

# **UnHypnosis**

*How to Wake Up, Start Over,  
And Create the Life  
You Were Meant to Live*

**Steve Taubman**

Powertrack Publications  
San Francisco, CA

Copyright © 2005 by Steven Taubman

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system except for brief review, without the express permission of the publisher.

Powertrack Publications  
PO Box 547  
Williston, VT 05495  
[www.unhypnosis.com](http://www.unhypnosis.com)

Layout design and printing by Booksurge

Additional copies of this book may be ordered through our website or through conventional wholesale and retail channels. For more information, contact Steve Taubman through his website, [www.unhypnosis.com](http://www.unhypnosis.com).

ISBN 0-9766271-7-5

LCCN 2005902361

## **Dedication**

*I dedicate this book to Sacha O'Connor, friend, lover, muse, and wise counsel, who's inspired my creativity, confidence and ambition, and with whom I've been learning, slowly but steadily, the difference between love and attachment.*

## Acknowledgements

There are many people to whom I am grateful. My path to understanding has been forged by individuals from all walks of life. My wonderful friends and family have all played a part in my journey. In particular, I'd like to thank my father, who taught me discipline and clarity, and my mother who taught me compassion and kindness.

For an understanding of success philosophy, I've turned to the writings and teachings of such masters as Mark Victor Hansen, Wayne Dyer, Napoleon Hill, Norman Vincent Peale, Brian Tracy, Og Mandino, and Emmett Fox. Each has contributed something to my success, as have many who remain unnamed.

For a glimpse of spiritual attainment, I've tried to emulate the path of seekers like Ram Dass, Deepak Chopra, Trungpa Rinpoche, Eckhart Tolle, SN Goenka, Pema Chodron, and Swami Muktananda, as well as the eternal wisdom of the enlightened masters of all religions. Their contributions to my serenity can never be repaid.

Several people kindly extended me their support in a variety of ways, offering ideas, inspiring my creativity, and acting as resources. Thanks to Steve Cody and Ann Pechaver for their public relations expertise, George Foster for lending his skilled eye to my book cover design, John Rieck for walking me through the publication process so clearly, and Tim Nitz for his involvement with web development and other tools for communicating my message. I'm especially appreciative of my author friends, Paul Foxman, Joe Citro, Archer Mayor, and Chris Bohjalian for their encouragement and insight. A special thank you goes out to Richard Orshoff, master psychotherapist and spiritual teacher who, to the best of my knowledge, coined the term unhypnosis.

I'd also like to thank my many fans who have supported my shows and lectures by their enthusiastic participation and have continued to hold me to the highest standard, forcing me to grow.

# Table of Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Forward .....</b>                   | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Preface.....</b>                    | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Introduction.....</b>               | <b>7</b>  |
| Unhypnosis?                            |           |
| What does it mean to be hypnotized?    |           |
| Why don't we feel hypnotized?          |           |
| What is life like after hypnosis?      |           |
| A promise                              |           |
| Do over                                |           |
| The journey                            |           |
| Take a mental inventory                |           |
| <b>The Overall Strategy.....</b>       | <b>17</b> |
| The Five Layers of Consciousness       |           |
| A remarkable meeting                   |           |
| Empty cup                              |           |
| <b>The First Layer-Essence.....</b>    | <b>32</b> |
| Nothing matters                        |           |
| The path                               |           |
| Notice the beauty                      |           |
| Extreme weather                        |           |
| Meditation                             |           |
| Mindfulness and addiction              |           |
| UnHypnosis and recovery from addiction |           |
| Mindfulness and forgiveness            |           |
| Unconditional happiness                |           |

**The Second Layer-Beliefs.....45**

Values  
Beliefs  
The elephant  
Reframing  
Use your upsets for self-discovery  
Use questions  
Withdrawal symptoms  
Become conscious

**The Third Layer-Goals.....67**

Burnout and purpose  
Express your unique gift  
Start the goal-setting machine in motion  
Tough love  
A surprising fact  
Goal-setting fundamentals  
Goal-setting technology- COUGAR method  
Wash one dish  
Managing discouragement, doubt, and depression  
Giving goals  
Prosperity consciousness  
Money goals  
Congruence  
Feelings vs. reality  
Preparation  
Passion vs. detachment  
Witnessing and precession  
Big goals/multiple goals

**The Fourth Layer-Manifestation.....97**

The swinging door  
The rules of manifestation  
Unfolding our good

Practicing manifestation  
A game  
Instant manifestation  
The seed of creation

**The Fifth Layer-Interaction.....110**

Giving  
Interrupting the stream of thought  
The experiential nature of enlightenment  
Inducing consciousness in others  
The gift of attention  
Witnessing  
Sharing  
Humor  
Suspend judgment  
RARE  
Kindness  
Appropriate distance  
Receiving  
Show your work  
Share with care  
Your outer presentation

**Wrapping Up.....140**

How the journey unfolds  
Parting words

**Appendix I-Recommended reading.....160**

**Appendix II-Sentence stems for growth..180**

## Success

*To laugh often and love much; to win the respect of intelligent person and the affection of children; to earn the approbation of honest citizens and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to give of one's self; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to have played and laughed with enthusiasm and sung with exultation; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived--this is to have succeeded.*

-Ralph Waldo Emerson



## **Preface**

*“In the midst of winter, I discovered within myself an invincible summer.”*

-Albert Camus

I've reinvented myself more times than you can imagine, and life keeps getting better. I've been a physician, pilot, actor, musician, magician, trainer, author ... and a hypnotist. I judge each new project on the following two criteria. First, will it help me touch the lives of others in a positive and constructive way? Second, will it be fun? I love to learn new skills that require practice and concentration, and I love to teach others about what I'm learning.

