COACHING WELLNESS

The Art & Science of Stepping Up Your Practice with the Next Evolution in Coaching

by David Krueger, M.D.
How to Use This Program

This program is designed to have you working and earning additional income before you complete the course. This is accomplished through **Just In Time knowledge Transfer** where you learn what you need to know, when you need to know it, in order to derive the most benefit for yourself and your clients.

By incorporating multiple learning styles into a single program you are able to absorb the information you want and transform it into the knowledge you need, at the pace you desire.

**Recommended Steps for Accelerated Learning**

1. **Skim the printed material.** The icons displayed below will help you distinguish the facts, quotes, and information you want to know right away.

2. **Listen to the recorded audio.** The course is laid out in sessions - both in print and on the CDs. Listen to the first session and begin an Action List.

3. **Read the corresponding printed session** after listening to each recorded segment. This reinforces visually what you have heard.

4. **Go over the Review Notes** located at the end of each session. Make notes in the margins and add to your Action List.

5. **Take action on what you have learned.** Knowledge left unused deteriorates. The experience you gain from your actions will lead to competence and wisdom.

**Legend**

- **The “Art” of Coaching**
- **The “Science” of Coaching**
- **“Important Point”**
- **“Stop”**
- **“Great Coaching Idea”**
- **“Words of Wisdom”**
- **“Flip the Switch”** (Something that can be done to improve your coaching practice immediately)
- **“Road to Success”** (Motivational thoughts to keep your practice growing)

The **LearnMore System™** enables you to experience your knowledge. It is an opportunity to know experientially what you already know conceptually. The system incorporates the **Four Pillars of Wisdom™** approach and the **Circle of Learning™** methodology that trigger accelerated learning. You can learn more about this trademarked system here: [www.coachtrainingalliance.com/about/learnmore.php](http://www.coachtrainingalliance.com/about/learnmore.php)
Index

Session 1 - The Wellness Revolution 1
Introduction
What is the Scope of Wellness Coaching?
An Overview of Coaching Wellness
A New Wellness Paradigm
The Wellness Revolution
The Wellness System of Energy
Recognize Authorship
Why is Change So Difficult?
An Application of Change
The Wellness Coach Mindset
The Four Cornerstones of Wellness Coaching

Session 2 - Coaching a Wellness Mindset 19
The Power of Story
We Tell Our Story—Then Our Story Tells Us
A Story Can Define Reality
A Story Can Take Over the Author
Comfort Zones
Listen For the Power of Story
Active Choice
ROADMAP™ for WELLNESS
Addendum: Exercise on Intuition

Session 3 - Recognize, Own, and Assess Your Wellness Story 35
Step 1. Recognize Authorship of Your Story
The Three Principles in Recognizing Authorship
Step 2. Own Your Story—Storylines That Define
Point of Reference
Recognize Active versus Passive Positions
Step 3. Assess the Storylines and Plot
Distinguish and Address Needs
Needs Clarification List
Part of the Assessment: Understand Conflicted and Contradictory Storylines
Listen to Your Self-Statements
Listen for Repetitions of the Old Story
Listen to Your Body
Index (continued)

Session 4 - The Choices of Change
Step 4. Decide What to Change in Your Wellness Story
Basic Storylines
Choice is a Mindset
An Exercise to Deconstruct a Concern
The Science of Change — How the Brain Opposes Change
An Instruction Manual for How to Outsmart Your Brain
Principles of Change
The Four Choices of Change

Session 5 - Map Wellness Strategies
Step 5. Map Changes in Your Wellness Story
14 Steps to Edit Your Life Story
The Art of a Vision
The Science of a Vision
The Power of a Vision — Of Mind Over Matters
5 Steps to Revise a Storyline
A Summary of Steps 4 and 5
Addendum: Inverse Wisdom

Session 6 - Create a New Wellness Experience and Identity
Step 6. Author New Experiences
Think Outside the Box
Money. Your Life and Wellness Story
Step 7. Program New Identity to Incorporate and Sustain the Changes
Follow Success Trails
The Art and Science of Affirmations
Break Out of Your Comfort Zone
Addendum: Good News/Bad News

Wellness Workbook

Workbook content is woven into the text and recommended exercises are placed within each session for your convenience.
Session 1

The Wellness Revolution

- The need and scope of Wellness Coaching
- An overview of this series
- Wellness defined
- A new wellness paradigm
- Wellness awareness exercises

Coaching a Wellness Mindset

- Create a wellness life story
- The power of story
- Coaching principles to facilitate change
- A ROADMAP™ for Wellness Coaching

Recognize, Own, and Assess your Wellness Story

- Beliefs – Behavior – Performance
- How to listen to your story
• How to listen to your body
• How to assess wellness needs

**The Choices of Change**

• The art of change
• The science of change
• Basic principles to change a wellness story

**Map Wellness Strategies**

• How to regulate states of mind
• The power of focus
• The art and science of visualization
• Inverse wisdom in wellness coaching

**Create a New Wellness Experience and Identity**

• 12 AAA (Awareness‡Acceptance‡Action) Wellness Principles
• The art and science of affirmations
• Strategies to exit comfort zones
• Program new wellness identity

**Introduction**

In the six sessions together we’ll talk about the concept of Wellness Story, principles and practice of change, and the seven step ROADMAP™ process to create a New Life Story for Wellness. This complete wellness system integrates current research in psychology, neuroscience, and strategic coaching to guide systematic change.

In our first session, we’ll focus on wellness, and in the second session on story. In sessions three through six we’ll develop and apply a philosophy and model of coaching wellness that can be used with individuals and groups anywhere in the world.
Session 1 - The Wellness Revolution

Throughout, I will speak to you about your wellness story. I encourage you to do the exercises and work pages in the Workbook. Then you’ll know firsthand how to coach a New Wellness story.

*Although we’ll discuss application to wellness, you’ll see that the principles are fundamental to all growth, change, and success.*

Why me? I am an Executive Mentor Coach, and CEO of MentorPath, a coaching firm to help executives and professionals write the next chapter of their life or business stories. I am Mentor/Trainer Coach for Coach Training Alliance. My coaching and writing focus on the art and science of success strategies: mind over matters.

My experience in wellness: I am a physician who formerly practiced and taught Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis, and was Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Baylor College of Medicine.

I founded and served as CEO of two healthcare corporations—one focused on preventive medicine and wellness—and a third that went from startup through venture capital to merger/acquisition. I have taught, written, and spoken about wellness, as well as coached individuals and corporations internationally. Being an athlete shaped a lifelong passion for wellness. A number of articles and a list of my books is on my web site www.MentorPath.com

Why you? You know how to listen and guide people. You know that intentions need a strategy and plan. You will learn a proven system of transformation for lasting lifestyle change. The ROADMAP™ for Wellness is a master plan to guide you to empowered wellness in your life story—including tools and exercises. Then you can coach it. ROADMAP™ for WELLNESS provides a template to guide and apply your wellness story.
ROADMAP™ is the acronym for the 7 steps to write a New Wellness Story.

- Recognize authorship
- Own your story
- Assess plot and storylines
- Decide what to change
- Map changes
- Author new experiences
- Program new identity to incorporate and sustain the changes.

The Wellness Revolution

Just after graduation ceremonies at Harvard Medical School, the number one graduate, Michael, was walking along the Charles River with his favorite professor. A drowning man crying for help floated down the Charles. Michael jumped into the water, and pulled the man to shore just after he had gone down for the third time. He applied cardiac massage and mouth to mouth resuscitation until the victim regained consciousness. Michael was proud to have the opportunity to have his professor witness his rescue, and he was congratulated on a job well done.

Although wet and exhausted, Michael continued to walk with his teacher. Then a second victim crying for help came floating down the river. Michael again jumped in to rescue this person and repeated the process. It happened a third, and then a fourth time, until finally Michael was so exhausted he could barely move. He turned to his professor and said, “I know I’m a doctor dedicated to helping people, but I just can’t keep this up anymore.”

His professor replied, “Then why don’t you run ahead upstream and stop whoever it is pushing these unfortunate people off the bridge?”
Session 1 - The Wellness Revolution

This story, told by Dr. Frank Yanowitz to his fourth year medical students, contrasts two paradigms of healthcare.

What is the Need for Wellness Coaching?

Here are some findings:

• **70% of health-care costs stem from preventable diseases.** (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

• **70-80% of physician visits are stress related.** (US Public Health Survey).

• **Stress is the number one reason behind absenteeism from work.** (Gee Publishing Survey)

• **Stress undermines work productivity in nine of ten companies.** (Industrial Society Survey)

• **Obesity, diabetes, and heart disease have reached epidemic proportions—and almost all are preventable.** (American Medical Association).

• **Every dollar invested in worksite wellness yields 300-600% return through reduced absenteeism, increased productivity, and decreased health-related costs.** (Partnership for Prevention National Coalition).

People don’t need more advice about vitamins, or told again to exercise, lose weight, or stop smoking. They need a clear, specific, step-wise program for change, and an informed guide to help them. They need an accountability partner who is an expert at change.

The mission of Wellness Coaching is to help people establish healthier lifestyles. In addition to individuals interested in health and longevity, who needs Wellness Coaching? The answer: any business interested in achieving these goals:

• **Reduce medical claims**
• Lower stress
• Reduce absenteeism
• Improve morale
• Improve retention rates
• Generate overall savings to the organization

What is the Scope of Wellness Coaching?

In addition to individual coaching, examples of some of the portals of entry—the gatekeepers—for large scale Wellness coaching include:

• Human Resource heads and groups
• Employee Assistance Programs
• Healthcare Insurance Companies
• Pharmaceutical Companies
• Small business owners
• School systems and governmental agencies

An Overview of Coaching Wellness

First: a disclaimer; my mission; my hope; and my stretch goal.

The disclaimer: I will not be offering advice about vitamins, supplements, how to exercise, or 1700 calorie diets.

My mission is much more fundamental: to change the way you think. Specifically, to be a catalyst for you to examine your wellness story, how you write it, and how you can write a new one. This will best position you to help others.
My hope: To guide you to look around the corner: at the next years and decades of your life. What you do today can affect the quality and longevity of those tomorrows.

My stretch goal: To have these six sessions we spend together in seminar make a positive and powerful difference for you for the rest of your life, and to touch many other lives.

A New Wellness Paradigm

Wellness integrates mind, body and spirit with a balanced flow of energy. It is an ongoing process of choices that become the stories of our lives. Wellness is never static—we never stay at the same place. So it must consistently be assessed. Wellness is not something that you begin to plan at age 65—or even at 50. Rather, every choice you make each day writes your wellness story:

• *The ways you care for yourself and meet your needs of mind, body, and spirit*

• *The clarity and loyalty to live your ideals*

• *The effectiveness of managing your life*

• *The health and balance of your lifestyle*

I want to guide you as you write your own wellness story. When you want to go to someplace new, rather than give you directions, I’ll teach you to read a map. I’ll teach you the essentials to write and live a new wellness story rather than tell you what you should do, or ghostwrite it for you. You know how this works in coaching: it’s less immediately gratifying, but much more long-lasting and powerful. It will be your story.

The Wellness Revolution

We are just beginning to recognize how simple choices profoundly affect our wellness. Sickness is reactive: people react to address a specific condition or ailment. Products and services treat the symptoms of a disease or attempt to eliminate the disease. People respond when they
succumb to a specific condition or ailment. They do not want to be customers of the healthcare industry.

Wellness is proactive: people seek activity, products, and services to feel healthier, reduce the effects of aging, look better, and prevent illness. Wellness is characterized by problem avoidance and prevention.

One reason that wellness has been elusive as a concept is that most of what we know today about biochemical functions of proteins, minerals, vitamins, and nutritional substances occurs on a molecular level rather than a cellular level.

The pursuit of wellness has immediate rewards. You can:

- **Feel better**
- **Become stronger**
- **Look younger**
- **Become healthier**
- **Increase energy**
- **Enhance physical and emotional well-being**

Why do sophisticated, intelligent people spend money to improve their lives and their surroundings in every way except their physical and emotional well-being? For example, The National Institute of Health found 61% of the US population to be overweight (an excess of total body weight) and 27% of the US population to be obese (an excess of body fat) defined as having a BMI of 30 or greater.

This figure has doubled since the 1980’s.

When someone is clinically obese it increases the difficulty of maintaining energy and affects job performance. The obese have a significantly higher incidence of body pain, fatigue, stomach distress, arthritis, headaches, and other common ailments usually associated with aging. Most of
the fifty-nine million Americans who have diabetes or pre-diabetes are overweight.

“Thousands of studies have shown direct relationships between lack of physical activity and coronary heart disease, hypertension, cancer, diabetes, anxiety and depression.” (Paul Zane Pilzer, The New Wellness Revolution, John Wiley and Sons, 2007)

Over half the cases of personal bankruptcy in the United States are due to medical bills (Harvard University study). Of these individuals who are driven to bankruptcy by medical bills not covered by health insurance, some surprising findings occurred:

- 75% of the medically bankrupt had health insurance when their illness began.
- The majority owned their own homes and had attended college.
- Most of the medically bankrupt who had health insurance simply were unable to continue paying the expenses not covered by health insurance.

Today about 95% of all prescription drugs in the United States are maintenance drugs – ones that treat the symptoms of a disease. Maintenance drugs are designed to be taken in many cases for the rest of your life.

The crisis in US Health Insurance is because we treat symptoms instead of preventing illness. And over 90% of expenses are paid by someone other than the patient or the doctor who decides the treatment.

A change of lifestyle, especially diet and exercise, can dramatically cut lifetime healthcare expenses.
The Wellness System of Energy

Each person is an open system: we take in energy from sources around us, transform and organize it, and return it to the environment.

Ilya Prigogene won a Nobel Prize for his theory of dissipative structures. A dissipative structure is an open system in which energy is taken in, modified, and then returned (dissipated) to the environment.

Wellness requires an efficient flow of energy. Disease is when that flow of energy is disrupted, blocked, or derailed in some manner.

Consider these examples of disrupted energy flow:

• Take in more energy in the form of food than is required, the result is obesity.

• Block energy, such as to suppress communication or repress feelings.

• Take in insufficient energy, such as vitamins and nutrients, or to deny compliments from others.

• Crossover or inappropriate substitution of one form of energy for another, such as using sex to satisfy a spiritual need, or money to satisfy an emotional need.

• Rechannel energy in an indirect way, such as passive-aggressive behavior or psychosomatic symptoms.

• Weak interface or unfocused assertiveness with others, resulting in diminished emotional impact.

• Excessive withdrawals from your emotional or physical bank account without replenishing.

• Poor interface with the environment such as impulsive, explosive, or addictive behavior.
Wellness of the senses also deserves consideration, as sensory information is a form of energy input into the wellness system. Our senses channel significant information on an ongoing basis to inform and protect our system.

An example of excessive energy input to the sensory system is noise. I grew up on a farm and noticed that my dad’s hearing by age 40 was compromised. He worked around heavy machinery all his life, and did not know to use ear protection. I knew from the time I started to drive a tractor at age 10 that I wanted to be a doctor. I knew from Drs. Kildare and Ben Casey that I had to hear a set of heart sounds through a stethoscope; if my hearing were compromised like my dad’s, I would be in trouble. So I fashioned ear plugs from moistened tissue (don’t ask) and cotton to plug my ears around farm machinery. It worked. Only much later did I see ear plugs at the drug store made for purposes ranging from machinery to snoring spouses.

What we eat is another form of energy intake and utilization. When Yankee Stadium was built during the 1920’s it had 82,000 seats. After remodeling during the 1970’s the seating was only 59,000. During that 50 year period, the average American “bottom” had widened from 14 to 19 inches. (Perhaps Miss Piggy has too many followers of her dictum, “Never eat more than you can lift.”)

Recognize Authorship

Warren Buffet used the analogy of buying a car. If you get a new car every few years, the approach would be different than if you knew you were going to choose one car and have it for the rest of your life. You would do research to know the best care for that car, probably change the oil more frequently, and do everything possible for maintenance. Knowing that it would be the only car for the rest of your life, you would take meticulous care of it.

Your body is the only one you will have for the rest of your life. Your body is irreplaceable; everything about its care and maintenance matters. It reflects the cumulative care you take of it.
To recognize authorship of your wellness story includes awareness of the processes and behaviors of mind, body, and soul. This authorship includes the physical, emotional, and spiritual patterns that you engage on a daily basis. It means recognizing true needs and distinguishing them from wants.

- **Mind** includes constructive and creative use of your mind; knowing and living up to your ideals; maintaining a loyalty to your ideals; nurturing close relationships.

- **Body** includes making the choices that are in your best interest; informed, consistent pursuit of nutrition, exercise, and safety.

- **Spiritual** includes self-awareness and nurturance; meaningful endeavors; expression of feelings to others; asking and getting what you need.

