

*David Essel's destiny is to help you feel more
alive in every area of life! —Dr. Wayne Dyer*

HELPING AMERICANS HEAL!



THE *ULTIMATE* GUIDE TO
HEALING, DURING THESE
CHALLENGING TIMES



BY **DAVID ESSEL, M.S., O.M.**

#1 BEST SELLING AUTHOR OF "FOCUS! SLAY YOUR GOALS"

HELPING AMERICANS HEAL!

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Helping Americans Heal!

**The Ultimate Guide to Healing,
During These Challenging Times.**

David Essel, M.S., O.M.

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Dedication

I dedicate this book on healing, to my incredible mother, Pat Essel, who passed away after a several year battle with dementia, in 2021.

To this very day, routines that my mom taught me to help me stay organized and focused as a child, I still carry-on today.

I believe my mom and dad have always been my biggest cheerleaders in my life!

And to my father Ed Essel, who I am so happy for, at the age of 94 you're still with us. Your influence, in all of my life, brings a smile on my face as I sit here thinking of you today.

Mom, I see you and hear you every morning as you appear as a cardinal in my backyard, and I know you had a guiding hand in writing this book.

I love you both.

David

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Helping Americans Heal!

Part One

**We can achieve huge goals by working together,
supporting each other in life. Let's begin today!**

Love, David

A note to all Americans: We can heal together!

This book is for you and you and you.

The world is being turned upside down. And now we have to learn how to cope in new ways, how to live with a different mindset, and how to decrease the self-sabotage that's going on all over the world today.

- Daily stress
- Pandemic
- Vaccination challenges, agreements and disagreements
- Political upheaval
- Isolation
- Addiction
- Job loss
- Divorce
- Depression, Anxiety, PTSD
- Suicide
- Financial struggles
- Hopelessness
- Insomnia and other sleep challenges
- A loss of personal identity
- Ongoing relationship challenges

I know. I know. The above list is incredibly disheartening, but it is the reality that we are all facing today. I wrote this book because I wanted to give all Americans, (and the world), the opportunity to go a little deeper with your mind, body and soul in regards to looking for solutions to the challenges we are facing.

For the past 42 years, I've been involved in the world of personal growth with so many different hats to wear: number one bestselling author, counselor, minister, master life coach, radio host, television host... The list goes on and on and I have loved every second of what I do to help Americans heal over this long period of time.

So, I wrote this book for you! Yes, you!

And, this book is also for all veterans and their families, active military and their families!

This book is also for all first responders, including caregivers, truckers, nurses, healthcare aides, doctors, EMTs, firefighters, police... Everyone!

Over the past several years in my counseling business, I have seen a dramatic increase in addictions, divorces, relationship challenges that seem to have no end. Weight gain, suicide ideation, suicide... Hopelessness... I mean the list goes on and on, and I knew there was only one thing we could do to help more people than I could ever help one on one.

And that would be this book. I wanted to create a book that was filled with hope! Passion! And the answers to so many questions that we are all struggling with regarding these unique and outrageously challenging times we are living in.

The writings in this book will give you specific steps on how to move towards a brighter existence, even if you're in the midst of an incredibly deep clinical depression. I know that by constantly re-reading the messages in this book, you will be able to slowly lift yourself out of the hole so many of us are in, and begin to see the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel.

Now if you combine this book with the help of a professional counselor, life coach, minister, priest, therapist... You'll even see a quicker increase in your own personal healing!

But even if you just rely on this book alone, and read it every day, I can guarantee you that you'll start to feel a shift in your attitude and your emotions. Your new action steps will lead you to greater health, happiness and more secure relationships.

And remember the most important relationship is the one that you have with yourself! Self-love is lacking in our country today.

Self-sabotage is at an all-time high. And how do we heal? Change in these times? Always remember this: the key to life change is found in the repetition of new thoughts and new habits.

And because of this fact, you will notice certain critical topics presented in slightly different ways in this book. With this repetition, we have the best chance to anchor change in both the conscious and subconscious mind. Repetition, will lead us to the health, harmony and success that we all desire right now.

We can change ourselves by putting aside time every day to reflect on these messages. And then by taking specific action steps that we recommend, you can overcome relationship challenges, attitudinal challenges, addiction challenges or whatever they might be. We can all heal together through the information in this book, which was designed to make healing, a simpler process.

The time to begin universal healing for every American, and the world, is right now. And I'm so glad to be a part of your process.

Stress during the pandemic is not just high, it's at an all-time high. A recent article in the American Psychological Association titled "Stress and decision making during the pandemic", brought statistics to the forefront that are absolutely mind blowing, changeable yes, but still mind blowing.

1. 68% of couples in a family said that their relationship was a very or somewhat significant source of stress.
2. Now listen to this, this is huge! 79% of people responding said they could've used more emotional support than they received over the past year! And that's what this book is all about and that's what our program "Helping Americans Heal™", is all about.
3. Only 47% of American said that their mental health was very good. A year ago, that number was 52%. While that percentage drop might not seem big, it is very significant.

Just a few statistics above justify the reason that we started our brand-new program to help all Americans heal. It's the very reason you're reading this book. I have seen the devastation over the last two years in my counseling practice, in my radio and TV interviews, and it's time to change. Today, is the day to start to change and I will help you at the deepest level possible, to do just that.

Love, David

This writing is all about you! Enjoy.

When was the last time you read any writing that was all about you? When was the last time that someone sat down and said, “I want to hear all about your greatness!”

When was the last time you actually took the time to write about the amazing things you’ve gone through in life? Maybe the people you’ve met, the places you’ve seen, the challenges you’ve overcome?

I wanted this writing to be all about you! Why? Because we don’t spend enough time looking within and seeing how special we really are.

Now if you look at the questions that you will read in just a moment, and answer them honestly, and you cannot find anything great about yourself, that probably means that the “victim mindset” has taken over the subconscious mind. You have created an internal program that does not allow you to feel gratitude for who you are.

And how do we overcome this? This might surprise you... But the answer is, answer the questions below honestly!

Everyone has overcome some type of challenge in life. Dig deep and think about what you’ve overcome. Maybe it’s becoming a solid mature adult when you didn’t have a solid upbringing in your childhood.

Maybe you’ve overcome a long-standing addiction.

Maybe you’ve actually volunteered time with the homeless, or the blind, or seniors or some other group that needed your love.

Anyway let’s get to this exercise right away because it’s all about you! Please put your answers on a piece of paper or your computer or in this book, so you have these to refer to in the future if you’re not feeling as good about yourself as you’d like to.

1. What challenges, or major challenge, have you overcome in life?

As I stated above, we’ve all overcome challenges. Write down each one that you’ve overcome. Maybe it’s being raised in a single parent household that was a challenge at that time. Maybe you left your career that was really unhealthy, not knowing what you’re going to do next, and it turned

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out to be a very good move for you.

Maybe you were in a relationship that was dysfunctional, and the first time in your life you found the strength to leave it!

Or maybe you were single for a very long time, and decided to take the risk of getting back out into the world of relationships and you were successful in finding a compatible partner.

You might have 20 great things that you've overcome, or just one, don't compare yourself with others, just be grateful for what you personally have overcome.

Take a few minutes right now, and in the space below, right about the challenges that you've overcome in life.

2. Who have you helped in life when they really needed you? A friend? A child? A parent? A partner? A next-door neighbor? A homeless person?

Go deep, you may have helped 1000 people or more in your life but never thought of it until now. Write down those people that you have helped in life.

3. Who was your greatest teacher? Your greatest mentor? Have you reached out to them recently, to let them know, even if it's an elementary school teacher, how much they meant to you?

I was watching an NFL football game the other day and one of the players was talking about two teachers from elementary school that radically changed his life and that he would never forget them!

And on national TV, they were both honored in his name! Now we probably won't have the chance to bring these people that you write about on TV, but we do have the opportunity right now with gratitude to acknowledge those people who have touched us deeply and if possible let them know.

4. What gift do you have with you today that was given to you at birth? Are you a very patient person? Very driven for success? Are you very compassionate? Are you very athletic? Are you very intellectual? Are you very creative?

A lot of times, we don't look at the gifts that we were given a birth because they've been with us our whole lives and they don't seem very special. But they are special!

It's what makes you, you! It's why I want to celebrate you today... It's why I want you to reflect back on how beautiful you are as a human being!

Think about how wonderful you really are. What you've overcome. Who you've met. Who has helped you. Who you have helped.

The more we look at how incredible we are individually, the more we can come together as a nation and as a world.

I want you to become a role model in helping our country to heal. And it all starts with self-confidence, self-worth, self-esteem which is basically self-love. Let's do this together.

The world is grieving!

The world is grieving so deeply right now, from the loss of our independence, the loss of loved ones, the loss of businesses and jobs and money and of course the loss of relationships!

There's not a corner of the world that isn't in grief of some type. The stress and anxiety of the pandemic, which also includes the vaccine situation and the political unrest in our country, continues to put one American against another.

So we are grieving, individually and collectively.

This can easily be seen in the huge upswing in addictions that I have experienced in my practice, which has been unlike anything I've seen in my 42 years in the world of mental health. The world is grieving, as we see the number of separations, divorces and relationship breakups increase on a daily basis.

The world is grieving, as we see people that we used to call friends, who are now enemies, because we have a difference of opinion regarding what is happening all over the world.

The world is grieving, as people take sides and argue over anything and everything that pops up in the news today. The world is grieving in one of the worst ways we've ever seen.

And you can't stop energy, grieving, sadness, depression, anger or rage... These are simple examples of energy. And no matter how much you want to stop them from influencing you or I, there's no way that we can do that.

You can't block energy. The negativity of your neighbor, coworker, family member, friend or even lover seeps into your subconscious and before you know it, you start to shift your attitude and you see it going in a downward spiral.

So if we can't block this energy, what can we do to help all the grieving that's going on in our country and the world?

1. Take care of yourself. If you take really great care of yourself mentally, physically, spiritually, financially and in your relationships, you will become a role model for people all

around you. You don't have to buy into the dysfunction in the news. If you choose, you can be the calm one in your social circle and hopefully others will begin to follow your steps.

2. I have been saying this for the past year and a half, greatly decrease the viewership of news on a daily basis!

Most news shows are based on sensationalism, filled with anger, projection, judgment and blaming anyone and everything that might have a different opinion than we do.

Insanity. Knock it off. It's not needed. You won't die if you don't watch the news, but you might start to have a happier life and diminish the grieving that you're going through even if you don't know it.

3. Social media? Limit your interaction to positive information only. Stop arguing about the vaccine or the pandemic or whatever other topics that are all over social media. So many topics can trigger us, limit your interaction.

When you limit your time on social media and you choose to not read the nonsense that is posted every day, you'll start to heal your own mind, body and spirit.

Your engagement in any negative or "hot topic" on social media post is not necessary if you truly want to heal the world. Every argument that you begin or take part of, is dragging yourself and everyone around you down. Can you see that?

4. Disengage from all conversations where someone is trying to convince you, that you are wrong and they are right. I had a session with a client from out west recently and she was starting to feel quite depressed, more anxious than she ever felt six months ago. When we talked about the reasons why, she admitted that she continues to get into disagreements with friends and coworkers over the various topics that are causing the grief, sadness, depression and anxiety in our country!

So I taught her the skill of “disengagement,” which is really simple to learn. If someone’s making a comment about the vaccine, simply don’t respond.

If someone is making a comment about the pandemic, simply don’t respond.

If someone is making a nasty comment about politics or a specific politician, disengage, simply don’t respond.

You have the emotional power if you choose to use it, to get the hell out of this blame game that the world is in and to start to live a more grounded existence.

If we do the above simple steps, automatically our life is going to start to improve!

On June 1, 2020, I cut out all news, all media and anything on social media that wasn’t photos of puppy dogs or gorgeous nature pictures. My life became much simpler, less stressed. I’ll be informed on any huge news through one of my clients... There’s no need for me to be involved in the media anymore.

And then, what’s next?

Exercise. Eat clean. Meditate daily. Get outside in the sun for at least 20 minutes every day. Only watch uplifting shows on television or anywhere on the Internet.

Be kind. Be compassionate. Be the best you ever and we can slowly start to dissipate this world of grieving that everyone is going through.

And yes, you can make a major difference by following the steps above! Let’s go.

How to live, a calmer existence?

When we think of people in this world that exhibit a sense of calmness, many times we think that they are extraordinary in nature... Like a guru... Some may say that they’re like “someone from a different planet”!

And why is this?

Because most of us live in a constant state of low anxiety... Uncertainty... Doubt... Frustration... Stress... Irritability.

And we can change this, if we want to. Now change doesn’t always mean it’s going to be easy, but the steps below are incredibly simple ways

to start to decrease stress and increase your level of calmness every day.

From the single mom struggling to make ends meet, to one of my clients, a high-powered multi millionaire executive who cannot seem to keep his relationship with his wife of 10 years in a good space.