One of my favorite lessons to share is that we are not trapped by our circumstances in life. We aren't defined by job, family, current finances, or education. Whatever we are doing can be changed, and we can start over...now!

Of course, it takes courage and vision: courage to step out past the familiar and risk failure, ridicule, and fear; vision to be able to first see ourselves in new circumstances of our own creation. Most of us have stopped using our God-given right to dream, to fantasize, to imagine. We stop before we start, and we rob ourselves of the wonder and awe of life's adventure. Imagine if we dared to dream and take action on our dreams!

My hypnosis and magic shows are an entertaining reminder of what's possible when the source of our inspiration is set free.

The source is within each of us, but we trap it behind our limiting beliefs. In my shows, I offer people a chance to come out from behind those beliefs: to play, to imagine, and to reclaim their childlike lightness through laughter, fun and astonishment.

In essence, what I'm offering is freedom. The real life magic that takes place on my stage is more about unhypnosis than hypnosis, waking people up rather than putting them to sleep. It's about using the hypnotic state to communicate with the subconscious mind, coaxing it out of its trance, out of its limiting beliefs. Freed of those beliefs, people are filled with real happiness. In essence, I invite people to shed their hypnotic programming and to come out and play.

In the following pages, I'm going to attempt to awaken within you that sense of wonder and possibility and to provide you with tools for making your dreams into reality.

*"Dreaming is an act of pure imagination  
attesting in all men a creative power, which, if  
it were available in waking, would make every  
man a Dante or a Shakespeare."*

-Blount

## Introduction

*“The key to wisdom is this -- constant and frequent questioning ... for by doubting we are led to question and by questioning we arrive at the truth.”*

-Peter Abelard

### Unhypnosis?

What does that mean? If unhypnosis is something I should want, doesn't that imply that I'm hypnotized? How can that be? I'm fully awake! I see these words on the page and I'm thinking clearly. I can't be hypnotized...

*Picture this. You're sitting in the audience at a hypnosis show. A hypnotized subject on stage has been told by the hypnotist that he hates the show, that he's not hypnotized, and that there's an invisible wall in front of him, preventing him from leaving the stage. On cue, the subject jumps up, yells at the hypnotist, and begins to storm off. But he hits the wall and recoils back, furious for this impediment. The hypnotist tells him that he's free to go, but he can't. The hypnotist asks him if he's hypnotized, and he says, “Of course not!” “Then go,” says the hypnotist. Still, he can't. “What's stopping you?” asks the hypnotist. “There's a wall,” Cries the volunteer. “There's no wall,” says the hypnotist. His words fall on deaf ears. The illusion is simply more powerful than reality. Yet, the subject insists that he's fully awake.*

*Another subject is given an onion and told that it's the most delicious fruit he's ever tasted. He munches it greedily, commenting on its delectable sweetness.*

*A third subject, with a history of shyness, is told that she's the most influential public speaker known to mankind and that she has an obligation to spread her inspiring message to the masses. Without skipping a beat, this timid young woman grabs the microphone and launches into an animated diatribe to rival the likes of Anthony Robbins.*

How do these stories relate to our reality? What if we're all hypnotized, stuck behind invisible walls that exist only in our minds? Suppose our preferences were actually colored by hypnotic programming and that what we felt we deserved was similarly the result of hypnosis. How would we know it? Could it be that our conviction that we're fully awake is a misunderstanding of the facts? If so, how can we see through the illusion to embrace the limitless potential that awaits us? How can we discover and achieve what we really want, separate from the set of desires hypnotically imposed upon us, and predictably become fully engaged in life? How can we *wake up*?

In fact, we are all hypnotized. It's part of our upbringing, and there's nothing we could have done to prevent it. And there's no one to blame. The people who hypnotized us were hypnotized themselves, and they had no more control over their actions than the people who did it to them. It's our legacy.

## **What does it mean to be hypnotized?**

There's so much misunderstanding about what hypnosis really is. The simplest way to explain it is to say that hypnosis is a learning experience; a tool for impressing new information upon someone. The simple explanation that we hypnotists use says that the mind is divided into both a conscious and a subconscious part, but, of course, there are no actual parts that you can dissect out of the brain. The simple explanation is just a model of understanding, based on our observation of how the mind seems to work. The conscious mind is that part of our thinking that we're aware of, and the subconscious mind is that part of our thinking that is below our awareness. The theory suggests that it's the latter, the subconscious, which is more important in determining our behavior; that is, we end up making important decisions about what to do and how to interact with the world around us largely for reasons we never get to understand or to consider on a conscious level. The pathway through which those thoughts came to live in our subconscious mind is the result of hypnosis.