“The next major advances in health of the American people will come from the assumption of individual responsibility for one's own health and a necessary change in lifestyle for the majority of Americans.” (John Knowles, M.D., former President, Rockefeller Foundation)

Disease is body talk, feedback for gathering information. Disease—the symptoms that we are familiar with—is not the problem but the attempted remedy. A symptom is the body’s attempt to solve a problem, somatic language that something needs attention. And when you listen to whispers, no one needs to shout.

Your body is the projection of your mind’s software. To change your body, you have to revise the software.

“Every psychological symptom both reveals and conceals, making very obvious to others what we hide from ourselves, continually engaging what we attempt to flee. Symptoms give disguised voice to what we avoid knowing. As sentinel of a process that needs, begs, to be understood, a symptom should be listened to rather than silenced, respected rather than disregarded. A story needing to be heard, it repeats until translated or listened to literally: a pain in the neck, purging something, weeping skin, hyper-tension. People become patients because they can no longer keep
their secrets, yet cannot tell their stories to themselves. A symptom is an answer to a question its creator has not dared ask consciously, a story with its own history, dynamics, and motivation.” (David Krueger, Integrating Body Self and Psychological Self. Brunner/Routledge, 2002.)

How you think about something can change your body. Think of a frightening situation, and you immediately change your body’s physiology. Guide your relaxation or meditate and you change your body’s physiology.

During the Korean War a young soldier sustained a bad wound to his leg. Although his leg was lacerated, his vital signs were excellent as his fellow soldiers supported him. When a doctor arrived, he took one look at the soldier’s leg and exclaimed, “Oh my God, this is bad.” The young man immediately died.

A hypnotic suggestion that someone is badly burned can immediately cause skin blisters.

Psychoneuroimmunology verifi es what folk medicine has known for centuries: that thoughts and emotions directly affect the body’s chance of healing. The immune system, the body’s first line of defense against disease, has substantially strengthened by thought, feeling, and overall health.

Why Is Change So Difficult?

In studies of coronary bypass patients, when their lives are at risk unless they adopt healthier lifestyles, how many do you think change their habits?

Only one in nine.

Changing behavior is difficult. What keeps people from doing what they need to do for themselves? What makes it difficult to change, even when someone’s life depends on it?

Some of the resistance is staying in a comfort zone of the predictable and familiar. Another component of resistance is that our brains are programmed to operate on the default mode of repetition.
One answer is to have a clear, specific, step-wise program for change.

**An Application of Change**

Each moment we actively construct what we think, feel, and experience. Every day begins a fresh page. The dramas of everyday life do not simply affect us, they are created by us. Yet so often the story closest to us, our own, is the most difficult to know.

How can we tell our life stories to ourselves in order to know which aspects of the narrative work and which need to change? How can we identify what is missing, change an attitude, or generate happiness?

I discussed the concept of writing a new life story with Jeremy Tarcher, the Publisher. His response captured both the simplicity and the challenge. He said, “You know, I don’t know how to tell my own story to myself in order to know what to change.”

*Insights, understanding, even coming to the end of the past and ending an old story are not enough to create a new story.*

The process of change itself must be addressed in an informed and systematic way. A ROADMAP™ for Wellness provides the fundamentals of lifestyle transformation and applications for wellness success.

I want to provide some context and stimulus for you to actively work on the exercises and quizzes in the Workbook for each of the 7 Steps. The composite will provide a template—a ROADMAP™—to guide and apply your wellness story.

**The Wellness Coach Mindset**

Wellness is a mindset. The wellness professional operates from a position of being an ally with the client or patient, a collaborator. The antithesis of the ally is the expert, the teacher, the medical authority.
Session 2 - Coaching a Wellness Mindset

This mindset gives ownership of a life story of wellness to the individual. With this ownership comes the responsibility—and privilege—that each thought, feeling, experience, and behavior is created each moment.

The Four Cornerstones of Wellness Coaching

1. The client is naturally resourceful, creative, and whole. The focus is on possibilities rather than problems, on construction and co-creativity rather than fixing and repair. The client can generate and co-create answers; the answers are not supplied by the expert.

2. The professional addresses the entire person and each of these five storylines: Physical, Emotional, Relationship, Spiritual, and Financial. Lifestyle improvement is a holistic concept. For example, the overweight, sedentary individual does not need a prescription for another diet, but needs to look at how he is writing his wellness story.

3. The client sets the agenda, and by doing so, claims ownership of each session and of his life. This simple component of how we frame each coaching session distinguishes coaching wellness from every other program and professional engagement including consulting, therapy, counseling, fitness training, medical and nutritional advice.

4. The professional is the catalyst and guide; the relationship is the crucible for change. Truth, trust, and mutual respect form the foundation of the co-created relationship.

Someone has to have a new story to be inside before he or she can give up an old story. This guided journey addresses change from compromising past storylines, as well as reinvention of a present life story for future wellness success.
Exercise 1 — Wellness Awareness Exercises

This exercise will help you track bodily symptoms to a deeper meaning. I'll use the example of gastrointestinal upset to walk through the steps. Listen. Question as a reporter: who, what, where, when, why?

1. Experience: churning gut
2. When it occurs: after an upsetting event
3. What it prevents: outright expression of anger.
4. How it rewards: a refocusing to something I can end by a medication.
5. Where's the need: focus on the initial derailment of relationship and its subsequent breakdown product or upset.
6. More effective approach: from a cool state of calmness, understand and express a point of view and illuminate hidden or implicit assumptions.
7. The remedy: reframe or negotiate to a mutual agreement.

Exercise 2

1. List three things that you know you can do to increase your wellness.
2. What is one initiative you can take for each of the three wellness steps?
3. Specifically plan the next best action for each initiative—one thing that you can you begin today that will give you a start in the process of change.
4. Will you commit to this next best action today?
Exercise 3

Neuroscience now teaches us that we can either program wellness or program illness by our focus. We bring about not what we want but what we focus on. Focusing on illness and worry not only drains energy but adumbrates illness.

A negative thought loop is mentally replaying the same thoughts and reviewing the same scenarios again and again. You can't find an exit—you can't think or logic your way out of it. It looks like focusing but it's really obsessing. Thought loops are being marooned in your left brain.

Negative thought loops of worry will drain emotional and physical energy as well as create negative mental pictures which program your mind to their fulfillment. Since mind and body are connected, depletion of energy wears down the body's defenses.

To program wellness and deprogram illness:

- Recognize negative thought loops such as worry.

- Write down the list of negative thoughts so that you can cue your radar for awareness.

- Write a list of positive, proactive thoughts/plans/affirmations.

- As soon as you recognize entering a negative thought loop, immediately move to a positive thought and action.

- For intrusive negative thoughts, schedule a time to engage them.

- Respect the boundary of engaging the negative concern only during the time that you have scheduled (e.g., 20 minutes each week at 3:30 PM Tuesdays).

- Mourn what cannot be changed. Place energy on what you can determine.

- Focus on and express gratitude for wellness.
Exercise 4
Wellness questions:

1. What do you do to actively work at health and wellness?

2. Do you have any health challenges or illnesses?

3. Are you on any maintenance medications?

4. Have you educated yourself about the benefits of vitamins, minerals, and supplements?

5. What do you do to nurture yourself, and to reduce stress?

6. Do you make an appointment with yourself to relax/meditate?

7. Describe a typical day. Describe a typical week.

8. Describe your usual diet for a week. For one day, write down everything you eat and drink.

9. Describe your usual exercise for a week.

10. Describe what you do for fun and pleasure during a week. How often do you do it?

11. What barriers do you experience to wellness?
The Power of Story

First, let’s look at the power of story.

Over the years I’ve listened to different kinds of stories. In medicine, each symptom is a story, needing, begging, to be listened to, rather than silenced or disregarded.

I’m still learning about the power of story from cognitive and behavioral sciences, some remarkable research in the neurosciences, Professional Coaching, Quantum Physics (of all places), and from listening carefully to some extraordinary people.

We learn through stories. Stories are how we understand and how we remember. A story is a system for holding together facts. A story makes things make sense. Defense lawyers know this. Little kids standing next to broken vases know this.
We personify the economy or the stock market as if each were a story of its own. We make a story out of events in order to infer relationship and assign causality. Or ascribe a story with a mind of its own to our own creations: “My ulcer acted up.” “My weight gets in the way.”

We each have a personal story with a plot and storylines. Our beliefs and assumptions ghostwrite that story. From an infinite sea of possibilities, our software determines what we perceive and process. The brain needs a story. The parietal lobe orchestrates innumerable bits of data to keep us oriented in time and space, to integrate body self and psychological self.

Our plot consists of our core beliefs and assumptions that transform all available information into a system that makes sense. We then create life narratives according to plot.

A life story—whether we read it in a bestselling memoir or participate in it each day—contains silent assumptions and emotional scripts. Our assumptions tell us what to look for, and how to perceive and process experiences.

When people construct their personal narrative, what they leave out, as well as the beliefs that ghostwrite behaviors, are often invisible. A personal narrative, unlike other narratives, is not announced directly. The narrator may not realize the story he is living, and can even believe he is writing a different story than people perceive.

Gregory Maguire, a bestselling novelist and playwright (most recently the Broadway hit, Wicked), said, “I didn't even realize this at first, but there's almost no central character in any of my 24 books who doesn't have a dead mother or a lost parent.” Maguire's mother died from complications during his birth. After his 23rd book he became conscious of the fact that I “I can't seem to start a novel unless the character doesn't have a mother. If the mother is still alive—if the mother was still there—what's the problem. There's nothing to write about.”

We believe and remember only that which fits our plot. What we expect to happen in the present reveals instantly our experience in the past. Psychoanalysts call this transference. Someone abandoned early in
life will expect more of the same in future relationships, even though circumstances change. All subsequent information is absorbed, filtered, and organized by that narrative plot.

We don’t see things as they are—we see things as we are. We see what we believe. And we’re always right—because we write the story.

Two anthropologists were chosen to enter separate, essentially identical ape colonies to live and observe for a year. They had remarkable similarities of personality, philosophy, and education.

When the two anthropologists emerged to compare notes, they expected essential similarities, but instead found remarkable discrepancies. One anthropologist, after an initial period of transition, was accepted by the apes, integrated into the colony, and achieved a unity and comfort with the apes. The other anthropologist never got beyond the social periphery of his colony, remained careful and vigilant, always seemed right on the cusp of a conflict, and never reached a harmony.

The anthropologists could not understand the discrepant results, or find any reasons. They puzzled for months, until they finally found the one difference. The anthropologist who was never more than a vigilant outsider carried a gun. His gun never showed; he never used it; the apes never knew he had it. But he knew he had it; he knew that if things got tough, he had an “out.” The anthropologist who had no gun had a commitment: he knew from the beginning that he would either make it—or not—on his own.

In retrospect and reconstruction, each of their assumptions created the reality that they experienced.

We Tell Our Story —Then Our Story Tells Us

A Story Can Define Possibility.

In centuries of recorded time, no one ran the mile in under 4 minutes.
It was impossible. Roger Bannister broke the four-minute mile in 1954. Within months, several others broke the four-minute mile as well. The obstacle of the impossible could no longer be constructed. Today this is common place. When the mindset of what is possible changes, reality then changes as well.

A Story Can Define Reality

Not only do we actively construct a story at the brain level, we also edit at the same time. In real life, you can't create and edit at the same time; yet our brains do on an ongoing basis.

A placebo generates the effect of the accompanying story. A patient is prescribed an inert pill + some expectations. In the majority of cases, they manifest. By anticipating an experience, one can create it.

The story generates a truth so powerful that it can even reverse the pharmacological effect of a real medicine. The placebo is a white lie, a fiction that becomes a truth.

Things that don't fit the storyline get unconsciously edited, or, simply fail to register as relevant.

A Story Can Take Over the Author

Listen to these expressions:

- “My anxiety stopped me.”
- “My weight gets in the way.”

A feeling that someone creates is perceived to act on its creator.

Here are some ways that we can see ourselves as the victims of the stories that we create rather than as the author.

- “My bulimia came back.”
Session 2 - Coaching a Wellness Mindset

• “My doubt paralyzed me.”

• “My work eroded my free time.”

Another example of the power of story is a woman I know who recalled an incident from her adolescence. She attended a Catholic all-girl’s boarding school. She said, “At one party, I started a rumor that the punch was spiked and everyone got drunk.”

Why do we resist change? Even changing a story that doesn’t work?

What keeps people from doing what they know they need to do for themselves? Why will someone repeat behavior that doesn’t work, often do it harder, and expect a different result? Even when it leads to lower energy, debt, plateaued careers, or disappointing relationships?

Part of the answer to this question is in our minds.

There is something secure and familiar about repetition. We repeat the same story because we know what the outcome will be.

*Predictability masquerades as effectiveness.*

The invisible decisions that we make daily become camouflaged as habits, our collection of repetitions. Reactions become automatic so we don’t have to make a new decision in each situation.

We are always loyal to the central theme, the plot, of our lives, always returning to it. Any departure, even temporary, causes uncertainty and trepidation. Being in new territory—developing a new story—creates anxiety. The easiest and fastest way to end this anxiety is to go back to the familiar: the old story.

*People fail to change because they don’t feel safe changing—changing means leaving their home base of reality—the internal map that is synonymous with identity. We tend to return to our default mode.*
Let’s do a brief exercise that will demonstrate why people don’t change.

- **Put your palms together and interlock your fingers. Notice which thumb is on top.**

- **Now keep your fingers exactly the same, and change your thumbs so the other is on top.**

- **How does that feel? Awkward?**

- **Now, move your hands and thumbs back to your original place.**

- **Ahh. A relief.**

- **That’s why people don’t change—they return to their comfort zone.**

Now up the ante. Add significant success. Or significant stress, such as a major transition. Really out of a comfort zone. We’ll talk more about comfort zones and how to program change.

There is always the pull of the old and the fear of the new.

**Comfort Zones**

A comfort zone is a familiar pattern of behavior. It is a gradual process, but once established, resists change. We repeat in order to play a game where we master the rules and know exactly how to win.

A comfort zone is a belief combined with a behavior pattern, repeated until automatic. So, it’s familiar and predictable. It makes sense to pick the known over the unknown.

**We follow comfort zones unconsciously and automatically because we know what the outcome will be.**

Here’s an example of a comfort zone in action. Most lottery winners manage to spend or give away their newfound winnings to return to
their previous situation. In fact, in the U.S., 80% of lottery winners file bankruptcy within the first five years.

Their money changed but their mind sets didn’t. So much money moved them from their comfort zone, and they ended up returning to it.

A comfort zone can be very beneficial and energy saving. It is beneficial to reflect on when it continues to serve you, or when it has stopped serving you.

At some points, a comfort zone can become an obstacle. Think about how subtle a comfort zone can be in determining choices: what you eat; the difficulty of starting a new exercise program.

A comfort zone can be a behavior pattern, such as self-effacing jokes. Or a state of mind, such as responding angrily to certain situations. It can be the repeated role you play in the relationship. Or procrastination of lifestyle changes you need to make.

A comfort zone may manifest in certain patterns, storylines, or recurring characters. Working under pressure, waiting until the last minute, creating crises – all can be comfort zones. For example, someone can be an underdog and succeed against all odds. This can become a comfort zone of behavior in which the same pattern is repeated over and over, faster, and faster, so that escalating success is the repeated comfort zone.

In the beginning, departure from a comfort zone feels, by definition, uncomfortable—a rupture of continuity. A routine is broken. Sometimes letting go of a comfort zone occurs only when the pain is too great to remain in it.

The choices we make tend to be from our comfort zone. But a comfort zone trades passion for predictability, creativity for continuity, and the new for the familiar.
Some reflections about comfort zones.

- Because something feels familiar does not automatically make it the best or most strategic way to proceed.
- But, just because something feels unfamiliar and uncomfortable does not validate it as the best choice, either.
- Recognition of patterns and repeating loops gives awareness of options.
- Remember that new choices will at first be uncomfortable—a move from your comfort zone.

How do you know when your comfort zone is not serving you?

- You feel stuck, repeating the same pattern or scenario
- You lack enthusiasm and may feel lassitude or dullness, still very busy, but not changing.
- You've lost enthusiasm and excitement, but keep repeating the same pattern.
- Your friends notice patterns that are invisible to you about how you keep doing the same thing again and again.
- You get uncomfortable and frustrated with the same storyline and the same limited results.

The comfort zone is the ghost writer, invisibly creating the same storylines without questioning or awareness. A comfort zone is not bad; it has just outlived its usefulness. It originated in a different era and the behavior was adaptive then.

A caveat: Recognize that when you initiate change to move from your comfort zone, it will challenge the system. Everyone around you will be forced to react to your change. Their first reaction inevitably will be change-back pressure. Others will “help you” try to restore your equilibrium and resume the old comfort zone.
Session 2 - Coaching a Wellness Mindset

As with any system, when you change one component, the entire system must shift. Recognize that moving away from a comfort zone will prompt resistance from people around you. You have to do it anyway rather than respond to the change-back pressure.

