts of gratitude, success, joy, and happiness will create a reality nothing short of miraculous.

Cruising downhill, the wind rushed against my face as I raced the bus on my shiny new bicycle. Skillfully maneuvering each corner, I approached the journey every morning with the anticipation of partnering with my new "ride." As I gripped the rubber-wrapped handlebars, the sound of the tires making contact with the pavement was music to my ears. The reflectors and shiny wheels reflecting the early morning sunlight filled me with a wonderful sense of pride—my very own bicycle.

The foregoing recounts an actual experience from my high school years; it illustrates the visualization I engaged in each morning while traveling on the bus to school. At fifteen, I often dreamed of owning a bicycle, but such fantasies felt far-fetched due to the limitations

to obtain one. Despite this realization, my daily trip into my world of fantasy continued.

The over twenty-mile journey from home to school provided ample opportunity for me to envision myself on a new bicycle, riding ahead of the bus each morning. I would close my eyes and shut out the chatter from other passengers, focusing vividly on the fantasy in my mind to the extent that I could almost feel the experience—the adrenaline, the firmness of the handlebars—it felt incredibly real. This began about three or four months before the summer holidays of 1988, and despite my socio-economic realities, it continued unabated because I wanted a bicycle so badly.

As mentioned earlier, due to the unavailability of resources, these were mere fantasies of a young boy who had nothing but a vivid imagination. However, despite the limitations, my father surprised me with a shiny new bicycle that summer!

“We were moving mountains long before we knew we could.” (Carey and Houston, 1998).

This account illustrates the power of the mind, which I discovered as a teenager; I remember the experience vividly, as if it were yesterday. I seemed to have “willed” the bicycle into being, as my mother could never have afforded such a luxury, and my father and I have had an

estranged relationship since early childhood. Therefore, my imaginary space became my comfort zone, compensating for the tangibles I could not access. This discovery paved the way for a deeper understanding of the human mind and its vast potential. Later in this chapter, I will share a method (briefly alluded to in Chapter One) that I utilized to achieve many of my tangible and intangible goals.

According to The Law of Attraction (Byrne, 2006), you attract whatever you hold in your mind; those images eventually become reality through the signals you emit during periods of mindfulness. Think of your brain as a powerful transmitter that constantly emits and receives signals from the surrounding environment. The frequency on which you operate, along with the signals you send out, ultimately determines what happens in your life.

There is much more to us humans than meets the eye, but for far too long we have *comfortably* restricted our experiences to the five conventional senses, which we have been socialized to accept as the extent of our assimilative processes. The truth, however, is that an individual's true worth exists outside the parameters of tangible existence or experience; yet, not enough focus or attention is paid to this reality. This stems from our socialization, which prioritizes materialism, ultimately

leading to spiritual dormancy and an eventual ignorance of one's *greater self*. So, even though we possess immeasurable power, untapped resources equate to unused potential, resulting in lost opportunities.

Given our tangible achievements, we often claim success; however, failure is often our reality due to our limited understanding of our "total selves." If we had a greater awareness of our vast potential, we would realize that the achievements we sometimes celebrate can become an albatross around our necks, distracting us from investing in what is truly eternal. When we consider that our physical bodies and tangible experiences account for just a small percentage of our total makeup, it becomes clear that many of us have spent nearly our entire lives in a state of ignorance. We were often unaware of the greater need for spiritual and mental satisfaction, believing that our physical selves represent the entirety of our existence. We seem oblivious to the fact that our subconscious is teeming with activity and that our thoughts are, in fact, one of our "superpowers."

Many of us who use this superpower daily do so without fully assessing its potential. Thoughts are powerful to the extent that when held in one's mind, they send signals out into a spiritual realm, attracting elements of their own kind and then returning tenfold to the individual (Mulford, 2010). Therefore, your mind is fertile ground

for cultivating whatever you entertain in your subconscious, which is unbiased and will automatically act on whatever it receives. It cannot be overstated that great care must be taken when entertaining thoughts because whatever you frequently hold in your mind becomes your reality; in essence, you attract what you constantly think about. Additionally, your frequently held thoughts will eventually manifest through your actions, as who we truly are emanates from within.

Our minds are either engaged in a destructive or constructive process, but the latter depends on the individual's ability to master cognitive processes and filter out unwanted thoughts. If an individual is consumed by fear regarding an impending situation and focuses solely on what could go wrong, the current situation is only worsened due to the negative energy emitted. Conversely, thoughts of success and joy, when deliberately held in one's mind, can produce results that may sometimes seem miraculous.

What type of thoughts do you frequently entertain?

Be mindful of your thoughts because your mind is constantly in service to you and will eventually attract whatever you consistently expose it to. It is like a very willing servant whose sole purpose is to do your bidding

without complaining or warning you of the implications of your “instructions.”

Therefore, it is very important to reflect on our thoughts (Meyer, 1995) because many people have unwittingly developed unhealthy thought patterns and become accustomed— and even quite "comfortable"—with how they perceive the world around them. The danger here is the resulting negative tides that pervade their lives and the subsequent blame placed on everything except their own self-defeating mindset.

Earlier in this chapter, I mentioned a method that I have relied on during various periods of my life—one that has afforded me varying degrees of success. This is a process of visualization that requires adherence to a few key steps, as set out below. While some amount of success may be achieved without following every step, adherence to the complete method will increase your likelihood of attracting what you desire.

Relax

The ability to shut out distractions and focus on what is important is critical to the process of concentrating on your goals. The ideal environment for this should be free from interruptions, allowing you to fully focus on your

areas of interest. Begin by getting yourself into a relaxed state, which may require being in a quiet room with a comfortable bed or chair; however, be careful not to fall asleep before completing the process. For some, relaxation may require other elements such as soft instrumental music; however, achieving a relaxed state is not standardized, so you are free to find what works for you to shake off the distractions. Taking deep breaths and focusing on your breathing can also assist in shifting your thought process to a point of relaxation. In this regard, it is beneficial to close your eyes and focus solely on your process of inhalation and exhalation; visualize your breath entering your nostrils and then leaving. Continue this for about three to five minutes until you feel totally calm.

Concentrate

By the time you reach this stage, you should be fully relaxed.

Remember when you thought about buying a particular car or getting a specific hairstyle, and suddenly you began noticing several of those cars or people with the same hairstyle while in traffic or at the mall? I have experienced this numerous times, and it essentially means that you are transmitting on a frequency that attracts whatever you send out. If done correctly, the

process of concentration will align you with that frequency.

With your eyes closed, begin to see yourself doing whatever it is that you hope to achieve. For example, envision the acquisition of a home. Picture yourself standing on the lawn, looking at the front of the house.

Immerse yourself in its beautiful architectural design; notice the shape of the windows and the double doors at the entrance. As you walk up to those doors, remove the keys from your pocket or purse, grasp the shiny brass knob with your left hand while inserting the key with your right, and open the door. As you enter, let your gaze travel slowly to the high ceiling, meticulously decorated with stylish moldings and an exquisite crystal chandelier. You observe the smell of fresh paint as you ascend the elaborate staircase, running your hand along the smooth, varnished cherrywood banister until you reach the landing at the top. This leads to a huge sliding glass door that opens to a balcony, providing a breathtaking view of the city.

The above process can be used to acquire anything, including good health, a suitable mate, gainful employment, and more.

Fundamental to this exercise is the ability to see, smell, and feel the experience as if you are actually there. By

the time you become accustomed to the engagement of this process, if you closely observe, you will begin to notice the various manifestations of your efforts. Practice this as often as possible, but remember to be mindful of distracting or unwanted images that may creep in.

Believe

If you lack confidence in yourself, you are twice defeated in the race of life. With confidence, you have already won even before you start (Marcus Garvey, 1923).