If you don't think very highly of yourself, or if you're afraid of clowns, or if you're a chain smoker, I can tell you to think more highly of yourself, or that clowns aren't scary, or that smoking is bad for you. Chances are, people have tried to tell you how to think or behave before, and it hasn't worked. Why not? Because they were communicating with your conscious mind. To make an impact, a message has to reach deeper into the subconscious mind, and this requires techniques for bypassing the conscious mind. Think of your conscious mind as a sentinel, standing guard over your subconscious mind. It

only allows thoughts to enter which are consistent with what you already believe. In order to “slip in” a new belief, you have to lull the guard to sleep. That’s what I do.

But, that’s also what’s been done to you by your parents, teachers, mentors, and society in general. When your guard was off duty, when you were too young or impressionable to fight it, messages were delivered to your subconscious mind, bypassing your “critical faculty,” the part of your conscious mind that deflects unwanted information. So, without your being aware of it, you were hypnotized, and your subconscious mind is now full of stuff you didn’t put there and may not want. What are the messages we’ve been hypnotized to believe? Everything from who we are in relation to our world, to what we want, to what we deserve, to what we’re capable of accomplishing. Sometimes, these things come into conflict with one another and suffering ensues. For example, you might have come to feel that you want great wealth, but also that you don’t deserve it or that you’re incapable of achieving it. Such a combination would result in significant psychological pain, and as long as your hypnotic programming remains intact, you’d be powerless over that pain.

As a hypnotist, my job is to communicate directly with the subconscious mind of my subjects. It’s interesting to contemplate what hypnosis is and how it relates to our day-to-day experience. We assume that, because we are awake we’re not hypnotized. Yet, as I’ve said, in the middle of my show, I ask my subjects, who, up to that moment have been doing outlandish, crazy things, if they are hypnotized. Uniformly, they say no. They are, in fact, emphatic on that point. They are

offended by the notion that they are anything but fully awake. After all, their eyes are open. They can see me, hear me, understand my words, and make “rational judgments.” Isn’t that the way we define the experience of being awake? Yet, with the snap of my fingers or the sound of a particular piece of music, they’re on their feet grabbing shoes to talk to the president, or recoiling in repulsion at the ghastly smell of the person to their right or left. Perhaps, they don’t really know when they’re under the effect of hypnotic suggestions. And, perhaps...neither do we. Charles Tart, the professor, philosopher, and author of *Waking Up*, says that we exist in a “cultural trance,” that, in fact, we are all hypnotized. We just don’t know it. Our lives are less free, less exciting, less immediate, and less open to possibilities, not because those possibilities don’t exist, but because our cultural hypnosis keeps us from seeing reality as it is.

*In my show, I suggest to a young woman that a gentleman in the audience is her favorite, sexy movie star; Brad Pitt for example. Upon hearing the cue word, she jumps out of her seat and runs into his arms, seeing Brad Pitt before her...even if he really looks more like Karl Malden. She, in essence, paints a picture with her mind which overlays the actual reality before her. No amount of evidence will convince her of her error, because the illusion is so convincing.*

### **Why don’t we feel hypnotized?**

Does a fish see the water in which it swims? Of course not. The medium in which we live and have lived since we developed conscious perception is invisible to us. We think



hypnosis should look a certain way, so we disregard all the evidence that indicates that we're hypnotized. But being hypnotized doesn't *feel like* anything. It's just a condition of being conditioned. That's it.

One of my favorite stories is about the child who slips into his grandfather's bedroom and paints Limburger cheese, an extremely smelly cheese, onto his grandfather's mustache while he sleeps. On awakening, the grandfather sniffs, considers a moment, and says, "This room smells like Limburger cheese!" He leaves the room and goes through the house, declaring that each room smells like Limburger cheese. Finally, he steps out onto the porch, sniffs, and cries, "Oh, my God, the *whole world* smells like Limburger cheese!!!"

I remember reading somewhere that we see the world, not as it is, but as we are. Like the grandfather in my story, what's actually coming from us appears to be coming from everything around us. Our trance is so strong and compelling that we have no hope of seeing through it to the truth. This may seem like bad news, but knowing that we're in trance can liberate us. If we're entrapped by our unconscious adherence to an illusion, it is our conscious recognition of that fact that will ultimately set us free. Gurdjieff, the esteemed philosopher, said, "*The first step to escaping from prison is realizing you're in prison.*"

### **What is life like after hypnosis?**

A life without hypnosis is a life of freedom. Buddhist notions of liberation and enlightenment derive from the concept that

we're living in illusion, and that, freed of that illusion, we experience joy, contentment, enthusiasm, love, compassion, and a whole host of other qualities that we've mistakenly sought elsewhere. It is possible to achieve liberation from our illusion, to wake up from our trance, to become un hypnotized. At some level you know this, and I assume that is why you've decided to read this book.

