



## Develop Self-Confidence and Lose Your Fears



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# **Introduction**

***You are as important on the first step of your journey as you are on your last.***  
***Duane Alan Hahn***

In overcoming shyness to develop self-confidence, it is necessary to alter completely the manner in which you view yourself and the world about you. You must prepare for a period of intense self-examination and honest reflection.

A lack of self-confidence is rooted in fear. It may be the fear of failure, success, rejection or any one of hundreds of other possible fears. Regardless of the source, you end up becoming obsessed with all the perceived inadequacies of your life and it eventually becomes impossible to cope with them.

Timidity is widely regarded as a serious psychological problem in society. Advertisements on television encourage you to consult your doctor and request a prescription for the latest medication to treat social anxiety. While a pill may indeed help someone, who is unable to cope on a daily basis because of his or her fears, for the most part it is unnecessary and potentially harmful. If you find yourself simply in need of some helpful exercises and information that will head you to a more confident future, this ebook is for you.

No one will argue that fear is sometimes a legitimate response to a situation. A soldier facing his enemy has every reason to believe his life is in danger. After 9/11, America has learned that even our nation is not immune to a terrorist attack and we have become ever more vigilant. However, fear cannot keep a soldier from doing his duty, nor should it keep you from living a full and rich life. To quit moving forward is to allow your fear to dictate your life.

Facing your fears will strip them of their power. One of our ancient fables tells us of a man who, upon seeing a camel for the first time, runs in fear. He is convinced the beast is dangerous based on its size. After observing it for some time, he realizes it is a very gentle creature and he puts a bridle in its mouth, allowing a child to ride it. Most of your own fears will also prove to be unfounded.

In ancient times, our ancestors needed the fear response to know when they were facing a predator. In today's society, that "fight or flight" reaction causes our adrenalin to pump at inopportune times. Our psyches remember the moment our heart began to race and our palms felt sweaty, thus generalizing that feeling to other similar situations. We then learn to avoid such places or activities, not realizing that a vast majority of our fears go unrealized.

When you lack self-confidence, you also lack self-respect. Others tend to treat you in the same manner in which you treat yourself. Soon you discover that those around you tend to mistreat you. When you begin to treat yourself respectfully, others will follow suit.

Living in a state of constant anxiety makes it difficult to make decisions. You discover you are constantly second-guessing yourself, terrified you will make the wrong decision. Others begin to see you as incompetent and you will never reach the goals you have set before you.

In the following chapters, you will learn many of the ways in which you sabotage your life and dreams by living in a constant fear state. A lesson follows each chapter that will help you to overcome this debilitating problem and head you in the direction of becoming a self-confident, fully realized human being. I have used these lessons myself in my own struggle to overcome fears and I know they work.

My hope for you is that you come to see that you are valuable and that you will discover the strength I know resides within you.

## **Chapter One:**

### ***Developing Will Power***

**Lack of will power has caused more failure than lack of intelligence or ability.**

*Flower A. Newhouse*

First, consider all the advantages you will have by taking control of your thoughts and actions. You will begin to think more positively about your future and will see those things you once thought were impossible are now possible. You will look at yourself in the mirror and discover, much to your delight, that you truly like yourself. The talent others have noticed within you now becomes visible to yourself and you have a new fascination with life.

The secret is to desire the changes you need to make more than you desire your fears. If you are so afraid of misfortune it becomes your central thought every day, it is exactly what you will manifest in your life. You must truly desire to become more confident, courageous and be willing to put those fears behind you. All your thoughts from this point on must focus on the positive rather than the negative.

For each of us there have been times during which we have felt exalted. You have felt that yourself. A moment during which all things seem possible and there is no doubt that your dreams can come true. Think about one of those times and grasp on to it to bring back repeatedly. Use this to bring you back from the negative to the positive when you begin to feel fear creeping in.

When making a decision that deeply affects your life, you must avoid thinking and acting impulsively. It is imperative that you weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each action. As you learn to trust yourself, you will also learn to rely more on your instincts. At this point, I recommend you take a piece of paper and draw a line down the middle. On one side, write the word PRO and, on the other, the word CON. Now think about the decision you need to make. Each disadvantage you think of goes on the CON side, and each advantage on the PRO side. Once you have completed this exercise, consider which side has the most entries. That should give you a good idea of whether or not the action you intend to take is the right one.