And part of the answer to why change is difficult is in our brains.

Old habits and accustomed behaviors are like being on a daily commute. Familiar experiences travel along well-established neuronal connections with their predictable neural networks. Though repetitive, it is a familiar superhighway. To change is like coming to the end of that familiar route to suddenly enter uncharted territory with no assuring landmarks. This is what is literally happening in the brain as a grooved neuronal pathway and neural network— the default mode—change because of new experience. The result: to feel lost, tempted to end the discomfort of uncertainty by returning to the familiar—the old story.

No one is comfortable in the beginning to proceed in new territory.

In the fall of 2004, some voters voted twice in the presidential election. Their first time was a stopover at the laboratory of Neuroscientist Dr. Drew Westen to be hooked up to functional MRI brain scans. He presented them with a variety of new material. He found that people emotionally committed to particular ideas manage to ignore factual material that contradicts their own preconceptions. The participants simply did not register data opposing a belief system. He also found that three separate areas in the brain acted in concert to ignore everything except what fit a preconceived idea. His research reminds us that there are truths we refuse to see, and that incorrect assumptions will be validated. We see what we believe.

Not only do we actively construct stories, but our brain continually edits at the same time.

An example is a classic study in which an audience is asked to watch several people dribbling and passing a basketball among themselves. Their job: to count the number of passes each person makes during a one-minute period. Intense concentration is needed because the ball
moves quickly. Then, someone dressed in a gorilla suit crosses the floor, walks through the players, turns to the viewer and thumps his chest in the middle of the screen, and leaves. How many people saw such an obvious phenomenon?

Researches Daniel Simons and Christopher Chabris found that consistently 50% of people failed to notice the gorilla. This “inattentional blindness” is our brain at work trying to construct meaningful and consistent narratives from an inconsistent world. Things that don’t fit the storyline get unconsciously edited, or, simply fail to register as relevant.

**Listen For the Power of Story**

We are not hard-wired for life. With new experiences, new neuronal pathways and new neural networks are formed. New highways to new communities in your brain. And, some remarkable new research shows, consistently repeating new experiences even alters gene expression.

*When we write a new story—and change our minds—we change our brains.*

**Active Choice**

I’m going to describe a study and have you guess the biggest change impact.

Ben Fletcher at the University of Hertfordshire in the United Kingdom devised a study to get people to break their usual habits. Each day the subjects picked a different option from poles of contrasting behaviors -- lively/quiet, introvert/extrovert, reactive/proactive -- and behaved according to this assignment. So an introverted person, for example, would act as an extrovert for an entire day. Additionally, twice weekly, they had to stretch to behave in a way outside their usual life pattern – eating or reading something they would never have done.

What do you think was the biggest change in the group?
The remarkable finding was that after four months, the subjects had lost an average of eleven pounds. Six months later, almost all had kept the weight off. This was not a diet, but a study focusing on change and its impact.

The rationale: requiring people to change routine behavior makes them actually think about decisions rather than habitually choosing a default mode without consideration.

In coaching, I call this story busting. When the participants processed decisions actively, they exercised choice. This process of conscious decision extended to other choices such as what to eat, and what not to.

For example, next time you’re eating, think: Every bite is a choice. Do I like this choice? Does it serve me well? When I look back at the end of the day, what will I be glad I’ve done?

Once becoming aware of actively making choices, you can decide what’s in your best interest, what furthers your story. And what doesn’t.

*If you want to understand something, try to change it.*

*Here’s an example from Executive Mentor Coaching:*

Bryan was working successfully at a new CEO position. Three months earlier he advanced from COO at another corporation. He was doing a great job in his first 100 days.

One session he departed from our discussion of success strategies to say he had a vague concern that he would somehow sabotage his new achievements. Then he said he regularly stopped at a convenience store to eat candy before he got home so that his wife wouldn’t see him.

I asked how he decided to stop each time. He responded by calling it sneak eating, and said he hadn’t told his wife.

I asked, “What do you say to yourself the instant you decide to sneak eat?”
He wasn't sure. I wanted to know specifically what was going on in his head that led to the conclusion to do what he did.

I prompted, “In other words, do you bargain with yourself to say ‘I’ll do better later?’ Do you oppose your own authority to say, ‘I’ll do whatever I want?’ Or feel some overwhelming urge that hijacks your best judgment?”

Bryan’s conversation with himself was, “To hell with it, I’ll eat whatever I want—no one’s around to stop me.” He recognized that the result was to abandon his principles.

I noted that in the story he was writing, he farmed out his authority to his wife—as if she were the obstacle. He kept the other half: the desire—as if he were getting away with something. He created the illusion that he triumphed because she didn’t see him. He acknowledged his reactive choice to not be his own authority.

His question was, “How do I get it back?”

I said, “The question is not how do you get it back, but how do you not give it away? It is yours, you’re the author of your story. It seems you’re not being loyal to yourself.”

He recognized that he was writing the storyline he detested.

I asked how he could convert his fear into an intention that was in his best interest. He quickly admitted he needed to take care of himself better, that he wasn’t living up to his own ideals. He could then collaborate with me to make a specific plan with effective strategies for eating and exercise. We could then apply this process to sustaining and expanding his success in his company as well as his life.

ROADMAP™ for WELLNESS

From my work in Professional Coaching, I have distilled the following principles that focus on facilitating change—a preface to looking at the ROADMAP™ for WELLNESS.
Session 2 - Coaching a Wellness Mindset

1. Each person’s life story is created.
You create whatever you think, feel, and experience each moment. Every day is a blank page until you begin writing on it—even though it seems to the individual to be “just be the way things are.”

2. Knowing what not to do is at least as important as knowing what to do.
You may not always know what the next right thing is, but you can almost always know what it isn't.

3. Questions are more powerful than advice.
Questions—empathic curiosity—can direct, clarify, illuminate, even story-bust. And move the process from compliance to collaboration. Advice invites either acquiescence or resistance. People stuck in unhealthy habits know this: Both opposition and conformity occupy the same prison.

4. When people create their own answers, they have signed on to invest in the outcome.
This establishes the beginning of a sense of effectiveness and mastery. We’ll talk in a later session how the brain lights up with an “ah-ha” or insight experience, and doesn't when receiving advice.

5. We don't see things as they are; we see things as we are.
Assumptions manifest as feelings and behaviors. When you make assumptions explicit, you can more clearly see which facilitate and which interfere.

6. Change is constant and inevitable; it is the resistance to change that generates most problems.
We are most successful when we learn from yesterday, anticipate tomorrow, and integrate the impact of new experience.

7. Small changes lead to big changes.
Issues that seem overwhelmingly large and insurmountable can be approached by looking at the simplicity of the issue in order to specify progress. For example, when you feel overwhelmed with the amount of
tasks, first clarify one issue that if done today would be progress. This focus on a specific action exercises effectiveness and initiates a model of mastery.

8. Solutions, causes, and problems are not always related or even interconnected. To resolve a problem, even emotionally to come to the end of the past, does not create a blueprint for success. That's why there are a lot of frustrated therapy refugees. Strategic plans for specific goals are necessary. If something is a totally new experience, you may need a guide, even for something like a healthier diet or exercise.

9. The benefit of doing more of what is working and less of what is not will become evident and self-perpetuating.

10. You need to know where you're going--goals and strategies. If you don't know where you're going, any map will do.

11. You need the correct paradigm. A paradigm is an internal map—the way you see, interpret, and understand something. It needs to be correct. If you're in Dallas and need to navigate the city, a map of Houston is useless. And it needs to be current, not a paradigm from an old story. For example, if you read the anxiety or uncertainty of a new experience in an old paradigm, such as anxiety equals danger ahead; or uncertainty means wrong decision—it makes sense to stop. A current paradigm reframes the excitement and trepidation of moving ahead in new territory as a signpost of progress.

Addendum: Exercise on Intuition

As preparation for the next sessions of writing your Wellness Stories, I'd like to highlight one of the tools you'll use: intuition. Intuition is a knowing not formulated from data or intellectual processes. Intuition lets the unconscious do its job without the logical brain get in the way. (I'd highly recommend the book Blink by Malcolm Gladwell.)

Intuition can flow when you don't make assumptions, when you are very present and centered. It's related to flow--like the athlete totally immersed
Session 2 - Coaching a Wellness Mindset

in a procedural body memory of performance. If athletes have to think about how to perform, even for a nanosecond, it takes them to a different part of their brains and out of flow; it interferes with performance. Intuition is an energy field of flow to be attuned to internally as well as to resonate with others.

Let’s do an exercise that will demonstrate in one small way how you can program and calibrate intuition.

First:
- Get in a comfortable position on your chair
- Take some deep breaths
- Say yes to yourself many times
- Think yes to yourself many times
- Feel yes to yourself many times
- Think about something that is a yes
- Be aware of what your body feels like when you experience yes

Now:
- Think no to yourself
- Feel no to yourself
- Think about things that you associate with no
- Experience what it’s like in your body with no

Yes is usually associated with openness and receptiveness in your body.

No is usually associated with emptiness, contraction, nothing.

This exercise to focus on what you experience in your body with a yes or no also applies to reading someone else. A yes results in a certain kind of body signal. A no results in a different kind of body signal. This example
is only one entry in a catalogue of intuitive perceptions. You can develop many more. Most are already there—just listen to them. Trust them. You can tell the people who withdraw from or deposit to your emotional bank account. Just listen to your intuition.
Recognize, Own, and Assess Your Wellness Story

Step 1. Recognize Authorship of Your Story

When you examine your wellness story—the basics of your personal narrative, how do you recognize it in order to own it? Here is one specific method for identifying personal narratives. One purpose: to not wait until your health stumbles to pay attention to it. Ownership is the antithesis of several things: denial, rationalization, excuses, blaming.

Someone can be addicted to excuses. We all know some charter members of the “Ain't It Awful Club.” Membership can be relinquished at any point to not blame and complain but to plan and do. This reclaims energy. One way to change a habit is to simply stop practicing it. But first you have to recognize it.
The Three Principles in Recognizing Authorship

**Principle 1. Our experiences are always consistent with our assumptions.**
Beliefs are what we consider our basic truths that determine our experiences and results in life.

A baby elephant can be trained from birth to be confined to a small space. The trainer ties a rope around its leg, and stakes the rope in the ground. The baby elephant will initially try to break the rope, but the rope is strong and it can't. The baby elephant has to stay in the area determined by the length of the rope.

When this elephant grows to a mammoth adult size, it could easily break the rope. But it doesn't. Because earlier, as a baby, it couldn't. The five ton adult elephant is constrained by his assumption based on earlier experiences.

Each of us writes our own personal story, and make sense of things by fitting incidents and events into our unique plot. This story fills in the blanks and connects the dots to complete the picture of who and what we are. Events, images, and experiences form the patterns and storylines of that plot. We construct meanings to make sense of our life, and determine what is remembered as narrative in a coherent story of our identity.

Beliefs drive behaviors.

Beliefs determine the experiences and results of what we do. Beliefs are directives to your mind to make something happen in your life. A belief is the mind’s command to the brain. With the same belief, you will continue to have the same results. If you change your belief, you can have different results.

Using our beliefs and assumptions, we create our own personal story and the themes of that story. The plot defines and orients us in the present and guides us toward the future. The stories we tell about our life become our life. The stories we tell about our past become our past.
Session 3 - Recognize, Own, and Assess your Wellness Story

We perceive and remember what fits into our plot, which is our internal model of the world and ourselves.

The plot—the core beliefs and assumptions of life stories— informs what you look for and how you attribute meaning to what you find. You then create narratives of self-statement according to that plot, since brain and emotions are both programmed to ignore facts that contradict assumptions. You ignore, mistrust, disbelieve or more likely don't notice anything that doesn't fit into your pattern.

UCLA research professor Marilynn Kourilsky found that 97% of kindergarteners think out of the box, while only 3% of people by age 30 do. Kindergarteners do not plan ways to think out of the box, they have simply not constructed a box yet. The box is a personal construction, a story that is actively created both consciously and unconsciously to shape both perception and processing. At times, a way to think outside the box is to simply suspend judgment, and approach something with a beginner's mind.

Principle 2. We become what we think and feel. Our beliefs become our reality.
Our possibilities are always a manifestation of what we allow ourselves to consider.

The beliefs within us—our own internal map of reality—determine our perception of what surrounds us, including what and how we select, register and process. This is our plot.

A farmer and an archeologist pass through the same terrain of undeveloped land. The farmer sees the soil and envisions growing crops. The archeologist sees signs of an ancient civilization and reconstructs its history. Both are right. The data viewed validates each individual’s story.

Beliefs must be in conscious focus in order to revise the ones that don’t work, and to create new ones for personal and career growth.
People always make their beliefs come true. If you believe that no one will love you, you will interpret behavior and perceive responses as such, and act so that you will not be lovable, or will block someone from experiencing intimacy. You act in such a way to teach people how to respond to you. This actualizes your beliefs and validates your assumptions.

A footnote: select carefully the people you spend time with. You are the average of the five people you are around the most. Do you like the results? Are they kind, successful, disciplined, achievers? Choose your friends and colleagues well—it makes a difference.

**Principle 3. A new story can only occur by living in the present moment.**

It has been said that there is nothing but the present: the past is a present memory and the future is a present anticipation. Observe and own repetitions of storylines to initiate understanding the core assumptions that generate these repetitions. Moment by moment and frame-by-frame, we actively construct the present scenarios and our experiences of them. Some of the storylines are visible, such as ways of relating to family, or responding to stress. Other aspects may be invisible on one's own radar, such as an assumption of ability to only make a limited amount of money.
Exercise
Plot—the core unfolding of the themes and storylines of life stories—informs what you look for and how you attribute meaning to what you find. You then create narratives of self-statement according to those assumptions, since brain and emotions are both programmed to ignore facts that contradict beliefs.

The first step toward enhancing a life story is to recognize story ownership. Then, assessing the storylines becomes possible in order to decide what to change. This ownership of a life story involves a review and assessment of plot and storylines, including understanding hidden emotional themes and recurring patterns.

These questions identify specific personal narratives to begin an understanding of the assumptions that create them.

Focus on your basic life story plot themes to first recognize the following aspects of your life story. Writing down the answers may be useful now, and to show progress later.

Identity
- **Who are you?**

- **Do you define yourself by a role, such as “parent”?**

- **Do you define yourself by your work, such as “realtor” or “nurse”?**

- **Do you define yourself by a relationship, such as “wife” or “son”?**

- **Does your sense of self feel internally consistent despite varying external contexts?**

- **What is your core identity that transcends all roles and relationships?**
Ideals
- Do you have a clear internal ideal of who and what you want to be?
- Are you living up to your own ideals?
- Have you realized your potential?

Needs
- Do your basic needs and ideals align with your goals?
- Are you subjugating any needs to wants?
- Do you need to become more of who you really are?
- Do you deny your wants or needs to avoid conflict, to please others, or to take care of others?

Career
- Who are you in your career?
- Do you define yourself by your job description?
- Are you reaching your full potential at work?
- Do you create a self-definition that facilitates growth, with definite goals, a specific and evolving life and career plan, and measurable success?

Relationship
- Who are you (or whom do you become) in an important relationship, such as with a spouse?
- In a relationship, is your personal growth facilitated, stymied, or ignored?
- Do you lose your individuality by taking on your partner or spouse's identity? Do you feel “less than” rather than “equal to”?
- What goals have you realized in your life?
- What goals have yet to be achieved?
Session 3 - Recognize, Own, and Assess your Wellness Story

An example of recognizing authorship:

She said, “That could be a profile of my life. I’m sure a lot of other people experience the same thing. I don’t want to relive this pattern over and over again. There seems to be this circuitry that I keep entering. Destiny had to trust in order to learn. When will I learn to trust? I keep peeling back more layers. How many layers to these distortions are there?”

I wrote back the following response. “We each have a personal story with a plot and storylines. Our beliefs ghostwrite that story. When you peel back all the layers of the onion, what’s left is not a pure, unadulterated onion, but nothing, since you’ve destroyed the object of the quest. Instead of the model of layers going deeper to discover the next layer, consider generating a new story. You can assess when you’re rewriting an old story and plagiarizing an earlier version of yourself. Then, you can edit the repeating storyline. Or create a new one.”

This person now writes stories for a major US publication, and is working on a second screenplay.

STEP 2. Own Your Story — Storylines That Define

It’s difficult to be objective, because our assumptions are “just the way things are.”

Our beliefs generate the possibilities that we see. And because we live out our beliefs, we are always right. We each select, filter, register, so that our beliefs become our truth. Beliefs become self-fulfilling prophecies. Since beliefs create or foreclose possibilities, they influence how we perform and whether we achieve our goals.