In the following chapters, I'm going to present a model of consciousness, dividing the mind into five layers. I hope that this represents one of the most comprehensive models available for connecting the dots between the spiritual, psychological, and material aspects of our experience. I also believe that each of these layers must be addressed individually for health and happiness to become a possibility. Much of what we find when we study the content of each layer of our consciousness is useless, counterproductive data unknowingly imposed upon us at an earlier stage of life through the methods of hypnosis. It's the job of the truth-seeker to peel away each layer, evaluate its contents, and make conscious choices about what to keep and what to change. In a state of complete awareness, we ultimately connect with the deepest part of ourselves.

One of the failings of the personal growth movement in this country is its inability to connect strategies for gaining wealth with strategies for maintaining a connection with our spiritual essence. People desiring wealth have been led to choose the superficial path offered them, while those seeking deeper truth have been encouraged to turn away from material acquisition.

Neither of these approaches will, by themselves, bring about happiness.

To succeed outwardly alone will result in emptiness. “What profiteth a man who gains the world but loses his soul?” In my experience, however, turning within and neglecting outer prosperity and the dance of creativity results in discontent as well. Some part of the consciousness yearns for expression. It is possible to bring these two poles of inner growth and outer growth into relationship with each other and to have a rich, rewarding life both on the inside and on the outside.

I’m writing this book because I want to share my passion for some life-changing ideas, ideas that I have used personally to improve my attitudes, beliefs, and outward success. Some are well-worn truths available in thousands of self-help books the world over. Others are processed bits of wisdom from a wide variety of spiritual teachers, philosophers, motivational speakers, and life coaches I’ve encountered along my way. Many of the ideas I’ll present are controversial and may fly in the face of what you’ve been taught or have come to believe.

What I hope to offer are the fruits of many years of my experience from studying a broad spectrum of great thinkers and a synthesis of seemingly contradictory ideologies into a useable life plan. I’ve worked diligently to break through the inertia of my habitual patterns, thought deeply about the implications and applications of various principles, and have arrived at a system that works for me. If you want to succeed in implementing these ideas, you’ll have to do the same. I hope you do, because the rewards are amazing.

This book is not meant to be merely theoretical but also practical. Contained in these pages are ideas which I've actually used and shared with many other people who have benefited from them. In my capacity as a healer, lecturer, and entertainer, I believe that I've synthesized a systematic approach for growth, and I've tried to bring continuity into my life by using these principles in every interaction, regardless of the role I'm playing at the time. So, whether I'm making people laugh in my comedy hypnosis show, or inducing deep thought in my clinical practice, or teaching life skills in my lectures, these ideas are in my mind, and I'm communicating them somehow.

Throughout this book, I advocate self-knowledge, awareness of moment-to-moment experience, and absolute honesty. I'll do my best to adhere to the principles I advocate. In this moment, I'm not feeling that great. It's late, and I'd much rather watch a mindless TV show and then go to bed. Plus, I've got that free-floating anxiety that accompanies the beginning of any new project and which has followed me through my life, often dampening my enthusiasm and causing me to question the value of all my efforts at personal growth.

On the other hand, I can look back at my day and at the last few years of my life in general and say things have been good...very good. Today, I woke at 11 a.m. I slept late because I spent hours last night on the phone with my beautiful, brilliant friend, Sacha, whose wisdom and insight I'm sure will help round out what I have to say in this book. I was able to sleep late because my boss is an incredibly loving,

forgiving guy with a great sense of humor and an appreciation for his employee's need for sleep. In short, he's...me. So, among a great many other things, I can be thankful that I have no one to answer for but myself. In fact, I haven't worked for anyone else since I was twenty-two. In this book, you'll learn how to do the same thing.

After sleeping late, I exercised, meditated, took a beautiful walk along Burlington's scenic waterfront, which is coincidentally my back yard, made myself a delicious, nutritious breakfast, drank a big glass of water, and walked out the door refreshed and happy.

Driving down the road, I smiled, thinking how fortunate I've been in my life, how blessed. I continued to think that all the way to the airport, where I met up with my ex-girlfriend and her son to take them for a ride in my airplane as his seventh birthday present. He'd never been in a plane before. You should have seen the look on his face when we rose slowly off the ground, and he was flying for the first time! I even let him take the controls for a little while, and for that brief moment...he was flying.

Why am I telling you all this? Because everything I've accomplished is possible, and anyone can do it. Anyone. Including you! I have the life I want. I don't settle. I don't compromise. I don't have regrets. Life is so very short, and on the off chance that we only get one go-around, I want mine to be meaningful and fun. How about you?

To me, a satisfying life is one in which you give more than you get. So many people are looking for a handout, a ticket to happiness without any expenditure of time, energy, or presence on their part. In this book, you'll see that there's no such thing. And, it's just as well because without the act of giving, life quickly becomes dull and meaningless. The high point of my day today wasn't feeling the leather upholstery in my sports car. What do you think it was? Right. It was the look on that little boy's face as he took flight.