It is always tempting to rely on the opinions of others for making your decisions. While it is always beneficial to consider well-meaning advice, you must learn to rely on yourself. If you make a decision based solely upon what someone else says you should do, you risk a friendship ending badly if the decision turns out to be the wrong one. If you make the right one, you want the satisfaction of knowing you were able to rely on your own abilities to decide.

Sometimes we are more forthright with others than we are with ourselves. It's time for you to be honest with the most important person in your life. You know yourself better than anyone else does, you are the only person aware of what you can and cannot tolerate. If the decision you made ended badly, admit it, and move on. Learn from it but don't beat yourself up over it. You will always make the occasional poor decision.

One of the biggest problems in today's society is the inability to take personal responsibility. We've become a nation accustomed to finding excuses for our behavior. If you expect self-confidence, you must take personal responsibility. Admit your mistakes; take credit for your successes. Once you begin to do so you will discover the world doesn't fall apart if you "own up" to your failures.

If you tend to procrastinate (this is difficult for me) you must decide that it ends now. Procrastination tends to leave you constantly worried and fearful about those things you failed to accomplish. Imagine your mind as being your desk at work. Make it a habit to clean both at the end of the day so you can start fresh the next morning. You'll find you sleep more soundly with a clear mind. This will make an incredible difference in how you view yourself and the world around you.

As Goethe once wrote:

"Are you in earnest? Seize this very moment. Whatever you can do, or dream you can begin it."

Perhaps you are older and believe it is too late to begin reaching for a new dream. Consider how many have not begun living their dreams until they were well past middle age. Grandma Moses was in her eighties when she began painting. Catol learned Greek when he was past seventy. Michelangelo, Goethe, Jefferson and Browning were all older when they made names for themselves. It is never too late to start a new goal. Age, much as fear, is a state of mind and the numbers are irrelevant.

There is no success without failure to precede it. A published writer will often have enough rejection slips to paper his office. Almost 100% of all first time businesses fail. When you see these as temporary set backs and necessary learning curves you will go on to reach your goals. Simply remind yourself that when success comes it will mean more because of how much you worked for it.

Will power is the cement that will hold you together during the toughest times while you develop self-confidence. If you build it carefully and use strong materials, it will withstand any storm. If you fail to develop it, you will fold at the first situation you run into that challenges your fear.

## **EXERCISES:**

**Will Power:** Will power is making the decision to stick with the program as you make the changes needed for a fear-free life. When you develop will power, you learn to rely on yourself and your own ability to make the best decisions. Become optimistic about your life and future.

Repeat these affirmations or write them in a notebook:

1. I am strong and capable.
2. I can make my own decisions.
3. I will learn from my failures and turn them to success.
4. I can be self-confident.

**"An affirmation is a strong, positive statement that something is already so."**

*Shakti Gawain*

## Chapter Two: *Finding Wisdom*

**To understand reality is not the same as to know about outward events. It is to perceive the essential nature of things. The best-informed man is not necessarily the wisest. Indeed there is a danger that precisely in the multiplicity of his knowledge he will lose sight of what is essential. But on the other hand, knowledge of an apparently trivial detail quite often makes it possible to see into the depth of things. And so the wise man will seek to acquire the best possible knowledge about events, but always without becoming dependent upon this knowledge. To recognize the significant in the factual is wisdom.**

*Dietrich Bohoeffler*

One of the best ways to eliminate self-consciousness is to become knowledgeable. Never turn down an opportunity to learn something new. If there is a subject, you are interested in, begin researching the topic and become an expert. Not only will you gain confidence, you will find that your memory will improve and you will retain your ability to think clearly, as you age. Studies have proven that older adults who continue to learn new things are at a decreased risk for senility and Alzheimer's.

Learning will direct your mind to the positive rather than the negative. You will discover your mind wanders from your old habits to new ideas. When your mind lingers on old fears, you need to bring it back to the present and the task. Remember, you control what you think.

In all your actions, seek to do what is right. Those who are dishonest act this way from self-loathing. If you are to love yourself, you will work to live your life with integrity. Reach out and help others. Sefishness is an enemy to self-confidence.

You are worthy of respect. Treat yourself in such a way that it is obvious to yourself as well as to others that you value yourself. Once you begin to do so, others will begin to treat you well.