*Although not always conscious or even logical, we must recognize authorship and accept ownership of the beliefs and assumptions that write our stories.*
One of the unique qualities we have is self-awareness—the ability to reflect on how we think and what we do. So we can learn from our experiences and those of others. This is why, with guidance and an effective system, we can create a new story—a new program for ourselves that is beyond past experiences. Self-awareness allows us to not let our past—our old story—hold our future hostage.

No one can make you change—or stop you from changing.
Exercise — Assumptions and Motivations Constructing Storylines

Beliefs and assumptions generate the possibilities that we see. They then govern how you process what you perceive. Beliefs, created by you, become self-fulfilling prophecies, because they are lived out. Beliefs create possibilities, which influence how you perform and whether you achieve your goals. Empowering beliefs include:

• I will do what I decide
• I believe the decisions I make to be good.
• I am competent to achieve my goals.
• I can make the money I need.
• I can find a way to love my work.
• I will teach people how to respond to me in a positive way by being positive.

Limiting beliefs also influence reality and behavior. Limiting beliefs have an effect emotionally and physically.

Limiting beliefs include:
• I can’t find time to exercise
• I don’t trust people to be supportive.
• What I do won’t be seen as important.
• My opinion doesn’t matter.
• I will never make all the money I need.
• No matter how hard I try, it will fall short.
• No matter what I do, I will end up suffering.
• I feel stuck in repeating negative things.
As you transform beliefs, you write a new life story. Fundamental to any belief system is its point of reference. To initiate change, move your point of reference from external to internal, beginning with the following basic questions. Filling the space of the present moment with current feeling and experience leaves no space for old beliefs.

Your old assumptions will not disappear, but you make them a memory rather than a lived experience. You can change your mind and it will change your life.

- Is any pattern evident from your plot assessment?
- Do any themes stand out to you as you reflect on your responses?
- What do these patterns and themes articulate about how you think about yourself and others?
- How do they affect your behavior?
- Do you see the patterns repeating in other areas of your life?

**Identify basic aspects of your true self**
- What are you uniquely good at—better than almost anyone else?
- What do you most passionately about?
- What do you have special experience doing?
- What is your greatest personal ambition?

**Create your own experiences and your own reality.**
- What is the biggest obstacle that you face currently?
- What is the biggest challenge you face now?
- What is the one thing you most want to change about your life now?
Wellness Workbook

• What is the one thing you most want to change about your wellness story now?

Review belief systems
To challenge a belief, consider:

• What could I do if this assumption were not in place?
• What belief would serve me better?
• Am I too capable of having this limiting belief hold me back?
• Have I outgrown this belief?
• Have I discovered this belief is not true?
• Can I shift to that more adaptive belief?

Each of the storylines you create has its own history, its own consistency over time. The drama of everyday life does not just affect you, it is created by you. Illuminating the story of your life, the plot and subplots, involves the same questions as understanding any other story.

• Identify and learn about the protagonist (you), your motives and conflicts, wishes and fears, the manifestations of your wishes and fears in your life drama, your entire internal experience, and how each scene ends—whether resolved or not, happy or not, complete or not.

• Identify the antagonist (you, also).

• And how the outside, identified antagonist (your proxy) was carefully selected and identified as an external representation of some part of you. What part of you does the identified antagonist represent? (It is not an accident that the external antagonist was chosen out of millions of possibilities to be a specific representation of some part of you that is unrealized, deleted, or repudiated.)
• Is this antagonist like others in the past, with each relationship being the same process, only with different faces? For example, are you engaged in similar struggles and difficulty with authority with your current boss as with other bosses in the past?

• How similar is this struggle to an original one with a parent?

• Is there a consistent theme or pattern of the important others, the social context, the storyline and its outcome?

These questions assess whether the past lives on in the present, and if the past ghostwrites some of the present. Observing and owning repetitions of themes and storylines allows you to understand your core assumptions that generate these repetitions. You see what you believe, and become it.
Session 3 - Recognize, Own, and Assess your Wellness Story

Notice that these examples include a variety of responses: behaviors, reactions, even complex patterns.

I recently raised a hatching of wild ducks – Mallards – in a pen that I constructed at my ranch. The pen was necessary to protect them from critters until they are old enough to fend for themselves and flee danger by flying, especially since I’m there only on weekends. This necessitated living in the pen, partly submerged in the water at the edge of the lake so they would learn to swim and develop naturally, for about five weeks. When I opened the gate of the pen, they wouldn’t leave. Despite their freedom to swim in a beautiful lake, or just fly away, confinement in a small pen had become a comfort zone. I had to force them out. Then, as soon as they were released, all twelve moved as a group never more than a few inches apart, a habit they formed in the pen. They continue to this day to swim and fly in that tight pattern.

Point of Reference

The point of reference is a basic component of story writing.

People who don’t own their stories have a premise of an external point of reference; their theme is helplessness. They transfer responsibility to someone or something outside themselves. They react to situations they are in. Here are some typical characteristics of those with an external point of reference.

- They feel as if they have little or no control over things. Life is just happening—to be reacted to. “There’s nothing I can do.”

- They’re vulnerable to the responses of others. Their language can absolve responsibility. “She makes me so mad.”

- They focus on responding rather than creating. “I have to do this.”

- They see themselves as unchanging. “That’s just the way I am.”

- They believe that they can only change things by changing the outside source
Those with an internal point of reference see their authority as their own. Their premise is acceptance of responsibility; their theme is effectiveness. They know that—at least since adulthood—they write their own stories.

Here are their characteristics:

- They recognize accountability for their own lives. They are proactive. They plan. They look around the corner. They keep their feathers oiled.

- When experiencing an unpleasant result, they examine the chain of events that generated the result. And look for alternatives.

- When encountering a result that doesn’t work or doesn’t serve, they decide to not continue.

- They decide what to change, and initiate that change.

- They realize that the menu of choices is also created. You can choose and choose how you choose.

Recognize Active versus Passive Positions

Sometimes the story seems to write itself, to just happen to you.

- “I ran out of time so I couldn’t work out.”

- “My thoughts ran away from me.”

- “It just seems to keep happening.”

These passive positions disown the feeling, thoughts, or action as your own active creation—as if they became their own independent agent and are now acting on you. This passivity masks personal initiative. Rather than managing, overcoming, countering, or medicating a feeling such as anxiety, the first step is to acknowledge that even though it seemed to
Session 3 - Recognize, Own, and Assess your Wellness Story

“just happen,” you generate the experience. Then you can examine the meaning you attach. Insight and understanding alone do not generate a positive and successful new story. You create it.
Wellness Workbook
Workbook content is woven into the text and recommended exercises are placed within each session for your convenience.

Step 3. Assess the Storylines and Plot

A. Ideals Assessment

Exercise — Distinguish and Address Ideals

Needs and ideals form core themes of personal story plot. Awareness of your unique blend of these elements will inform assessment of your present story, and guide you in its revision.

Ideals and needs are at the core of identity, part of the foundation of self. Of the 19 tools in the 7 Steps Workbook, the Needs and Ideals Assessment is the one I use most with clients.

Ideals are internal standards of excellence. Ideals serve as a personal model of value—an internal guide to purpose. Living up to a personal, attainable ideal generates a sense of worth and esteem. Failure to live up to an internal ideal results in the feeling of shame.

The following exercises will help distinguish your personal set of needs and ideals. A personal journey of integrity in aligning decisions with ideals includes:

• Clarify your core ideals

• Develop awareness of how each ideal applies to important areas of your life

• Recognize and honor the hierarchy of ideals when making decisions (such as an immediate need of your child eclipsing a desire to learn and be creative).

• Attach significance to each ideal and recognize the expense in commitment (such as knowing the sleepless nights and boring moments in having a child).

• Align beliefs and assumptions with ideals.

• Live your ideals. Protect them. If you have not been true to them with integrity for yourself, reclaim them. If you are unclear about each of them, focus sharply, and perhaps reconstruct fundamental values.
Ideals Clarification Exercise

Ideals are internal standards of excellence. Ideals serve as a personal model of value—an internal guide to purpose. Living up to a personal, attainable ideal generates a sense of worth and esteem. Failure to live up to an internal ideal results in the feeling of shame.

From this list of ideals, choose the three that are most important to you. You may want to add others.

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Distinguish and Address Needs

A need is an essential requirement, a necessity for mind, body, or spirit. An unmet need is the gap between an internal realistic standard and reality. Earlier in life, needs consisted of physical nurturance, empathic attunement, attachment, effectiveness, exploration, assertion, feeling and tension regulation, and sensory needs. In adulthood, needs are adult versions of those same basic needs, all providing for physical requirements, comfort, identity, affirmation, love, communication, safety, mastery, freedom, and sexual/sensual needs. When you consistently meet your own needs, a sense of effectiveness and optimum functioning results. Remember the satisfaction of having completed something knowing you have given it everything you have?

Unmet, frustrated needs create discomfort. For example, the basic need for connection (one that is a commitment at a heart level, not just a decision) when derailed or nonexistent, results in emotional disharmony. A need may be most obvious when it is not met.

Wants (wishes and desires) are replaceable with other wishes, and fantasies are interchangeable, but one need cannot substitute for another need. Old unmet needs manifest as present wants, such as a need for affirmation as a child resulting in a relentless adult pursuit of validation trophies and driven accomplishments. A need cannot be suppressed or segmented from awareness for very long. The frustration of a wish, such as the expectation of a gift, can lead to disappointment. While needs are universal, wants are tied to experiences uniquely personal and with its own particular history.

You can get sick if you don't have enough of a need. You can get sick if you have too much of a want. Unsatisfied wants may result from not having a defined goal (not having an end point of “good enough”), or trying to satisfy a past want in present time. You can never get enough of what you don't need.
## Needs Clarification List

From this list of needs, choose the three that are most important to you. You may want to add others.

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The following vignette illustrates work to clarify needs and ideals. Note how we can know from someone's language and behavior the assumptions that drive their stories.

Client: “I feel like I’ve been cheated at the end of the day. It’s 9:00 PM and I haven’t eaten yet. The way my schedule goes is that I come home from work and my wife hands our son to me, and I’m in charge of him from 5:00 to 7:00. I love that, but I’m tired. She uses that time to do her computer work. Then I finish work from the day, and it’s at least 9:00 PM. I’m stressed out.”

I highlighted two aspects of what he said:

“... I’ve been cheated ...”

“... The way my schedule is ...”

I pointed out that he was speaking as if he were not writing his own story, as if it were ghostwritten by someone else and not approved by him. I knew he was in charge of his schedule. Then, I ask him simply, “Why are you writing your daily story in a way that you don’t like?”

He paused, dumbfounded. “I guess I feel like I have to. I feel like I have to support my wife and take care of our son in that way. My work just spills into the evening, into my private life. So I don’t work out or relax. I even have to take calls from my people during the time with my son. Something is assumed and expected of me when I walk in the door. I feel like someone else is in control of me.”

“What do you hear yourself saying?”

He responded, “Someone else is writing my story for me.”

I said, ‘You’re not acting like you own the company.”

He said, “How can I protect the time with my son?”

I said, “Every ‘yes’ you say you have to pay for with at least one ‘no.’ Those “yeses” are pretty expensive. No protected time to be totally with him—for him and you—no total immersion in free play.”
I said, “Let’s start at the beginning. Assume every day is a blank page and there is nothing on it until you write it. How, ideally, would you like your day to be?”

“I’d like to use that time after work for my family and to work out.” He then constructed a day in which he was in charge of his schedule, in which he proactively decided the structure, the boundaries, and the parameters. He even worked in (at my nudging) exercise.

I said, “I hear you beginning to write a different story—to take care of yourself. It’s also a powerful model for your son—for him to see fully how a man can take care of himself and others.”

When he was really getting it and reflecting on what we were saying, I decided to drive for the bucket. “I suspect the frustrations that you haven’t spoken until now—about your company, your marriage—are there at a subliminal level and get communicated so that others feel it—your wife, your employees, your customers. I’d guess it registers as something not working quite right and you—or they—don’t know exactly why, until it lights on something that makes it make sense—even though its not the real cause.”

He thought a moment, then said, “Yea. Like when I blow up. Or fire somebody.”

I said, “That would end the tension—for awhile.

He added, “Yea, until I’m off to the races again.”

He recognized that if he structured a way to meet his own needs—to take care of the foundation of his wellness—that he was creating a personal and professional mastery. By having clear boundaries, he could be totally immersed in work during the day, and totally free at home. Both were restorative for him.
Part of the Assessment: Understand Conflicted and Contradictory Storylines

Invisible storylines and emotional agendas can make intelligent, sophisticated, reasonable, talented, dependable, ethical people act goofy about certain things. For example, financial wellness. Examples of imbalances: Intelligent people spend money they don’t have. Sophisticated people get schemed and scammed, sometimes repeatedly. Reasonable people forego pleasure to pursue money in order to purchase back a portion of what they forfeited. Gifted people can’t convert their talent into sufficient income. Balanced individuals spend extravagantly or hoard compulsively. Dependable people ignore financial matters until they become serious. Highly principled individuals step over boundaries and write their own rules about money. The messages will keep repeating themselves--people will keep writing the same money stories that imprison them--until they are listened to.

If you feel trapped in your own recurring story, consider if you are stuck in an old belief or conflict. Better strategy or another new plan won’t solve an imbalance. Awareness of the internal origin of an imbalance is difficult because it’s so subjective.

In your story, is all of you going in the same direction, or do you seem to undermine yourself in certain areas?

Do all your storylines fit and advance the plot?

Listen to Your Self-Statements

Whatever you attribute to others -- another person or more abstractly to a group or culture -- comes from inside you as a self-statement. We always perceive and create outside to match inside, so pay attention to what you consistently like and dislike in another. Everything you say and do is a self-statement. Don’t project your intentions onto someone else’s behavior.
Session 3 - Recognize, Own, and Assess your Wellness Story

**Acknowledge and own everything about yourself.** Take yourself very personally. Listen carefully and explicitly to all the messages from your interior, to your whole truth. Feelings never lie; the body cannot deceive.

If you want to find out what you believe about yourself and the world, look around at your life. It is the self-statement, the mirror, of what exists inside you. When you feel chaotic or disorganized internally, you likely will notice that your house or office or car reflects that experience. All that you say, in the syntax of thought, feeling, and behavior, is about yourself.

Everyone else also makes self-statements. What you say about me doesn't tell me about me, it tells me about you. What someone says about you has everything to do with the speaker, even though focused on you. Listen, but don't take it personally (only a theory is ever this simple and clear). All others can do is share their experience of you; it is their experience and perception, their own point of view. You can share your own experience of someone else, but be aware that your perceptions are also filtered through your own lens.

For example, if someone is being critical and judgmental of you, it is your decision whether to believe and accept that point of view. Consider if you are assigning an aspect of your self to someone else, such as competitiveness. If you believe you lack a certain quality, you may pursue someone who exhibits it. This reliance on someone functioning for you and on an external point of reference for validation can be limiting. In order to grow, you must move your point of reference to an internal one, and own responsibility for your life and its expression.

If I say, “Jean, I think you're a lousy dietician/nutritionist.” Jean can say to herself, “Wow, he might be right. That makes me feel bad.” Or Jean can say to herself, “Krueger doesn't really know me or what he's talking about. I know how good I am.”

**What's important is not what Krueger says to Jean. What matters to Jean is what Jean says to Jean.**
Listen for Repetitions of the Old Story

We each generate a life story with a recurring plot. We repeat its continuing formula over time, even when it is not a winning one. Each repetition may more deeply reinforce basic assumptions and the (false) belief that you are a victim of fate. To reenter an old story and attempt to write a better ending creates a variation of the scenario, a new edition of the same process.

The more you run away from something, the more you engage it. So the more apparent it becomes. And sometimes you can recognize something the first time only by denying it.

At times we repeat just to see, in relation to a fixed point of reference, how much we’ve changed. Each time we return to the chorus of a song, those same words are different, for more of the lyrical story has unfolded, and we see more of the unfolding journey at each juncture of repetition.

You are always reaching your goals, whether they are conscious or unconscious. If your personal or professional life is not as gratifying as you would like, if you believe you have not attained your objectives, look more closely. It is helpful to know consciously and specifically what those goals are. You might be undermining your success by being too vague in your objectives. Do you fear specifically yet dream vaguely?

If you want to change your body, begin with changing your body image. Visualize the specific image you want to achieve: your ideal body image—your true body self. Not a false body self for example, of overweight or out of shape. Then create an informed plan to get there.