I wasn't thinking only about the momentary thrill he was experiencing. I was thinking about the long-term implications for him. Here, now was a child whose boundaries were forever changed. For the rest of his life, he'll know that he can fly. That one recognition will, at some level, influence every decision he makes. His sense of what's possible is now bigger than it was before, and I'm grateful to be the one to open that door for him. As we go along, I invite you to think about the contribution that you're going to make to the lives of others, as your life gets bigger and better.

### **A promise**

This book will change your life: guaranteed. If you follow the steps I lay out and take the time to ponder the deeper questions raised, you'll grow. In the following pages, you're going to see something you may never have seen before: an honest, balanced look at the process of growth, with the challenges left in. Even if you've read a million self-help books (like me), you'll be confronting questions of your own existence in an entirely new way. My intention is to share the technology of

change and growth, sparing none of the gory details. So many books of inspiration fail to deal with the negativity which inevitably arises as a form of resistance to new habits and attitudes. Not so here. You'll hear about failure, discouragement, depression, anxiety, confusion, fear, hopelessness, and frustration along with the good stuff.

Why? Because, I'm assuming that you're human, and like all humans, you've become a slave to your habits of mind. When you try to change, a deep, primal part of you cries out. And your mind puts up roadblocks to your success, disguised so well that you're often unaware of what's gone wrong. You must be taught to spot these cunning ploys of your tricky mind so you can counteract their effect and keep moving towards your perfect life.

I also share these ideas because there's an underlying shame that we all face whenever those negative feelings arise, and we start thinking that we're alone and hopeless and broken and irreparable. Bringing them in to the light of day and discussing their universality will help you realize that what you thought was an isolated case of despair is actually a rather common and correctible temporary condition...and, as Ram Dass says,

*"Despair is the prerequisite to the next level of consciousness."*

**Do over**

One of the great cinematic moments I can think of is the scene in *City Slickers*, in which Billy Crystal's character talks to his friend about how, when they were kids, if they were playing a game and something happened that they didn't like, someone would yell, "Do over!" He then says, "That's what this is. My life is a do-over."

Previously, Crystal's character had been a sullen, bored, depressed "working stiff." He was turning forty, and although nothing in his life was particularly wrong, none of it was quite right. His wife and daughter loved him, and his job was adequate, but he felt no sense of purpose or meaning.

On his wife's prompting, he takes a trip to a working ranch, where he and a few friends drive cattle across the Wyoming plains and, along the way, encounter hardships, challenges, and some very dangerous situations. He faces the challenges, commits to an outcome, and pays the price of success. In the end, he gets his life back. He regains a sense of purpose, enthusiasm, and energy. He falls in love with his life all over again. He gets to do it over.

There is nothing whatsoever stopping you from having your do-over. Nothing, that is, except the conviction that it can't be done. In this book, we'll explore the attitudes that have kept you stuck where you are, and we're going to shake them loose.

Your outer life need not change at all. In the movie, Billy Crystal goes back to the same life he left behind. All that changes is his inner experience but that's all that needs to



change. When you change on the inside, everything around you changes as well.

### **The journey**

For me, the journey has been remarkable: remarkably good and remarkably difficult. I've encountered an enormous amount of my own negativity and have walked down more blind alleys than I can count. I've made progress which I've quickly undone through pride or fear, and I've gotten stuck for what seemed like lifetimes in the quagmire of confusion. I've tried in vain to resolve the paradoxes that any thinking person is bound to face as he or she begins to ask questions.

We'll discuss some of those paradoxes, and although we'll find that they're ultimately unsolvable, we'll see how few of them really need to be solved. Part of the journey of a successful, intelligent person is the recognition that ambiguity is part of the game, and the ability to live with ambiguity is a prerequisite to contentment and happiness. Besides, as mentalist and philosopher Roderick Russell says, "*Life isn't a puzzle to be solved. It's a mystery to be resolved.*"

What I'm suggesting is that the road is not a straight one. Many believe that successful people got there with no effort or discouragement. That isn't the case. Virtually everyone, no matter how successful, has faced despair and failure. You should expect that you will too.

That's good news, because it's probably not just the material rewards which you seek. You seek a better life. And part of a

better life is the ability to tolerate, even celebrate adversity. When you shift your consciousness so that you're able to welcome any experience that arises, you'll reap rewards that you'll feel on the inside much more deeply than any superficial pleasures available from gaining an external prize. I recommend that you embark on this journey of self-creation with an attitude of openness to whatever comes your way. By doing that, you'll find it much easier to get back in the race whenever life puts up a hurdle, and you'll have much more fun.

### **Take a mental inventory**

Before we start, I'd like to suggest that you take inventory of your life as it is right now. What works? What doesn't work? How much of your discontent is generated by your outer circumstances? How much is just a feeling from within? Where would you like to see yourself a few years from now? Do you have a clear idea, or is it vague? Are you starting from scratch, ready to create a life from nothing? Or, are you stuck in a life you don't like, ready for a do-over? Have you faced disappointment thus far? And, if not, are you willing to do so in the future if that's what's necessary to accomplish your ultimate goals? What do you perceive to be the primary factor holding you back? Is it an outer circumstance or an inner attitude? Is it a habit of not taking the necessary steps?