When you speak to another person, look them in the eye. When you look at their chin or nose you are saying, "I am not worthy of speaking to you." Of course you are! What you have to say is important and valuable. Don't worry about what the other person may be thinking while you speak. If you speak to them directly and with confidence, they are considering your words. If they disagree with what you say, it is because they come into this conversation with their own agenda and core beliefs, not because of anything you said. You are only responsible for your words, not their reaction.

Wisdom is more than learning a new skill or researching a subject. It is comprehension at a deeper level. It is being able to take what you have learned about life and applying it in many situations. It is the ability to understand yourself and the environment around you. Wisdom is not something that develops with a few lessons; it will come as you become more confident.

One of the most difficult aspects of fear is that when you are uncomfortable interacting with people you tend to forget how to say the word, "no." When you use wisdom, you know when you need to let go of something and turn down a request for you to do something you'd rather not do. If you find this difficult, practice saying no with someone you trust.

## **EXERCISES:**

**Wisdom:** When you seek wisdom, you seek knowledge. Using wisdom, you will know how to apply what you have learned and to have a deeper understanding of it. Sometimes it is difficult to say no to those who want us to do something. You need to learn this skill.

Repeat these affirmations or write them in a notebook:

1. It is important to learn new things.
2. I will seek to be honest in all things.
3. I know that wisdom is more than knowledge.
4. I can tell someone “no” when they want me to do something I would rather not do.

**If I have been of service, if I have glimpsed more of the nature and essence of ultimate good, if I am inspired to reach wider horizons of thought and action, if I am at peace with myself, it has been a successful day.**

*Alex Noble*

## Chapter Three:

### *The Power of Thinking Positively*

**A person will worship something, have no doubt about that. We may think our tribute is paid in secret in the dark recesses of our hearts, but it will out. That which dominates our imaginations and our thoughts will determine our lives, and our character. Therefore, it behooves us to be careful what we worship, for what we are worshipping we are becoming.**

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

What are you worshipping? Are you dreaming of infinite possibilities or are your thoughts constantly bombarded with limitations? Do you worship your fears?

Washington Irving was once asked to speak at a public dinner given for Charles Dickens when he visited America. Irving tried to back out of it; certain he would fail to make a good impression on such an auspicious occasion. However, he was convinced to accept. When it was his turn to speak, he started out strongly, and then faltered. Soon he muttered some vague closing remarks and sat down. He turned to his friend and declared, "See, I told you I would fail."

Remember what you thought about yesterday makes you who you are today. Did the negative thinking pay off? Are you in a better position because you believed all those fears would come true? When you think negatively, you become bitter and depressed. This is not the way to live life fully nor is it any way in which to become successful. When you find yourself thinking about all the negatives, ask yourself if you want these thoughts. Do I want my self-limiting beliefs to lead to discontent, unhappiness and failure?

Undoubtedly your answer will be no. Therefore, you must be vigilant in ridding yourself of negative beliefs. You will need to remind yourself constantly that you are a magnificent creation of the Universe and you can accomplish anything.

As you nurture your good thoughts about yourself, you will discover those good thoughts become great ones. Your dreams begin to take shape and you see the ways in which you can make them come true. You will change from a despondent fearful person into someone capable of doing great and noble deeds. Before you were only half a person but now you are whole.

When you are fearful, you are more likely to do things that don't speak very highly of your moral character. The fearful man steals, cheats or murders, not a man of courage. The person of fear sees the easy way out and takes it without considering the consequences. When you are confident, you become someone of strong character. You can no longer live with the decisions you made but knew were wrong and you will consider your actions based on what is right.

Meditation is necessary to become courageous. You must now consider your thoughts carefully. Spend some time each day considering carefully those affirmations you are working on. Consider each positive thought until it becomes a part of your being. Listen to that inner voice. It will tell you if what you are thinking is right.

We often scoff at people who talk to themselves. However, speaking thoughts aloud give

them power and life. There is nothing wrong with voicing thoughts to the air when working out problems or making decisions. The spoken word can be better considered, analyzed and discarded or placed in a mental box for safekeeping.

One way of deluging your mind with the right type of thinking is to memorize quotes. The words of famous persons have a truth in them that gives them sticking power. Everyone knows a quote, although many don't realize it. Most all of us have heard, "It is better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all." However, you may not realize that the quote is from Tennyson.

The reality is there are no new ideas under the sun. Every idea we come up with has been thought of before. The fact that YOU thought it makes it significant. You can add to it or take away from it to make it something original. Once you have taken an idea and molded it to your own use, it becomes yours.