As part of your mental adjustment, you must believe without a shadow of a doubt that whatever you envision is already yours. To the skeptics, it may seem counterintuitive to engage in this method, but you are actually reprogramming your mind to focus on possibilities you were previously unaware of. So, think about your “accomplishment” and smile to yourself as you focus on the joy you feel in having

“achieved” it. Step out in confidence, “knowing” that whatever you visualized now belongs to you. Hold that belief close to your heart, guarding it jealously without disclosing your visualizations to anyone, lest a skeptic dissuade you from experiencing and engaging your true “powers.”

Act

Faith without works is dead (James 2:20).

As you continue on this path, you will realize that opportunities begin to present themselves through individuals, situations, and networking. You will become aware of many things you had unconsciously ignored and will attract whatever you need to accomplish your goals. As this begins to happen, be ready to seize those opportunities before they slip from your grasp. The intention is to reap the highest degree of success from this process, so leave nothing to chance.

It cannot be overemphasized that for this process to work and yield optimum success, all negativity, doubt, and fear must be shut out. Entertain positive thoughts, act wisely, and be as calculated as possible. Although you wield this awesome power, it can have devastating effects if misused. Therefore, as you visualize, focus on specific outcomes that will benefit not just you but also your loved ones. Additionally, change your behaviour or practise those that align with your desires. For example, if your goal is to land your dream job, develop the behaviors that will help you attain that position, and let those behaviors become habits. Your reality should not be left to chance; your future success is determined by

how much you push beyond the norm towards your goals.

Who are you, and what do you want? The time to shape your reality is now!

The unconscious mind has a powerful influence over conscious actions, thoughts, feelings, habits, and behaviors, and it ultimately controls and guides your life.

To make real, lasting changes and improvements in any area of your life, you must tap into the subconscious mind, where these changes begin (Druckman and Bjorn, 1991).

Wake up and shake off your ordinary approach to life. Design your future through:

- The process of visualization, see yourself doing exactly what you desire.
- Making conscious choices by selecting behaviors that align with your goals.
- Acting promptly on opportunities that arise.
- Being consistent; stick to this pattern each day. Practicing this process until it is deeply embedded in your subconscious, and do not stop until it becomes second nature. You will be astounded by the remarkable levels of success you achieve as you tap into your higher self.

YOU CANNOT CHANGE UNLESS YOUR MIND CHANGES!!

You are more powerful than you realize. Abundant peace and joy are within your grasp, just waiting for you. Reach out and claim what belongs to you. Go ahead, summon your God-given power, and experience the abundance that is available through your thoughts. Dig in and move that mind.

Your Challenge: 1

Please take the next few minutes to read (*aloud*) and reread the following lines. However, before you do so, note the following: As explained in the introductory sections of this book, it may be of little or no value to you if your time with this material is not done in an environment free from distractions. So, before reading the paragraph below, please follow the following guide:

- Totally detach yourself from whatever you are doing and envision yourself as the person being described.
- Feel the experience
- As you read the words, do so with purpose. Read slowly and with great focus on the power of each statement that comes from your own mouth.
- Close your eyes, take a deep breath, exhale slowly, and then begin:

The rest of my day/week is already filled with joy and contentment. With welcoming arms, laughter, success, and prosperity are embracing me; peace and harmony are my companions. While dancing in meadows of daffodils, I am accompanied by multi-colored butterflies that flutter with excitement as we observe the beauty around. I can also hear a babbling brook gently trickling

through the nearby pasture, as the faint fragrance of magnolia perfumes the air. Eyes closed, arms outstretched... warm sun rays cascade over my upturned face; I am as light as a feather and as free as a bird...my possibilities are endless.

Take another deep breath and re-read the lines above as you absorb the joy and peace available to you through the power of the spoken word. If you are not smiling to yourself or feeling refreshed as you read, then you have not escaped into the experience laid out here.

Let yourself go as you read the lines again; see yourself as the person being described, that fortunate individual possessing limitless possibilities... you are free.

Can I tell you a secret?

What you just did has the potential to change your life beyond your wildest imagination.

And here's the truth... with your own words and speaking into any situation in your life, you have the power to do this every day or as often as you like.

Your Challenge: 2

Retention and reinforcement through writing: Several studies have shown that writing helps in the retention and reinforcement of information.

Please rewrite the following affirmation on the lines provided below:

‘I will think only positive thoughts today’

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Chapter 4

Words I Am

Superpower 3

If thoughts are things, then the spoken word is power unto life or death.

Grace sat elegantly poised in her chair as the interviewer scrutinized her résumé. As his oversized spectacles reflected the words from the document, doubts raised by her family members momentarily crossed her mind, but she quickly replaced them with positive thoughts; in her mind, she had already secured this job. She was undaunted by the unpleasant socioeconomic realities of her past or present—she didn't *live* there anymore. Neither was she troubled by the skeptical mindset of those around her. As a child, she had always believed that she was the rose that would emerge from the muddled mess of her environment and that she would reap success from her ambitious pursuits. Consequently, the habit of speaking positively about herself became second nature by the time she reached adulthood. Whenever she had the opportunity, she reminded those around her that she would be successful,

especially when their negative statements reflected their immediate challenges.

When her family learned of her job interview, they were more apprehensive than she was, perceiving the improbability of such a large corporation hiring someone who had no connections. As she struggled with her self-discovery, they still saw the little girl who had been shaped by the psychosocial influences of her environment. What they were oblivious to was the fact that, despite her circumstances, through her thought process and the power of her words, she had already emerged from the mess she had refused to accept as her lot in life.

Her words, often misconstrued as arrogance, and her self-confidence to many seemed lofty, but she insisted on speaking of herself from a place of hope—the audacity to see beyond her immediate circumstances. She had distanced herself from the parameters of doubt and apprehension of imminent doom so frequently expressed by the chorus of voices around her. Her tenacity to be different stemmed from her resistance to the sociocultural norms of her immediate environment, where the lifeblood of her family and neighbors was inextricably linked to their acceptance of the community's social predicament. Oblivious to them, their words of self-pity became curses, the albatross that

kept them shackled to a never-ending loop of despair and poverty. Their many excuses for failure fostered a place of complacency that embraced them within its *warmth*, keeping them imprisoned in a life they *loved*. Given her circumstances, she had to secretly and selfishly focus on her dreams and daily self-affirmations as a means of escape because the seeds of hope she frequently articulated became an annoyance to those who were *deaf* around her.

“So, I see here that you volunteered in several benevolent initiatives.” She was jolted back to reality by her interviewer’s observation of her credentials. In the discussion that followed, she exuded confidence as she effortlessly responded to the questions posed to her. It was as if the words she had previously spoken over her own life had taken flight and were manifesting right before her eyes.

Having secured the job, her unbridled excitement was not only due to the prospects of a successful career with a prestigious organization, but also because she had stumbled upon something amazing — the power of her words over her life... her very own superpower. Through Grace’s eyes, her mother hadn’t just left her father for another man; she had abandoned her. She felt betrayed, isolated, and lost. At thirteen, she was late to enter adolescence, and her journey of self-discovery had

just begun. Consequently, she looked to her mom as her point of reference and the support that would always be there for her whenever the heckling about her flat chest and underdeveloped hips came from other teenage girls in her community. Her father and brother were of little help in such matters; moreover, her father had his own unmet needs, while her brother struggled with his self-created demons. Each morning, her saturated pillow was a constant reminder of the challenging nights she had endured and the tears that eventually lulled her to sleep.

However, she eventually came to terms with her situation, and like a phoenix rising from the ashes, she decided to move her mind beyond her circumstances.

Having assessed her challenges and recognizing that those closest to her were an emotional mess, she realized that the rescue she desperately sought resided only within her. Therefore, she embarked on a journey to rebound from depression and embrace the confidence she knew she possessed. Her goals became her fixation, to the point that she envisioned herself excelling in school and achieving success at the highest level. The regular heckling directed at her faded into the background and eventually disappeared, not because it ceased, but because she was on a different frequency where her focus shifted away from her obstacles. She chose to ignore negative expressions and replace them

with frequent, well-placed affirmations of hope, confidence, and success, which became the subject of her intrapersonal discussions in the absence of a willing ear.