I'm going to suggest that throughout this process, your success will be proportional to your level of willingness to take responsibility for your life. To the extent that you place the focus of your problems and their solutions outside yourself,

you will fail to see progress and will likely relapse into old, stuck ways. To the extent that you own your life, the good and the bad, the glowing and the repulsive, and that you fail to yield to the temptation to blame others for your misfortune, you will succeed and ultimately change the environment in which you live without even trying.

Finally, there are people who, for reasons unknown to them, fail to take action even when they know what's necessary. Often, they see the required steps as daunting, and anticipating failure to complete each step perfectly, they decide not to try. If you're among these people, let me suggest that you let yourself off the hook. Take each step you can with as much positive intention as you can, but don't be immobilized by perfectionism. Whatever you do will be an improvement over what you didn't do before, and often the results of your early actions will create the momentum necessary to continue the process with more enthusiasm and precision. So, regardless of your current motivation level, take heart and get started!

With that said, let's move on to the real work. The journey is exciting and manifold. If you're willing to make the effort, you will be rewarded. While I can't promise you a life without pain or challenges, and while you'll still have those days when things don't seem so great, you can create your life exactly as you want it. That's your birthright. Ready? Let's get started!

*“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”*

-Lao Tzu

## **The Overall Strategy**

*“Whatever you can do, or think you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.”*

–Goethe

The strategy I propose in this book for waking up from our hypnotic state and creating the life we want is contained within what I’ve termed the *five layers of consciousness*. Chances are that if you’re living a happy, successful, fulfilled life, you’ve already made a commitment to master each of these, consciously or unconsciously. If your life is lacking in any way, you’ve neglected one or more of these layers. As I continue through the rest of this book, I’m going to give individual attention to each of the five layers, talk about their importance, and give concrete tools for mastering them.

### **The Five Layers of Consciousness**

#### **1. Essence**

This deepest layer of consciousness is the fundamental you as you were when you came into the world. Our essence includes our infinite potentials and our natural predilections, independent of what we learned, for better or worse, growing up. To truly know our essence is the work of a lifetime and can only be apprehended through a process which goes beyond the thinking mind. Most of the work of knowing our essence fits not into the category of learning but into the category of un-learning.

Without addressing this first layer with sincerity and conviction, no *true* progress can be made on the path of self-improvement. Certainly, we may feel we're moving forward but many results masquerade as progress. But, don't worry, we'll discuss plenty of strategies for connecting with our essence, and you'll be fully prepared to do what it takes after reading the next chapter.

## **2. Beliefs**

Just outside the layer of our essence, existing largely below the level of conscious thought, our beliefs drive our capacity for success. Our beliefs must be empowering in order for us to succeed. More importantly, we must have good values that support those beliefs and create a foundation upon which our success can be built. The challenge we face is that of bringing our subconscious beliefs into our conscious awareness, and choosing to keep those which empower us and reject those which limit us. In chapter three, we'll consider specific, useable strategies for discovering and choosing our beliefs.

## **3. Goals**

The next layer outward is our goals, which are a direct switch to setting the wheels in motion for manifesting what we want. Every goal we set is informed by our values and beliefs. Many of us have only a vague idea of what we want. Some of us think we know what we want,

but are actually operating out of hypnotically programmed desires, rather than being led toward the true desires of our deeper selves. To objectively evaluate our goals, we must know our purpose, which means we must understand why we want what we want. In chapter four, we'll discuss ways of getting in touch with our true desires, setting goals consistent with our values and beliefs, and remaining focused on our true purpose until our goals come into being.

#### **4. Manifestation**

To manifest is to create. What we manifest is a direct result of how we've mastered our consciousness at the deeper levels. Once we've experienced our essence, clarified our values and beliefs, and established our goals, we can begin to manifest the fruits of our labor. We can learn much about our consciousness by looking at what we've manifested thus far in our lives. In chapter five, we'll explore specific tools for exercising our consciousness so that our ability to manifest our desires is amplified beyond our wildest dreams.

#### **5. Interaction**

The outermost layer of consciousness is the part which interacts directly with the world around us. Just as atoms have an outer layer of electrons which connects with adjacent atoms, our outermost layer connects with other people. How well we connect, and how often we fail to connect are a direct result of the sum total of our mastery

of the deeper layers of consciousness. In chapter six, I'll provide tangible skills for becoming more comfortable in your connection with others and ideas about dealing with difficult interactions.

Before we probe deeply into each layer, it's important to consider how the universe works, to recognize that it's natural law which determines growth. In fact, you, a natural being, subject to the same laws as plants and animals and rocks, have no choice but to grow and change. Any lack of growth on your part has resulted from some aggressive measures on your part to keep it from happening, whether or not you're aware of it. Freed from subconscious resistance, the universe makes positive change inevitable.

### **A remarkable meeting**

Let me tell you a story which may sound implausible, but every word of it is true. Ten years ago, I was living an entirely different life. I owned a large chiropractic, holistic health clinic. I was the president of my state chiropractic association, and I was seeing many hundreds of people for their health concerns each month. I was, by all outward measures, successful.