There is a danger, however, in simply taking another person's idea and making it your own. Look at the idea from your own unique perspective and develop it to make it your own. Do not blindly accept opinions and the beliefs of others. You are an individual.

Hang on to that independence and guard it fiercely. Do not become another face in the crowd. No one ever changed the world who blindly accepted the views of another.

Thinking positively will ultimately affect your physical health. Even if you are disabled, you can make a difference in how well you control your illness by what you are thinking. I am not suggesting you should simply pretend an illness or disability does not exist and that positive thinking will make it disappear. I am suggesting that you learn that you are more than your physical limitations.

### **EXERCISE:**

**Optimism:** Optimism is the ability to see the positive when you are surrounded by the negative. When you think positively about yourself, you begin to see the positive in the world. Optimism can have a positive effect on your physical health.

Repeat these affirmations or write them in your notebook:

1. I am a positive, happy person.
2. I am an individual and I can make my own decisions.
3. I can do the right thing when faced with a decision.
4. I can improve my physical health.

**I am in earnest. I will not equivocate; I will not excuse; I will not retreat a single inch and I will be heard.**

*William Lloyd Garrison*

## **Chapter Four:**

### ***Seeking Inspiration***

**The tragedy of life is not that it ends so soon, but that we wait so long to begin it.**

*W.M. Lewis*

Choose anyone whom you can admire. One of the women I most admire is Eleanor Roosevelt. I'm sure you can think of someone who has made a difference in the world. Learn all you can about that person. Read her biographies, writings and anything else you can get a hold of to discover what she did that made her successful. You will discover that in most cases the person you admire started life in much the same way you did. There was nothing special about their childhood. There was nothing to distinguish her from the kid down the street. She had a dream. She worked, failed and then succeeded. This life is your blueprint.

The great thing about books is they are the great leveler of society. Regardless of how poor you are, you can always get your hand on a book. The written word creates an environment in which we can all succeed. You will discover that within the pages of a book you can be transported through space and time to lands you may never see in a physical sense.

Music is another source of inspiration. It doesn't matter if it is classical, jazz, hip-hop or hard rock. Close your eyes and let the rhythm move you. Some of the greatest ideas in the world have come to the beat of a drum. Find the type of music to which you can most relate. If hard rock grates on your nerves, it obviously isn't going to inspire you.

Visit a museum. You may choose an art museum or one that holds the secrets of history. Art can fill you with wonder at the accomplishment of the artist. The portrait may lead you to dream of distant lands you might want to visit or people you want to meet. History inspires you by bringing you back in time. Consider the person who designed the artifact. Think of how he fulfilled his dream despite having lived at a difficult time. Imagine what it might have been like for someone who wrote political tracts in a country where his politics could have led to his death. Are you strong enough to push through to your own goals despite resistance?

Inspiration can be found in the people around you. If you want to be inspired, spend time with an influential person. Only a small percentage of those who inspire us actually become famous. Every day you have the opportunity to meet someone in your own community who leads life in such a way that people wish to emulate him. Tell someone you admire how you feel. Odds are he doesn't realize he is inspiring you and it will build confidence in you both.

Fear and timidity cause you to spend too much time living within yourself. Seek ways to reach out of your cocoon and spend time with others. Look people in the eye when you speak to them and hold yourself confidently. Once you have done this, find a way to reward yourself for a job well done.

When you find your source of inspiration, use this time to write down your resolutions and goals. Decide what you want to accomplish within the next day, week, month and year. If you know what you want to do five years down the road, write that down as well. If you fail to reach a goal, simply move it to a new deadline, don't drop it. You'll get there; I have faith in you.

## **EXERCISES:**

**Inspiration:** Look for inspiration in culture. Inspiration can be found in many different places such as music, art and writing. Use your inspiration to create goals and aspirations.

Repeat these affirmations or write them in your notebook:

1. I can find inspiration in many places.
2. I can inspire others.
3. I can tell someone he inspires me.
4. I can create goals and dreams.

**All our dreams can come true - if we have the courage to pursue them.**

*Walt Disney*

## **Chapter Five:**

### ***Learning to Concentrate***

**Concentration is my motto - first honesty, then industry, then concentration.**

*Andrew Carnegie*

When you are self-conscious, you tend to flit from one thing to another, never settling on any particular project, rarely making a decisive decision. You might be offered a great business deal but then give up at the first sign of difficulty. Concentration becomes nothing more than a card game.