Listen to your language in regard to your goals. If you say you will “try” to reach a goal, you may be protecting yourself from anticipated failure. “Trying” immediately says that there is not a full commitment, a potential diversion to other alternatives against failure. You know the words of someone not committed: “I’ll try;” “I should;” “I ought to;” “I know I need to.” These build in a “take-away”—detraction—by not being totally committed, by creating an “out.” When someone says, “I’m going to try to quit drinking” you know that he or she will continue drinking.
Session 3 - Recognize, Own, and Assess your Wellness Story

Here are the words of someone committed: “I will.”

“What if there were a pill that would keep you fit and lean as you aged, while protecting your heart and bones? What if it were as good for your brain as for your body, if it made you stronger, more confident, less susceptible to depression? What if it improved your sleep, mood, and memory and reduced your risk of cancer, all while adding life to your years and years to your life?”

“A great number of studies have found that exercise can provide all these benefits and more, even for people who begin late in life.”


Listen to Your Body

Your body always speaks to you. You sense it and feel it when you eat healthily, work out, and rest well. At the time, and especially later.

A huge, delicious dessert will taste great at the moment, but the residual feeling and awareness of regret will last far longer in time than the immediate pleasure of the great taste. Also reflect on what studies—and your experience—shows: the major taste impact—up to 80%—is in the first three bites. After that, it’s redundant—your body has already accommodated to the sensation. (Same principle as coke addicts who describe how they chase that first high of the initial use)

Listen also to the message in each pain, discomfort, disease, change of function, exhilaration, sensation, and energy spurt.

There are no accidents within the system—the story—of your body. As with any complex system, a change of one component affects every aspect of that system.
Of your body’s eleven systems only two have memory: the nervous and immune. A new story involving your body inscribes a new text for these two systems, and benefits your whole body.

Listen to your body; acknowledge and accept its somatic language. Acknowledge what works. And what doesn’t. Hear your body speak when you eat too much, eat foods that are unhealthy, or drink too much. It’s not rocket science. Listen to your body—it’s sensitive, accurate, immediate. Pay attention to the message when you work out, when you feel refreshed by taking care of yourself. Your body makes you accountable. Your body’s language communicates the accountability of stress and tension, as well as of relaxation and contentment. If you are creating hypertension (hypertension: emotional tension’s physical expression of high blood pressure), understand and change the process. Acknowledge and accept what your body speaks in pain, headache, chest tightness, churning gut, being easily winded.

Symptoms give disguised voice to what you avoid knowing. A symptom is a sentinel of a process that needs, begs, to be understood, listened to rather than silenced, respected rather than disregarded. A storyline needing to be heard, a symptom repeats until translated. Somatic language is literal: a pain in the neck, purging something, weeping skin, hyper-tension. A psychological symptom answers a question not asked consciously, and proffers a story with its own history, dynamics, and meanings.

“It is easier to fall ill than learn the truth …so take care of your maladies …they always have something to tell you.” — Milorad Pavic

You are the author, not the victim of your symptom.

What does a symptom ask of its creator? To listen, to hear the message spoken in physical or symbolic language, to learn from it in order to address the change needed.

Do you have a symptom speaking a disavowed message to you?
Session 3 - Recognize, Own, and Assess your Wellness Story

A final thought: Schedule an appointment with yourself (the passive version is, “If I find time...”) to meditate. If you use some of this time to brainstorm with yourself, here's a suggested prompt.

Everyone on earth has one thing in common: our choices in life define us. Those who provide service to others, such as authors, money managers, therapists, leaders, teachers, coaches, especially parents—have their answers counted many times. Make it matter.

When you listen to whispers, no one has to shout.
The Choices of Change

Changing behavior is difficult. Even when it means the difference between life and death. In studies of coronary bypass patients, when their lives are at risk unless they adopt healthier lifestyles, how many do you think change their habits? Only one in nine.

We’re going to talk about change and how to do it.

You make your world fit into the story you’re writing. Your story determines your future by predicting it. You write your story—then your story shapes you—determines your relationship with everything.

Your present and future story is yours to write.
STEP 4. Decide What to Change in Your Wellness Story

Exercise — 4 BASIC INQUIRIES FOR STORYLINE EVALUATION

1. What do you want to change?
If there is a problem, barrier, or obstacle, it is not a simple matter of getting over it, countering, or adapting to it: It is not there until you create it. Consider creating something else instead. For example, convert a fear of public speaking into an intention with a specific commitment.

2. What do you want to let go?
The bottom line, no matter how entrenched the process or strong the hope, is “Does it work?” Emotionally, it is not so easy to let go of a hope without it being fulfilled—such as trying to get someone to respond in just the right way?

3. What do you want to avoid?
There is always the pull of the old and the fear of the new. Yet there is no future in repetition. For example, to avoid engagement with someone who is draining protects your energy for a more productive choice.

4. What do you want to keep and enhance?
Your life is the manifestation of your beliefs.

Choose carefully what you engage.
Basic Storylines

Here are some examples of basic storylines that show how a belief can lead to behaviors:

• **A desire to feel important.** This urge can drive people to overwork, and to demand perfection from others. It may make them hypersensitive to criticism and overly judgmental about work performance for themselves and others.

• **A wish for approval or acceptance.** It can lead to someone either taking too many risks or refusing to take risks. They may also never say “no” and promise too much.

• **The wish to control.** To be right, to win, avoids vulnerability and a self-perception of weakness or incompetence. Vulnerability to letting anyone see mistakes or presumed flaws becomes intolerable.

• **A need for achievement.** A powerful motivation that requires a reachable, measurable goal and leads to phenomenal success. The goal of “more,” however, can never be reached, whether for money, possessions, promotion.

• **The need for harmony can power affiliation and achievement.** It can also make it difficult for people to stand up for themselves when they have a different opinion. Or to disregard a need—remember my client from last session who said yes to everyone else except himself and his self-care?

Your job is to be aware of your narrative—of the story beneath the surface of your talk and action.
For this step, Decide What to Change, we’re going to add an equation. Remember the one from last session:

\[ \text{Belief} + \text{Behavior} = \text{Performance} \]

The next equation captures the principle that you either create your reality or agree to it:

\[ \text{Event} + \text{Response} = \text{Outcome} \]

Every outcome you experience in life is the result of how you respond to an event in your life. Achievement is outcome; it is the result of responding in certain ways. It’s not what happens to us, but our response to what happens to us that makes the difference.

Between every event and response there is a potential space. That space contains your freedom to choose, and your power to respond. How you respond determines both your growth and your happiness.

So, if you don’t like the outcomes you’re experiencing, you can:

- **Focus on E**
  Blame the event (E) for your lack of results (O) ("Sorry I’m late—the traffic on I-10 was terrible"); here’s my personal favorite: “The assembly instructions didn’t make sense”.

- **Focus on R**
  You can change your response (R) to the events (E) to get the outcome (O) you want. But be careful: to do the latter, you have to give up blaming and complaining.

Here is an essential principle for ownership of your life wellness story: In adulthood, you either create or allow everything that happens to you.
Session 4 - The Choices of Change

- You worked out, so now you feel more energy and alertness.
- You didn’t attend to marketing, and now your business is slumping

Choice is a Mindset

The antithesis of choice is also a mindset. Here’s how the latter sounds:
fate/luck/circumstance/bad traffic/things just happen/I can’t do it.

Whatever you’re doing that you can’t control is your addiction.
You can be addicted to a substance, a behavior, a person, or a process.

Your identity is not your behavior or habits. If you define yourself by what you do, it will be harder to change.

Have you noticed that people specialize: they keep having the same success, or the same problem? If the success is with money and business startups, we see a serial entrepreneur. If the problem is with relationships, it keeps getting repeated.

What you seek is camouflaged in what you fear. Show me an obstacle, and I’ll show you a desire. Show me clutter, and I’ll show you blocked energy that desires release. We always create the outside to match the inside.

For example, a man says, “I only fall for unavailable women.” They are unavailable because they already have partners—or are emotionally unavailable. Since he was afraid of women and intimacy, he needed an obstacle to be in place so he could allow himself awareness of his desire.

There’s a secret here: An obstacle is the unconscious mnemonic of desire—it reminds you of what you want, but makes it safe to want if you’re afraid.

I saw a cartoon of a dog straining at its leash, barking relentlessly at a cat, as if to say, “Just lemme at him.” The cat wasn’t too shabby, and actually
looked kinda mean—about as big as the dog. All of a sudden in the middle of a ferocious bark, the leash snapped. So the dog was free to go after the cat. He looked astonished. Frightened. He quickly grabbed the leash, and tied a triple knot. Then, then he could again strain at the leash and bark his ferocious, “Just lemme at him.”

When you find yourself focusing on an obstacle (e.g., “I can't find time to exercise”), reflect on the underlying desire. When you're ready to consider that you create the obstacle, you're also ready to consider the possibility of not creating it. Imagine what it would be like not to create your obstacles.

To decide what to change in your Wellness Story, Neuroscience, Quantum Physics, and The Law of Attraction can provide us with useful information.

In Quantum Mechanics as well as the brain, the question you ask influences the outcome you see. Dr. Jeffrey Schwartz describes a well-verified law called the Quantum Zeno Effect: focused attention systematically rewires the brain. The mental act of attention activates and holds in place brain circuitry. Consistent focus rewires the brain.

Some NASA astronauts did a training experiment in which they had headgear with a visual apparatus that gave an upside down image—consistently, 24 hours a day. They had to learn to adjust everything they did: down for up, up for down—reversing everything. Then about day 25 they each noticed something remarkable: their brains automatically made the adjustments—they didn't have to any more. Their brains had developed new neural pathways.

Another group of astronauts in the headgear, however, were given a day off—out of the helmets—at day 15. When they put the headgear back on, it took them 25 days from that point on to make the adjustments.

Where you focus your attention, your brain makes connections. Your mind is an energy field and responds to focus. (We'll talk about how to do
Focused attention plays a crucial role in actually altering the structure of the brain.

Stimulating environments, especially when coupled with structured repetitive activity, form more brain connections and expand function. Simply put, this means that when you focus attention in constructive ways you change your brain.

This concept offers explanation at a brain level for why a solution focus is more effective than a problem focus. These brain connections literally become mind-maps, and subsequently influence the reality that we see.

New neuronal networks and pathways are created when you focus on solutions. The already existing circuitry is further etched when you focus on existing problems. This is why people can get stuck in therapy.

Neuroscience validates that it is not understanding the source of our thoughts, but a focus on awareness of choice that is most beneficial.

In coaching, the coach helps the client focus attention on behaviors in a planned strategy to reach goals. This is what we’re doing now.

An Exercise to Deconstruct a Concern (to see what it has to teach you).

Whatever your personal dragons are—fear, restraint, procrastination, your internal critic—each is a belief. Listen to your beliefs rather than ignore them.
Let's consider how to transform your inner critic into an inner coach by listening to the rest of the story.

Write down the biggest health concern your inner critic says (For example, an active internal critic):

- I don't exercise enough.
- I need to lose weight.
- I drink too much.
- I'm anxious about public speaking

Hear the four storylines in each statement: anger, fear, request, and love. That is, listen for the anger, fear, request, and love in the concern.

This is how each of the four storylines can sound:

**Anger:** I'm mad at you for not taking care of yourself and eating right.

**Fear:** I'm afraid for your health.

**Request:** I want you to eat at least 4 servings of vegetables a day, cut out desserts, and work out four times a week.

**Love:** I want you to be around a long time and feel alive and energetic.

You don't confront your dragons to defeat them; you confront them to get to know them. To learn what they've done for you so they can get the respect they deserve. Then, with the pride of a mission accomplished, those dragons can rest peacefully and let you proceed, knowing they're safe—and appreciated.

Be careful lest in casting out your devil, you cast out the best thing in you.
— Niche

And:

The way to solve your problem is to live your life in a way that makes the problem disappear. — Ludwig Wittgenstein
The wisest of sages and old time country doctors reside inside you and generate the text of your new story. Ask questions of your story. Ask questions of your dreams—your stories in nighttime language. Expect answers. Some dreams will be simple and literal, such as a dream of eating an apple and green vegetables being about what your body needs. Some may require interpretation, such as those in DragonSpeak. But each dream tries to work through—while you’re sleeping—something not quite finished from the day—or what you’re already anticipating the next day.

Listen to your intuition. You’re always hearing answers; it’s just that the questions may not be clear yet.

The Science of Change – How the Brain Opposes Change

I’ve overcome my resistance to instruction manuals to put one together for how your brain works.

An Instruction Manual for How to Outsmart Your Brain

These first considerations are important to understand how your mind and brain work—to then know what to do. Later, we’ll apply them. There are eight crucial principles. These principles are immensely useful to navigate change; they help conceptualize and reframe what might otherwise be experienced as barriers. The mechanisms are a little complex, but the principles are so simple they’re almost elusive. Just listen.

1. Change Generates Discomfort.

At a physiological level, change produces pain. One reason has to do with how and where the brain processes new ideas. Routine activity without the introduction of anything new requires little attention or energy. The brain circuits of these longstanding habits reside in the basal ganglia. You take the same route to work each day so you don’t have to think about it and can listen to audio books.
When something new confronts these habits, the automatic pilot in the basal ganglia gets disrupted. You feel discomfort. The prefrontal cortex has to get busy with more energy and attention to process this thinking.

When people encounter something new, such as a new product, they immediately compare it to the familiar, known product. This matching also uses “working memory” of the prefrontal cortex and is energy-intensive.

It’s work to change. The natural inclination is to resist the stress of change, and to preserve the default habit.

2. Change Creates Dissonance (like something is not quite right)

The brain has an innate capacity to detect what neuroscientists call “errors”: the differences between expectation and perceived actuality. Remember the experience of absently-mindedly grabbing a glass to take a drink of milk—to abruptly discover when you took a sip that it was orange juice? When this happens, neural firings disrupt expected flow and use brain energy.

Another example is something that’s not quite right—unsettling—but you can’t identify what it is. Then you touch something unfamiliar. Your error detection circuit says, “I just touched something dirty and have to wash my hands.” You logically know the message isn’t reasonable, but you have an urge to remedy the situation and wash your hands. This distraction is an immediate relief, even though it’s not a cause and effect. In extreme instances, the more this “remedy” is engaged, the more etched the neural circuits become. So hand-washing becomes more compulsive.

This error detection signal that something is “wrong” when routine behavior changes means that we have to take this coupling into account when strategizing about change. That something doesn’t feel comfortable in the beginning is not an indication to stop. You have to leave your comfort zone to change.

3. The Brain is a Prediction Machine.

This is huge in writing a new story—sometimes you have to outsmart your brain. Anything that recurs two times in a row, the brain predicts a
repetition the third time. A stock goes up two quarters in a row, the brain predicts a third will follow. It’s the basis of jokes: listing two things, and surprising with a third nonsequiter.

Well-grooved circuits become default behavior patterns. These brain connections literally become mind maps, and subsequently influence the reality that we see. Remember the placebo affect: what we expect accounts for what we perceive and experience. A patient is prescribed an inert pill + some expectations. In the majority of cases, they manifest. By anticipating an experience, you can create it. The story generates a truth so powerful that it can even reverse the pharmacological effect of a real medicine. We need to be sure we’re predicting—envisioning—the right things.

4. Behavioral Reinforcements Can Backfire
Clinical research demonstrates that some behavioral incentives and threats in the workplace usually backfire.

Studies show two things:

1) Threats such as to reprimand for lateness work short-term, but draw attention away from work and back to the problem that created the behavior. It focuses on the negative. And remember that you get more of what you focus on.

2) Recognition for someone being on time actually raises anxiety and reinforces the neural patterns associated with lateness.

We assume people will receive information about change and use it to better themselves. Not so, says the brain. In fact, being told what to do results in an innate opposition. The brain’s natural homeostasis says: avoid change.

5. Motivation Is Not Essential
Someone does not have to be motivated to do something. And someone may not generate motivation until setting a goal. An action can generate
its own motivation. Many of the professional athletes I’ve worked with get up in the morning and go to the gym, but aren’t motivated to do so. They just do it. Sometime during the course of the workout, perhaps late into it, they become motivated. Or they may just do the workout because they know that it’s the thing to do in order to do what’s next. Motivation isn’t essential—but a plan and sticking to it are.

**Exercise to illustrate motivation is not necessary.**
Place your hands, palms together, in front of your face. Align the little crease at the bottom of your thumbs so that your hands are perfectly symmetrical. Keep your hands together and look at the tips of the longest finger of each hand. Notice if one is slightly longer. About 90% of you will have one slightly longer.

Now, take the hand of the one that’s shorter. If they are the same, pick one hand to do this. Place the hand just a few inches in front of your face and repeat after me eight times: “Grow bigger.”

Now align your palms again and measure. About 95% of you will see that your hand grew bigger.

Now, take the same hand and hold it in front of your face and repeat five times, “Back to normal.”

Then measure your hands.

This exercise demonstrates that you don’t have to be motivated to do some things. You just have to do it.