I had moved to my chosen area from a good distance away and had made many sacrifices in order to start that life, not the least of which was a four year period of intense study to receive my chiropractic license. You could say that my



investment in my future was enormous and that the last thing in the world I should consider was leaving it all behind.

Yet, I was discontent. Everything on the outside seemed alright, but I couldn't get excited about my life. I felt bored, anxious, frustrated, and unhappy. I started to notice that I had developed the habit of looking at my watch more and more often. In the final days of my practice, I would have looked at my watch about ten times by 9 a.m., and I'd only arrived an hour earlier!

Finally, I realized that this couldn't go on. It wasn't fair to my patients who deserved an enthusiastic, committed doctor, and it wasn't fair to me who deserved a rewarding, fulfilling life. I'd already attempted to light a fire under myself on several occasions by attending motivational and educational seminars, but the results hadn't lasted more than a few weeks each time. It was time to make a change.

I started reading whatever I could get my hands on about individuals who had changed their lives. I knew that there were going to be a lot of unhappy people, who had come to count on me for a variety of reasons, and that my parents weren't going to be excited to learn that the investment I'd made of my time and, to some extent, their money, was now going to be wasted. As we'll discuss later, those investments are never wasted, and the opportunity to use the knowledge gained from other pursuits always exists. Nonetheless, I had to be true to myself and trust that in doing so I'd ultimately be doing what was best for everyone.

I came across a little book called *How to Win by Quitting* by Jerry Stocking. Jerry had been a successful stock broker with all the outer trappings of affluence but caught in the same dilemma I was facing. He was unhappy, stressed, and empty. Finally, he made a radical decision: to quit. He simply strolled into his office one day, walked up to the boss and said, "I quit." His boss was shocked. "What do you mean, you quit? You can't quit!" "I just did." he responded. Mind you, he had absolutely no plan of what might come next. But he was sure that even nothing was better than the meaningless something he was doing, and a small part of him recognized the universal axiom that *nature abhors a vacuum*. Whenever we create space, answers rush in to replace the emptiness, and all we need to do is remain patient until inspiration arises.

This ancient wisdom from Lao Tzu is worth remembering:

*"Do you have the patience to wait until the mud settles and your mind is clear? Do you have the courage to go on waiting until the right action arises on its own?"*

So Jerry waited. He became a house husband, spending more time at home with his wife and kids. He took long walks, wrote, dreamed, and fantasized. Eventually, his next life invented itself. He became an author, then a trainer, then a consultant. He's helped thousands of people find their way out of their trapped existences and into more meaningful, rich lives. And all that came from a simple, but scary, leap of faith on his part. Had he not honored the voice within, which seemed to be completely irrational at the time, he'd not now

be impacting all the lives he has, and I, for one, would be the poorer for it.

When I read his book, I was so impressed with his thinking that I sought him out. I called Jerry and was able to reach him at home. He was kind enough to give me close to an hour of his time, listening to my dilemma and asking me some thought-provoking questions. One of his questions was, “What will you do next?”

I answered, “Well, I’ve been performing magic at business events and restaurants. I’m thinking about making that my new career.”

“Wrong!” he cried.

“What do you mean?”

He said, “Never plan a new life without first leaving the old one behind.”

That seemed pretty radical to me, and I don’t think he’d be averse to the idea of dreams and fantasies that we play out while still stuck in an unfavorable life, but what he suggested was important for the following reasons: we need space; we need silence; we need a vacuum.

### **Empty cup**

There’s an old story about a new, analytical meditation student who goes to visit the wise, old teacher. The student is

invited to sit for tea, and the teacher begins to pour a cup for him. When the tea reaches the lip of the cup, the teacher keeps pouring, filling the saucer, and ultimately spilling tea all over the table and onto the floor. Finally, the student, unable to contain his shock and confusion, points out to the teacher that the cup is already full. The teacher pauses for a moment, smiles, and says, “Yes, just like your mind. You are already so filled with concepts and beliefs that it is impossible to fit any more. For you to gain wisdom, you must first empty your cup. That is our job here.”

Similarly, when you plan a new life not having left the old one, you’re only able to conceive a plan which has many of the same elements already present in your current “cup.” Whereas, if you allow a time of emptiness, possibilities arise which you could never have previously conceived. Such a move requires great faith and courage but provides a much more rewarding experience and a much more balanced life.

In the next chapter, we’ll discuss *essence* the core of our being. If you don’t have a good connection to your essence, it makes no difference what you do for a living. You’ll be doomed to an unsatisfying life because the deepest part of you isn’t being fed. To feed that part of yourself, you must embrace emptiness, silence and spaciousness, which can only come from allowing yourself to have a mind free of chatter, thoughts, plans, and obsessions about the future.

So, armed with the wisdom gained from my conversation with Jerry, I decided to embark on an adventure with no firm plans of what was next. I went to Guatemala, intent on spending a

few months traveling around Central America, with no established structure. I thought I could use the time to reflect on what was important to me, to work on my language skills, and to drink in a new culture. It was an exciting proposition. Still, it was a bit scary. I didn't know what I'd find there, and I didn't know how well I'd fit into the fabric of Latin American society.