It is important that you begin to focus on one thing at a time. When you are used to never staying with one project for any length of time, you must learn that while diversification may be the best way to invest your money, it is not the best way to invest your time.

Think about one thing you do well. One talent you could see yourself nurturing over the next twenty years or more and make that the focus of your long-term goal.

If you are unsure of what direction you might like to take, spend some time researching those areas in which you are interested. Maybe you're not even trying to make a career decision right now. Perhaps you're having trouble deciding on a hotel for your next vacation. The response is the same, write down those attributes you most desire in a hotel or job and do some research on the possibilities. This exercise alone will help you in your level of concentration.

Remember, it is not the quantity of work that distinguishes you; it is the quality. If you write twenty books on twenty different subjects, you will never be considered an authority. However, if you should write two or three books on one subject you have proven you are an expert and have researched your topic thoroughly.

Find something you love. You are living in fear because you are unhappy with the way your life is headed. Working at a job you detest will not leave you satisfied at the end of the day. It only adds to the negativity and depression. If you aren't totally in love with your work, try a different path.

Once you find a career you are happy with, take that same attitude with you to recreational activities. Don't play tennis simply because your brother-in-law needs a partner. If you don't like tennis, take up something that excites you. Look at everything in your life as a possible source of inspiration and you'll have more self-confidence in everything you do.

One of the added benefits to learning to concentrate is improved memory. Once you have trained yourself to concentrate on one task at a time you will discover you have an easier time remembering other things in your life. I don't suggest you throw away the PIM however.

As you consider the positives in your life and learn new things, you'll discover the ability to concentrate will follow naturally. Soon you'll become so absorbed in those things you love; you'll discover you have worked on a project for hours without moving on to twenty other things. You'll enjoy your work more, be able to relax and sleep more soundly.

## **EXERCISES:**

**Concentration:** Fix your mind on one thing at a time. Maintain your interest in a topic and work toward a definite goal. Take on new responsibilities as you feel you want to. Your desire for achievement will allow you to concentrate.

Repeat these affirmations or write them in your notebook:

1. I can do one thing at a time.
2. I can research my topic thoroughly.
3. I can avoid all distractions.
4. I will concentrate on my future success.

**Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan “press on” has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.**

*Calvin Coolidge*

## Chapter Six:

### *Your Physical Health*

#### Health is not simply the absence of sickness

*Hannah Green*

It is rare that you will find a book on self-confidence that has a chapter acknowledging the trials and tribulations of the disabled. It is no secret that good health is as important to positive thinking as positive thinking is to good health. For when you are not healthy, it does, indeed, make everything more difficult.

However, contrary to popular belief, it is completely possible to be happy despite a physical or emotional illness. You can continue to work toward your goals and dreams while still acknowledging that some things may be more challenging for you along the way. One way is to read about inspirational people who were disabled. You might look at the biographies of Helen Keller or Christopher Reeves. The author of ***Seabiscuit***, Laura Hillenbrand, wrote the book from her bed while suffering from debilitating Chronic Fatigue Syndrome that left her exhausted and dizzy most of the time. I personally have Diabetes, Undifferentiated Collagen Disease and complications from the treatments that are causing my bones to die. For all of us it is simply a matter of not accepting the option that our dreams are not possible.

One way you can make yourself feel more confident is to always look clean and put together. Even if you work from home, make the effort every morning to take a shower and get dressed. You'll find that once you have taken the time to prepare for the day your brain is better equipped to deal with that nagging "to do" list.

Make an effort to get outside for at least a few moments each day. A short walk and fresh air will make you feel invigorated and ready for the next project if you're feeling fatigued. In our technologically inclined society, we tend to move from the house to the car to the office without setting foot outside. This is especially true if you have a garage and work in a city office building. You may believe you are avoiding air pollution in this way. When you consider the number of germs, molds and other disease causing agents that are harbored indoors, you realize the outdoor air is probably more beneficial.

Physicians estimate that we only use approximately one-fourth of our lung capacity as adults unless we are engaging in frequent aerobic exercise. If you cannot participate in strenuous exercise, practice deep breathing. This will not only give you more lung capacity it will also help calm you when you have an anxiety attack.