6. **Emotions Change Brain Functioning**
Anxiety or fear shifts someone into a survival mode that prevents fluid learning and understanding. The alarm signals of fear, anxiety, anger, or even irritability and impatience shanghai the attention of the frontal lobes, causing them to forfeit their optimum functioning.

Here’s where we can integrate research from two pristine fields: neuroscience and poker. Poker experts indicate that the difference between winning and losing is often the ability to stay off “tilt.” “Tilt” is the emotional reaction to winning big or losing big. The emotion from
winning big or losing big alters a state of mind which carries over to the
next hand. When poker players are on tilt, they make decisions they
normally would not make because they’re upset, disappointed, irritated,
or extremely happy. Typically, after a big loss, they attempt to recoup
their losses. Or, after a big win feel flush (literally) and get loose with their
money.

*When someone is in an emotional state they’re marooned in
their right brain—the feeling, intuitive brain. The emotional brain
hijacks the intellectual, logical brain and holds it hostage.*

So what do you do? Your brain is working against you.

7. **Stimulation and Performance**

Stimulation, also known as a little bit of stress, enhances memory and
learning.

The things that excite us, and provide a little bit of stress-short-term,
enhance learning. The time window on this phenomenon is about two
hours.

For longer periods of time, especially four hours or more, things go the
other direction. Learning capacity declines.

*This means that with sustained stress, people make bad,
emotionally charged decisions. The most important success
strategy for many of the executives I’ve worked with is regulation
of states of mind and management of emotion.*

8. **Closure to Novelty**

If you think you’re too old to do something, you will be right. Your body
doesn’t wear out, but it will rust out.

Studies show that even highly accomplished people close themselves to
novelty as they get older. The major factor is not their age, but how long they
have been doing a particular thing, such as been in a particular business. People who stay in one place and one position get most entrenched. Those who have changed positions or careers often adapt to change more readily. They reset their clocks. This means that the imminence and prestige of someone highly accomplished in one area tends to add to the resistance of change.

The longer someone has been practicing unhealthy habits—or just not practicing healthy ones—the greater the challenge in change.

In corporations, there is no problem with fixing what is broken--the resistance is to trying new things. And that resistance may even be greater at the higher and more accomplished levels of the corporation. CEO’s who change companies have to be flexible. Another place I see this resistance in coaching is family succession of business. The patriarch founder passes the company he founded 32 years ago to his two children to own and manage. It’s a challenge, because everyone involved changes roles and relationships.

Perhaps the hardest of all is to recognize that although something is right, change must always be considered.
Principles of Change

Exercise — External Feedback

PERSONAL FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE
First determine who knows you best and who will give straightforward feedback (family, colleagues, boss, minister, etc). Ask each to jot down their impressions, opinions, and suggestions about you.

Ask these people what each sees as your:

- **Strengths**
- **Potential**
- **Special skills**
- **Personal and career possibilities**
- **Blind spots**
- **Unrealized potential**
- **Winning strategy (personality style that you most rely on, even when it doesn't work)**
- **Next step to take**
- **Distractions/derailers**
- **Work environment I’d work best?**
- **Work environment I should avoid?**

What have you learned from the feedback you have received? How will you use their feedback to create a strategy of proceeding in each of the areas of your life?
**Exercise for Internal Feedback**

**15 REFLECTIONS TO UNDERSTAND AND REVISE YOUR STORYLINES**

1. What are the recurring storylines in your life that work?

2. What are the recurring themes in your life that do not work?

3. Is there a piece of your life that is unlived?

4. What goals have you realized in your life?

5. What goals have you not realized in your life?

6. Do you have a clear internal ideal of who and what you want to be?

7. What percent of your full capacity are you functioning in your work?

8. What percent of your capacity are you living in your personal life?

9. Who are you (or who have you become) in your most intimate relationship?

10. What are your conflicted storylines where it is obvious not all of you is going comfortably and effectively in the same direction?

11. Do all the storylines fit and further the plot you want to advance?

12. What do you continue to engage by disclaiming and denying?

13. Do you have an awareness of your different states of mind?

14. Do you have basic mastery of how to enter and exit various states of mind?

15. What do you hear in listening to your body’s somatic language?
Session 4 - The Choices of Change

The Four Choices of Change

Some change occurs from the inside out, from examining and altering thoughts and feelings, with the resultant change in behavior. Some change occurs from the outside in, from adapting to new experiences and situations. Each individual usually has a favorite mode of how they work best, from the inside out, or the outside in.

1. **Change begins with the recognition that you are the author of your own life story.**

   Everything that happens to you either create or allow. Creating is easier to understand—even that with indirect consequences, such as lack of exercise leading to lack of energy. The allow one is harder to own and sometimes elusive. You didn't say no and your personal time is eroded. You didn't grow your skill and maintain your marketing efforts and your business is stalled. You didn't make an appointment with yourself to meditate, or brainstorm, or exercise, so it didn't happen.

   You either create or agree to everything that you do.

   **In order to change, you first have to know what you want to change—that is, know what you do not want in your life and what you want to create instead. Without this awareness, change in a meaningful and systematic way cannot occur. Doing something differently, being a contrarian, is not change, because it uses another person or idea as a point of reference and simply opposes it.**

2. **If you want to change your life, first change your mind.**

   How do you take an inventory of beliefs that are self-limiting and compromising if they are experienced as reality? Analogous to Impressionist painting, each of your experiences is a dab of paint on a pointillist canvas. Only when you step back and view the entire picture do you recognize that the points form a pattern of a particular segment of life, and that the segments have their own unity. You create each experience, the patterns, and the composite image—and each are at a different level of awareness.
Beliefs may be conflicting, such as one woman who indicated that she wanted to lose weight, yet wanted to enjoy life, food, and her summer free of dieting.

3. **You are always free to change your mind, always free to change your beliefs and core assumptions about who and what you are.**

Changing your mind not only alters your brain but also transforms your life. But first you have to be aware. Prediction and expectation based on the past creates repetition, but based on the present and future creates possibilities. A belief system constructs an obstacle or an opportunity. Trying to change your past is not change, as your past will always be the way it was.

Do this exercise with me. (It may feel a little goofy--but do it anyhow).

Say out loud two things you can't do. For example:

- **I can't finish this article I'm writing.**
- **I can't get the clutter out of my office.**

Now restate each—but substitute won't for can't:

- **I won't finish this article I'm writing.**
- **I won't get the clutter out of my office.**

Now say this sentence three times out loud:

- **“I am always free to change my mind.”**

4. **You have to have a new story to be in before you can give up an old story.**

To change, you have to develop a life story that contains the storylines you want. To stop doing something is not complete change—a new story incorporates new behavior and beliefs. You have to embody—actually live—this story you want. Good theory is not enough. Abstaining from an old story—such as excessive drinking or eating—is a beginning.
Session 4 - The Choices of Change

You have to have a new story to be in before you can give up an old story.

But you can't just remove all the old software—because it's who you are. And much of it—most of it has worked—and works—very well.

And you can't just suddenly start appending some success principles to an existing story and assume that there won't be resistance—reversion to the familiar—and noise—from the old story.
STEP 5. Map Changes in Your Wellness Story

Insight and understanding alone are not enough to replace an old story. How many people do you know who can tell you all there is to know about something they're struggling with? They're experts on diet, weight, and nutrition—yet haven't changed? When I treated severe anorexics in a hospital setting, they each knew more about food and nutrition than my entire treatment team of experts and me.

Underlying causes are always present for any problem—often complex, multi-determined causes. A coaching approach is to use causes, feelings, and history only as information. At times, simply doing what is currently effective dissolves barriers.
Exercise — 14 Steps to Edit Your Life Story

Five frogs were sitting on a log. Four decided to jump off. How many were left?

The answer: 5, because the 4 only decided and planned-- they didn't do it.

This exercise addresses invisible--and not so invisible—decisions camouflaged as beliefs and assumptions. The active editing of your story begins here. You can track when in time you made your original decision that led to a view or belief that is limiting. Most often the original decision arises from disappointment, or negative past experiences.

An example is a decision to be overly cautious about investments, and protect yourself in case of loss or misrepresentation. If this belief stems from earlier negative experiences, it may dictate rather than inform subsequent decisions. First, convert a fear to an intention: such as to outline a course of study, and consult with a financial planner. Then move the intention to a commitment.

Editing Steps

1. Get to the fundamental beliefs you hold in your life.
   For example, if you believe that when you are not born with money, you’ll never amass wealth; or that you’re not a good public speaker, you’ll avoid the limelight.

2. Realize that you decide what to perceive.
   You also decide what meaning to attach. And you decide the behavior associated.

3. Each day is a new and blank page.
   You will write whatever you choose this day. It is not there unless you choose it and create it.
4. Clarify what you want to create, and what action would be paired with it.
You are always free to change your mind.

5. Try new perspectives and possibilities to get informed data.
For example, a fear of public speaking can be converted into an intention to get better, and a commitment to start Toastmasters.

6. Honor your uniqueness.
Combining what you do uniquely well with your passion makes you unstoppable.

7. Embrace that which you can determine and benefits you, consistent with your needs and values. Let go of all that you can’t determine, and which doesn’t serve you.

8. The bottom line of any theory or belief system is: Does it work now?

9. Make yourself a promise about how you use, invest, and refurbish your life energy based on your life plan.

10. Design short-term, step-wise measurable goals to validate your progress. Hold yourself accountable to the timetable of your goals. Change is a process.

11. Create a mission that is stronger than your fear.

12. Focus your energy on where you are: the present—and on where you are headed: the future.

13. Keep your eye on the ball and your head in the game

14. Know what enough is.
There are six crucial elements to map change. When you understand and incorporate each of the six, you have the outline to master your life story of wellness.

1. How to Regulate States of Mind
The brain connections, or mind maps, influence the reality that we see. The mind map is the brain’s story. Each state of mind has its corresponding mind map—the software program of experiences, beliefs, and behaviors.

A state of mind is a set of particular emotions, memories, mental models, and behavioral patterns. We each have a consortium of different states of mind: Relaxation. Alertness. Anxiety. Anger. Centered attention.

A key element is to be aware of your different states of mind, and know which state works best for what purpose—e.g., creative writing vs. editing; brainstorming vs. completing a project.

Here’s an extreme example of the role of state change: Symptomatic eating is physiologically regulating—it soothes and calms. Symbolically, it is a proxy for nurturance. But at some point, the story can take over the author. As a Psychiatrist, when I worked with eating disorder individuals, I would ask, “At what point in the binge does your state of mind change—at what instant did you become calm?” Inevitably, I heard: “The instant just before the first bite of food ever entered my mouth.” This is the same with any addictive process—drugs, drinking, gambling. The alcoholic will admit: before the alcohol ever touched his lips. When people sit down at a slot machine, their amygdales light up, and dopamine gets torqued—before they ever touch a button.

The state change is not reliant on the physical substance, but the process. This shows how powerful their minds—and behaviors—are. The food is only a prop in a process. And an unnecessary one at that.

No one with an eating disorder ever found this statement incorrect: If you are totally present when you take each bite, you’ll never overeat again.
When you're in a state of upset—any kind of tilt—the first order of business is to regulate feelings to restore a cool state. Break the state of mind. Step away from the table (poker or conference). Take a walk. Wash your hands and face with cold water. Breathe deeply. Take a time out. Even sleep on it: “Let me think about that and get back to you is a decision.”

Then you can respond when your state of mind is balanced.

The brain equation for good decisions: right brain (emotional) + left brain (logical/intellectual) = balanced decision.

When you eat, be present and grounded vs. disconnected and automatically, unconsciously eating. Consider being grateful for each bite. If you offer a silent statement or prayer of gratitude for each bite, you'll focus consciously on the food. This process also focuses on whether you should be grateful—is this bite good for your body?

A Brief, On-Your-Feet Grounding Exercise

- Focus attention on your body
- Evenly balance your weight and posture
- Relax arms, legs, shoulders
- Breathe evenly and deeply
- Relax jaw, tongue, face
- Eyes look forward, aware of all fields of vision, including periphery.
- Rub your feet on the carpet.
- If standing, jump up and down in place a few times. If sitting: rock back and forth and move your legs.

You have most access to all of your states of mind—all the information you possess—when you're relaxed and centered. I have some of my best ideas while jogging. My wife has her most creative spurts while in the shower.
Both are activities to be fully inside a body experience.

Let’s look at another kind of example of applying the idea of states of mind.

Lump tasks according to states of mind required to do it. It takes energy to change a state of mind, so clustering similar tasks that require the same state of mind is an efficient strategy.

Going back and forth during the same time period is both exhausting and inefficient. For example, creative writing and editing are two different states of mind.

- Learn the optimum state of mind for a particular task.
- Cluster tasks that require the same state of mind.
- Protect your time for an endeavor of a particular state of mind (for example, action items such as errands may be most useful for a time later in the day when you are tired and have more difficulty concentrating).

Another example of state of mind: Your brain can be measured to function differently depending on the music you listen to. Drs. Gordon Shaw and Frances Rauscher showed that undergraduates who listened to ten minutes of a Mozart sonata performed better on cognitive tests. The improvement lasted for ten to fifteen minutes. This Mozart Effect is about getting centered and relaxed for access to information stored in all mind states.

Create a list of things that change your state of mind.
- Make your first thoughts of the day positive and fulfilling. They set in motion how the day will transpire:
  - Make your last thought at night before you go to sleep a positive, enhancing one. It sets in motion what your unconscious mind works on while you are asleep.
Session 5 - Map Wellness Strategies

- A meditation period of three to ten minutes a day can be powerful to get centered and determine your focus.

- Be aware of especially fertile times to plant seeds, such as the beginning and ending of the day. If you are positive, it will grow. If you are a collector of injustices, your collection will grow.

- The quickest signal of what you’re thinking about it what you’re feeling. Feelings let you know whether you are on track or not.

2. The Power is in the Focus
The mental act of attention holds in place brain circuitry that is activated by the focus.

Paying attention over time keeps the brain circuits open and active. With repetition, these chemical links actually become stable changes in the brain’s structure.

The Law of Attraction is based in neuroscience. If you lay a nail and a paper clip side by side, nothing happens. When you take a magnet and stroke the nail several times from head to point, it becomes a magnet and can pick up the paper clip. Why? The molecules of the nail are aligned in the same direction.

Same with your energy field. When all of you is going in the same direction—and focused—you have power.

In the film, The Secret, the Law of Attraction is represented as: You can have what you want by following three simple steps: Ask, Believe, Receive.

This leaves out an essential component: the sustaining effort to work to create exactly what you want. A revision is closer to actual experience: Ask, Belief, Create. The ABC’s of success.

The Law of Attraction won’t give you what you want—it will give you the energy to sustain the process to create what you want. It won’t send a Brinks truck up your driveway, or align the Lotto balls for you.
But you can align your internal molecules by focus and purpose to point to specific goals. It’s a way to use your power to write the story you want.

The paradox is that we do not attract what we want, but we attract what we focus on. Everyone wants more money, so wanting is not the key to having it. Focusing on scarcity attracts scarcity. Focusing on prosperity aligns your energy to pursue prosperity.

Your unconscious doesn’t register + or −. Just the focus. A print or negative is the same image—your unconscious is the image.

The power of focus: whatever you attend to or focus on, you align yourself to create.

“I want to get out of debt.” The focus is on debt.

“I want to lose weight.” The focus is on overweight.

Here’s one that has kept a lot of dry cleaners busy: “I want to be careful and not spill something on this outfit.”

Notice which people worry about illness, talk about a pain or disorder, and are afraid of getting sick. It’s the people who get sick most of the time. What you worry about happens—because you focus on it.

Put energy into what you want. Focus on wealth instead of debt. Possibilities instead of problems. Desires instead of obstacles. To fight something is to engage it—to add energy to it. This creates resistance. When you focus on what you want, what you don’t want falls away. Like your lap when you get up to walk.

The pen is in your hand to write your story.

The energy we are talking about is not the energy of stamina, as in tired versus refreshed, but that of energy field—this invisible, very real connection.
Session 5 - Map Wellness Strategies

Quantum physics has much to teach us about energy and about its application to personal power and collective energy fields.

- **Certain places have more quantifiable energy fields: a microwave oven, an electrical utility plant.**

- **Certain places have agreed upon but less quantifiable fields of energy: the pyramids, Stonehenge.**

- **Each person has a personal energy field.**

- **Everything and every person are dynamic and connected.**

Thoughts have a frequency—an energy field. Thoughts attract all like things on the same frequency—like a magnet. It's like choosing a frequency on the TV set, the channel we want, the specific frequency out of hundreds of possibilities. We each transmit and receive a frequency through our thoughts.

If you want to change something in your life, change the frequency; change the channel. Change your thoughts.