Grace's situation is not unique; many individuals recognize the power of their words and use them to speak positively into their lives, resulting in varying levels of success. For those who are unaware, words are infused with enough power (Scovel-Shinn 1928) to either destroy or create. However, they are often carelessly used, or there is a misunderstanding or underestimation of their power. Individuals inflict self-harm when their utterances are frequently punctuated by complaints or self-pity; their environment becomes inundated with negative language, setting the tone for them to subconsciously anticipate and attract failure. Such negative utterances displace all positive energy, and like a deflated balloon, those hapless individuals become limp, lacking the ability to rise on the next wind of success. This practice continues until self-cursing becomes an effortless act woven into regular conversations. What is startling is the ongoing ignorance of this self-imposed act of failure, given that no followup is done to connect the words used and the resulting outcomes.

Relationships also suffer from this type of negative rhetoric; the atmosphere changes and self-esteem is

affected when negativity fills the air, all because of an ill-placed word or statement over dinner. Consequently, this negatively charged environment leaves no space for positive outcomes, pushing an already troubled relationship closer to the edge of the abyss.

Conversely, when we choose to speak positively, broken fences are mended, unbroken ones are bolstered, self-esteem is boosted, and the atmosphere becomes vibrant.

According to Newberg and Waldman (1994), activity in the fear center of the brain (the amygdala) increases whenever negative words are spoken, interrupting logical functioning due to the release of stress-producing hormones. However, when positive words are spoken, they *alter the expressions of genes*, strengthening the areas of the brain responsible for behavior, learning, personality, and voluntary movement. As a result, cognitive functioning improves.

As a rule, say only what you want and refrain from uttering anything negative or undesirable. Some may argue that their statements are made from a place of realism based on current situations. However, it is unwise to express negative words that may derail any positive momentum. If you feel compelled to speak negatively, silence is a more fitting posture.

Power From Within

*I dare to dream and then to speak of what
I'm sure I'll be,
My words of hope become alive, a spectacle for all to
see.*

*But if my words reflect no hope, then what should I
expect?*

*I may never manifest the light I seek if I choose to
preach darkness.*

*I therefore infuse light in the words I choose to speak,
My atmosphere—positively charged; Power from
within me.*



Who I am or hope to be takes flight with my words; as I speak, I become. As my words emerge from my mouth into a powerfully charged atmosphere filled with endless possibilities, they remain aloft, searching for connections—a common thread binding success to success, while negativity is embraced by its own kind. Mission accomplished; like a guided missile, my self-made situation returns with pinpoint accuracy, either sustaining my happiness or creating another opportunity for me to complain and wallow in self-pity.

Therefore, I am whoever I say I am, participating in situations I predict, whether knowingly or unknowingly. I am a product of my own doing because whenever I speak, I either “live” or remain stagnant due to my own utterances.

In heated exchanges with others, instead of blessing, I cursed. My words wielded like a sword in hand; I slashed—destroying lives— and in my wake, bruised and battered souls clung helplessly to the remnants of their pride. In retrospect, I ponder, remorseful yet resigned to powerlessness, as that which was spoken cannot be recalled and has but one mission: to fulfill. By then—too late—I had already set destruction into motion; another life was wounded, another situation disturbed by the venom of my toxic rhetoric. Owing to my self-pity, I too fell victim to my own utterances and

came close to destroying the foundations of my house. “*I am not good enough, I can’t... I doubt that it will...*”—all words that frequently left my lips and proved to be the genesis of my failures.

Through faith, we understand that the universe was framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear (Hebrews 11:3).

I have since learned that I was created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26), who, through the spoken word, called everything out of nothing. He has bestowed upon me the power (Proverbs 18:21) to speak life or summon death when I open my mouth to articulate my thoughts. I am therefore fully aware of the responsibility that comes with possessing such an incredible gift, which requires me to exercise due care in its use. When I choose to speak, I am careful to do so with meticulous care, devoid of emotive influence, lest my momentary lapse feeds the flames of recklessness, destroying the harness of the tongue, which then wags destructively.

It is of vital importance that great care be observed when the mind is in a state of euphoria or beset by anger, for in such situations, weaponized or erroneous words can take flight, potentially eroding the fragile foundation of a

collapsing soul or sowing seeds that may eventually yield bitter fruit.

So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

(Isaiah 55:11).

Undoubtedly, the spoken word is packed with enough power to bring into existence that which exists outside the parameters of consciousness. Within that realm, everything lingers, buzzing with energy and anticipation, awaiting the command to come into being.

As words are uttered, portals open, and the foundations of life or death are created.

Dunamis

*Your words possess what your hands cannot, so it
remains unseen;*

*A power unparalleled since time began, a gift to
human beings.*

*It's in your grasp — quite potent, yet to some a mystery,
While others actively abuse this power when the tongue
moves recklessly.*

*Motionless—it lies quite still, and the entire world is
quiet,
But then it wags in judgment, and an entire kingdom is
in riot.*

*To hold it still... a problem that the feebleminded cannot
fix. Oh, for sweet silence; a notion far dismissed.*

*The mouth ajar, not yet! The brain engages
first,
Assessing over yonder to determine what this is worth.*

*Carefully now and with due care, let your gentle
words emerge,
To heal hearts and mend souls, lest you cause a
scourge.*

Your Activity

Please answer true or false to the following statements:

Words have no power over my life. **T F**

Whenever I am upset, I don't need to **T F**
think before I speak.

If I speak without thinking, I may **T F**
hurt those around me.

My words are powerful enough to **T F**
create changes in my life.

My words cannot hurt anyone **T F**
because I speak the truth.

Please practice the following affirmations as often as you can, especially first thing in the morning. Writing them several times will also add value to the intended process.

- I am happy and healthy.
- I am powerful.
- I am prosperous.
- I am free.
- I am filled with love, light, and laughter.

As you repeat the foregoing words, it is important to say them with purpose while envisioning yourself in the situations you describe. Go ahead, plant those seeds, and bask in the experience created.

Chapter 5

Your Creative Power

Superpower 4

The agonizing truth about Junior's marriage became quite evident after his wife, Bethany, declared her undying love for another man. To make matters worse, she was impregnated by her knight in shining armor before she left their matrimonial home.

Their shattered marriage became the subject of many hushed discussions in the small community where they grew up and chose to establish their family. Among the shared perspectives was the belief that they were not a perfect match. Bethany's affinity for risqué experiences and Junior's conservative nature highlighted their divergent personalities; however, their shared sense of humor seemed to be the common thread that brought them together. Despite the latter, Junior had his doubts about his wife's true feelings for him.

This was often alluded to whenever he lamented about his inadequacy as a husband, amidst his references to what he considered meager excuses for the dates he took her on. Much to his wife's annoyance, this behavior intensified on special occasions such as anniversaries

and Valentine's Day, when his self-pity became overwhelming, ultimately undermining his masculinity.

To further complicate matters, Junior's overactive imagination often enslaved him, leading to depression over some contrived extramarital affair he believed Bethany was having. Despite her many attempts to convince him otherwise, Junior remained fixated on this idea, unable to understand how she could settle for someone like him when he was certain she had much better options.

"Do all things without grumbling and disputing: that ye may be blameless and harmless, sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation..." (Philippians 2:14-15).

He became suspicious of her every move, even hiring a private detective to track her when she went out. This intervention proved futile, as Bethany had never been involved with anyone up to that point. However, the frequent arguments between them eventually destroyed the harmony in their home, leading Bethany to give up. She decided to stop caring about Junior and resigned herself to the notion that, since he had already lost his trust in her, things could not get any worse. Consequently, she began fantasizing about a *real man* who would sweep her off her feet. This became her

escape—the world she often fled to—whenever Junior expressed his self-pity or ranted about her *infidelity*. Due to her newfound *reality*, Junior was often infuriated by the contentment she displayed when tuning him out during his emotional tirades. She just wasn't there anymore; some days she would be *off* sailing on a yacht with her faceless Casanova, while on other days they would enjoy delectable caviar by candlelight with soft jazz in the background as he gently touched her cheek. Her *Romeo* demanded nothing from her, neither did he lament about her shortcomings; all he did was make her feel complete.