There is no doubt that worry and fear contribute to illness. Regardless of your physical condition now, thinking positively and developing self-confidence can help you improve your health for the future. For some there has been a complete reversal of disease. For those who are disabled, learning to deal with your fears can result in the ability to take better control of the disease and perhaps stop its progression. Self-confidence also makes you more willing to play an active role in maintaining control over your treatment.

Be certain to get enough sleep. Sleep deprivation has been responsible for more deaths on the highways than drunk driving. Often the root of insomnia is working too many hours at a stressful job and worry. Once you begin to think more positively and are more confident, you will discover it is easier to sleep restfully and those medications you've been taking to

help you sleep are not longer necessary.

Be wary of working too many hours. Relaxation is as necessary to the soul as food is to the body. Even if you are working at something you truly enjoy, if you allow yourself to work at it too much you'll suffer from burnout and the enthusiasm you now feel for the activity will be lost. Remember this; no one has ever said at the end of his life that he wished he had worked more. When you get an opportunity for a vacation, take it. You'll never regret that time you spent with your family and you may find yourself pleasantly surprised at how much you learn from your children once you spend some time listening to them with your full attention.

### **EXERCISE:**

**Health:** Although the ideal is a strong body with a strong mind, it is entirely possible to be confident and reach your goals despite a disability. Ridding yourself of fear and worry will positively affect your physical health regardless of your body's status at this time. Work for balance in your life of work and relaxation.

Repeat these affirmations or write them in a notebook:

1. I will breathe deeply so my lung power will increase.
2. I will exercise, as I am able.
3. I will maintain a balance between work and relaxation.
4. I can become confident despite any disabilities.
5. I will give my body the sleep it needs to function properly.

**I keep the telephone of my mind open to peace, harmony, health, love and abundance. Then, whenever doubt, anxiety, or fear try to call me, they keep getting a busy signal and soon they'll forget my number.**

*Edith Armstrong*

## Chapter Seven:

### *Discovering Your Character*

**The best index to a person's character is {a} how he treats people who can't do him any good and {b} how he treats people who can't fight back.**

*Abigail Van Buren*

Perhaps you have lived your entire life without realizing who you are. This is probably the main reason for a mid-life crisis. You may go out and buy a new car or change careers without fully understanding what it is that you want to do. It is difficult to understand yourself if you are looking at the world through glasses clouded by fear and anxiety.

One of the biggest mistakes people make in working for someone else is in making themselves invaluable. If you become so necessary to your position the boss decides you cannot be replaced there will be no opportunities for advancement. The fear reasoning behind this Catch-22 situation is that if you aren't invaluable the boss may replace you.

Don't take on the responsibilities of another person. If you are intelligent and industrious, you will learn to pay attention around the workplace and know what you need to do in advance.

Once you begin thinking positively about yourself and become more confident, you will begin to discover what motivates you to move forward. That motivating force will compel you in the right direction in everything you do. First, however, you must learn to listen to your intuition. Seek that still, small voice inside you that tells you when something is right or wrong. You will recognize it as the funny feeling at the pit of your stomach or the goose bumps you get when something moves you. Meditate on listening to it. Learn to trust yourself and you will discover all the things that make you the wonderful person you are. You can learn to rely on your own choices and decisions. It is far easier to allow others or fate to decide your destinations. It is much more challenging to forge ahead and nurture your individuality. The independent soul gets what he wants from life. The one who follows the crowd is often left behind. Question everything with which you find yourself at odds. Chances are if you are not comfortable with a situation or decision, there's an excellent reason for it.

If you were to ask someone who is living their dream life if they are lucky, they would probably tell you yes. Those who are confident in themselves and follow their instincts tend to view themselves as lucky while those who allow fear to steer their life tend to report that they are unlucky. Decide that you will be lucky and create the life of which you dream.

You will discover the road to success is paved with potholes. Don't be discouraged by this, failures are necessary obstacles to success. Learn from them. Take what you can from disappointment then let it go.

#### **EXERCISE:**

**Character:** Learn to accept yourself for who you are. Learn your motivations and aspirations. Trust yourself to make the right decisions and take the right path to happiness. You can succeed. Use every opportunity to learn from your failures.

Repeat these affirmations or write them in your notebook

1. I am a whole, loving human being.
2. I am an individual.
3. I can make the right decisions.
4. I will listen to my intuition.
5. I can learn from my failures.