*The bad news: if you think about what you don't want, it keeps showing up over and over.*

Your energy field has specific metrics. It is not quantifiable by standard measures but is immensely powerful. (Do you know how the Internet works? I haven't even figured out exactly how the radio works but both are real and we can use them.)

Someone's energy field tells you immediately whether they are:

- **Warm and inviting**

- **Cold or “stay away”**

- **Charismatic**

- **Energetic**
Quantum physics offers us another paradigm. In addition to our individual energy field, there is a collective field. And you can tap into and resonate with this field—the quantum field of possibility. Einstein called it a unified theory: basically the human mind and body are bundles of energy but interact with the larger energy field. This is how we can read people, focus our choices, and determine the flow of our future.

How? What do you do to tap into this collective field?

When you are grounded and connected—these are physics terms—to yourself—it opens doors and creates synchronicity. A popular term is “in the zone.”

Your choices set this flow into motion, just as other choices cause derailment of this process. You set your day in motion when you wake up happy and excited about what you’ll do that day. Days when nothing goes right can be usually be traced to an instant when you became disconnected from yourself, such as a bad feeling or disturbing thought. Or stubbing your toe when you get out of bed. You create your state of mind and set yourself on a particular path.

Here’s one secret the film The Secret leaves out: strategic action: There are people who need to be taught how to believe.

- Specifically
- Strategically
- Systematically
- Consistently

The Law of Attraction is neutral and impersonal. It works equally for positive or negative thoughts, good things or bad things. You keep coming back to what you run away from. You attract what you resist because you engage it with focused emotion.
Session 5 - Map Wellness Strategies

• The most important principle is to focus on what you do want rather than on what you don't want.

• Most focus is outside awareness. The challenge is to target the specific outcomes you want.

• Discover all the things that you focus on that you don't want—make a list as you notice thinking about them. This list will cue your radar for early recognition. Then, each time you notice thinking about them, stop and think what you do want.

• Be specific about what you do want—not just what you don't want in disguise (“I want to lose weight.” The focus is on overweight.)

Do this test to see how it works: Follow each statement you make with, “Your wish is my command.”

• I'm tired.

• I'm late.

• I'm overweight.

• I'm eating healthily all day.

Thinking this way is not magical. It requires discipline. This is why most people don't have a spectacular result.

Wisdom is learning what to overlook.
— William James

Spectacular results require mind and brain consistency for 25-30 days without resistance to change and without reverting back to the old pattern.

If you are not having fun, you're not doing it right. — My Grandmother

A final vignette on focus:
One evening, an elder Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, “My son, the battle is between 2 ‘wolves’ inside us
One is Evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.

The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith.”

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: “Which wolf wins?”

The old Cherokee simply replied, “The one you feed.”

3. Visualize changes
Basketball players at Ohio State University were divided into three groups to practice shooting free throws:

- No practice for 1 month
- 30 minutes of practice daily at free throws
- Practice imagining shooting perfect free throws—nothing but net—for at least 5 minutes daily for 30 days

They were tested at the end of 30 days.

- First group—no practice: 0 % improvement
- Second group—actual practice for 30 minutes daily: 24% improvement
- Third group—practice by visualization only: 23% improvement

On brain imaging the same sequence of firing occurs with visualization as when actually shooting.

Create a vision. Then look back to see the path to get there. The most common mistake is having a vague sketch rather than a vision.
Session 5 - Map Wellness Strategies

Every image draws you toward its conclusion. An image is like a goal: if you create a negative image such as, “I can't dance” or “I'll look goofy if I really cut loose” (I had no trouble coming up with some of these examples) this will be a destination that your brain will draw you to. If you picture yourself as not able to dance, when you go to your party, the image says, “I can't dance.” You will stay in the zone of that self-image. You create your experience. You can create something else instead.

Create another image of yourself and live into it.

A Focus and Visualization Exercise

• Focus on the weight that feels good to you.

• Picture what you'll look like at your ideal weight. Look at the pictures daily.

• Write out your ideal body weight range.

• Focus on the body you want – your ideal weight range-- your ideal body. (Remember it has to be your body at ideal weight. You can't lose weight and have Alicia Key's body).

• Don't focus on losing weight.

• Don't focus on “fat thoughts” such as:

  Slow metabolism

  Hereditary body size

  Slow thyroid

  The spirit of your Great Aunt Sally that channeled the curse of large thighs

• Look at and admire your body; be grateful; keep in mind the pictures you have.
• When you eat, be entirely present to the act of eating and to your body.

• Visualize the thoroughly chewed food assimilated throughout your body.

• Think and feel as though your desire is manifest.

• Create your body, as your life, intentionally

The Art of a Vision

Visualization is a way to rehearse for your future. It takes both art and science to establish a vision.

A group of executives asked me to present a seminar to them on writing a first book. The first thing I asked was,” Have any of you seen a yellow jeep in the last month?” There were 24 people present. One person raised his hand.

Then I went through a visualization exercise with them.

Let’s do it now:

1. Close your eyes and visualize a yellow jeep—the specific detail of how it looks.

2. Walk toward it. Walk all around it. Look at the tires, the body, and the trim.

3. Open the passenger door. Look at the seat, the steering wheel, the dash.

4. Smell the interior. Touch the seat. Start it, and listen to it run.

Open your eyes. In the next week, see what happens.

I asked them to contact me if they saw a yellow jeep in the next week.
Session 5 - Map Wellness Strategies

Twenty two of the executives contacted me in the first three days to say they had spotted a yellow jeep.

What happened? What someone sees—what appears on the radar screen—is determined by belief and assumption. A yellow jeep was preprogrammed as possibility. For example, the most common reason people don't earn more money and accumulate wealth is that they don't see themselves capable of it. I can tell you how much money people will make by listening to their assumptions. Once someone genuinely sees himself or herself as capable of doing it, all sorts of thing begin to happen. The amount of wealth—or yellow jeeps—existing in the world doesn’t change; you just code your radar for possibility.

It’s difficult to challenge long-held beliefs because they are part of your identity. A vision starts at the other end—the successful outcome.

If someone has a fear of success, or a fear of failure, the visioning process bypasses that fear and etches the successful outcome.

In the film, The Lookout, Lewis, a blind man, helps his mentally challenged roommate make sense of things by thinking of his day as a story. Lewis said, “Start at the end. Can’t tell a story if you don’t know where it’s going.”

Our possibilities are only limited to the ones we allow ourselves to see.

The Science of a Vision

Recent PET scans (Positron-Emission Tomography) of the brain have confirmed several things about visualization:

- **Visualization brings about actual physical changes in the brain**

- **The brain assimilates a mental picture whether the stimulus is actual from the optic nerve, or imagined; the brain cannot tell the difference between a mental image from an actual image.**
• When you repeat a vision of successfully attaining a goal, it programs neural networks and neuronal pathways to more strongly etch the experience.

• Mental visualization of a complex movement can actually improve performance.

• PET Scans have established that thoughts result in physical changes in your brain.

When you program your unconscious, you actually create a “future memory” to live into. The brain can’t tell who conjured it—you or reality. The more detailed your visual image, the more specifically etched your brain will be. We know that by simply picturing a danger, we can trigger the entire body responses of fight and flight.

Here’s the key: You do not make the brain changes permanent unless you incorporate it into your story. This makes it part of who you are—your identity. Otherwise, it either doesn’t register, or gets extruded as noise.

For example, if you see yourself in a successful business, you create the specific imagery to live that experience. You then incorporate it as part of your identity, rather than as belonging to someone else.

While your unconscious mind cannot tell the difference between something you physically see and something you mentally picture, your conscious mind can, and your conscious mind must incorporate an evolving story to include and assemble the imagery as part of the story. Otherwise, unconscious messages will delete access to or believability of the imagery.

The key elements are:

• Repetition: the neural networks dedicated to your vision must be renewed and repeated regularly, or they will be eliminated.
Session 5 - Map Wellness Strategies

- Consciously incorporate this new vision into an ongoing story to be ultimately metabolized as part of the self. Otherwise, you will “lose” this vision.

- Be very specific about the experience of having achieved the goal.

A footnote: Write it down. Research on memory tells us that a new idea or fact lasts an average of 40 seconds in short term memory. Then it’s gone. Unless you write it down to review.

Visualization crystallizes possibility into an articulated idea—the experience changes the brain. A vision serves as guide and inspiration to design ways to realize it—to live into it.

Major James Nesmeth, spent seven years as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam. During the time he was imprisoned, he was essentially isolated and had no physical activity. Before the war, Major Nesmeth was an average weekend golfer, hardly breaking 100. To preserve his sanity, he learned to visualize golf. He selected his favorite country club. He saw himself dressed in golfing clothes. He experienced everything in great detail. He smelled the fragrance of the trees and grass, made each stroke with his entire body. After he was released from his captivity, playing golf in his mind seven days a week for seven years, his first outing he shot a 74.

The Power of a Vision—Of Mind Over Matters

4. Insight Changes the Brain
At the moment of insight, a complex new set of neural connections is created. A totally different part of the brain lights up in fMRI scans during these times, as contrasted with information or a directive received.

An “ah-ha” activates centers in the brain to release certain chemicals. As important as this insight-induced change is, the sustained attention hard-wires it into the brain’s circuits.
5. Take action.

The world will not pay you for what you know. It will pay you for what you do. It rewards action.

To analyze, plan, think, and organize are important. Payday comes with action.

Successful people develop a plan and set it into motion. It may not be perfect, but they self-correct and keep moving forward, learning from their mistakes and produce results.

This is why a group of the brightest people anywhere with all kinds of degrees can plan and figure something out, but struggle to make it happen, while the guy who barely finished high school owns most of the real estate on the west side of town.

6. Identity Transformation

A new experience or idea must be focused on consistently and frequently. When attention is consistent, brain circuitry is stabilized. The mindset of identity then incorporates the new experience and integrates it as part of an evolving self—as a component of one’s identity. Otherwise, it is not integrated and prone to be dismissed as “not me,” or attributed to luck or circumstance.

The most important thing about a goal is having one. Wisdom is to know the right path. Integrity is to take it.

A clearly defined goal can capture imagination and inspire passion. It can cut through the fog like a beacon in the night. One extra degree of effort in business and in life separates the good from the great.

• In the Indianapolis 500 mile race, the average margin of victory for the past ten years has been 1.54 seconds. On average the winner takes home $1.3 million, second place $600,000.
Session 5 - Map Wellness Strategies

- At 211 degrees, water is hot; at 212 degrees it boils. One extra degree makes all the difference.

- 51 publishers turned down Richard Bach to publish Jonathan Livingston Seagull. He took it to #52.

- 141 publishers turned down Jack Canfield for his first Chicken Soup for the Soul. He decided to publish it himself and sell it out of the back of his car.

To get what you’ve never had, you must do what you’ve never done.
Perseverance is not a long race; it is many short races, one after another.
— Lord Eliott
Exercise — 5 Steps to Revise a Storyline

Align needs and ideals with your goals.

• In the story of your life, is all of yourself going in the same direction, or do you seem to undermine yourself in certain areas of your life?

• Do all the storylines fit and advance the plot?

Address resistance to change and repetition of the old story.

• What are the repetitions in your life that are dead-end and dissatisfying?

• What are the things you like to change in your life in the next 90 days?

• Are you willing to do it?

Create your own experiences and your own reality.

• If you could add three things of vital importance to your life beginning this month, what would these be?

• Develop an internal point of reference; change occurs from the inside out.

Change only what doesn’t work.

• What in yourself would you like to enhance?

• What do you do uniquely well, better than almost anyone in the world?

• Are you devoting enough time and energy to develop your unique and undeniable talents and interests that distinguish you?
Wellness Workbook

Decide what you want to change.

• What is the one thing you most want to change about your life now?

• What is the one thing you most want to change about your work life now?
A Summary of Steps 4 and 5

Since old patterns are hard-wired, it takes consistency of focus on new experiences to change this wiring. First, it requires recognition of authorship, and ownership to assess the story.

Then, decide what to change and map the changes.

- Concentrate on new behaviors and not on problems in order to create new brain pathways. Identifying the problem won’t solve it.

- Create new ways of thinking to stimulate brain circuits, with an “eye on the prize” to lay new mental maps.

- Regulate states of mind and manage emotions to promote brain power. New insights and adaptations occur through balanced learning: left brain and right brain, intellectual and emotional.

- Facilitate insight rather than give or follow advice. People can usually discern between inquiries to prompt insight vs. attempts at persuasion.

- When diverted to old feeling or behavior, redirect ideas and energy flow to the new ideas.

- Remember that the power is in the focus, and that permanent change is from the consistency of that focus.

- Focus on successes rather than obstacles or nonperformance. Focus aligns and directs energy and efforts.

- Emphasize positive, adaptive behavior and progress; discourage attention to negative behavior.

- Knowledge is inert until it is activated. Put it into behavior.

- Facilitate new behaviors and guide the development and actualization of new mental maps.

- Think about your new experience and evolving self—how your new experiences require thinking of yourself—your identity—in an evolving way. No longer in the old story.
Addendum: Inverse Wisdom

I came home from college after my freshman year and announced to my Mom that I’d decided to major in psychology. We talked; she was excited for me. Then she mentioned that she made an A in her college psychology course.

I said, “You must have really enjoyed it and studied a lot.” She said, “No, I just answered everything on the test the opposite of what I thought was right.”

Here is a list of six things that are the inverse of conventional wisdom in writing a new story. In honor of my Mom, who thought it was all opposite anyway.

1. Burn your bridges. Make it impossible to go back to an old habit or way of being. If you decide to quit smoking, make it impossible in some way to go back. Create an uncomfortable scenario if you do return. Focus on the present without the bad habit. Reward yourself for not going back.

2. Do the opposite of what you’d normally do when you are afraid, worried, anxious, or uncomfortable. If you’re uncomfortable with public speaking, avoidance will increase the fear, so do more of it. Jump in the water; you can’t learn to swim on paper.

3. Obstacles reveal desires. Show me an obstacle, and I’ll show you a desire. An obstacle conceals but simultaneously reveals the underlying desire. Proceed despite the obstacle: when you’re ready to recognize the obstacle, you’re ready to consider the possibility of not creating it.

4. Discomfort can be a sign of progress. Moving beyond a comfort zone is necessary for progress. Comfortable is not a place you begin, but a place you can arrive. Moving from a comfort zone is necessary in order to proceed.

5. Lean into the unknown. You can tiptoe through life very carefully and arrive safely at death.

6. You do not attract what you want; you create what you focus on. Everyone wants more money, so wanting is not the key to having it. Focusing on scarcity attracts scarcity; focusing on prosperity aligns your energy to pursue prosperity.
Create a New Wellness Experience and Identity

Step 6. Author New Experiences

We trust our stories. They are our reality. When our stories and our behaviors don’t fit, we experience disharmony. We have to change one or the other to restore harmony. Sometimes we revise our stories; sometimes we change how we see reality.

Think Outside the Box

What is “the box”? How do you think outside it? I recently saw a quote by Randall Kennedy printed on the wall of the Student Union at Princeton: “…Thinking that frees itself of reflexive obedience to familiar signals.” How do you know when you’re in the box, to get out of it, to revise your story or write another one?
The questions assume the story is there, a given in the universe. The story—the proverbial “box” of the familiar and accepted—becomes the obstacle. Yet the truth is, it is not there until you create it or accept it. And people are always free to change their minds, beliefs and core assumptions.

“The box” is the result of programming and conditioning. It is self-created in adulthood.

Boxes are not a bad thing. They don’t have to limit. They can define. Guide. Validate. And expand.

Listen to these different “boxes” to hear how very arbitrary and situational each one is—each with its own intrinsic set of beliefs, behaviors, and rules.

- **People treat a piece of processed leather as if it were sacred:** they protect it, hide it, try to steal it. There are all kinds of rules about what you can and can’t do with it—even who can hold it. If it crosses an arbitrary line someone draws, it can count for different points: 2, -2, 3, sometimes 6.
  **Football**

- **It moves in and out of your life, varies daily.** You usually want more, but may keep doing the same thing not to get it; two people can do the same thing and obtain very different quantities. You can buy it and sell it, but the price changes daily, even hourly. It’s a stand-in for whatever you want, even for what you despise.
  **Money**

- **There’s no clear definition of winning. It’s always at risk.** There’s always a price to pay. There’s always another level of success.
  **Money. Your Life and Wellness Story**

A box may be, e.g., a traditional way to make money; and you make more money if you work harder or charge more. The canal boat companies of the 1700’s didn’t become the railroad companies of the 1800’s—they stuck to their box. There were no Union Pacific Airlines in the 1900’s—they stuck to their box.
Session 6 - Create a New Wellness Experience and Identity

Open yourself to possibilities you haven’t quite imagined yet. Scarcity is a rigid box. Abundance is expandable. No one can grant you freedom; you have to declare it. No one gives you power. You have to generate it, claim it, and not give it away.