Bethany's frequent *interactions* with her fantasy guy became more than an escape; they evolved into a source of pleasure that consumed her. She became so enraptured by her fantasies that each ecstatic rendezvous with her imaginary lover was marked by rapid heartbeat, flushed skin, and bated breath. Her delusion deepened to the point that, by the time she was actually wooed by her coworker, she had already fallen for her imaginary phantom. And then, despite the pleas from friends and relatives to seek professional help, she was deaf to their promptings. Junior, on the other hand, was convinced that this was the relationship he had referred to all along, but Bethany was already head over heels in love long

before her co-worker appeared. He merely provided a face to the Casanova in her fantasies.

From the start, their relationship had been troubled; Junior's low self-esteem and constant focus on his fears and inadequacies forced his wife to escape into an adulterous fantasy, resulting in toxic effects for both.

They had unconsciously created an atmosphere of disharmony in their home by dwelling on negativity and selfish pleasure, ultimately destroying what they had spent years building. They were not the only victims; their daughter and son, like diligent students, absorbed every lesson taught by their personal tutors.

Upon impacting the mind where our creative power resides, everything coalesces into a force that can affect the individual's psyche either negatively or positively, depending on how those independent powers were initially utilized. This remarkable ability, gifted to us by God, allows us to create our own reality; thoughts are entertained, words are spoken, and choices are made—the never-ending process of creation continues. This happens because the human mind willingly satisfies the unconscious biddings of its master. It does not discriminate as it accepts stimuli, processes data, and manifests results in various ways.

The power to create your destiny lies within you, but this is contingent on the stimuli your unconscious mind has been consistently fed.

Whatever you constantly engage in and focus on eventually takes root and manifests itself in your life.

He begins by bombarding our minds with a cleverly devised pattern of little nagging thoughts, suspicions, doubts, fears, wonderings, reasonings, and theories. He moves slowly and cautiously (after all, well laid plans take time). Remember, he has a strategy for his warfare. He has studied us for a long time (Meyer 1995).

The power of your ever-willing mind is evident in how it eagerly accepts every signal you send it. It buzzes with energy and activity, awaiting your next command, whether you do so intentionally or unconsciously. Every thought held; a signal sent—every signal sent; a cognitive process gains momentum...the process of creation in the making.

In the mind's constant assimilative process, it can drift off on a spoken word or phrase, often becoming distracted by intriguing or overwhelming sights and sounds. Without an effective *harness*, this distraction may leave the individual in awe, temporarily oblivious to their surroundings. The mind often assumes

leadership— the slave becoming the **master**—with the eventual **slave** powerless to effect change.

Whether you are aware of it or not, your mind is always on the move because it constantly processes the stimuli to which it is exposed. It becomes intoxicated with excitement as the conventional senses feed it through sights, sounds, tastes, feelings, and fragrances. In this cognitive state, it deposits into long-term memory (Atkinson et al. 1987) whatever it is consistently and frequently fed, inevitably impacting the individual on a subconscious level. Much of what enters the mind stems from experiences that have had either a positive or negative effect; the greater the experience, the more influential it is on the human psyche. Such situations shape beliefs and inform decision-making. Behavioral patterns then emerge as manifestations of these deep-seated cognitive processes, influencing how the individual interacts with society through their words and actions.

Therefore, be mindful of your cognitive diet.

Provide your mind with something constructive to *chew* on, lest it wanders off into the *open fields* where it becomes accustomed to frequent servings of negativity.

By now, it should be clear that guarding your mind is crucial on your journey to shaping your belief system. As

you curb your cognitive appetite, you will realize that shutting out certain thoughts and limiting your interactions with negative people are essential parts of the process. What you believe and the individuals you frequently associate with will ultimately help determine who you are.

Consider the things you often expose your mind to: the places you go, the people you interact with, the music you listen to, etc. (*These will be expounded upon in Chapter 7.*) These are all factors that you have allowed to invade your cognitive space. You would not be the person you are today without the beliefs you entertained, which ultimately guided your choices, and the choices you made that helped shape your beliefs. This never-ending cycle continues throughout your life and presents numerous opportunities for change if identified.

Every situation or event you observe results from the creative power of the mind. That person who just walked by, the car that just drove past, and the individual who called you a few minutes ago are all outcomes of those individuals' creative powers to embark on a mission, foster a relationship, or follow up on an initiative. Such activities are not as ordinary as they seem; they emanate from deep within an individual's subconscious mind.

Nothing was created in a vacuum. Everything you see around you began as a mere idea in someone's mind before becoming a lingering and transformative thought that progressed into reality. This book you are reading is a perfect example. Consider all that went into its production. It was not the result of a spontaneous event devoid of in-depth analysis and focus; it was the outcome of an initial concept, deliberately held in focus until the idea gained traction in reality. Essentially, it was a spark that eventually became a flame, much too intense to be contained in the mind of the author.

Every thought of yours is a real thing—a force (Mulford, 2010).

The same creative power you possess and use (often unwittingly) daily is used by billions around the world. If you look throughout history, you will observe several notable figures, such as the Wright brothers, Henry Ford, and Thomas Edison etc, who all harnessed this very same creative mindset to conceptualize and subsequently produce machines and devices that continue to impact the world today. If you were to assess the backgrounds of any past inventors, or even those around today, you would find that they are no different from you or the person next to you. What distinguishes such individuals from others is their awareness of the creative power they wield, their willingness to consciously tap into that

infinite reservoir, and their enthusiasm to realize their dreams.

You are more powerful than you realize; your ability to create whatever you desire is not as difficult as you think. The challenge for most people lies in the lifelong ignorance of their creative genius, leading them to accept whatever comes their way, whenever it arrives... if it arrives at all. They may even be oblivious to opportunities right in front of them, especially when those opportunities require stepping out of their comfort zone. The feeble minds of such individuals are constantly influenced by social and conventional media, lacking a personal reference point. Because of this influence and the resulting diet of confusion, they are confined to skimming the surface of life rather than making a meaningful impact through their creative power. If you fail to stabilize your mind through regular exposure to positive and fulfilling stimuli, the diversity of the world—through subliminal imagery— will unconsciously program you to accept random outcomes. The ultimate result will be a stagnant life steeped in constant despair, leading to an unfulfilling end. So, push beyond the noise towards an understanding of yourself, because there is so much undiscovered ability in you.

The heights of great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight; but they, while their

companions slept, were toiling upward through the night.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

As you seek to become your best self through discovery and tapping into your reservoir of power, laziness and complacency will be your greatest foes. As Henry Longfellow aptly illustrates, greatness takes work, requires sacrifice, and is not spontaneous. By the time you picked up this book, you may have been driven for years or even decades by the same mindset, so making any deviation from your comfort zone may seem daunting. The choice to shift your mindset is entirely yours; however, if you choose to do so, you must step outside your comfort zone to counter the effects of laziness and complacency.

Our system is inherently wired to protect us from discomfort (Robbins, 2017). Therefore, any deviation from a particular mindset or behavioral pattern can trigger a psychophysiological rebellion that may leave you feeling defeated if your desire to change is not stronger than your relationship with mediocrity.

The moment you feel an instinct to act on a goal, count down from 5-4-3-2-1 and physically move within that time, or your brain will stop you (Robbins, 2017).

You must consciously and deliberately act when action is required; otherwise, your brain, in its effort to protect you, will inadvertently foster stagnation.

Creativity therefore becomes an internal battle that requires the filtering out of damaging stimuli from the mind and maintaining focus on positive imagery. The willingness to sacrifice comfort as a vehicle for change is also fundamental, as discomfort often accompanies growth. Push yourself beyond complacency and reject anything that competes with your quest for the metamorphosis that you seek. View your sacrifices as investments in the "bank" of life; the returns will astonish even those who previously regarded you as inferior.