**What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us.**

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

## Chapter Eight:

### It's the Small Things That Count

**I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can do, or any kindness I can show to any creature, let me do it now. Let me not defer it, for I shall not pass this way again.**

*Stephen Grellet*

Take a moment to imagine yourself in a situation. You are walking down a busy city street and you come across an elderly man begging for money. He has obviously been homeless for quite some time. What is your reaction to his presence? Be honest with yourself. Are you appalled by his appearance and situation? Do you feel compelled to help him with money or a meal? Are you afraid he might try to hurt you? Consider why you feel the way you do toward this man.

I personally know a person who will not reach out to someone in need simply because he believes in the motto: “give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime.” This is not a bad message in and of itself, but too often, it provides an excuse for turning away from someone who needs your help. When you reach out to someone, you are not assuming he cannot be self-reliant, you are simply allowing yourself to nurture him at that particular time in his life. Consider that to teach a man to fish he must be provided with a fishing pole and the proper fishing technique. Without the necessary skills to become self-reliant, he is doomed to spend the rest of his life on the streets. Just as your fears are keeping you from becoming self-confident, the homeless man is dealing with his own fears and feelings of inadequacies. No one should be expected to build a completely new life totally alone. In addition, when you help another you also help yourself. Giving someone the help he needs gives you the confidence you need to rebuild your own life.

It takes real strength to be gentle and loving toward others. Hate and violence is a sign of weakness and fear. When you lash out in anger you are telling those around you more about yourself than you are about them. Just as depression is anger turned inward, so violence and hate is fear turned outward.

Do you feel the need to be always in control? The person who needs to control a situation is acting out of fear. Most times, you feel each situation you are in must play out the way you perceived it in your mind and when it doesn't you panic. There were no back-up plans for extenuating circumstances and you lack the spontaneity to deal with the unrehearsed. For the most part, you may find it difficult to trust others to take any lead in matters. For some who need to control a situation the anger that is felt when a situation does not go as planned leads to abuse. This is often seen in marriage when one spouse blames the other for those things that cannot be controlled. Unfortunately, the person who feels the need to be in control all the time is often feared by those around him. No one respects him and his opinions are often disregarded.

Perhaps you are a perfectionist. Remind yourself that failure is not the final chapter. It is often a prerequisite for success. There is really no such thing as a perfect person. If there were, would you really want to know her? What's important is the unique perspective you bring to any project or idea. You can only give your best to all that you do.

Just as you need to help yourself. As I mentioned before, no one can rebuild an entire life alone. Once you learn to ask for what you need you will find your confidence increases as you reach out to others. There really are people out there who want to help you reach your goals and dreams.

Accept the advice of others as you learn to listen. As you trust yourself more you'll find that you are able to distinguish the good advice from the poor. You must learn to discard that advice that doesn't fit and absorb the advice that does.

As you develop self-confidence and rid yourself of fear, you will naturally develop a new desire to be with other people. You will discover an ability within yourself to love honestly and unconditionally. No longer will you need to hold on to the old prejudices and hatred. No longer will you need to control a situation because you don't trust others. You will discover there is much freedom in this new life.

### **EXERCISE:**

**Caring:** The greatest ability in the world is the ability to love others. You will want to help those around you who cannot help themselves and give opportunities to those who need them. As you develop this ability, you will find that you also care more about yourself.

Repeat these affirmations or write them in your notebook:

1. I am capable of loving others.
2. I am capable of loving myself.
3. I do not need perfection or control in my life.
4. I can accept the loving advice of others.
5. I will help change the life of someone who needs me.

**Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.**

*Leo Buscaglia*

## Chapter Nine:

### *Finding the Humor in Life*

**A person without a sense of humor is like a wagon without springs. It's jolted by every pebble on the road.**

*Henry Ward Beecher*

When you live in a world dominated by fear and self-recrimination, it is difficult to have a sense of humor. You tend to take life seriously and look for ways to prove that nothing good ever happens. It is when you can find the humor in life that you begin to realize nothing is ever as bad as it seems.

Humor can also be used to cover fears. The man who constantly tells jokes at the wrong time is covering his fear of making a bad impression and, thus, he does make one. On the other hand, he may be afraid of rejection from the people in the room. When humor is used inappropriately, others tend to view you as unintelligent or misinformed. This type of humor you need to avoid. You also don't need the humor that denigrates another human being. For the most part, you need to learn to read your audience.

When you can laugh at your difficulties, they lose the power to intimidate you. When we realize how ridiculous a situation is, it no longer has the power to control our thoughts and actions. We decide our focus in life, not our circumstances.