Or the veteran, who has returned from serving his or her country, but feels left behind.

For the first responders, who are exhausted from the exposure to so many different diseases, and the long hours that demand their presence, keeping them from loved ones that they used to spend more time with.

Another client is struggling to stay sober... A different one battling with ongoing daily anxiety... And a third one who's trying to find a new career in life during these turbulent times.

Maybe you're also struggling trying to live a more peaceful life and just cannot seem to wrap your head around the steps to take to make this happen.

Let's look at six powerful steps below in order to live a life filled with a greater degree of calmness:

1. Walk instead of argue. When you're with a partner, child or even a co-worker where you regularly go into negative conversations, learn to end them quickly and take a 15 or 20 minute walk before you continue carrying on a conversation that is going down the tubes.
2. Sit in nature every day for a minimal of 15 to 20 minutes. It doesn't matter if you live in New York City, Los Angeles or Utica, New York... There's nature all around us. Even if it takes you a few minutes to find that peaceful park or that gentle stream, do it every day.
3. Do not turn on any electronics for the first 60 minutes that you are awake every day. Social media, the news, even the weather reports can start to increase the release of adrenaline which increases anxiety and stress, the exact opposite of what we are looking for.

Use the first hour every day to meditate, journal, walk, workout,

paint, sing, read inspirational books or spiritual books... Start your day off in peace!

4. Get help starting today for any addiction you might be struggling with. Addictions to food, nicotine, alcohol, video games, social media are all creators of anxiety, and in many cases shame and guilt as well.
5. Meditate, or follow a guided visualization program even if it's just for five minutes a day. This will allow your mind to calm down, allowing thoughts to arise and to be released, leading to a greater sense of peace.
6. Visit an animal shelter. Sign up as a volunteer. Give your time to help creatures that need your love so deeply, as a way to increase your own inner peace and calmness right now. As you can imagine, the list goes on and on. But if you just start with one of the steps above, you automatically will bring a greater sense of calmness into your life.

Do not ever give up!

The 365 day secret, to a healthy new love?

So, the relationship just ended. Or maybe it ended three months ago. Or maybe the marriage is on the way out, or it's already ended. The divorce is now final.

Are you ready, really ready for new love?

30 years ago I introduced the concept of a "365 day healing break at the end of a love relationship," something so practical, so powerful but yet, not too many people get excited about this concept until they really sit and focus.

People love to bed hop, Relationship hop, so they don't have to be with themselves... isn't that interesting?

But the secret I'm talking about today is one of the most important ones, if you truly have a desire to create a healthier love life than you've ever had in the past.

And why is it a secret? First of all, there's not too many people that I've ever talked to that endorse this type of work. Most people will talk about taking 30 days or 60 days or 90 days off after a major relationship ends, but in my experience that's never enough. A large percentage of people in terrible relationships will leave only if they have someone new in their sights.

As a nation, we have this incredible fear of being alone. So many people say they're not afraid of being alone, but these are the ones that jump quickly into another relationship.

Let's look at some facts:

1. If you have no fear of being alone, then you would never jump from one relationship to the next without taking a 365 day break.

If that scares you, you have no right whatsoever to think that you don't have a fear of being alone.

2. Being alone means that you can hang out with yourself on a Friday or Saturday or Sunday night without the need to socialize, drink, eat sugar or take recreational or prescription drugs to pass the time. If you're super comfortable being alone, you can sit in on a Friday night, in a bathtub with a good book, and not feel you're missing out on anything in the world. Because you're not.

If you can hang out by yourself, with yourself only and be wrapped in your own joy, that means you're very comfortable being alone. Congratulations.

But most of us? At the end of a love relationship, we will numb our brains with hours of movies or sugar or alcohol or nicotine or some other substance or activity. We can't face our self. Peer pressure and mass consciousness tells us that being alone means there's something wrong with us.

On top of this there's so much pressure in society for women to be in love or to be in a relationship it's absolutely sickening.

Many men feel the same pressure as well, but not as deeply as the woman I've worked with in my career.

Instead of being alone, healing, and doing the work necessary to be ready for another relationship so many people will say things like, "David the purpose of life is to have a partner! I've got to get back in the world of dating because I'm getting older and I might miss that soulmate!"

Thoughts like this continue to sabotage our chance for healthy love in the future.

Not dating or having an intimate relationship for 365 days in a row after the ending of a tough relationship gives you an opportunity to go through the seasons, holidays, weddings, birthdays, funerals and more on your own as a healthy, independent man or woman. You're not codependent. You don't need someone by your side to be happy or to have high self-confidence. You're great on your own.

The independent side of you will worship the ground you walk on.

During this time alone we should be working with a professional to completely forgive our former partners regardless of what they have done in life. Betrayal? Stealing? Lying? Work with someone to remove any resentments against your former partner so when you move forward in love, your mind, heart, soul and body is in the present moment, not stuck in the past with resentments.

In this 365 day vacation from relationships you'll get a chance to be simply with yourself... Something that a lot of us never get a chance or want to do. During this time evaluate, discern and make changes in your approach to love from a behavioral point of view, as well as an emotional and psychological perspective as well.

What have you done incorrectly in the past? Don't always focus on the former partner, what was your role in the dysfunction?

When you can see the roles that you've played in the ending of relationships, you now have a chance to change the subconscious pattern, which will change your life forever.

Remember the greatest of love relationships are a combination of emotional desire and logic. Most of us throw logic out the window and we stay with our emotions when looking for your next partner. Not a great idea, we need the combination of emotions, attraction, chemistry and most importantly: logic.

The logic that says let's not repeat the past. The logic that says I'm taking this time off to heal my heart and soul. The logic that says I deserve the greatest relationship possible, but I need to put in the work first to make sure I'm coming forward with an open slate, an open mind and an open heart.

If you follow this one powerful and sometimes deep, difficult secret in love, you will absolutely be surprised at what your next relationship will look like.

How to look at the pandemic, from a totally different perspective!

If you listen to the news, or follow social media you will find 10 million different explanations on what caused the pandemic, how to deal with it, and when it's even going to end!

But if I were to tell you there's a healthier, more powerful way to move through this pandemic than reading, watching and discussing all the insanity around it... Would you believe me?

I am a different thinker. I'm not normal, and my whole family would agree with me. I'm not a normal guy, or a normal counselor, there's nothing normal about me so this writing will surely not be normal either.

Even during the pandemic, would you like to create a more successful life? A happier one? Would you like to create a better relationship right now, during the pandemic? Would you like to make more money, during the pandemic? Would you like to get into better shape, during the pandemic?

If you're willing to stretch your mind, and get out of the little boxes that we all paint ourselves in, we will find ways to lose weight, create a deeper relationship in love, find a better job or make more money as well as drop any and all addictions that might be holding you back.

I just completed a national radio media tour and it was amazing how many of the hosts wanted to blame the new president on the pandemic, or they want to blame drug companies for screwing around with the vaccines, or they want to blame their boss for making them actually come into the office when other hosts are broadcasting from home... It was all projection, blame, projection and blame!

And it was quite surprising to me because this pandemic has been

going on for quite a while now. I couldn't understand why media hosts were trying to be so argumentative when the whole point of the interview was to bring solutions to how to deal with everything that we're going through.

Pure insanity.

In the year 2020 everyone kept saying that this pandemic will be over, the virus will be gone in 2021.

Well, it's 2022 and we still have massive outbreaks, we still have people dying from the virus, we still have countries shutting down... Doesn't that tell us something?

So there's an alternative, instead of arguing about who started the pandemic or why it happened or what the motivation with the vaccines are... We need to look at it a different way.

Here you go:

"Accept the pandemic today as if it's never going to leave."

Did you read what I just wrote?

"Accept the pandemic today, as if it's never going to leave."

When we use acceptance of the fact that the pandemic is here, and we honestly don't know if or when it's ever going to end, we can start living with a more peaceful mindset.

So let's look at some of the benefits of accepting the fact that the pandemic, just might be here to stay:

1. We will quit worrying about when the pandemic is going to leave. So many people are focused on this very point, that they're not dealing with the reality that it's still here today.
2. Start living your life today! Open the new business, grab a few business partners, go down a pathway that you've never gone that you have passion for. Fill a need that's not being met in our society or somewhere in the world! Don't let the pandemic get in the way, instead use it as an opportunity to be creative and create a better business or more money.

Millions of people have been doing this, starting they're own small businesses to fill a need that has not yet been filled, and there will always be needs to be filled!

3. When we accept the fact that the pandemic will be here for as long as it will be here, we decrease our stress levels. We start making better choices with food as well as taking care of our bodies, not waiting from some magical day when “the pandemic is finally over,” to live our lives.
4. We totally remove ourselves from the ridiculous reports on media that continue to hammer blame, deflection and all of the ridiculousness that’s been going on ever since the pandemic has started.
5. When we accept the fact that the pandemic is here for as long as it will be, we can take a big breath and start living again! Sure we’re going to wash our hands, cover our faces when necessary, social distance, and get the vaccine if that is the best move for you and everyone around you.

Our attitude will improve because we’re not arguing with anyone anymore, we’re not trying to convince them that we are right and they are wrong. Our attitude improves because we’ve come to the place of acceptance in life.

I had to do the very same thing a long time ago, when I accepted the fact that I was an alcoholic.

I had to do the very same thing a very long time ago, when I accepted the fact that I was a cocaine addict.

I had to do the very same thing, full acceptance, years ago, when I had to admit that I was extremely codependent in my intimate relationships.

And it was acceptance of all the above that allowed me to finally heal!

Don’t fight against the pandemic anymore! Quit arguing with people over conspiracy theories! Just simply accept that life is different, and “my superpower is adapting to changes in life, so let me use this superpower right now!”

Adapt. Change. Stop fighting.

I know there’s going to be a lot of people that will not appreciate this writing because they want to be stuck in the “I’m right, you’re wrong mentality.”

And for those people? There's nothing that will change their mind. But for the people who are open minded? I promise, this writing will radically change your life not just for today, but for the rest of your life as well.

It's time to change.

Simone Biles: The new face of the mental health crisis.

When we look at Olympic gold medalists, like Simone Biles, we rarely think of emotional disturbances or dysfunction like anxiety, depression and more. We look at these incredible athletes simply as machines. Yet, many times they are incredibly human, with mental health challenges of their own, regardless of how many gold medals they may have achieved in their existence!

Many athletes, who I have worked with at the major-league sports levels for years, can be struggling with mental health issues, but instead of dealing with them, they'll just put in extra work, or try to find a way to distract themselves from their mental health challenges with addictions and more.

Simone, one of the most celebrated Olympic athletes in the history of time, reached a breaking point at the Tokyo Olympics and had to pull out due to her own mental concerns. Her own issues that many people had no idea she was struggling with.

And from a variety of reports, the challenges she had faced over her life have been immense.

Olympic gold medal list and swimmer Michael Phelps, while reporting from these Olympics, made a comment that he had struggled with the immense pressure that Simone was dealing with right now and had battled his own depression and anxiety for years. He knew and totally understood where Simone was coming from, and said that he also had the pressure of the world on his shoulders every time he was at an Olympic event. For him, this was a daunting task to overcome.

A number of years ago when I interviewed Olympic gold medalist and diver Greg Louganis, we talked about the Olympics in which a dive he performed, came too close to the board and he actually cut his head which required stitches. Everyone at that moment thought he was out of the Olympics for good, only to return to win a gold medal.

He had mentioned during my interview, that it could've easily taken him out of the Olympics. The fear of hitting his head again was prevalent in his mind, but he had the help of his coach and his own mental conditioning to get back up on the diving board and the goal for gold. But not everyone has that ability, or the training, or the background, or the support to overcome something as insidious as anxiety, depression or even low self-confidence after an athlete misses their mark, or performs inconsistently with their past efforts.

With her honesty, Simone Biles became the new face of the mental health crisis, allowing millions of other people to look in the mirror and face their own struggles as well.

In my own life, I struggled for over 30 years, denying that I was battling anxiety and depression on a daily basis until I finally cracked... Reached out for help... Something that I had denied because of my position as a motivational expert in this world.

How could I, why would I, as a best-selling author and more admit that I had challenges that I couldn't heal on my own? I must be smart enough as a mental health professional, in order to heal myself through these periods of depression and anxiety. But, I was dead wrong!

Simone gave us the greatest gift in the world, her honesty of her own mental health challenges, proving that this crisis can affect anyone, anywhere, at any time.

Isolation. Depression. Anxiety. Addiction. Low self-confidence. Low self-esteem. Past trauma that we've never healed. All of these can lead to a mental health break down.

Like Simone, if you're finally facing your own mental health issues, please reach out for help today to any mental health professional that you can reach.

I also remember a number of years ago interviewing another Olympic gold medalist, Kayla Harrison, and her story is so well-known about how she was sexually abused by her coach at a very young age. As many young men and women will do, she kept it inside, leading to incredible bouts of low self-confidence, low self-esteem and depression. She finally gained the strength to share the news with her mother, who was able to get her the help she needed and the coach was put in prison for acts that could have destroyed her entire life.