There can be miracles when you believe... (Carey and Houston, 1998).

Moreover, it is crucial to understand that your aspirations may not be immediately visible until you make it a habit to consciously and deliberately focus on the steps required to achieve them. Your creative power is waiting for you to summon it; no one can do it for you. Get your mind moving.

Your Activity

Why is guarding your mind important?

.....
.....
.....

Write down three ways in which you can guard your mind and begin practicing them as soon as possible

.....
.....
.....
.....

Identify a goal you want to accomplish

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

What is the first step to achieving this goal?

.....

.....
.....

On separate sheets of paper, create a written plan to achieve this goal. Write down and focus on the small steps (critical success factors [CSFs]) toward its achievement.

CSFs

.....
.....
.....
.....

Focus on completing these small steps each day while simultaneously visualizing the success you hope for.

Chapter 6

Reality

Jerry watched jealously as Michael navigated his new car through the maze of potholes along the narrow street leading to the nearby church. Even though Michael greeted him as he passed, Jerry enviously observed as he and his family disembarked and entered the building. Whether alone or with friends, the makeshift wooden bench along the roadway had become Jerry's hangout spot. It was his escape from his rundown apartment, where his landlord failed to make the necessary repairs. In addition to this, his job was far from perfect, as were his relationships with the numerous women he only saw when they dragged him before the court for delinquency in child support payments.

"How could this be? I am not worse than anyone else! We are the same age, we went to the same school, yet Michael is the picture of perfection: a lovely wife and kids, the perfect job, and he always seems so fulfilled. All I have are dark, lonely days: no family, a lousy job, poor education, and an unreliable landlord."

Despite Jerry's lamentations about his life, he was unaware that somewhere along the way, he and Michael

had taken different paths, despite the many common spaces they had shared over the years. Although they spent five years in the same high school, study time for Michael was Jerry's time to hang out with the guys on the corner. This pattern continued even after Michael went off to college, as Jerry viewed success through the lens of his fortnightly salary, which allowed him to be the fashion icon at the parties he frequented.

It wasn't until age forty that Jerry experienced a stark realization about his life. After attending a high school reunion and learning of his classmates' successes, he sank into depression in the days and weeks that followed as he reflected on his life in comparison to Michael, with whom he frequently interacted. He had recently learned that Michael was the general manager at a financial institution near the restaurant where he made a living as one of the workers assigned to wash utensils—a job he landed after being fired from the bakery where he had worked for only six months. Did Michael's success come by chance, or was it meticulously planned?

How did Jerry end up here?

Was this his lot in life, and what factors contributed to a life that obviously displeased him so much?

As the child of divorced parents, Jerry had watched as the flame of his father's spirit gradually dwindled after his mother left home. Despite the decades that had

Page | 69

passed, as an adult, he sometimes reflected on the manifestations of his father's plight and how much he had *missed* him even when he was physically present. His father seemed to have given up on life, merely existing as a shadow of his former self. Consequently, Jerry and his sister Grace lacked the necessary attention and guidance required for teenagers. Jerry couldn't understand, though, why Grace had become so arrogant amidst all that was happening to their family. She had always been full of herself, but after their family fell apart, her arrogance became unbearable. Despite being older, he had to find creative ways to avoid her out of fear of being reprimanded or getting an earful about her lofty dreams. At fifteen, Jerry's only escape was his group of friends, whose only way of helping him was through a constant supply of marijuana. Except for divine intervention or a dramatic turn of events, his future seemed predetermined, especially after becoming a father at seventeen.

Your current reality did not happen by chance.

Your present state, even as you read these lines, is the result of a series of choices based on how you **chose** to respond to events in your past. As discussed in Chapter One, your responses to situations (arguments, disappointments, pleasurable moments, opportunities, etc.) directly impact your future.

Consider this: *Constant resentment, arrogance, or aggression toward a friend, partner, or relative during disagreements may have negative implications for your social network and relationships.*

So, if there isn't a significant change before it is too late, failure and loneliness may eventually be your reward.

For many individuals, when there is no change, the ensuing failure or self-imposed isolation is often attributed to every variable except their inadequate behavioral responses to past situations. Another example involves wild, uninhibited, spur-of-the-moment reactions to moments of excitement or pleasure, which can cause permanent damage to a person's character or life.

As previously stated, it is equally important to note that your reality also stems from your thoughts. Positive cognitive processes must be acted upon, or they will remain dormant. How many thoughts have you had that were never acted upon? Your ideas hold no value if not pursued. To realize your dreams, you need to put those thoughts into action. However, you must exercise meticulous care in decision-making as every action produces far-reaching effects. Even in seemingly trivial situations, the wielded power of choice creates cascading waves of change that impact events and individuals.

Such effects can alter lives, dictate outcomes, and influence generations for decades.

For example, consider unprotected sex:

Possible Impact: Unwanted pregnancy and/or sexually transmitted infection (STI)

- *Ripple effects of unwanted pregnancy:* Time spent in gestation, post-natal care, and childrearing may postpone personal goals until the child reaches a certain age. Potential depression. A child or generation that impacts society: An unwanted child who is not socialized into acceptable patterns of human behavior due to neglect, and who may eventually become a liability to society.
- *Ripple effects of STIs:* Health issues or time spent treating infections that could have been used to achieve personal goals. Weeks of concern regarding STI transmission. Possible death (for some STIs). Temporary distraction from other life events until all STI results are known. Embarrassment if an STI diagnosis becomes public.

These examples illustrate the consequences of decisions made without due care, emphasizing that caution thrown

to the wind eventually returns with a gale force that rocks the foundations of the soul, creating chaos in what could have been a life devoid of worry. The reality we seek is within our grasp but is easily lost when we fail to focus on and act upon the important steps that can guarantee us greater joy.

Your Activity

Reflect on a past mistake and the reason(s) you made that error.

.....
.....
.....

How have you or those around you been affected by this?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Recall an unfulfilled dream you’ve had and the reason(s) it has not been realized.

.....
.....
.....

Is it too late to make this dream a reality?

.....

If not, then what are you waiting for?

Chapter 7

The (Re)Programmed Mind



Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

(Philippians 4:8).

You have total control over what you **choose** to focus your mind on. The decision to selectively choose between the lingering effects of past trauma, a negative word, or an uncomfortable interaction is entirely yours. In the past, you may have had to creatively draw upon a particular approach to navigate a bad experience. Such approaches may have included isolating yourself from the situation or person, exhibiting aggression as a defense mechanism, or even focusing solely on yourself just to survive the event. The positive aspect of those approaches is that they may have been

sufficient to lift your spirit or protect you at some point in the past. However, the drawback is that these methods may not apply to other areas or periods of your life, or to the future. In fact, they may be negatively affecting you in current situations that require a completely different approach, thereby hindering your growth.

For some individuals, life becomes a frustrating mess due to their unwillingness to change their approach to challenges. As you have seen throughout this book, a common behavior among those who struggle to change is blaming circumstances or other people for their failures while ignoring the role they played (or didn't play) in the ensuing mess. This is also true for individuals fixated on resolving current challenges with irrelevant and ineffective means.

How often have we heard people lament about the absence of proper parenting during their formative years, the lack of funding for a quality education, or a boss who doesn't like them? Too many individuals have resigned themselves to a posture of self-pity due to past experiences, hoping that someone will save them from their emotional quagmire when they have the inherent power to rescue themselves.

You have the power to choose your future by stepping off the treadmill of behavioral traits and connection to

past trauma that you've grown accustomed to. The ritualistic ebb and flow of your daily routines may very well be subconsciously motivated by baggage from the past, potentially obstructing your success. Unproductive habits, an unsatisfying job, bills, appointments, and deadlines can stifle your creative powers, keeping you locked in survival mode.

Are you truly living, or merely existing?

While your daily pattern may provide enough for your current survival, making time for a new mindset is critical if you hope to become the best version of yourself.

In your frantic approach to daily routines, you may find little to no time for introspection about who you are and what your purpose is. As a result, the likelihood of feeling lost in the maze of life increases with age, leading to a mindset where acceptance of life's circumstances becomes your guiding principle.