Humor can also lessen depression. When we laugh, we take away from the feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. Humor offers us an opportunity to turn outside our self-contained shells and find another way of coping with our feelings.

Research has proven that laughter decreases pain and disease. Endorphins are released in our bodies that we need to deal with pain or injury. Norman Cousins used humor to cure himself of cancer.

There are many ways to find more humor in your life. I will tell coaching clients to read cartoons or jokes on a daily basis. Keep a journal of what is happening in your life at the time and see if you can find some humor or irony in it. At one time when I was dealing with poverty, disability and I had just come out of an abusive marriage, I would joke that I was the person others used as an example when they told someone things could always get worse. In fact, one friend did just that!

Sometimes, when you are meditating, insert a humorous image into your scene. You might be imagining yourself on a beach, the sun warm on your skin. What might happen if a fish suddenly grew legs, walked out of the water and started chatting with you? Make it as wild as you can imagine and use those humorous images to confront your fears.

There is no pain so great you cannot get through it with humor. Perhaps you are mourning the death of a loved one. You might start remembering all the funny things you two did while she was alive. When my father died, my brothers and I thought of all the things he did while we were children, such as mowing the lawn in Bermuda shorts and black dress socks.

Find laughter and you will find self-confidence. Fears cannot stand up against a merry heart. There will always be time for tears, but sometimes we need to make it a point to laugh.

## EXERCISE:

Laughter: Laughter is a cure for pain and disease. Humor neutralizes negative situations and makes them more bearable. When you laugh you draw others to you because they see someone they can enjoy being with.

Repeat these affirmations or write them in your notebook:

1. I can find humor in difficult times.
2. Laughter will help my pain.
3. I can draw people to me with my laughter.
4. I can face my fears with humor.

**When humor goes, there goes civilization.**

*Erma Bombeck*

## Chapter Ten:

### *Your Imagination*

**Imagination has brought mankind through the dark ages to its present state of civilization. Imagination led Columbus to discover America. Imagination led Franklin to discover electricity.**

*L. Frank Baum*

Your imagination can be your greatest ally or your worst enemy. When you use your imagination to create works of art, writing or in discovering your talents and gifts, you discover you have the whole world open to you. However, first you must discover how to channel it away from your current fear state.

There is no place your fear is better fed than in your imagination. Once an idea that something is dangerous is directed to the imagination, it becomes bigger and more fearful. An anxiety attack in a public place can soon become agoraphobia. What you imagine yourself to be, you will become.

Your dreams are also nurtured in your imagination. It is within this realm you realize that nothing is impossible and that whatever you can conceive you can achieve. Here books are written, great paintings first created and the next top product for the infomercials is designed. The successful person sees his goals coming to fruition while the fearful person plays the scene of rejection repeatedly until it becomes reality to her.

Imagine your fears and then put yourself within that scene facing them head on. You may fear rejection yet envision yourself stepping confidently into a room full of people and facing them with a smile of acknowledgement. They see your confidence and strong presence; they greet you with a smile. You find someone in the room you believe you would like to speak with and you walk up to them without hesitation. You might ask then a question about their job or home life. You are interested in what they have to say and you know they are interested in you. Suddenly you realize you are no longer afraid and you have conquered rejection.

Now, imagine yourself in a career you would love. You have reached your goal and you are successful. Envision the people around you telling you what a wonderful job you are doing and how much they admire your abilities. This is the vision you want to hold on to and come back to whenever you think your fears are beginning to come back. Whether it's a career goal or some other goal, use it as a safe haven in your imagination where you can go to center yourself.

If you have ever sold a product or service, you know how important the imagination is. You use imagery and promise to ignite the imagination of others so they will believe your offering is the only one out there worth purchasing. It is the same with your fears. It is the same with your dreams.

#### EXERCISE:

Imagination; Your imagination can be a two-edged sword. It can be used to keep your fears alive or to nurture your dreams. You need to choose which it will do for you. Use your

imagination to reach your goals.

Repeat these affirmations or write them in your notebook:

1. I will use my imagination to nurture my dreams.
2. I will not allow my imagination to dwell on my fears.
3. I have a vision of the future and it is good.
4. I envision my goals and I will rise up to meet them.

**There are no rules of architecture for a castle in the clouds.**

*Gilbert K. Chesterton*

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