It's time to look in the mirror. When you notice something is off with your own mental state, where you see yourself over eating or over drinking or smoking too much or watching too much television... isolating... numbing yourself out with drugs of any type... Look at these signs as cries from the inside asking for help.

And then, please get the help needed.

Meditation? That's not for me.

I was introduced to meditation in 1974, 1978, and 1982 and every time I said "that's not for me at all!"

Wow, was I wrong. I thought the best way at that time to decrease stress was exercise. And while exercise is great as a way to decrease stress, nothing can come close to the power of meditation. It not only diminishes the stress response, but also adds a wide variety of benefits which I'll talk about in this writing.

I finally began meditating in 1986 by following an audio cassette, because I wanted to get comfortable trying to quiet my mind. As an extremely hard driving type A professional, this was not the easiest thing to do.

After a year of following an audio cassette on meditation, 365 days in a row, I signed up to do the "Transcendental Meditation" intensive weekend workshop, and it radically changed my life in many ways.

First, I learned that I could meditate without the assistance of the outside world no matter where I was. On a plane? No problem. I could get into a meditative state in about three minutes.

When I went to get braces, the dentist at that time told me that I would have to have this large contraption, making a mold of my teeth in my mouth, for an extended period of time. He said you'll probably start gagging, but you've got to hang in there for a few minutes, in order for me to get the best mold for your braces. Of course he didn't know that I meditated and the second that he left the room, I went into a deep transcendental state, that lasted over seven minutes even with the contraption in my mouth!

When he walked back in, he couldn't believe that I was in this blissed out state. He asked me what the secret was to my ability to sit there for

that long, without gagging? This would be the first of many experiences that I had, where I was able to share with others the power of meditation. If I did not become a meditator, there's no way I could've sat in his chair with that contraption my mouth, for as long as I did.

When I decided to get sober, which was not an easy task for me to do at all, I actually increased my meditation work. By putting more time into meditation, I found that I could quiet my mind quite easily. I also found that I didn't need to reach for that drink every night. A blessing beyond compare.

A variety of studies have shown that through meditation, we can decrease high blood pressure, anxiety, addiction and depression... Powerful end results from a simple program to follow every day.

You can actually grab our own version of my meditation/relaxation audio by simply going to YouTube and googling "Meditation with David Essel."

It's absolutely free, and if you've never meditated it's a great place to begin.

A number of years ago we used our meditation program with one of my clients who had Parkinson's, which had put her in a deeply depressed state.

For six months prior to meeting, she had become isolated in her own home, embarrassed to go out in public, embarrassed to also go on cruises because of her shaking hands. But within one month of doing our meditation program seven days a week, her shaking had decreased remarkably! Her confidence and self-esteem grew, so much so that she was completely fine going out in public, even with the small amount of shaking in her hands that was still happening.

We've also used our meditation program for weight loss clients, recovery clients, and also clients that are recovering from some form of trauma or PTSD.

We remind clients every day that even five minutes of meditation is a perfect place to begin, and there's no such thing as a bad meditation! If your mind races... Let it. If thoughts of dinner come into your brain while you're meditating that's OK. Simply observe them and then go back to the meditation process.

Healing our mind, body and spirit will take a variety of practices... Of which meditation should be a priority.

What is your greatest superpower?

So, what is your greatest superpower? Or better yet, what is the one superpower that we all have, but don't take advantage of?

We all have one amazing trait, or for this writing let's call it a superpower, that you have right now that will radically change your life. Yes, you are that special, and fortunately, everyone else in the world has this as well.

Many don't take advantage of it, because like everything else that offers a benefit, there's a certain type of effort that must be given in order to receive these new benefits in life.

The greatest news that I can tell you about this superpower is that it is available at any moment. Like right now. Or 10 seconds from now. Or tomorrow afternoon. It will take you from where you are to where you want to be. This superpower can help you get sober, double your income, lose 150 pounds, change careers, find love, or let go of a terrible love relationship that you might be in... In other words, the superpower, will allow you to achieve anything you want in life!

This is the same superpower that my mentor, Joe Cirulli, used to go from homeless to multi millionaire. It's the same superpower that my friend Evelyn Keiling, used to lose 240 pounds!

It's the same superpower that I used in order to shatter my addiction to alcohol, cocaine as well as my addiction to codependency in relationships. It's the same superpower that my friend Ray Higdon used, as a single dad with two small children, to go from near bankruptcy to earning over \$100,000 a month.

It's the same superpower that one of my clients, struggling with her marriage while in the middle of an affair, used in order to reclaim her partner and create a marriage and a love deeper than anything she had ever experienced before.

And what is this incredible superpower?... It's called... Choice!

It's called free will. You have that power right now, to start making different choices on a regular basis. I'll never forget when I finally decided to get sober, after struggling for over 30 years with alcohol and cocaine. I had to either make a call to go into a treatment center and actually follow

through with that call, or just lie to myself once again about the need to get sober.

I have helped clients use the superpower called choice, to leave toxic relationships, to stand up for themselves, or to help someone in society that needs support, and it has radically changed their lives.

It's the same superpower that Martin Luther King Jr. used, Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, Gandhi... You get the picture.

When we start to act on the concept of choice, our superpower, we quit being the victim. We quit procrastinating. We quit complaining about how our genetics, or lack of education is holding us back in life. With choice there's no more victimhood.

With choice, your future is limitless! You can choose all you want to think positively, but unless you're going to act differently, with the choices you make, positivity is never going to radically change your life for a very long time.

That superpower of choice, must be an action step. You either stop drinking today, or you don't. You either forgive someone and work through forgiveness, or you don't. You either make the choice like my friend Evelyn did, and quit eating junk food or snack foods... Or you don't. You either make the choice to work two jobs in order to increase your income, or you don't.

The greatest thing about this superpower, is that it levels the playing field. You can't tell me or anyone else that because of the lack of education you can't make more money. A number of years ago one of my clients Angela, who had a high school education, doubled her income in 90 days, following our program and her own personal choice in life!

I highly advise that you don't wait until tomorrow to use this superpower, but rather, the minute you're done reading this writing, choose to change your life. Make a copy of it. Print it out. Carry it with you everywhere. And every day you'll see that you do have a choice, that is either going to move you forward into a brand-new existence or keep you stuck in a world or a life that you're not happy with.

Go. Now. Don't delay.

A love... Like no other.

Imagine this. You are at a social event and a young girl catches your eye. You're a single guy that just might be looking for a relationship. As she walks by you, you smile and ask for her number, and instead of saying yes she says "don't worry about the number, I'll be able to find you."

You shake your head, laugh and walk away. But then to your surprise, she finds you! After several dates, you fall head over heels for her... The only problem? It's a long distance relationship. So for three years you go through the planes, the long-distance dating, the excitement, the headaches and everything else until you say... Enough! You both decide you need to be together 24/7, but there is another problem.

This woman who you fell in love with, has cystic fibrosis, and there's no guarantee she'll make it even another eight years. Welcome to the life story of my very good friend, Chuck Ardezzonne and his gorgeous wife Heather Champagne who met in 2001.

In 2011, I was the luckiest minister in the world as they requested that I marry them on a beautiful beach in Florida. The day was incredibly cold, the wind was fierce and we are out on the beach with a microphone that could not compete with the wind! As I'm doing the vows, I'm screaming over the wind and the waves and everything else... And we had an amazing time!

Heather had gotten out of the hospital after a procedure just two days before and arrived with her beaming smile. The hospital? That's not Getting in the way of her wedding! Windy, cold day? No! We're not going inside to do it, we're staying outside! Heather was a beautiful force of nature, incredibly funny, outrageously loving and so determined and headstrong at the same time.

Chuck had been warned by her family that this was not going to be an easy ride. At the age of 27 she had already had 20 operations. Knowing you're marrying someone that might only live another seven, eight or 10 years is a daunting idea, isn't it?

But not for Chuck! He had fallen in love and in his words, "150%," and nothing was going to get in the way of him being with the dream of

his life. Even if it meant she only had a few more years to be with him before she would pass on. Their years together were absolutely amazing.

Heather went through another 20 operations, including an incredible double lung transplant, which had given her at least another six years to live. And then the time came, for her to go to the next level, to return to God.

I'll never forget the day that Chuck called, asking me if I would be the minister at the celebration of life event for his wife Heather. It was an incredible opportunity for me to give back, to serve two people that I loved deeply. Within a very short period of time I began my grieving course with Chuck, as I told him it would probably be the best time to begin and he agreed. Within 24 hours he was doing the written work and within a few days he had written the most compelling love letter ever that I would read at the celebration of life for Heather. What he wrote was absolutely stunning, beautiful and phenomenal. How many men do you know, that have the strength and the capability of love that my friend Chuck exhibited? How many men do you know, or women, who would marry someone knowing that they only had six or eight years at most to live?

How many men or women would marry someone, who knew that even if the other person made it another 10 years, there would be multiple operations and multiple health scares all along the way?

When I think of what a real man looks and act like, I think of my friend Chuck. When I think of what a real man does when he falls in love, regardless if the woman has 10 children or two years to live or some other incredible challenge... Real men step up to the plate and serve their partner with love.

At the celebration of life ceremony, I had a chance to share what happened that morning as I was preparing and praying to God for the ceremony. After I just finished praying for everyone who would be in attendance, and I finished praying for Chuck as well, I sat down and looked up at the heavens and said "Heather, I love you too!" At that moment, where there was no breeze, a huge gust of wind blew through my backyard! And with the wind came the strongest scent of jasmine I had ever encountered. The breeze only lasted a minute and then it was calm. I looked up at the heavens and smiled and said "thank you God so much!".

I knew Heather was with me, I knew that she was pleased and the event would be a combination of tears, joy and laughter.

As I read through Chuck's six-page love letter in front of the audience for Heather, he consistently reminded us how much she loved life! He consistently reminded us, that she was always saying "don't sweat the small stuff!" He consistently reminded us of what love looks like, the way he looked at Heather, the way she looked at him, the way he embraced her and the way she embraced him.

Love is a many splendored thing. And when you commit yourself, to serving your partner like my friend Chuck did, you now know how incredible love truly can be.

Bad habits: How do we break them?

Millions of people today struggle with emotional eating, over drinking, smoking, and the use of legal and illegal drugs on a daily basis. Millions more struggle with procrastination. Millions more struggle with an excess amount of television, media or social media. All of these bad habits can be shattered if we understand what creates them in the first place.

My bad habits began at the age of 12 with alcohol, and I carried many bad habits for with me for more years then were needed.

A client of mine from China who had struggled with sexual addiction, couldn't understand the reasoning for his cravings... But once we went to the core of his childhood and helped him understand the reasons that he was looking for an escape, letting go of the addiction became his main focus in life. Success occurred.

Another client, that had struggled with being overweight her whole life, was amazed to find out the reason for her emotional eating, and once she discovered this reason, it was so much easier to shatter her emotional eating habit then she could've ever believed.

And what is the cause of these bad habits?

Our habits are the result of a pattern that we have fed the subconscious mind, in order to escape ordinary emotions in life. What that means is, instead of learning how to deal with shame, guilt, arrogance, anger, resentment, boredom or more... We find a habit that takes us out of our current reality. And once that pattern is repeated over and over again, the

subconscious mind takes the bad habit and makes it just a part of our every day life.

Imagine this. You're frustrated with your partner, and even though you've tried to talk to them about your frustration, they refuse to listen. So you start staying later at work, so you don't have to deal with the resentment that you have regarding your partner and their behaviors.

Or maybe, even in the same situation, you start to eat more at night to numb out the emotions of resentment and frustration. Or start drinking more. Or smoking more.

What we're doing, instead of sitting down with our partner and trying to talk again, or going into counseling, is that we're trying to avoid the emotions of resentment and frustration and numb the brain, so we don't have to feel what we're really feeling deep inside.

And before you know it, a bad habit is formed. And once we continue to eat the food we shouldn't eat or work later to avoid being home, the subconscious mind takes that as a new pattern and will fight like hell to try to keep us stuck in our avoidance of certain emotions in life that we really need to face head on.

Sugar, like alcohol and nicotine and television, actually numbs the pleasure center of the brain. In this way we don't have to deal with emotions we'd rather avoid. We bury them. Deeper. Deeper. And of course all along, these bad habits are growing, growing and growing some more.

And the subconscious mind, reminds us every evening let's say, that we deserve this drink or the sugar or the television in order to numb out. Not because we really do need any of those things, but so that we can avoid the reality of the emotions that we don't want to face and deal with.

Some people will blame their bad habits on laziness, and laziness could be part of the problem. But the real problem, is that we continue to feed our unhealthy habits into the subconscious mind. And the subconscious is so powerful, it just continues to encourage us down the pathway of bad habits.

So how do we turn these habits around?

1. If a habit has been with us for more than a few months, seriously consider hiring a coach or a counselor or therapist.