Individuals in this situation may feel almost powerless in the face of challenges —akin to driftwood— merely existing and being carried along by the relentless tide of life's circumstances. The quality of life for this unfortunate and unwitting individual shifts to a reactive stance, as the ingrained programming in their subconscious mind limits any proactive efforts.

Mediocrity then becomes the default setting, and poor choices are made due to ignorance of the vast reservoir of power that lies dormant within. This can lead to uninformed decisions such as unwanted pregnancies, abusive relationships, or dissatisfying jobs, which falsely validate their chosen path. Such a cycle traps individuals in a state that offers little or no growth unless something significant alters the trajectory of their lives.

The automatic engagement in specific behaviors suggests a mind that is set to gravitate by default, to predetermined responses in various situations. As humans, we all possess this feature. Our brains, functioning like powerful supercomputers, process thoughts, events, faces, and places, making decisions in mere seconds. This three-pound mass (Cherry, 2020) accepts data from our experiences and sends signals to different parts of the body after complex processing. Thus, the brain serves as the control tower for the body's intricate network of nerves. Interwoven within the brain's operations is the mind, which shapes an individual's perception of the world and their responses to internal and external stimuli. While the brain is a tangible organ controlling the nervous system, the intangible mind is akin to computer software, facilitating

the transmission and storage of information processed by the brain through a symbiotic process.

To assert that the mind is crucial to an individual's mental health is an understatement. The mind perceives, imagines, memorizes, responds, believes, and desires. Given its importance, it deserves the same level of protection that computer software receives; otherwise, the entire system risks becoming corrupted by *viruses*. Additionally, a computer system is limited to the data it receives, producing only what it has been fed. Similarly, the mind is shaped by the information it encounters, acting solely on what it has been exposed to and generating nothing else.

According to Burner (2006), the programming of the mind has implications for our future selves, as whatever is stored there is later retrieved, impacting us long after we have distanced ourselves from those influences. As such, our current state and aspirations depend on how our minds have been programmed through our experiences. It follows therefore, that if we seek a different life and different results, we must reprogram our minds.

In this chapter, we will examine the variables that significantly affect the mind. With a brief analysis of these factors, individuals should be able to assess their

situations and facilitate the reprogramming of their minds if they see the need.

Reprogramming the mind is not inherently difficult; the challenge lies in whether the individual is willing to make the necessary lifestyle changes to expose the mind to different data sets. This process requires filtering the information that enters through the eyes and ears, such as discontinuing visits to certain locations and ending specific friendships or associations. To begin this process, the following self-assessment must be made:

- What activities am I currently engaged in?
- Who are my friends?
- Where do I frequently go?
- What thoughts am I focusing on?
- What do I often expose my mind to?
- How do I see myself?

These variables ultimately determine what the mind returns to you and, consequently, the type of lifestyle you enjoy. Let us take a closer look at each.

Friends

The reasons we choose our friends should extend beyond a mere desire for companionship, as those closest to us

significantly shape our values and belief systems. This is particularly important because, if we are honest with ourselves, we must acknowledge that most of our choices are influenced by our social circle, whether by the compulsion that comes from direct socialization or merely through a need to please those around us. So, when we select our friends, we are charting our future, including our successes, failures, and how we ultimately respond to challenges.

One of the gravest mistakes an individual can make is to befriend someone out of sympathy or merely because they feel obligated to do so. In such cases, there may be no commonalities, and this may lead to emotional harm for both parties if the relationship is allowed to develop.

Negative Friends

Amy considered herself to be a beautiful woman, yet she struggled to come to terms with certain decisions she had made in her life. At thirty-five, she had never been in a stable relationship, had no children, and despite her many female friends, she felt lonely. Although physically attractive, she could not hold onto any of the several eligible bachelors she had dated, and she wasn't sure why. Notwithstanding her multiple partners, the constant in her life was the many nights out with her female friends and the many negative discussions about the opposite sex. The prevailing focus of these

discussions was on female independence and the flaws observed in the men they were currently dating.

Resident within this circle of friends was a strong feminist camaraderie that enforced an unhealthy loyalty to an unwritten code. There seemed to be an unspoken contract that set parameters for any relationship in which any of the four friends were engaged. However, this was to their detriment, as they all remained single while approaching the twilight of their childbearing years.

This anecdote illustrates that long-term exposure to an atmosphere of constant negativity can lead to emotional harm. Amy failed to recognize that her loneliness and emotional turmoil, upon returning to an empty apartment, largely stemmed from how her mindset had been shaped by her friends. The frequent negative remarks about men unconsciously influenced her psyche, making her quick to find flaws in the men she dated. This cycle ultimately hindered her from forming stable relationships and pursuing marriage and a family. Consequently, loneliness would remain her faithful companion if she continued to absorb negativity from her friends.

Negative friends or associates often encourage poor behaviors, such as breaking the law, indulging in promiscuity, abusing drugs, and overconsuming alcohol.

They tend to create negative energy by complaining about life and wallowing in self-pity. In addition to this, they will even berate and belittle those around them by trivializing or criticizing their attempts at goal achievement, even in jest.

Positive Friends

Conversely, friends who promote socially acceptable behavior, speak their truth in love, discourage negativity, and frown upon mediocrity should be cherished. Such friendships serve as positive stimuli for the mind, continuously fostering growth and development because there is no toxicity. Moreover, the atmosphere of genuine care fosters mutual support and motivates everyone involved to pursue their goals.

Locations Frequented

The places we frequent are also vital to the reprogramming of the mind, as stimuli from these environments impact our psyche. Some locations necessitate specific behaviors, given the activities associated with those spaces. For instance, attending a club with friends typically involves consuming alcohol, which can impair judgment. This can lead to various unwelcome possibilities, some of which may even be irreversible and therefore life-altering.

Other locations may expose individuals to illegal activities, which may eventually become normalized in their minds. The effects of immoral activities are similar; constant exposure may ultimately cause them to be seen as normal, leading to indulgence. Frequent visits to such locations can also distract from important aspects of a person's life, leaving them physically and mentally drained.

Thoughts

(Within the context of reprogramming the mind, it is important to reiterate a few points from the chapter on thoughts.)

As previously highlighted, thoughts have the power to shape an individual's reality when given sufficient focus. Therefore, in the process of modifying how the mind operates and what it produces, it is crucial to establish barriers that filter out or protect the mind from the negative effects of our surroundings. Let us explore ways to accomplish this, particularly in repelling negative thoughts.

As we interact with the world, we will encounter challenging times and difficult people. If we are not careful, such negative events may leave us with emotional residue below the level of consciousness, which can subconsciously influence how we think and

behave. In this regard, we need to be mindful of the following:

Guarding the Eyes

The extent to which the images we view impact us makes it evident that we must guard *the windows to the soul*. From horrific images (*videos and pictures of accidents or traumatic events*) on social media to violent content on television and depressing articles (*text messages, notes, social media posts, etc.*) that we sometimes read, the need to protect our eyes from such negativity is a fundamental factor in safeguarding the mind. *Protecting the Ears*

Turn off that distasteful music filled with violence and sexual immorality!

Remove yourself from the company of gossipers and those who frequently spew negativity!

Be vigilant against depressing conversations, or you may find yourself burdened by what you have exposed yourself to. While the eyes are windows to the soul, the ears are the doors, so shut out unwanted *guests*, or their presence may leave your soul disturbed.

Whatever you allow into your mind through what is seen or heard may continue to manifest subconsciously, even after being separated from the initial source. As you read

these lines, you may likely recall, to some degree, what you heard and saw a few hours ago, especially if what you were exposed to was distinct. Whether or not you believe it, such events will impact you if they linger in your mind. Consider then the implications of being exposed to negative situations; the mind may become inundated by the burden of those previous events if the resulting thoughts are allowed to persist.