To recognize yourself as the author, the creator, of your story challenges an assumed model and leads to the deeper question, “How do I create something else instead?” And, “What will the ‘something else’ be?”

To simply stop doing something is not complete change; a new story means incorporating new behavior and beliefs. You have to embody—actually live—your new story. To abstain from an old story—from stuckness or repetition, is a beginning. But someone has to engage a new story before an old story can be given up.

A mind that accepts a new idea generates a new dimension; a brain that creates a new experience alters its neurochemistry and neuronal pathways. Neuroscientists now know that the brain is sculpted by changes and experiences. The mind can change the brain. It’s an inside job.


1. You’re writing your own story. Is it working?
   For each component, what are the results? Honestly assess each of these storylines with the question: “Is it working?” And make that a yes or no.

   • Your personal wellness story: mind, body, spirit
   • Your business/career story
   • Your relationship story
   • Your money story
When I ask people what they most look forward to and what they are most afraid of for the next chapters of their lives, they often respond with vague dreams, yet specific fears. The top of the lists of long term concerns: health and money.

A not-so-secret to success is that you have to pay in full for that success. So you might as well find out what the price is, pay it in full, pay it as soon as possible, and then enjoy the benefits of success. The price is always some form of energy, whether that energy is money, time, work, or experience.

If you get something for which you haven't provided value or benefit, you will still have to pay in some way. As an example, if you incur debt in order to purchase something before you've earned the money, you simply end up paying more for it.

Another non-secret: people who truly enjoy getting what they want are those who enjoy paying the price. This makes it easy to pay. The price is whatever you need to give in order to generate exactly what you want.

2. You’re writing your own story. It takes just as much energy to create any belief in your story.

Positive or negative; past, present, or future; adaptive or maladaptive—the same energy. The belief of scarcity takes just as much energy as the belief of abundance. The subtle but crucial distinction: you give specific power to your story and it assumes a momentum and power of its own. Remember that you’re not the subject of that process—you’re the creator of it.

This is a short list of some results when you focus on what you don’t want: fear, anxiety, anger, confusion, annoyance, guilt, helplessness.


The primary reason people don’t get what they want is that they’re not sure what they want.
Here's a neuroscience/Law of Attraction question: How does the brain work like a travel agent? The first two questions a travel agent asks: Where do you want to go? When do you want to get there? A goal is like Map Quest: You program in where you want to go, make a map, and determine the time.

A caveat: To know what not to do is at least as important as knowing what to do. You may not always know what the next right thing is, but you can almost always know what it isn’t.

What you resist, you draw toward you.

And most suffering is the result of resisting what is.

4. You’re writing your own story. Do you have specific, measurable goals?
In a Harvard study begun in the mid-1950’s, 10-15% of the Harvard Business School graduates fashioned a vision and specific goals for their life in business. Five decades later, those 10-15% had 90% of the assets of the entire group.

Motivation increases as soon as you’re clear about the goal and the payoff. Focus enhances when you have a specific plan and strategy.

1. Establish SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound (timetable: 30-90 days)

2. Determine three Key Initiatives to take for each goal (timetable: 7-10 days)

3. Decide on the Next Best Action for each initiative (timetable: 24 hours)
It is estimated that less than 10% of people have measurable goals. 100% of people have good ideas—at least some. The difference between a good idea and a goal: measurement and time. Where? When? (The travel agent questions).
Good idea: I’d like to lose weight.

Goal: I will reach 185 pounds by 5 PM December 31, 2007.

Good idea: I want to make more money.

Goal: I will generate $245,000 from individual coaching and $165,000 from products in the next 10 months.

Then: Write a breakthrough goal—something that would stretch you, bring incredible opportunities, and move you to a higher level. A quantum leap. Getting a book on the New York Times bestseller list. Spending four weeks in Steamboat Springs every March skiing.

Then: Reread your goals—regular and breakthrough—twice a day: when you wake up and when you go to bed.

5. You’re writing your own story. Small changes lead to big changes.

Terry Fox started the Marathon of Hope – a cross-Canada run of 3339 miles. Since he had an artificial leg, his running style was a shuffle-and-hop. He managed about 24 miles a day and completed the run in 143 days. He was asked how he kept himself going when he was exhausted and knew he had thousands of miles ahead. His response: “I just kept running to the next telephone pole.”

Divide up your work. Focus on and complete one thing at a time. There’s always something you can focus on.
Session 6 - Create a New Wellness Experience and Identity

6. You’re writing your own story. Be consistent in the pursuit of your goals.
It takes 25-30 days to etch a new pathway in your brain to make it permanent. Remember the NASA astronauts.

7. You’re writing your own story. The benefit of doing more of what is working and less of what isn’t working will become evident and self-perpetuating.
This is all so simple—good parents have known this for centuries. Sometimes it just takes human science and cognitive research to remind us of the obvious.

We can foster change by conscious practices and effective tools. An infinite sea of new patterns and possibilities can be created to further new goals. The caveat: You have to take action to diminish preprogrammed responses and to write new script for new experiences; a new story has to replace the old one.

There are no short cuts, since long term change requires consistent practice—repetition—to groove new neuronal pathways and establish new neural networks. But there are effective and efficient methods to accelerate optimum change and insure transformation.

To your spouse or partner, ask, “On a scale of 1 to 10, rate the quality of our relationship.” If you do this, you can get direct feedback—and learn what you can address. Everybody else is probably in on it anyhow, except you: lunch buddies, neighbors, hair stylist, colleagues, other family members. Why should you be the only one who doesn’t hear it? Maybe you just need to ask.

To your employees and colleagues: “On a scale of 1-10, how am I doing?” Then, “How can I get to 10?”

A tribe in Southern Africa called the Babemba has an interesting practice. When they hear a story of a person doing something wrong, something
that destroys the social net of their tight community, all work in the village halts. The people gather around the offender, and one by one, recite all that that person has done right in his life: good deeds, responsible behavior, thoughtful acts. This honest feedback on misbehavior has a time honored consequence to allow the person to reclaim the better part of himself. He remembers who he is and why he is important to the life of the village.

This may have been an original 360º feedback.

Even without this kind of social network and feedback, we can relax and remember our way back into alignment with our true selves. We can get centered and reconnect with our true essence.

An interesting statistic: after giving a complete presentation about the benefits of their service or product, more than 60% of the time sales people never ask for the order.

How to ask is a crucial factor. Ask clearly, confidently, sincerely.

Virginia Satir, the well known family therapist, was hired by the Michigan State Department of Social Services to submit a proposal on how to restructure the Department of Social Services to better serve the client population.

Sixty days later, she provided the department with a 150 page report. They said two things: “This is the most amazing report” and “How did you come up with all these brilliant ideas?”

She said, “I just asked all the social workers in your department what it would take for the system to work better.”

9. **You’re writing your own story. Get success insurance.**
Instead of waiting for good luck. Luck is defined as probability taken personally—narcissism meets chance.

*It is not that I am so smart; it is that I stay with problems longer.*  
— Albert Einstein
Session 6 - Create a New Wellness Experience and Identity

A review of research on goal setting (in your Workbook) helps us understand two essential components: why people give up on goals, and how effective goal-setting can help ensure long-term achievement. There are six important reasons people give up on goals—the inverse is success insurance.

- **Ownership.** Someone must “buy in” and own their goals.

- **Time.** Goal setters tend to underestimate the time it will take to complete the task (an “optimism bias”), leading to giving up.

- **Difficulty.** The optimism bias equally applies to difficulty as well as time.

- **Distractions.** People tend to underestimate the distractions and competing goals.

- **Maintenance.** The challenge is to maintain new behavior. There is always the pull of the old and the fear of the new.

- **Rewards.** Disappointment sets in when achievement of a goal doesn’t translate into other goals or to the desired happiness.

10. **You’re writing your own story. Take a chance.**
You didn’t have a NY Times bestseller before you sent your manuscript to an agent. If you get it rejected, you still don’t. So what have you got to lose? What’s the problem—you’ve spent your whole life not having a NY Times bestseller.

A young chiropractor just out of professional school wanted to open a practice in Carmel, California. He was told he’d never make it—there is one chiropractor for every eight people in Carmel already.

He went to 12,500 homes and talked to 6500 people. He asked 3 questions:

- **Which location should I open my office—the north or west side of town?**
• Should I have extra office hours from 7-9 AM or 5-7 PM?

• Which newspaper should I advertise in?

• He added, “When I have an open house party, would you like an invitation?”

He took in $72,500 the first month and netted over $1 million his first year.

11. You’re writing your own story. It’s never too late to start.

Don’t let conventional wisdom or limiting assumptions ghostwrite your story.

Cliff Bion was a 61 year old Australian sheepherder. He heard about a cross-country race from Sidney to Melbourne and decided to enter. He showed up in Oshkosh overalls and workboots. The officials looked at him like he was crazy. They said, “This is a race of over 800 kilos—the most seasoned runners in the world compete. Do you have any running experience and equipment?” He said, “Yea, I run after my sheep every day. And I got these boots and this baseball cap.”

When the race began, the world class runners took off as they were trained to begin. Cliff started shuffling along in his boots. You’re supposed to run 18 hours and sleep 6. But no one told Cliff this, so when the other runners were sleeping, he kept shuffling along. They were all asleep and couldn’t tell him he wasn’t supposed to keep running. He just shuffled along for over three days.

He cut 5 1/2 hours off the world record.

We each have beliefs that limit us. Find the story that will improve you and start believing that.

If there were no barriers, what would your ideal life be?
Session 6 - Create a New Wellness Experience and Identity

12. You’re writing your own story. Everything is OK in the end. If it’s not OK, it’s not the end.
For tens of thousands of years before books and computers, we transmitted our essence and principles by story. Story linked to the past, organized the present, and illuminated the future. Story allowed us to connect with each other’s humanity in the paths crossed on the long journeys out of Africa to populate the rest of the world. Then the anatomy and physiology of our brains grew by putting thoughts and feelings into stories. Stories informed, instructed, inspired, governed, organized. Story is the most powerful way humans communicate. Stories give birth to possibility.

Stories are a way that we resonate with our earlier selves, connect with others, and create a road map to proceed.

Your story is yourself, your life and what will survive you. At some point, in the distant future, all that will be left of you, all that will survive you, is your story.

Get it right.

STEP 7. Program New Identity to Incorporate and Sustain the Changes

Mission Statement
A mission statement is a key tool in a business plan. It captures, in a succinct concept, the essence of the business’s goals and the philosophies underlying them. Equally important, the mission statement signals what the business is all about to the team of employees—and to customers, suppliers, and the community. A mission statement helps clarify what business you are in, your goals, and your objectives.

Create a personal mission statement. What is your life purpose? What are you meant to do? This is the compass to guide your life story to personal fulfillment.
I'll share mine: To inspire and guide others to achieve their unique, most empowered life and business stories.

Write yours down. Read it every day.

**Follow Success Trails**

Have you said some version of the following?

- *I want to change careers but I don't know what I'd do instead.*
- *I'd like to open my own business but I don't know where to start.*
- *I want to get in shape, but I'm not quite sure how.*

Decide how you want to expand.

Then: pick success trails to follow. Seek out a mentor, books, program, or resources to help you. Watch someone who's doing what you might want to do. Ask if you can take them to lunch and pick their brain. Or shadow them for a day to observe.

When my good buddy, Art, heard that I was transitioning from Psychoanalytic practice and had completed my coach training, he came to Houston to take me to dinner. A few years earlier he left IBM as the lead sales person in the country to start his own corporation. He told me how he chose five very successful people and asked them to lunch or dinner to pick their brains about what he was about to do. Some business people with instant global recognition now pick his brain. He advised me to do the same. It worked for both of us.

*Create a support team. Construct an Advisory Board, networking group, engage a mentor, join a mastermind group.*
The Art and Science of Affirmations

To achieve a goal, reprogram your automatic pilot by affirmations. Affirmations are positive statements that state the goal as if it has already been achieved. For affirmations to be optimally effective, the following characteristics need to be incorporated.

**Present tense**
Begin with, “I am …” State the goal as if you have already achieved it. “I am enjoying this month of skiing in Steamboat.” (I told you you have to be persistent).

**Positive**
Your brain will strive to achieve the image you focus on (close your eyes and notice the images that come to mind when you think: “The dog is not chasing the cat.” “I am not thinking about elephants.”) The purpose of an affirmation is to create an image; a positive image is more powerful than ideas.

**Personal**
Make your affirmations about your experience and accomplishment. Do not try to change other people's behavior. “I am watching my daughter clean her room” won't work.

**Visual**
Use all five senses, different lenses: include wide angle and close up; make a complete picture of experiencing the success of your goal.

**Emotional**
Include a feeling word (happily interacting, peacefully experiencing). A primary reason we do things is how we imagine we'll feel when we do it.

**Brief**
Brevity is the soul of wit—and affirmations.
Specific
Clearly focused, specific detail makes it real. No abstractions.

Action words
“I am driving ... acting ... living ...”

If you say “I am going to ...” you will always be on the way.

Consistent
As soon as you let up on the disciplined, focused pursuit of a goal, your automatic pilot will revert back to the familiar. This is the frustration of losing weight and then letting up to have it regained. Remember the astronauts who got day 15 off and had to start over.

Add “Or something better. “I am enjoying my month each summer writing on the coast of Maine, or something better.”

Write each goal and affirmation on a 3x5 card. Read each one at the beginning and the end of each day. Remember to visualize yourself as having already achieved the goal.

When you program your system with a visualized goal, you create structural tension in your brain—cognitive dissonance—the difference between where you are and where you visualize and affirm.

Your brain then strives to end this tension by actualizing the goal. Structural tension (dissonance) in your brain will:

• Give you creative ideas

• Help you see things in your environment not seen before—a perceptual shift.

• Provide motivation to take action. (Remember: The universe rewards action.)

How long do you do this? Until you reach the goal.
How many goals should you generate affirmation for? A reasonable amount—at least three—maybe more—that you’re working on daily.

In this way, you create the feeling of internal success. You inhabit the experience.

An affirmation will initially make you feel uncomfortable, even anxious. With an affirmation that is positive and not yet achieved, you are challenging the core belief of your identity – of who you are.

Break Out of Your Comfort Zone

Are you repeating the same story, even doing it harder, expecting that to work? Like talking to someone who doesn't understand English and repeating it louder? As if louder English will be the key. The repetition results from staying in your comfort zone. Or returning to it. Remember the exercise of clasping your hands and seeing which thumb was on top—then reversing it so your other thumb was on top—and being relieved when you could get back to the comfort zone of the first position. That's why people don't succeed remarkably—or at all. They return to their comfort zone.

Think of your comfort zone as like your home thermostat. If the temperature increases or decreases, the thermostat signals the heater or air conditioner to turn on or off. It keeps the temperature in a narrow range of comfort.

Your performance—even the money you make—operates in a similar way. If people get more successful, they feel vaguely uncomfortable—just different. If the results go outside their self-image, it cues an internal thermostat to return to the comfort zone.

The example is one I heard Jack Canfield tell about his step-dad.

Jack's step-dad was a regional manager for NCR. He noticed that each of his sales people had a particular self image of themselves as a salesperson.
They were a $2000 a month salesperson, or a $3000 a month salesperson. If a salesperson’s self image was that he earned $3000 a month in commissions, when he got to that figure, each month, he slacked off until the next month. But if it were close to the end of the month and he had only earned $1500, he would work 16 hour days, weekends, and beat the bushes until he got to $3000.

A comfort zone is an unconscious thermostat until it becomes conscious. Then you can reprogram your mind and brain. Your brain has a mind of its own.

I hope this time together has been useful as a catalyst to know and evolve your own wellness story a little better—to not dream too vaguely, imagine too low, or play too little. And to further your mission as Alchemists. Alchemists are people who believe in potential, in transformative power.

Just go to the next telephone pole.
Addendum - Good News/Bad News

(Notice how the bad news is what happens if you don't listen to the good news.)

**Good News:** You are in control of your life.

**Bad News:** You are in control of your life.

**Good News:** You can exert power to do what you want with your life.

**Bad News:** That power is not inert, but always responding, moving.

**Good News:** You can harness that power and direct it.

**Bad News:** You have a default mode that is worse than doing nothing.

**Good News:** It is a moving energy.

**Bad News:** That energy can be used against you.

**Good News:** Everything has a choice embedded in it

**Bad News:** Even those who do not think they are choosing, are

**Good News:** There is no such thing as doing nothing.

**Bad News:** Doing nothing, inertness, and minding your own business are the same thing
Good News: What you focus on, you bring about.

Bad News: What you focus on, you bring about (I want to be out of debt. Focus: Debt)

Good news: You can change your circumstances by what you think.

Bad news: You can change your circumstances by what you think.

Good news: Your current thoughts create your future.

Bad news: Your current thoughts create your future. If you want to change, change your thoughts.