When I finally faced the reality that I needed help to shatter my addiction to alcohol and cocaine, I had to reach out, hire other counselors to help me get to the core of why I drank as much as I did on a daily basis.

I was running from emotions I didn't want to deal with. Even though the world thought I was incredibly confident and filled with self-love, my actions, and my bad habits, told me a totally different story.

2. Once people understand the power of the subconscious mind, it takes away that desire to beat ourselves up every day and say that we're just lazy so we over eat. Or watch television. The truth is, we're simply trying to avoid the emotions of life. When you work with a professional, you can find out what emotions you're trying to avoid and why. This is tough stuff to do on our own.
3. Commit 365 days in a row to shatter a habit, a bad habit, that you've had for more than one or two years. This might sound like a long time, but many times the habits that we've had have been embedded in the subconscious for five years or 10 years or even 30 years in my case!

Get help during this 365 day commitment. Focus on the change for just one year so that the rest of your existence is filled with freedom. Emotional freedom.

Don't become a victim. Don't blame your genetics. Don't blame your parents. Don't blame your partner. Don't blame the presidency. Don't blame your boss.

Get strong, centered and organized. Shatter those bad habits, so that you can live the life you've always wanted to live.

Anxiety can come in many forms, faces and experiences in life.

Anxiety can be created by worrying about the future. Anxiety can also be produced by looking back to past events that we have not let go of. Recently I was working with a woman who's been divorced for three

years, yet continues to second-guess herself in regard to filing for divorce, creating anxiety every day.

As she shared with me during a recent session, she's jealous because her former husband has a new girlfriend, who is reaping the benefits that she used to call her own. She woke up early in the morning unable to sleep, wondering if she made a mistake in divorcing him?

Her anxiety is based in the past. She has not come to acceptance, that leaving an alcoholic, leaving a man who is not emotionally connected or available, was the right move. When I gave her an exercise to write out all the reasons that she divorced him, her anxiety started to minimize immediately!

How about you? Are you anxious about decisions you made from the past... And trying to live in the present? Or are you more anxious about what might happen in the future, versus living in the present now?

Below are a few key steps to help you learn how to deal with anxiety in a better way starting right now. This information should never take the place of medical intervention, but rather should be an adjunct to you working with your doctor in regards to alleviating anxiety in your life.

1. What causes your anxiety? Write it down. Is it something that you did in the past, that you need to come to an understanding or acceptance of? Do you need to let yourself off the hook finally... And forgive yourself for decisions you made in the past? Or is it future-based? Are you worried about your health? Finances? Children? Being single? We can start to diminish the hold anxiety has on us, simply by trying to locate in writing where the anxiety is coming from. A past event? Or a future event? Write your answers below.

2. To become more in tune to the present moment, learn how to meditate, or even practice ten deep breaths when you get up in the morning. Repeat this at noon, and at night, which will be a great move in regards to decreasing your anxious response to the world. Deep breathing, just 10 simple breaths, can immediately start to lower your heart rate and blood pressure. Start this practice today.
3. The scent of lavender has an immediate and powerful relaxation effect on the brain! Sprinkle the essential oil of lavender drops on your pillow at night. Carry a bottle with you in your purse or pocket and when you start to feel anxious, take 10 deep breaths directly from the bottle of the oil of lavender. It works.
4. Get in with a counselor, therapist or life coach starting right now. Today. Ask them to give you reading assignments, writing assignments on a weekly basis in order to get to the core cause of your anxiety and also to help you alleviate some of the symptoms.

In my practice, I have rarely seen anxiety as a genetic problem, but rather, more often than not, my anxiety ridden clients had a mom and or a dad who were anxious as well. They picked up the traits from childhood, by observing a parent who was filled with anxiety, and carried it forward in life. Think about this.

5. It is a well-known fact that exercise reduces anxiety in our life. Even 30 minutes walking in your neighborhood can have a powerful anti-anxiety effect .
6. Cut way back on caffeine. If you're struggling with anxiety, caffeine will only exacerbate the effects of anxiety in your life. Go slow, start to minimize any and all caffeine in your life today until you're totally off of this substance. Diet soda can also create both anxiety and depression with certain types of people.

If you follow the above steps, there's a very good chance you will start to reduce the anxiety in your life right now. Don't forego medical help if necessary, because it could be one of the other tools to use in order to get anxiety under control.

The most important thing you can do for yourself is to start right now! Most of the above steps can be done without any real planning. Don't overthink it as many anxious people do. Just start today. Change your lifestyle, change your life, minimize anxiety right now.

80% of relationships in the United States are not healthy!

If you pay attention to romance novels and more, you get the feeling that our country is in great shape regarding relationships. If you read many of the women's magazines today, they're giving us all these tips on how to make our current relationship even better, when our current relationship may actually suck and be beyond repair.

Why are so many relationships in our country in such terrible shape? During a recent radio show, the host asked me my opinion regarding love and relationships in our country. What I said shocked her. Her audience as well. She became baffled and didn't even know how to continue the conversation.

So what was it that I said that absolutely made her head spin? The following:

1. After being in the world of counseling and life coaching for over 30 years, it's easy for me to acknowledge that 80% of our love relationships are either terrible, unfixable or in a lot of trouble.
2. 55% of first marriages end in divorce.
3. 70% of second marriages end in divorce.
4. 74% of third marriages end in divorce.
5. And if that isn't scary enough, many people who stay together for a lifetime will be living in hell on earth. Living in dysfunctional, codependent relationships where people are either struggling with addiction, control, passive aggressive behavior and more.

And how did we get ourselves in such a terrible position regarding relationships in this country?

1. People don't wait long enough in between relationships and instead jump to another one, without evaluating the role in the breakdown of their previous love with intimate partners.
2. Most people don't really know how to love themselves. If we can't or don't understand how to love ourselves, we are probably going to attract other people that don't know how to love themselves either.

If we struggle with codependency, addiction or any type of behavioral issues... Those habits which are a form of self sabotage are going to come into play and destroy any future relationship we may find ourselves in.

3. So many of us are petrified of being alone! Some are so petrified of being hurt in love, they will stay alone for a large portion of their life and potentially miss out on having a great partner.

That doesn't mean that everyone should be in a relationship, but you have to look deeper at the reasons that you have been alone for a long time. Just like we need to look deeper at the reasons of why we might jump from one relationship to another when we're not really ready.

Forgive ourselves for anything we've done in the past that has hurt someone we were in a relationship with. Completely forgive any past partner, regardless how they treated you, in order to be ready for a new relationship in love.

When we carry our resentments against past partners into our new relationships, the new partner will suffer greatly because of the fact that we've never let go of our emotional baggage.

Let's stop looking for people to save us financially, or save us from being single with children. We also have to stop looking for people who have great potential in life! Wait for them to reach their potential before you start dating them.

If we combine all of the above information, we can radically change the world of love in our country.

A top key, for improving our mental health.

Millions of Americans, and on top of that billions of individuals all around the world, have been battling with the pandemic stress for quite a while now. And while the vaccine offers hope as well as the masks and social distancing, they surely are not a cure-all especially when it comes to mental health issues that so many of us face.

Anxiety. Depression. Low self-confidence. Low self-esteem. Procrastination. Anger. Insecurity. Addiction. Relationship dysfunction.

All of the above can be the end result of mental exhaustion, financial exhaustion, pandemic exhaustion and then finally the exhaustion many of us are feeling in regard to our relationships.

70% of my work in my profession in mental health, is working with individuals who are struggling with these conditions. And I have also been there myself.

I battled a deep clinical depression for so many years I can't remember the number, but my guess is about 30 years. That turned into an ongoing generalized anxiety disorder, that I could not get my finger on for another number of years.

And then, through working with so many people that were also struggling, I found the biggest breakthrough in the world in regard to the solution, or one of the main solutions, for our mental health issues today.

It's called "emotional regulation," a fancy term that says we understand how to control our emotional response to the world, which might be different for things that are in our control versus those things out of our control.

Since 1996 we have certified thousands of Master Life Coaches from all over the world, and the main thing we help them teach their clients is emotional regulation!

Let's take a look at emotional regulation:

1. One of my greatest teachers, the late Ram Dass, taught me in the 1980s the importance of being able to “step back” to regulate our emotional responses to certain circumstances, before we instantaneously or subconsciously react. So let’s take the pandemic. Those people who are emotionally regulated, are minimizing the amount of time they are spending talking about, watching, reading about the pandemic.

They’ve done their research on the vaccine, but they don’t go into to every conversation wanting to talk about the upside, or the downside. They don’t ask anyone, “Why aren’t you taking it or why have you taken the vaccine?”

With emotional regulation, individuals talking about the pandemic know that it doesn’t help anyone to continue to beat a dead horse, so they’ll quickly end the conversation when it arises or minimize their part of any discussion.

They realize emotionally that if they get wrapped up in arguments, or trying to defend themselves, that they’re going to be out of emotional balance in a heartbeat.

2. Relationships. Because so many couples who are married or dating are struggling right now in their relationships, it is more important than ever to practice emotional regulation. The number one tool we have for couples that argue regularly is called “disengagement.”

Through disengagement, we see that our conversation is going south, we see that if we continue to participate in this conversation that it will turn into arguing, resentment or passive aggressive behavior. So the person who is practicing emotional regulation, when they see an argument with their partner appearing will say something like... “Honey I love you very much. I don’t want to continue this conversation because I’m afraid I may say something that will hurt your feelings or damage our love. So I’m going to take two hours and go for a walk, go pick up some stuff from the

store, then when I come back at 4 o'clock, let's sit down and see if we can talk about this again."

When we are emotionally regulated, we look for the logical answer to challenges we are facing and one of the best moves to make, when tension is high, is to disengage. But let your lover know you love them, that you're coming back in a couple hours and you want to sit down to discuss it again. Now you're grounded, and the chances are much better that you can work through your disagreement without the tension and anger.

3. Anxiety, Depression. Mental exhaustion. Emotional regulation is crucial for all of these as well. I personally struggled with depression for so many years and then anxiety took over and I had no idea what to do about either of them. In 1991, a friend recommended that I start to do what I teach others, to emotionally regulate and look for what is triggering my anxiety or depression. It was the smartest thing anyone could ever tell me!

I found that I was worried about things that may never happen, or upset or depressed about things that happened in the past. Both of these were out of my control. There was nothing I could take care of right now! So when someone is emotionally regulated, they're able to differentiate between things they have no control over and need to simply let go of, or those things that they do have control over and need to take action upon.

About 80% of my client base right now is struggling with mental exhaustion, anxiety, depression and more. And they are all responding incredibly well to the techniques that we teach in regard to emotional regulation. This technique will not only make a huge difference in your life, but it will positively affect everyone around you as well.

A year of trauma and PTSD.

When most people think of PTSD, they think of veterans returning from war. A very true statement. Others might think of someone who

had a near drowning experience, and that could create PTSD as well. But, there are other events in life that can create ongoing PTSD, or post traumatic stress disorder, that we may not even recognize.

A number of years ago a client contacted me, filled with dread of living, but had no idea what she was struggling with. As she explained her symptoms, PTSD immediately jumped in my brain. She had a year from hell, and was wondering why her sex drive had diminished, she had lost 30 pounds when she couldn't even afford to lose 30 pounds and she had lost her identity for a living. The anxiety and trauma from 12 months of hell had destroyed her normal sleep cycle as well.

When I mentioned that what she had gone through, some very personal deep stressors every week for the past 52 weeks, created a form of PTSD, she could not believe it! She had only thought of PTSD of being related to veterans of war or Active Military Members, she couldn't believe that she was struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder.

And most people are shocked when they come up with the same diagnosis that I had discovered with this woman. But it was true in her case, just like it is in many other cases that we've worked with. PTSD can come from being in an unhealthy marriage for just a few years or being let go off from several Jobs when it was not your fault. PTSD can also occur if you have a child that struggles with addiction.

In other words, many of the stressors in life, if they are around long enough, will start to create post-traumatic stress disorder.

As I had her write about all of the stress and trauma she experienced in the previous 12 months, she immediately saw how she could be suffering from PTSD:

1. A child she had worked with through an organization similar to Big Brothers/Big Sisters, moved to another country and she did not have any access to communicate with her at all.

She would never see this little girl again, even though she had been a huge part of her life for five years in a row.

2. For the first time in her career, she had hit huge financial blocks. She was scrambling almost every month to make

bills payable and was extremely stressed by this experience, as anyone would be.

3. She had a falling out with her best friend of 20 years. Even though she knew it was the right move to end the relationship, she had not found anyone else to confide in, or to create a deep friendship with.
4. Her cat, 15 years of age, and her dog, nine years of age died the same week together. She had relied on these two animals for a number of years to be her support system, her comfort and within seven days both of them were gone.

Some people would look at what she went through and say... “That’s just life, get over it.”

But for most of us? It’s not that easy. Just when she thought she was recovering from one event, another event came and hit her from behind, totally unexpectedly. She was worn out. Burned out. In immense grief and not having a clue of what to do.