Then, the most amazing thing happened. It was during my fourth day in Antigua that I discovered a small chiropractic office on a side street and off the beaten path. It was closed, so I returned the next day. I sat in the waiting room until the doctor came out and found me sitting there. He had no secretary or assistant of any kind. I introduced myself as Steve, a chiropractor from the USA, and he introduced himself as Todd, an American ex-patriot, living and working in Guatemala for the last couple of years. Upon learning that I was a chiropractor, he asked what most chiropractors ask of their colleagues. "Would you mind giving me an adjustment? I haven't seen another chiropractor around these parts for the last six months!" I obliged him, and after trading adjustments, we walked out to the waiting room.

There, sitting in the waiting room by himself, was an American man about my age. He stood as we entered the room. He looked from me to Todd. He extended his hand to me, thinking I was the doctor, and said...

"Hello, I'm Steve. I'm a chiropractor from the USA."

Todd and I looked at each other in disbelief. After a moment of silence, Todd introduced himself as the proprietor of the practice, and I introduced myself as Steve, a chiropractor from the USA. He asked me where I practiced, and I told him of my recent departure from the field. He responded that he, too, had just sold his practice of fourteen years (the same length of time I'd been in practice.) "What brings you to Guatemala?" I asked.

"I just wanted to have a place to reflect on my life and goals and to work on my language skills. And you?"

"The same."

After his adjustment, Steve and I decided to get lunch together and discuss our common experiences. We walked out the door into the afternoon sun and simultaneously reached into our backpacks to get a cap. The caps we pulled out were identical, except for one thing. While mine said "100 Years of Chiropractic" on it, his said "Vermont," which happened to be the state in which I lived. Turns out he had friends in my city and had been there several times in the past.

Stopping briefly at his room to pick up some money, I noticed something intriguing on his dresser: a copy of a rare, difficult-to-find book, *How to Win by Quitting*, by Jerry Stocking. I told him of my lengthy conversation with the author and how it influenced my decision to come to Guatemala, and Steve said that he, too, had had a similar conversation with Jerry, prompting his visit as well.

If this is starting to sound a bit too weird, stay with me. It gets better! Let me remind you that this is an absolutely true story.

Over the next several days, Steve and I became friends, as we are to this day. We learned of many more coincidences, including the facts that we had both been married and were currently good friends with our ex-wives and that we both enjoyed adventure sports. We did some exciting whitewater rafting while in Guatemala!

When we parted company in one part of the country, we didn't anticipate seeing each other for a long time, but a week later, walking along the beach in Montericco, a hundred miles west of Antigua, the town in which we first met, I found Steve poolside at a local resort, talking to a young woman about, of all things, his encounter with me. I filled in the gaps in his story, and the young woman, who'd had an opportunity to get to know him a bit, asked me if I was also a Gemini. Up to that point, it hadn't occurred to me to ask Steve's astrological sign. I'm not big on astrology, but in fact, I, too, am a Gemini. So, there was one more coincidence.

Weeks later, I was traveling through Honduras with my girlfriend. We were taking a boat ride around the island of Roatan, and I was telling her the now famous "Steve Story."

As the boat came to the dock on the remote side of the island, we disembarked and climbed the steep wooden staircase to the restaurant above. My story was winding to a conclusion, but I couldn't have anticipated that the last words of the story would be... "And that's him, right there!" Ten feet in front of

us sat Steve and his lunch guest, blissfully unaware of our arrival. We spent the next couple days catching up and telling more stories.

On arrival back in the USA, I made plans to meet up with Steve in his home state of Montana, as part of a plane trip I'd planned across the country. When I shared my travel plans with John, the doctor who'd purchased my practice, his questions led to the most startling revelation of all: Steve had been John's chiropractor, and John's best friend had purchased Steve's practice.

OK, so that's most of the story. I could go on with some of the subsequent coincidences, but I think the point has been made. What point is that? Well, it took me a while to process the experience, and I'm still not sure exactly what it all means, but here's what I think in part. When I got back to Vermont, I shared this story with a very wise, spiritual man I know. I said, "What do you make of this bizarre set of events?" He said, "I think it proves that you were in the right place, because when you got there...there you were!" He then went on to remind me of all the fear and uncertainty I felt embarking on the journey, and how none of that existed any more. The magical quality of the meeting with Steve had reassured and supported me as I went along my path.

The universe has a way of supporting courageous action. Many, many people have had the experience of delaying a decision out of fear and then finally taking the leap, only to have a series of unforeseen events unfold to support their decision and help them along the way. Remember the Goethe



quotation at the beginning of this chapter. Another one relating to commitment is the famous passage by the Scottish explorer, W.N. Murray who, in 1951 said:

*Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative and creation there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans; that the moment one definitely commits oneself, Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would otherwise never have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents, meetings, and material assistance, which no man could have dreamt would have come his way.*

*We hope you've enjoyed this sample of UnHypnosis. If you'd like to purchase your own copy, please visit [www.stevetaubman.com](http://www.stevetaubman.com). You'll find this and other learning resources on the Resources page. Thanks again, and we hope you've gotten value!*