Critical to this process is the need to think positively, even in the face of challenges. Positive thinking is the first step to overcoming any predicament and preventing negativity from overwhelming you. Negative thoughts may arise, but how you respond is the most important factor in determining how long and to what extent you are affected. You must consciously and deliberately reject negativity as soon as it appears and instead focus on something positive; similar to viewing a glass as half full rather than half empty.

If you do not grasp the concept of repelling negative thoughts, resetting or reprogramming your mind may never happen.

Your Challenge

Considering all the variables required for reprogramming your mind (friends, frequented locations, etc.), what adjustments can you begin making?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Practice repelling negative thoughts whenever they arise in your mind.

Your thoughts held in focus help to determine your reality. Remember also that you are a creature of habit, so whatever you practice regularly will eventually become part of you. Commit to repelling negative thoughts daily.

- Focus your mental energy only on positive thoughts.
- Assess your approach to current challenges and consciously adjust your strategy for dealing with

them. Knee-jerk responses to challenges are often the result of reactions previously encoded in your subconscious and may be unsuitable for the issues you now face.

Chapter 8

The Power of Failure

Despite all that you have done, your multiple attempts *at* (*..insert your failed goal here..*) have amounted to nothing. Your time, attention, and even tangible assets have all gone down the drain. You've failed again; so what? Are you going to just sit there feeling sorry for yourself, or will you rebound from the lessons learned during this temporary setback?

Lament if you must, but get up and start over!

Reflect on a brilliant plan you or someone close to you had in the past and analyze why it was not realized. How many attempts were made before giving up? Many people quit easily after failing, not realizing that failure creates a platform for greater success. This occurs because a doubtful mind tends to self-destruct in the face of failure, failing to recognize that failures are life lessons that better prepare us for the next attempt. Therefore, we should feel more equipped after every failure. Take, for example, Thomas Edison, who failed numerous times in his attempts to perfect the light bulb but did not yield to failure. Instead, he capitalized on past

mistakes and used those lessons to inform his subsequent attempts until he succeeded. Notably, the Wright brothers experienced many crashes of their flying prototypes before finally achieving success due to their steadfast mindset.

Do not allow the failures of the past to cripple your future potential. You possess a vast reservoir of creativity that guarantees unlimited success, but this requires steadfast focus, determination, and an unwavering commitment to succeed. Along the journey of life, failure is the flat tire that occurs every few miles. So don't sit there like others do, waiting for the spare tire that may never come. Even without tires, keep your destination in sight and continue on foot if you must. As your toes are bruised by the rocks along the way, draw on your tenacity to withstand the challenges and continue navigating with your eyes focused on the prize, because failure is only a state of mind.

The concept of failure is quite subjective. For some, it is seen as rock bottom, while for others, it is merely a challenge on the road to success. Such challenges are quite commonplace in the lives of even those who are seen as immensely successful; you would be surprised by their numerous testimonials. They weathered many storms and rode angry waves before reaching shore. They shed tears, filed for bankruptcy, faced

embarrassment, and hit rock bottom many times, but they never gave up.

Lessons Learned from Failing

One of the greatest advantages of failure is the experience it affords you. After you have picked up the pieces, brushed yourself off, and reassessed, you will gain valuable insights from the lessons learned during your setback. Understanding the reasons for your failure will motivate you to adjust your approach as you move closer to success. As Henry Ford once said, “Failure is simply the opportunity to begin again, this time more intelligently.” Failure has the potential to motivate you toward perfection, seeing that the second time around will require greater effort and meticulousness. As you reflect on your setback and plan your restart, new ideas and fresh approaches will emerge from within you. Consequently, you may even decide to expand your initial goal due to a renewed sense of motivation and your vast potential, of which you are now aware. Realizing that your sights are now set on something greater may even bring a smile to your face, as you compare your new goal to the one you had before your experience with failure.

Temporary setbacks, such as being rejected by a promotional board at work or not achieving a financial

milestone, can be distressing; however, these disappointments can significantly contribute to character development. This is especially true considering that arrogance often accompanies success. In some cases, the pursuit of success can become an obsession or even an idol—a false god—leading to idolatry. So, failure may be necessary to hold ambitions in check until the recipient is morally equipped to handle success. To many, this may seem counterintuitive because everyone desires success. However, does a constant atmosphere of success lead to spiritual stagnation? Does the comfort associated with success hinder our creativity and ability to add value to the world around us? While achieving goals is important, it is worth considering how success alters the character of those who attain it before they are shaped and refined by experiences often labelled as failure.

Consider Marilyn Monroe; due to her movie roles, she was regarded as a sex symbol during the 1950s and 1960s and was the fantasy of many iconic men and the envy of her female counterparts. Owing to her physical attributes, she landed multiple *blonde bombshell* characters, leading to a very successful career in the film industry. However, under the weight of an enormous career and a troubled childhood, she experienced multiple panic attacks and relied on drugs to cope. She

eventually died at 36 from a suspected case of suicide. It may be argued that had she experienced failure in her movie career, she would've had an opportunity to resolve the challenges from her tumultuous past, and perhaps the weight of future success wouldn't have destroyed her. The counterintuitivity here may be quite profound for the mind that is fixated on materialism as the priority in life. But what is the value of material gain for the individual who does not possess the psyche to bear its weight? The individual ends up either being ruined by it or mismanaging whatever was acquired.

Premature success is rarely lasting, as its value is not fully realized. While more could be done to sustain what was achieved, the focus often shifts elsewhere, rendering success to nothing more than a fleeting moment. Therefore, challenges pull us back from the brink of the abyss and perform a subconscious reset, helping us appreciate the true value of our accomplishments.

When we experience disappointments or setbacks, we are reminded of our shared humanity with those around us. In those moments, with our bruised egos, we seek comfort from a friendly shoulder or an outstretched arm as the storm rages. Meekness is fostered, and the flame of humanity resurfaces within. Arrogance then takes its leave, allowing humility—born of this newfound awareness—to take center stage.

Failure also fosters ingenuity and helps us understand the value of hard work and dedication. Additionally, the significance of achievements becomes clearer, prompting us to carefully guard the rewards of our efforts, having reflected on the blood, sweat, and tears involved in the process of unlearning and relearning on the path to success.

When confronted with failure, we are reminded that success isn't gift-wrapped and waiting for us under a tree. Instead, we come to realize that it is tucked away in the crevices of a distant mountain range, accessible only to those with the tenacity and determination to bruise their knuckles and risk falling to find it. And even after falling, they pick themselves up, find a better route, and continue climbing until they plant their flag at the top of that mountain. The nectar of success is then more deeply enjoyed and valued, enriched by the experiences of failing, falling, and faltering, but never forgetting that failure is merely part of the journey toward success, not the destination.

Nonetheless, what we do after failing is crucial if we are to allow the lessons from our challenges to guide us toward our greater selves.

Below are pointers from Amy Morin (2021) that provide insight into how we ought to function in a post-failure environment:

Embrace Your Emotions

It is normal to feel bad when failure occurs, so don't be too hard on yourself; this experience is not unique to you. Use these feelings as motivation to get back on your feet; just give it time.

Recognize Unhealthy Attempts to Reduce Pain

During a crisis, it's all too easy to resort to measures that help you quickly forget the pain or provide immediate relief. This might include indulging in unhealthy practices such as drug use, overeating, or alcoholism. You certainly don't want a solution that only worsens an existing problem. View your setback as a process of refinement—an opportunity to reflect and rebound. Be patient.

Practice Healthy Coping Skills

Step out of isolation and engage with friends who will listen and offer constructive advice. Participate in some form of physical activity to help combat depression. Discover what works best for you.

Acknowledge Irrational Beliefs About Failure It is quite commonplace to worry about how others perceive us when

we face failure. Identify how this makes you feel and reject any associated negative notions. You will rebound.

Accept an Appropriate Level of Responsibility

If you don't acknowledge your shortcomings, they cannot be fixed. The most important step in resolving an issue is admitting it exists.