So here are the steps that helped her decrease the symptoms associated with PTSD:

1. Cognitive behavioral therapy. One of my favorite therapeutic techniques, if used correctly, can help alleviate feelings such as deep anxiety, shame, guilt anger... Resentments and more in a very short period of time. Go to YouTube and search “David Essel CBT or David Essel Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.”
2. A grieving journal. I had her start writing about her grief in a journal, about the financial stress, the loss of her best friend, and the loss of two animals as well. She was venting, expressing her sadness, her loss, and it had an immediate effect on her well-being.
3. I encouraged her to get outside of herself, and create a new identity in order to create a new life. I asked her to pick an organization to volunteer for and she surprised me when she picked the local pet shelter. A great move. Every Saturday she goes in and spends five hours with the dogs and cats and

while she's not ready to bring one home yet, it brings her great relief from all the stress that she's been under.

I think our greatest victory came when she accepted the fact that her traumatic experiences were truly traumatic, and it created the PTSD experience. She understood she was underneath incredible stress, and she had to radically change her life in order to deal with the stressful experiences. Her healing process is ongoing, seven days a week, and the results have been incredibly positive!

I encouraged her to talk to her doctor about the potential of adding CBD oil to her daily routine and he was 100% behind the recommendation. We also began with 15 minutes of meditation following an audio program that we created 25 years ago.

Take a look at the steps above. Share this message with other people if they are going through traumatic experiences as well. Healing is possible.

Is it OK to ask your partner to change a behavior that's unhealthy?

This debate in the counseling community has gone on since the beginning of time. So many mental health professionals have sided with the concept that we should never ask our partner to change, we should just be able to accept them for who they are.

But as I've grown in the world of counseling, I've matured and I see how infantile this belief system can be, and how damaging it is to a relationship or marriage.

Recently I was working with an individual whose wife for the last couple years had increased her drinking dramatically. She was a functioning alcoholic, able to go to work, but she gained a lot of weight. Her attitude went into the ditch and she started radically changing the type of friends that she was hanging around with.

All of her girlfriends now are into the party mode and the counselor he was working with said to him "you just need to learn to accept your wife as she is."

Because his wife was working with a separate counselor, I was surprised to hear that counselor told his wife the same thing "your husband has no

right to ask you to change, you are who you are, keep living life on your own terms.”

I shake my head at this insanity. My own professional industry continues to promote unhealthy practices in the world of relationships and marriage.

I come from a totally different perspective.

I believe that you have every right in the world to ask your partner to change habits that are hurting your marriage or relationship, your finances, or your children if you have children living at home.

We even teach our single clients in the dating process, that if they meet someone who checks all the boxes of compatibility, except for the fact that they have one habit that is unacceptable, we recommend that they ask this person to change... If they say no, then just be willing to walk away.

When I got sober, I didn't get sober because I wanted to. The initial reason I went into a treatment center was because the woman I was dating had called me out one night and said, “David you're going to choose alcohol over me,” and she was right. So I thought I was getting sober to save the relationship, but when the relationship ended I realized that I was getting sober because I needed to be sober in life! Thank God she was the straw that broke the camels back, and thank God for years I've been free of any addiction that I struggled with in the past.

It was not only OK that she asked me to change, it was a massive turning point in my life.

Let's look at the reasons why it's OK to ask your partner to change if they have a habit that is damaging you or your relationship or your family:

1. If you have children, you have every right in the world to ask your partner to eliminate alcohol, nicotine, vaping, emotional spending, emotional eating or any other habit they have that could have a negative influence on your children.
2. One of my clients, a woman recently asked me what to do with the guy she was dating? He was awesome in so many ways, but never took care of his physical health and was approximately 70 pounds overweight.

Because she was in her 50s, she had many concerns about their future together. He was already on medication for high blood pressure and high cholesterol, and she was concerned about having to become “a nurse for him,” in just a few years.

So she asked him to change. She asked if he would be interested in getting together and exercising together... She also said that she had just recently taken a cooking class on clean eating and would he like to go with her and learn more about the new diet she was on?

His answer was a simple no. He was very comfortable with being overweight, he didn't mind taking the medication from his doctor, and he was never going to change. He said if you like me the way I am, take me, if you don't move on. So she moved on. It was a great move because six months later she met an amazing guy who was a much better match for her and her lifestyle.

3. If your partner puts you down in front of others or in front of your family or their family, you have every right in the world to ask that person to change. And if they don't and you stay, it just shows that you were an extremely codependent individual afraid to rock the boat, instead of an independent person who's willing to stand up and fight for what is right.

If you're not treated correctly, you have every damn right in the world to ask your partner to change.

We need to know what works for us and what doesn't work for us. We need to quit being so afraid of being criticized or rejected or have someone leave you over something that you would consider to be a deal killer in love. If they don't want to change their habits or beliefs that may be in the total opposition to yours, you'll have to make a decision that you feel is right for you.

The independent man or woman does not have a problem asking their partner to change. Addictions. Negativity. Extreme laziness. These are all habits that can be easily changed, if someone truly wants to be in a relationship with you.

I'm not saying leave someone who has a bad attitude for 30 days, but I am saying that you have every right in the world if your partner has ongoing

issues that do not match yours, and that might be hurting you and or your children, to ask them to change. When you do, your confidence and self-esteem will rise, and your partner may very well change to keep your love alive. But if they don't? It's time to keep your sanity and move on.

How to become the “come back kid” in your own life right now!

Today, millions of people will wake up and think, “What’s the use in trying any longer.” They feel dejected. Exhausted. Beat up. Not thinking that life could be any better than it is right now and not quite knowing what to do to turn it around.

Life can be incredibly difficult, but there are millions of individuals that have overcome difficulties that maybe you and I couldn't even imagine how they could do it.

Maybe as you read this writing right now, you're feeling quite hopeless about your health issues, addictions, financial challenges or maybe even struggles in love. And it's easy, so easy just to give up, let go and live in despair. Or hopelessness. And worry.

But there's another way you can start to approach challenges today that can help you make a major comeback regardless of what you're facing in life.

Let's start with a very powerful saying by Buddha, “Fall down seven times, stand up eight.” Think about this concept with your own life. How many times have you fallen down and how many times have you risen to the occasion to get back on your own feet again?

For most of us, we have probably fallen or failed so many times we can't even remember... But if we're still here that means we've gotten up after every failure! We forget how resilient we can be. We need to reflect back and maybe with admiration, look at the times in life that were so difficult and challenging that we had no idea how we could get through them... But we did.

That's the attitude of the “comeback kid”.

Some of the most famous people in the world have struggled and struggled greatly, having to “come back” time after time again in order to finally create the success they've always wanted. In our number one best

selling book, “Focus! Slay your goals,” I tell the story of a single dad with two kids who had lost all of his money and was going through foreclosure.

What was he to do? In a session we did together, I mentioned to him that he had incredible energy, an amazing attitude even in his despair, and that if he found something he really believed in selling I knew he could make a major comeback.

As he tells his own story in the book, within a year and a half of going after 20 rejections a day when he was trying to sell a certain product, he went from zero income on a monthly basis to \$50,000 a month! But it gets better. Much better. Years later, he’s over \$1 million a month in income and he loves what he does!

That’s resiliency. A year and a half after going after 20 rejections a day when you’re selling a product, is probably one of the most difficult things in the world to do. But he did it.

If you’re in a tough place right now, questioning if you have the resiliency to bounce back, I can tell you the answer: you do! You may have to reach out and hire an accountability partner or an expert in some area of life to really help you get the momentum going. Trying to make major changes on your own many times can become extremely frustrating. But don’t give up. Don’t stop. Fall down 25 times as long as you stand up 26... And you are on the pathway of becoming your own “come back kid.”

Are you numb? Angry? Afraid?

The time we are living in, is bringing out emotions, for many of us emotions that are absolutely creating more dysfunction, chaos and drama right now in our lives and in those around us.

Some people are feeling incredibly numb. Some people are very afraid. Some people are incredibly angry.

What do we need to do? Major disasters, like the pandemic we’re currently in, create a myriad of emotional responses by people from all over the world.

1. Some people are extremely numb. They’re walking around in a daze, not really accomplishing much and not really feeling much either. And why is that? This is one of the ways that

the brain compartmentalizes the stress, during disaster, in order to help us survive.

It may not be the healthiest response to the pandemic, but it's understandable. With overload, the brain can shut down, the emotions become vacant and numbness sets in.

A variety of individuals feel numb, because they don't know anyone who has the virus or who has died from it. So the overwhelming news reports, combined with the fact that they have not experienced anyone ill or dying, can make people shut down and become numb to the overload.

2. Fear is another incredibly normal response to the pandemic that is taking lives all over the world. We become afraid, maybe to touch that door knob, or to be in the grocery store around other people, or afraid that our family members might have immune system issues and could be affected by the pandemic.

Or we're afraid that our children might come down with the virus, or ourselves or our partner. We are afraid that we may not return to work, that we might lose our home or apartment. Fear is very real.

3. Anger. There are many people in this country and around the world that are filled with anger at the government, at the scientific community, or maybe even at each other.

People can feel angry because they don't feel they're getting accurate information. People can feel angry because they're getting conflicting information. This networks says this, the other networks says that, and where the hell is the truth? This can create anger.

So what do we do?

If you're feeling numb, open yourself to new experiences during the pandemic if you can. Get out in nature daily. Do strenuous exercise as well to create a positive endorphin release in the brain. If you feel numb, write about what you don't want to look at, what you don't want to experience, just so that you're staying real with yourself. If you are numb, is there a

way through email or text or social media that you can support others, and become a positive influence in their lives at this time?

Fear. If you're dealing with fear, this is the time to reach out to a minister, rabbi, priest, counselor, therapist or life coach and get help right now. If you're filled with fear, minimize the amount of news that you're reading, or watching or listening to...

Anger. For those who are angry, my first response is going to be something similar to what I said above, get help! Without a doubt, watch the amount of media that you're participating in, and make sure you stay away from any discussions that could turn into arguments and feed the anger inside.

Journal about your anger. Buy a punching bag, or shadowbox and get your anger out. Scream into a pillow. Join a kick boxing class.

The most important thing to do with any and all these emotions is to express them in writing, ask for help and then look for activities that will minimize your stress. There's no need to go down this road alone.

Alcohol: The great destroyer of marriages and families.

The number of families destroyed by alcohol in the United States alone every year is mind boggling. Alcohol destroys love. It destroys confidence. It destroys relationships. It destroys self-esteem. It creates incredible anxiety for children who live in a household where alcohol is abused.

And regardless of how many families are destroyed via alcohol, every month in our office we get calls from families who are falling apart due to the abuse of this substance.

A couple came for counseling sessions because they've been struggling for over 20 years with the husbands abuse of alcohol and the wife's codependent nature. She never wanted to rock the boat or confront him on a regular basis about how his drinking was destroying their marriage.

After having two children, the situation became even worse. The husband would be gone all day on Saturday and Sunday, golfing and drinking with his buddies... Only to return home drunk, abusive emotionally and showing no interest whatsoever in educating or spending time with the children unless he had a drink in his hand.

When I asked him what role alcohol played in the dysfunction of his

marriage and in the stress that he was feeling between himself and his two children, he said “alcohol has no role in the dysfunction of anything. My wife is neurotic. She’s not stable. But my drinking has nothing to do with that, it’s her issue.”

His wife admitted that she was extremely codependent, that she was afraid to bring up his drinking because every time she did they got into a huge fight. He told me during the session that he could stop at any time. I replied, “This would be a good day to stop. Here’s a chance for you to reclaim your marriage, reclaim your relationship with your two children, I know this will turn out perfectly.”

While he was in the office, in front of his wife he told me he would do that very same thing today. Today was the day he would quit forever.

But on the drive home, he told her that I was insane, that she was insane because he’s never giving up alcohol, ever.

From that point on, I never saw him again. I prayed, and told his wife that I hope he would find a different counselor, but she told me that he never would, alcohol was too important to him.

His wife continued to work with me, to try to decide if she would stay or divorce him and we began talking about how her children were doing during all of the insanity she was going through.

The answer was not pretty at all.

The oldest child, who is around 13, was so filled with anxiety that they set their alarm clock to 4 AM every day to get up and pace the hallways of their house to decrease the anxiety they felt. And what was causing his anxiety? When his mom asked him he said, “You and dad are always arguing, dad is always saying nasty things, and I just pray every day that you too can finally learn to get along.” Wisdom, from a teenager.

A teenager, completely filled with anxiety.

When the younger child would come home from school, he was always extremely combative with his father, refusing to do chores or homework, refusing to do anything the father asked. This child was only eight years of age and while he couldn’t express his outrageous anger and hurt that his father had already caused him, the only way he could express himself was to adamantly go against his father’s wishes.

Unfortunately, I’ve seen this scenario play out over and over and over again.

If you're reading this right now, and you like to have your "cocktail or two in the evening," I want you to rethink this, especially if you're having challenges in your relationship or if you have children at home.

When either mom or dad are drinking on a regular basis, they are not emotionally available for each other and they are especially not emotionally available for their children. Any social drinker, that saw their family falling apart, would stop drinking in a minute!

But those who are alcoholics, or alcohol dependent live in denial. They will change the topic and say "this has nothing to do with my alcohol, we just have bratty kids... Or my wife is too sensitive... Or if the wife is the one with a drinking problem, my husband is just a jerk."

In other words, the person struggling with alcohol will rarely admit they're struggling, they'll just try to blame it on everyone else. Or how about the other client I worked with recently, a married woman with two children where every Sunday she would tell her children she would help them with their homework. But Sundays, were her "social drinking days". These were days that she loved to get together with other ladies in the neighborhood and drink wine in the afternoon.

And when she would return home, she would be in no mood, or no shape to help her kids with their homework. When they protested and told her that she had promised to help them, she would get angry, and tell them to grow up. They should be studying more during the week, not leaving all their homework to do on Sundays. In other words, you guessed it, she was using diversion. She didn't want to accept her role in the stress with her children, so she would blame it on them when in actuality, she was the culprit and creator of their stress.

When you're a young child and you ask your mom to help you every Sunday to do anything, and mom chooses alcohol over you, it hurts in the worst way possible. These children will grow up filled with anxiety, depression, low self-confidence, low self-esteem and they may either become alcoholics themselves, or when they enter the world of dating, they may look to date people who are very similar to mom and dad: emotionally unavailable individuals.

As a former alcoholic, everything I'm writing about is true and it was true in my life as well.

When I first started helping to raise my first child in 1980, I was an

alcoholic, drinking every night. My emotional availability to this young child was low because I was drinking.

I am surely not proud of those times in my life, but I'm being very vulnerable and honest and authentic with you when I write about my own trials and tribulations.

Everything changed when I got sober. When I had the opportunity again to help raise children, I was emotionally available. I was present. When they were in pain, I was able to sit and talk to them and help them through the pain they were going through.

When they were jumping with joy, I was jumping right along with them! If you're a parent reading this and you think that your alcohol consumption is fine and it's not affecting your children, I would like you to think again. The very first move is to go in and work with a professional, be open and honest about the exact number of drinks that you have on a daily or weekly basis.

And what does a drink look like? 4 ounces of wine equals one drink. One beer equals one drink. 1 ounce shot of liquor equals one drink. Most of us drink much more than that, and if you're above that level it's time to look seriously at your relationship with your loved ones and your children.

Denial is a very powerful emotion, so is justification and rationalization when it comes to our drinking issues.

Don't risk ruining your children's future. Don't risk ruining your relationship with your husband, wife, boyfriend or girlfriend. Alcohol is one of the greatest destroyers of love, self-confidence, self-esteem and self worth.

You're a role model, or you're supposed to be one. If you don't have the strength to quit drinking for your children's sake, or your partner's sake, maybe it's better off that you don't have a family to deal with.

If you choose not to release alcohol, just remember this: everyone will be much better off if you simply left the family so you could keep the comfort of alcohol by your side.

Allow them to grow in a much calmer and more beautiful environment. Think about that.

Gratitude: Powerful, if done correctly.

Through the years, many of the top books and spiritual teachers have told us that we can attract things into our lives via our thoughts. So if we feel gratitude, for the physical things we want but don't have in the current moment, they must come into our existence.

I remember listening to a famous author on success who had a line in the interview that I didn't agree with at all. It went like this. "As you hold images of what you want, you're going to be attracting things into your life that are going to be attracted to you. Whatever you don't have, will literally move into physical reality and be with you shortly, almost like a law, if you use gratitude for what you don't have but what you want. So have gratitude for all that you desire in life, that is not here, and you will have it soon."

As I listened to this interview, I thought it was crazy. You can have gratitude and positive thoughts about images of what you want, but they're not going to come into your life just because some kind of ridiculous "law". I believe he's talking about "The Law of Attraction," and the way it's discussed, it's simply fantastical thinking. That's all.

Now if this were true, that you could just imagine what you want in your life and be grateful for having what you don't have, and that thing actually came to you, it would be called a miracle. I would absolutely call that a miracle.

So if you're thinking today about the car you've always wanted or the house you always wanted, but it's not in your life, and somehow it magically appears in a few days, simply call it a miracle.

It does feel good to imagine this would happen, but I've actually never seen it happen in my life or in my years of work.

So what's the real definition of gratitude?

I believe that when you have gratitude for your current car, when you have gratitude for your current home, when you have gratitude for your current body... That is true gratitude. If you're willing to get uncomfortable and do things you're currently not doing on a daily basis, you can then set yourself up for the new car, the new house and the new body!

Having an appreciation for your current life surely is an amazing step to take, because so many of us are living in the future. Somehow we think we will be super happy when we have that new car or that new house or the new body. And you might be for a short period of time. But if you can't have gratitude for what you have right now, the new stuff won't keep gratitude in your life for very long.

And if we look at the reality of what I just said, that once we get that "new thing," after a period of time it doesn't create ongoing happiness... Why is that?

We call this "an addiction to the future." Which simply means that we are addicted to more. That there's never enough. We will always crave something that we don't have right now.

On the other hand, if we start with the present moment and become grateful for whatever we have in our existence right now, we are opening the door to achieve something greater. But if that something greater doesn't come? We can still be happy right now wherever we are. Does that make sense?

I believe that this logical approach to gratitude will open up a whole new world where we are able to live in the moment, appreciative for what we have and then ready for changes that may come. And if and when the changes come? Well, to me that just says that our gratitude will be even deeper in the future, then it is right now.

How to turn a negative mindset into a positive one.

Gossip. Conspiracy theories. Failure. Lost hope. Low self-esteem. Low self-confidence.

Above are just a few of the many ways that we can turn from a positive person into a negative one. But how do we turn it around? How do we take this limited or negative mindset and make it a positive one?

Negativity is all around us. We are bombarded on a daily basis with the Internet, radio and TV telling us the Democrats are right, the Republicans are right, civil rights is dead, civil rights is alive... And this is only one part of the spectrum.

We also have a tendency to become victims in life, struggling financially and blaming the government or our parents... Struggling with our weight

and blaming genetics... All this can easily take a positive person and turn them into a negative one in just a few months.

Where does negativity begin anyway? Many of us model behaviors of one of our parents. So if we had a parent that was constantly gossiping, or negative in nature, or always angry... Struggling with addiction... Many of the negative traits we have today can be from one of our role models growing up.

And then this turns into a subconscious situation. You may want to be positive, but after spending 18 years in your home growing up with someone who is extremely negative, the fall out is that sometimes we resort to old behaviors that we don't even realize are tucked into the subconscious mind.

Then of course, there are our own experiences, failures and successes.

Failures grab the gold medal when it comes to turning us into a negative person if we don't have a good perspective and know how to bounce back from loss in life, health, finances or more. All of this can seem pretty daunting, to try to turn ourselves from a negative person into a positive one but it's absolutely possible.

A number of years ago I worked with a woman with extremely low self-esteem and confidence, she was the consummate victim in life. She told me she was overweight because of her genetics. She hated her job because the corporation she worked for was ruthless and always blames her for mistakes in the department. Men were all dogs, so she had opted out of the world of dating for 20 years because she had such a negative mindset about men. Then we got to work. I had her journaling every day her negative thoughts and at the end of two weeks, we found out that 100 times a day she had a negative or limiting thought running through her brain!

No wonder she was so negative!

So we broke her victim status. She could no longer blame her parents, genetics or the corporation for her unhappiness. I had her take out the words, "Men are all dogs, you can't trust them," so whenever she was in a conversation with one of her friends, she would tell them in advance that if she ever started talking negatively about anything, for them just to say the word "black".

It's a technique we use with a lot of our clients, so that their partners

and or friends can alert them when they're going down a negative mind track and get them to stop before they tumble down any further.

Within six months, her whole life was beginning to change. She was less stressed. She stopped emotional eating. She was on her way to losing 100 pounds in 12 months. She went to work every day with an incredibly positive attitude and shocked the hell out of the people in her office.

I asked her to start to evaluate the type of people that she was hanging out with socially and or at work. She found that she was surrounding herself with like minded, negative people. Gossipers. Conspiracy theorists. It started become quite clear to her, how negative she had become and how she got there. Not to blame these other people, but to see that they were part of her problem.

We had her cut out all political talk shows, all negative media and she limited herself to one hour a day on social media.

She decided to really focus on sleep and started to go to bed at nine at night, getting up at six in the morning to do her spiritual work, and her exercise.

She literally turned herself from a negative Nelly into a positive Patty in a short period of time.

Let's start right here. Do the work. Don't bypass this writing and think you'll start next week or next summer or sometime in the future. Your future is now. The present is all we have. Act on it today.

Persevering through Addiction?

Millions of people right now are stuck in an addiction. It might be alcohol, smoking, food, opiates, television... Or maybe you're addicted to the need to be right!

Or gambling? Emotional spending? Sex? No matter what the addiction, and no matter how long you've battled it, hope is on its way today.

I don't care how long you've been an addict, how long have used food to soothe your emotions, how long you've used alcohol to escape the reality of life... There is hope. For almost 30 years I was a raging alcoholic and binge cocaine addict, even while doing the work of helping other people to heal. Early in my stages of addiction, I bought into the nonsense

that “once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic,” as well as, “once an addict, always an addict.”

The statements above are absolute lies.

But that doesn't mean that addictions are easy to overcome. It will take work, it will take willpower and the word I love to use... It will take perseverance. But it's possible. Your addiction is not caused by your genetics no matter how many people try to convince you of this. If addictions were genetically based, the only cure would come from science or medicine.

And yet millions of people recover every day, from every addiction known to man, without the use of medication, surgery or any medical procedure.

If your addiction was caused by your genes, muscular dystrophy is caused by our genes, you would need medical intervention in order to heal. This proves right away that your addiction is not caused by genetics.

Perseverance for recovery. I encourage all my clients to commit 365 days to recovery from any addiction whatsoever. It's not easy, but with perseverance, willpower and really good accountability partners you can shatter any addiction in the world, no matter how long you have had it.

Personally, I had to invest time, money and effort in my 365 days in a row recovery program to understand the power, the beauty, the freedom that comes with recovery.

You may have to go to meetings, you may have to hire a counselor, you may have to go to a treatment center... I'm not sure what the right path for you is, but I can tell you that every person I have worked with has created the same program of perseverance to overcome addiction.

I worked with a client from Canada that overcame a 33 year addiction to Xanax. And they did the same thing that I did. They persevered through the challenges through the triggers and through the cravings.

A desire to heal is important, but as I tell my clients, as long as you have a 10% desire to heal, and follow the program completely, you will heal with your persevering attitude and action steps.

It's possible with the correct effort, time and yes money that you can become free from any addiction. And the best news, you don't have to believe you can become free, just do the work, on a daily basis. You will

become free even in spite of yourself. But don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today. Procrastination kills perseverance.

A major hospital administrator came to me because she had a 30 year Sex addiction, that was destroying her mindset and limiting her career advancement.

After six months of persevering through the cravings following our emotional regulation tools, and using the nutritional supplements we recommended to decrease her cravings, she became completely free! One year after that she finally got into a healthy non-addicted relationship, and at the same time her career exploded as well.

As you read this, decide right now, that it's time to reach out to someone other than yourself in the world of addiction and commit. Persevere. Become more persistent than you ever have in the past, and I can tell you, your life will radically change for the better. And you my friend, are damn well worth the effort.

What is real intimacy, and why are so many people afraid of it?

When most people hear the word intimacy, their mind immediately goes to physical touch, sex and more. But is that what intimacy really is? Could we have created a definition, that's actually inaccurate in the world of love, relationships and intimacy?

If you asked me in 1990, when I started in the world of general counseling what intimacy meant, I would've told you a totally different definition than the one I use today.

I probably would've agreed with the general concept of intimacy, physical touch, making love and public displays of affection. But my mind has been radically changed over the years. The definition of intimacy that we created in the year 2000, actually has nothing to do with physical touch or sex! It has nothing to do with lingerie, deep kisses or anything like that whatsoever.

And what is this new definition of intimacy, that will help individuals and couples learn how to make their bond even stronger and longer lasting in life?

Here it is: intimacy equals 110% honesty in a relationship. A purely intimate relationship means that "I will bear my heart and soul, I will risk

being rejected, abandoned and criticized, in order to be 110% present and honest with you as my friend and lover.”

That’s it. Not very sexy is it? But it’s a key to having the most profound love relationship and friendship that you will ever find, I can guarantee that.

When working with a gentleman from Europe who had been married for about five years, he had mentioned to me that within the first six months of marriage, there was a habit his wife had that he didn’t feel comfortable with, but did not have the strength to be 110% honest. After several years of him biting his own tongue, he finally reached out and we got to work.