Acknowledge Where You Went Wrong and Whether You Are at Fault

Doing so presents an excellent opportunity for growth. Blaming others will cause you to lose sight of the valuable lessons to be learned. From the point of acceptance, you can identify your missteps and develop solutions for the future.

Research Famous Failures

By examining some of history's greatest failures, you'll realize that your challenge is merely a bump in the road.

Consider Oprah Winfrey. Early in her career as a primetime co-anchor on a television news show, she was demoted due to the empathy she displayed on the job. Undaunted, she took this setback in stride and went on to establish her own talk show, achieving tremendous success largely because of that same empathetic style. Additionally, her Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN) was

initially perceived as a failure, but she redoubled her efforts and used the lessons learned to transform OWN into what it is today.

Oprah clearly understood the other side of failure and leveraged it to her advantage. It could be argued that if she hadn't been demoted, she might have been content as a news anchor. However, failure motivated her to seek more than the meager portion of life initially doled out to her. Deep within, she experienced an epiphany, and that spark became a flame, propelling her to become the best version of herself—a version that emerged from the potential mediocrity that could have defined her. Mediocrity would never have allowed her to impact the world as she has. Thanks to her experiences with failure and the lessons learned, she has changed countless lives.

Failure, combined with our human ability to tenaciously rebound from challenges, is a powerful catalyst that can propel any individual to greatness. This combination expands our mindset, alters our perspective, and creates previously unseen pathways. We become greater than we were before, having ventured outside our comfort zone and weathered the elements. We acquire new knowledge that enables a new approach, preparing us to conquer obstacles and achieve victory. It is therefore apt to conclude that failure is sometimes a blessing in disguise, often obscured from those with a weak mindset. When

you fail, do not accept that you are a failure; the failure you experience today could be your steppingstone to greatness. Open your eyes.

Your Activity

Despite your best efforts, your dream did not materialize: Reflect on a failure you experienced more than five years ago.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

What were the lessons learned, and how have you capitalized on them?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....
.....
.....
.....

Compare your reaction/response to that failed effort with one you had in recent times (*12 months ago*). Did you respond differently, or was it the same?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Challenge yourself to look beyond disappointment and shake yourself off. Accept the tough lessons learned and use them to your advantage. Don't remain stagnant; it's time to get moving again.

Chapter 9

Euphoria

If at this point, you are not excited about your super powers, then you haven't truly absorbed the contents of this book. It means you have chosen to merely skim the pages without fully appreciating that you are a walking powerhouse, capable of achieving anything you desire.

You are equipped with superpowers that are too often taken for granted.

Get excited as you begin to focus on:

- *The power of choice—the ability to choose the best outcome in every situation.*
- *The power of your words—speaking into existence whatever you desire.*
- *The power of your thoughts—consciously and deliberately focusing your mind on positive outcomes.*
- *Your creative power—creating your future by masterfully synergizing all your superpowers into a force capable of achieving just about anything.*

As you assess your newfound gems, let the excitement of what you are capable of be the genesis of the new you. Be energized by the discovery of these abilities and the opportunities to use them at your leisure. Like a consummate superhero who has recently discovered how to effectively wield their power, practice, practice, practice, until you can effortlessly defeat mediocrity, negativity, and anything else you do not desire. You lose what you don't use, so consciously and deliberately tap into your reservoir of power to shape your future. Allow the vivid expectations of your desires to be the energy that drives your aspirations into reality. Create an atmosphere of excitement as you envision yourself achieving whatever you set your focus on. Close your eyes; see your desired experience, feel it, and touch it as your heart races with excitement and shivers run up your spine.

Experience in your mind what you know is already yours. This is where everything begins.

A Simple Plan for Success

- *Identify your goals—write them down.*
- *Prioritize critical success factors and take small steps daily toward achievement.*
- *Speak positively over your life and into the desires that you seek; your words have power.*
- *See yourself already achieving what you have set your mind on.*
- *Manage your discomforts—sacrifice for success.*
- *Shut out the noise (negativity).*

As you implement this plan, create an atmosphere of anticipation while using your superpowers to guide you at each step. Negativity and gloom should never be allowed in this space.

You are powerful beyond measure—far more than you have been led to believe—and there is nothing in existence that you cannot achieve through the God-given superpowers you have been blessed with. To the new you...

Epilogue

True contentment and happiness will remain elusive until you change your perspective on life. Your attitude toward each interactive process is the single most critical factor that determines the degree of happiness you'll experience.

Focus on the lessons learned from challenges; they help shape character.

Social issues are perennial; adjust to accommodate them.

Each interactive engagement is priceless; there is always something to be learned. Change what you can and accept what you can't; otherwise, the happiness you seek will remain at the end of the rainbow—a gem you'll never find.

Consciously and deliberately choose your response to everything that happens around you, because the chosen response either makes situations worse or helps provide solutions.

Move your mind and create your own reality; no one will do it for you.

References

Atkinson, R., et al. (1987). *Introduction to Psychology*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers.

Buffington, S. (2014, October). *Rules of the Subconscious Mind and How to Use Them to Get What You Want*. Retrieved from Energy of Success: www.energyofsuccess.net

Burner, R. (2024, July 21). *Programming the Mind*. Retrieved from Gods-directions-for-life.com: www.gods-directions-forlife.com

Cherry, K. (2020, October 15). *Just How Big Is the Human Brain in Size?* Retrieved from Very Well Mind: www.verywellmind.com

Dreamworks. (1998). *When You Believe* [Recorded by W. Houston]. USA.

Druckman, D. R. (1991). In the Mind's Eye: Enhancing Human Performance. *National Research Council*.

Frederick, S. (2002). Heuristics and Biases: The Psychology of Intuitive Judgment. In S. Frederick (Ed.), *Heuristics and Biases: The Psychology of Intuitive Judgment* (pp. 548-558). Cambridge University Press.

Horner, J. (1988). If We Hold on Together.

The Land Before Time [Recorded by D. Ross]. USA.

Meyer, J. (1995). Battlefield of the Mind: Winning the Battle in Your Mind. Tulsa, Oklahoma: Harrison House, Inc.

Morin, A. (2023, January 12). Retrieved from Very Well Mind: www.verywellmind.com

Mulford, P. (2010). Thoughts Are Things. Megalodon Entertainment LLC.

Newberg, A. (1994). Words Can Change Your Brain. Hudson Street Press, USA.

Robbins, M. (2017). The 5 Second Rule: Transform Your Life, Work, and Confidence with Everyday Courage. Savio Republic.

Scovel-Shinn, F. (1928). Your Word is Your Wand. DeVorss Publications.

The Bible. (1769). King James.

TMZ. (2021). Retrieved from <https://www.tMZ.com/2021/10/04/akon-noregrets-famous-rich-more-struggles-problems-poor-doubles-down/>

West, T. G. (1979). Plato's "Apology of

Socrates": An Interpretation with a New Translation.
New York: Cornell University Press.

I Think, I Can...

I Believe



Discover Your Super Powers

What you hold in your hands is not just any book; it is an instrument of light that will illuminate your world on any given day. Its contents have been carefully prepared for: the brilliant mind eager to better understand the “superpowers” we have been gifted with, the intrepid sojourner on this earthly journey who realizes that “flying” doesn’t require wings, and those who are audacious enough to dream, think, and believe that we are more than the sum of our tangible experiences. There is untapped greatness residing in you just waiting to come forth.

-Ainsworth Shakes

About The Author

Ainsworth Shakes’ interest in the metaphysical and spiritual realms has arrested his focus towards a deeper understanding of human thought, existence, and motivation. Emanating from his lived experiences, and those vicariously obtained, he has artfully articulated his knowledge via the written word with the intention of elevating human consciousness to the next level.

Part of his ethos towards change includes a mindset fixated on achieving a specific outcome, bolstered by conscious, deliberate actions repeated frequently regardless of the prevailing circumstances. Consequently, varying degrees of success are always within the reach of the intrepid sorjourner of this physical life; the one who dares to colour outside the lines of conventional human thinking will yield miraculous rewards.



ISBN 978 976 655 093 6