He told me the concern he had with his wife, the concerns he had with his marriage and when I asked him if had he shared these very same concerns with his wife, he said no. He was afraid to upset her. She began drinking on a daily basis, which led to arguments and the frustration on his part increased when she started choosing alcohol over him in the marriage.

This is codependency, this is not an intimate relationship, it’s a codependent relationship. And what does that mean?

It means, “I agree not to bring up topics that are sensitive in nature so that we can keep the relationship on the surface.”

That’s codependency. It’s as far away from intimacy as you can get, but how many people do you know in life that are very intimate, very honest with their love partner and friend? It doesn’t happen very often.

True intimacy equals 110% honesty. Without it, you really don’t have a deep intimate relationship.

It takes practice. If you’re afraid of rejection, abandonment or criticism which is extremely normal, work with a professional. Get the courage you need with your loved one so that you can be 110% honest. Yes, you might lose some people on the way, but you will retain your integrity, your confidence and high self-esteem. It is worth the work.

How do we become our own cheerleader in life?

When you look around at what other people have versus what you do, do you become jealous? Envious? Do you want more of what they have?

Do you wonder why we don't have the money, body, relationship or the connection with God that so many other people have?

If you want to get out of this situation, to break out of negativity or victimhood, how do you become your own cheerleader in life?

In 1974, when I was trying out for the Syracuse University men's basketball team, I was competing with over 100 other athletes that wanted the same position on the team that I did. I remember my coach at the time, Tommy Green, pulling me aside and giving me some pointers, some tips on how to improve my already fairly strong basketball skills during the competition.

They were just basic ideas like get lower on defense, pass first shoot second. He saw potential in me, but probably because of my nervousness, I wasn't playing at my highest capacity.

That was his guess and he was right. I was intimidated by a number of the guys I was competing with, the talent was out of this world. I dug down deep, and made a decision that I was going to do everything he told me to do, and the results were incredible. That's when he pulled me aside and said, "Essel I can only do so much in regard to giving you advice, you're playing great, you truly do have to become your own cheerleader in this game."

And he was right. He could give me tips and ideas but I'm the only one that could do the internal work to motivate myself to play at the highest level possible. And it worked.

How about you? Are you playing in the game of life at the highest level possible? If you're not, are you hoping and waiting for someone to come along and motivate you every day to go to the gym when you don't want to? To stop buying goods that you really don't need? To start putting more money away into savings? To learn how to let certain things go that piss you off so you're not always on edge?

Many times we're waiting for a book or teacher or workshop that's going to motivate us to change. The reality? It doesn't work long-term. You have to become your own motivator, your own internal cheerleader in order to radically change your life forever.

Let's take a look at a few steps that can help you become your number one cheerleader in life:

1. Remind yourself daily that millions of people who have walked before you, in much worse circumstances, have created incredible success in life. I'll never forget meeting my mentor Joe Cirulli for the first time in 1986 and listening to his story about how he took himself from homeless to multi millionaire. He literally became his own cheerleader in life!

He decided to take the many challenges he was facing when he was homeless, and turned them into positive experiences to grow from. Amazing.

2. To become your own cheerleader, fill your brain every morning for at least 30 minutes when you wake up with motivational uplifting stories, scriptures, podcasts... The first 30 minutes of every day sets the tone when you apply it to become your own cheerleader.
3. Dramatically decrease the amount of time you spend with negative people gossipers or conspiracy theorists. Clear the slate. Open up the door for new more positive people to come into your life.
4. Individuals who become their own cheerleaders, do it by attacking the tasks on a daily basis they'd rather not do. In other words, no excuses baby! Again reflecting back to my basketball career, there were many days I didn't want to run the football stadium at Syracuse University with a 50 pound weight vest on my shoulders, to increase my endurance and lower body strength. But, I had to become that cheerleader and motivate myself to do what I never wanted to.

All cheerleaders do what they would rather not do in life. They shatter procrastination so that they can absorb the fruits of their labor. And there's nothing more motivating than to see the pounds come off or the bank balance increase or the relationship calm down.

There is no one in this world that can do for you what you need to do for yourself. There is no one, I promise you, that's going to save the day, rescue you or motivate you every day. This is an inside job. An internal

decision. The greatest athletes, the greatest success stories, the greatest relationships and more are all driven by individuals who become their own cheerleaders in life.

Ready? Let's go.

Is it possible to fall in love... Via text messages?

The pandemic has changed the way we live in this world, in so many different ways. Home delivery now is standard. Whether it's from Amazon or your local grocery store, or your local Home Depot, home delivery has become a way of life for so many people.

But what about in the world of dating? What about in the world of love? Can you actually fall in love while sitting at home? On your phone? Or your computer? Online dating is probably hotter now than it's almost ever been and people are falling in love with individuals, from not just all over their state but all over the world.

So is it possible to fall in love by texting someone back-and-forth on a daily basis?

One of my clients asked me the very same question. She wanted to know if it's possible that she could be falling in love with a man she's never met, but only talked to on the phone and exchanged messages via text? What a great question. Especially during the pandemic.

The gentleman she had met online was a four hour flight away and she was afraid to fly. He was taking care of his two children and had a job that required a lot of hours and he wasn't able to get out of town.

She was stuck in her city, wanting to see him, wanting to meet him, but did not have the strength to get on the flight to make it happen.

So they texted. And texted more. And texted more. And then they started to have two and three hour conversations on the phone. And then they started texting pictures of themselves to each other, some very normal with work attire and some more sexual in nature.

She found herself one day blurting out via a text, "I love you!"

After she hit the send button, her heart dropped into her stomach. She never met the guy, how could she be in love? Was she falling for some kind of scam that happens all the time with online dating called "cat fishing"?

She had heard of the concept, and was extremely confused and that's how we got into the conversation during our session. She wanted to know if she could really fall in love with someone she had never met. Was he even who he said he was?

One day she surprised me and told me she had come to a conclusion, that she was totally in love with a man she had never met. That she had found love via emails, text messages and phone calls. She realized that as a human being, she had fallen in love with a man four hours away and didn't know what the next step would be!

She decided right there in my office that she was flying out that weekend to meet him. And she did. And for her, it was Love at first sight! Will it last into the future? No one can answer that at all. Was it worth her risking and getting on a flight when she didn't want to, to meet someone who could hopefully become the man of her dreams? Absolutely. She knew she made the right move.

I'm excited to share the story because it's different. It's unique. And in the world of the pandemic we need to look at different ways to observe life and to interact with love.

For many people, they would say that this was purely lust, infatuation and the relationship will never make it. But in this couple's eyes, everyone would be wrong.

We will see down the road how they do, but it's been multiple months now and they've actually been with each other in person multiple times and the relationship is flourishing beyond their imagination.

Keep your mind open! Don't let the pandemic keep you from finding the love of your life. Go safely. Go slowly. But let's... Go.

Faith, during these hard times?

How do we access and deepen our faith, during these challenging times that we are all facing?

When we are all going through something devastating, many people turn to faith as a way to move forward in life. Many people would like to do so, but don't know how. Faith can help settle our soul, and bring us home, home to our self.

When we have strong faith, we're able to handle the storms in life maybe a little bit better than people who have not accessed their own inner strength and faith.

But what is faith? The definition that we've used for over 30 years is "Faith is believing in the yet unseen."

So for this pandemic that we are all going through, having faith would say "yes this is a terrible event, there are people dying, there are millions of people sick and I know with my belief and strength in my higher power, I can move through this and we will recover."

But faith isn't based on Pollyanna, positive thinking. Faith has to be much deeper than just a thought process in order to have an impact on our own lives and those around us.

Here are a few steps to help us deepen our faith:

1. Faith can only be deepened through action, not just thoughts. It's so easy to say, "I have great faith in God," when things are going great. But right now? There's a lot of people that forgot about their faith, forgot about God or their higher power, because they're so immersed in the human state of anxiety, depression and fear.
2. Using Prayer beads, or rosaries, is a perfect faith based action step, when you pray on the beads every day.

It will take a while to go through a rosary or, mala, which is what the Buddhist call their prayer beads, but it's worth the time, and it's a beautiful action step that goes beyond thinking.

3. Dedicating a certain amount of time every day of the year to deepen your faith. That might mean that we get up in the morning and spend 10 minutes or 30 minutes in prayer, 10 to 20 minutes of reading some type of faith based information, maybe 10 minutes of meditation and then 10 minutes of writing about gratitude for the faith that we're trying to deepen.

It could also mean that you choose to go to a certain service, every Sunday or Wednesday or Friday... We are actively engaged in deepening our faith, not just thinking about it.

4. Hang around with people that practice deepening their faith on a daily basis. It is so true, that if you want to get in great shape it would be helpful to be around people that are really into fitness. If you want to learn how to handle your money better, start to surround yourself with people that are really good at money management, and the same goes with faith.

Are there people that you've lost touch with, who have great faith and maybe this is the time to reach out and talk to them? We can do Skype or FaceTime calls or zoom calls with people to talk about how to deepen our faith. Can we start a book club regarding faith? Deepening our faith takes work. It just doesn't happen because we pray every once in a while, or go to church service every once in a while, or scream out to God when we are in deep need every once in a while.

It's a 365 day event, and I encourage you to start thinking about practicing your faith at a deeper level right now.

Ask for help today, then act on that advice to watch your faith grow.

End of Section Questions

Stop! Now is the time to take your pen and pencil with the lines below and answer the questions so that you can get the most out of part one of our book.

1. What was covered in detail, that grabbed your attention the most in this section? Write your answers below.

2. What action steps can you take, including reaching out to a professional, or finding or hiring an accountability partner, related to this section that could radically improve your life? Write your answers below.

Any and all changes that you would like to make are totally possible, I know you can do this!

Part Two

**By reading this book,
you are practicing deep self-love.
Read. Write. Share. Change.**

Love, David

Stressed? Struggling? Time for a break?

The world is struggling. The world is stressed.

Almost everyone in this world is struggling with either anxiety, fear, depression, addiction, or relationship challenges and we're really not quite sure what to do about it. Could it be time... To take a break from the stress and struggle? Is it even possible... To take a break from the stress, the struggle and the suffering?

It's interesting, in this time of existence, that my attitude about taking a break from trying to move through stress or move through suffering or move through struggling has totally changed!

I encourage my clients to never give up, to always move forward through challenges or new goals. Whatever it is, just keep charging forward! However, I am changing my philosophy right now.

I think more people need a break, currently, than in any time of my history of being on this earth. I think more people need a break right now, but most of us are afraid to take it, or we don't even know that we should! For those who are looking for a career change, and let's say that you're unemployed and you're putting in 6 to 8 hours every day looking for a job and it's not panning out. What do you do?

Take a break! Is David Essel saying that? Yes, I am, and I couldn't be more serious.

Now, when I say take a break from a career search or a job search, I'm not saying take 365 days off, but I am saying take at least one day. When you look at the next five days, circle the one day you're going to take off and relax. Maybe go to a beach, river, a park or maybe watch movies at home but do not search for a job on that one day!

And the reason? We need downtime. We need something other than goals and achievement or wading through the quicksand of stress, we need a break!

And what about if you're trying to lose weight, and you're doing everything possible but it isn't quite working at the level that you want. You're eating clean, you're exercising but you've hit a plateau and for the last several weeks you're not feeling that there's anything changing with your body.

Take a break! Let's say you're working out five days a week, so take one of those days and go to the mountains, or go for a two hour walk and enjoy the nature around you! But don't go to the gym!

I remember when my dad was in his 40s, he's 94 now, he ended up unemployed for a period of time and of course having three kids and a wife to take care of, his anxiety went through the roof. When he went to his doctor to get some type of medication, the doctor refused. Instead he told my father: "Ed, I want you to be looking for a job eight hours a day, because this is your new job, to find a new job. However, every morning at 7 AM, I want you on the driving range at the golf course. I want you for one hour to be on the driving range, giving your mind a break, your body a break from sitting all day long on the phone and applying for jobs. Give yourself a break, it will pay off."

And it did.

My father's anxiety decreased, and the time that he spent looking for a job was much more productive.

What about, if you're grieving? What if you've lost a loved one and every day you just don't know how you're going to fight your way out of that paper bag of anxiety? Sadness? My mom died seven months ago and for the first several months, I followed my own advice as a counselor and put myself through a grieving course that I created 30 years ago. But after several months of doing intense writing, and of course I was crying every day, I knew I needed a break. I wanted to continue through the grieving process, because I wanted to be free of the sadness but I also needed a break! So I took several days off from writing, several days off from talking about my mom, and tried my very best to realize that I have the rest of my life to grieve her. I didn't have to cram it all in two months, six months, eight months or even a year! And then, when I went back to the grieving process, and started writing about missing my mom, it became a joyful experience versus one that was creating all kinds of stress. And even though it's been seven months since she's passed on, I still write about her almost every day. But instead of writing paragraphs upon paragraphs, now I just write a few sentences and I feel so much more peace.

No need to push against the river of life, instead I started to flow with it.

My philosophy of, "It's time to take a break from suffering and

challenges,” is brand new for myself and also for all the clients that I work with on a daily basis.

And for some people, taking a break will be 24 hours away from whatever goal or challenge they’re working with. For other people, that might be 72 hours, and for someone else under huge pressure or huge stress, it may just be taking six hours off as a way to give their mind, body and spirit an opportunity to let go of the stress. Even just a little bit.

It’s great to be a hard charging, type A personality... Some of the times. But we need to balance that, by taking a break.

Are we increasing our own anxiety during this pandemic?

Anxiety is everywhere. Some of the signs are irritability, nervousness, the inability to be present, or still in the moment. Addictions can also ramp up when anxiety is getting out of control.

And during my practice in the world of mental health, I’ve only seen this “generalized anxiety disorder” at the current level that it is, during the 2008 economic/housing market crisis. The pandemic, has dramatically increased anxiety if we compare it back to those days.

Here are a few ways we might unknowingly be increasing our own anxiety:

1. Do we talk about the pandemic constantly? Do we talk about our financial worries regularly? Or job worries constantly? Do we argue with others about the right move the government should make on a daily basis, or the scientific community regarding vaccines? In other words, if you’re fully engaged all the time with discussing what’s going on with the pandemic, your anxiety is probably being boosted by your own actions.
2. Are you constantly attached to the news? Social media? Blog posts about the pandemic? Radio programs about the vaccines? If you’re doing this on a daily basis, your anxiety is going to be even higher than individuals around you who are also feeling anxious but not at your level, because you’re so engaged in the constant reporting of this tragedy.

3. Did you know that if you don't start right now to do things differently, in order to minimize your own anxiety, you're increasing the anxiety of everyone around you? All it takes is one person in the house, one person in the neighborhood to constantly be engaged and anxious, to create more anxiety in those around us.
4. Have you increased the amount that you're drinking? Eating? Drugs? Nicotine? As we try to numb ourselves from the reality of this world tragedy, with substances of any type, we're actually increasing anxiety! And how does this happen?

The next day when we wake up feeling a little slow from drinking too much, we could feel regretful and maybe even angry at ourselves, which at any point could come out as anxiety. We might feel guilty that we're over eating or doing drugs or increasing our nicotine... This guilty feeling will eventually come out as anxiety as well.

But there's a few things we can do right now to start to decrease the anxiety were feeling today:

1. Limit yourself to checking on updates with the spread of the virus or the vaccination requirements, at the most once a week. There's no need to be more informed than this and many of my colleagues in the world of counseling believe that we should be checking for updates once a month.
2. Limit conversations about the pandemic or the vaccine with friends, family members to the same kind of ritual: once a week at most, once a month is best!
3. Absolutely limit your alcohol intake, over eating, nicotine and drugs because this is all fully in your control.
4. Google "How to minimize my anxiety," and you will find 1000 different options from taking up a new hobby, to volunteering in your community, to exercising more, to learning the art of meditation. There are 1 million things you can do starting today including journaling about your anxieties and solutions for these same things on a daily basis.

With emotional regulation techniques like those mentioned above, you can learn to minimize your anxiety. If it doesn't work on your own, please reach out to a professional as soon as possible.

Are you a man, looking for love?

Millions of men right now, all over the world, are searching for love. They are looking for that perfect partner. But 90% of us are making the wrong move when it comes to searching for a great partner.

Because men are so visual in nature, oftentimes we continue to focus on the physical aspect of a potential partner versus anything else. We make the same mistakes, over and over again. As a matter of fact, as a counselor, I have my male clients that are looking for love to create an exercise that we call "a pattern of past relationship experiences."

It's pretty simple. All they do is write about every person they've been in a relationship with, what the challenges were in the relationship, and what their responsibilities were in the dysfunction of their attempt at love.

About 90% of the time, what my clients find is they've been chasing the wrong thing all along. They have a pattern of choosing very similar women, with very similar characteristics that would never work for them from a compatibility, personality or belief perspective.

These men will tell me that they've never gone deep enough, that they haven't taken enough time off in between relationships or maybe they're still living in a fantasy world, that the perfect woman for them is going to pop into their existence and make everything just fine.

Other male clients never realize that they have been the savior, the white knight on the horse, looking for women to rescue or looking for women who need help either financially or with raising children or their career.

So many men get sucked into the same vortex, different face, different name but the same insane dysfunctional relationship filled with chaos and drama that they've had their whole life.

Let's change that, by following these powerful tips:

1. After figuring out what your role was in relationships that did not work, maybe it was because you are passive aggressive

in nature, or more dominating than your partners wanted, or maybe you're wishy-washy... And just go with the flow with whatever direction your partner wants to go in, even though you're not happy about it.

Now, we need to forgive every partner we've ever been with in the past when it ended poorly.

This is crucial! This has nothing to do with you getting together with a former partner and talking to them about forgiveness. You need to go through and release all resentments that you have against past people you've dated, so you do not carry a jaded mindset into your next relationship.

2. To date correctly, it's much more than attraction and compatibility. As a matter of fact I have all the men and women I work with who are looking for love, to create a list that consist of their "deal killers in love."

This may end up being 10 characteristics or more, that would never work for you, because the other person has a deal killer that is unacceptable. (Go to YouTube and Google "David Essel's 3% Rule of Dating.")

It might mean that they smoke, or drink, maybe they have young children and you don't have the desire to raise children again or even for the first time. Maybe they're really into a hobby, or dancing, or theater or something that you have no interest in whatsoever, but it is an immense passion of theirs. This could be a deal killer as well.

Maybe you want to have children, but the partner you're with is wishy-washy about having children at any time in their life. This could be a deal killer as well.

One of my male clients met a woman that he fell head over heels in love with, at least from a physical perspective. But she was very jaded about men, and told him so on their very first date. He just smiled and laughed it off, until the reality hit week after week after week, that she truly did not trust men at all!

Whether you're a man or a woman, when you meet someone that says they don't trust the opposite sex, it's a really good opportunity to add this

to your deal killer list. No relationship can last if you're with someone who does not trust you, or other men.

I'm not saying that you should not be physically attracted to a potential partner, all I'm saying is that attraction and compatibility are not the keys to long-term love.

The keys to long-term love will include attraction and compatibility, but more importantly, make sure the person you're interested in does not carry any of your deal killers with them. When you follow these tips, love will explode!

Are we engaging in self sabotaging behaviors?

When we are under the stress that most of us are, one of the keys that puts us behind the eight ball is the concept of self sabotage. Whether we're struggling with anxiety, depression, PTSD, relationship issues, addictions or finances... If we don't know how to emotionally regulate, if we don't know how to control these stressful emotions that all of us go through, self sabotage is right around the corner, if not present in your life right now.

And what does self sabotage look like?

1. Emotional eating.
2. An increase in our consumption of pot, nicotine, or alcohol.
3. We sabotage our intimate relationships because we haven't learned how to deal with the stress that we're all going through, so it comes out either as attacks on our partner or isolation from them.
4. We start to consume, as a sign of self sabotage, way too much social media, television or even podcasts which can easily sabotage our attitude, and create irritability and impatience as well.

When we are self sabotaging our mind, finances, body or relationship, it absolutely destroys our self-confidence and self-esteem. Self sabotage is so common, that for over 30 years I sabotaged so much of my existence through my addictions to alcohol and cocaine. And once I cleared those

out, the amount of self sabotage dropped by over 90% and the same thing can happen for you.

Begin a journal on a daily basis and record any potential ways that you're sabotaging your health, finances, love life, career or more.

When you see in writing, how you're sabotaging your own success, how you're sabotaging your own inner peace, it should be a wake up call to reach out and ask for help. Help awaits you.

How do we make this year, a year of success?

Just surviving the past several years has been a huge accomplishment for many people. And there are still so many struggling with finances, and relationship issues as I've mentioned many times, are off the charts! Addictions, rising faster than anyone could believe.

So how do we turn this around and make this year a year of success? Today should be the day we start to try our very best to move forward with grace, a healthy attitude and safe practices, but not use the excuse of challenging times as the reason why we're not growing, changing or evolving.

I'm not going to tell you it's going to be easy, I'm only going to tell you that it's going to be worth the effort to change if you follow these tips today.

1. We have to pay attention to how much time we're spending with the media, social media, television, and podcasts that continue to push our buttons! There's no way that we can make this year a huge year of success if we're engaged on a regular basis in negativity, conspiracy and arguing. What are the benefits of paying so close attention to all these conspiracy theories that lead us down rabbit holes? The answer? Not one damn thing.
2. As we tell our clients every day, we must diminish greatly our discussions with others about the pandemic, the vaccines, the political shake up and how the last few years have been the worst years of our lives.

I was listening to a basketball coach the other day talk to his team and he said this: “if I hear one more person during practice or on the bench during the game, complain about masks, complaining about Covid, you will not play for the next several games. We have lost focus, we’re spending way too much time talking to each other about something that is out of our control, versus staying focused on what we’re supposed to be doing, and that is playing good basketball.”

Right on Coach!

3. Begin today to read books that will take you deeply into the world of spirituality or books on people who have overcome great hardships in life. It’s time to start to fill your mind with the potential of change. We all know change is hard. Even letting go, and stopping complaining about the pandemic is hard for many people. And one of the ways to make this change, begins by reading about other people who have overcome massive challenges in life.
4. Get an accountability partner! I don’t care if it’s a counselor, life coach, therapist, personal trainer... You need someone to hold you accountable to your goals so that you can make this year, your year! I say this all the time: I personally have counselors, I personally have coaches and I’m involved with mastermind groups so I make sure that I’m doing the best I can to serve as many people as possible. Please do the same thing.
5. Create joy in your life starting now! Maybe it means taking an art class, or a photography class or volunteering and helping at a local charity in your area. Going to the mountains, or hiking, or to the beaches, or fishing. We’ve got to create joy. I hear people saying all the time, “When the pandemic is over I can’t wait to get back to normal living.”

Guess what gang? This could be our “normal” for a very long time. So let’s get over this whole thing that life is going to be great when the pandemic is gone, because no one has any idea if and when it’ll ever be totally gone.

So instead of procrastinating on taking care of your mind, your body, finances or relationships... Let's set goals right now that we can smash and not hide behind the pandemic as a reason that we aren't maximizing our potential in life. I honestly believe that this year can be fantastic for all of us! Will there be bumps in the road? Oh my Lord, yes.

We will always have challenges, let's turn them into an opportunity to change our lives. Our mindset. Which just might also change the lives of others around us as well. Time to rock.

How to be an exceptional father in life.

What was your father like growing up? Was he connected? Disconnected?

It's not very common these days to run into a man with children, who truly understands what it means to be an exceptional father in their children's lives. So, we have to ask a question: what's going on with all the fathers, or dads, that are emotionally unavailable, addicts, workaholics or more?

One of the greatest disadvantages a child has today, is to have a father who is not emotionally and or physically present. For adult children that struggle with relationships and intimacy, it may be because they had a father that was not connected with them emotionally as a child. I was raised in a very powerful household, not perfect, but definitely a powerful household.

And why do I say powerful? Because my dad was responsible. He did household chores, was engaged with his three children and for a number of years the only breadwinner in the family. I have to tell you now, that my dad is 94 and I look up to him more and more every day as a man of complete honesty, respect and integrity.

Every evening when my father came home when I was a child, my mom would have dinner on the table at exactly 5:30 pm. And at exactly 6 pm, my dad would pick up all the dishes on the table and take them to the sink and wash them by hand. Yes, by hand.

After working a long day, my father would help my mom in the kitchen after dinner, because we could not afford an electric dishwasher.

Also, even though my father worked a lot of hours when I was young, he somehow magically appeared at every one of my athletic events as well as to my brother's and sister's! When I work with adult children every day, who missed that entire bonding opportunity with their fathers when they were young, it can create low self-confidence, low self-esteem. It could lead to addictions, and also create extremely unhealthy, intimate relationships for their future.

1. Spend private time with each of your children, one on one, and be emotionally connected, emotionally grounded during that time.
2. Make every school event, sporting event, music event, art event that your kids are engaged in.
3. Never call your wife or partner names in front of your children. It shows incredible disrespect. Your children are looking at you as a role model and they just might repeat your behaviors when they grow up as well.
4. Instead of constantly giving your children advice, ask them questions. The other day on a radio show I got a call from a gentleman who is upset because his son did not want to go to college, but instead he wanted to learn the trade of welding.

Instead of asking questions of why his son was so interested in this, his father just went off the handle and started arguing with him daily about the need for a college education and what a waste of time it would be for him to go into the trades as a welder.

I shared with the father at that time, that if his son had a passion for welding, the greatest move in the world would be for him to continue to ask questions and then support him in his choice for a career in life. Just support him.

If you have a daughter, let's say she's in high school and she comes home crying because her boyfriend left her for another girl, don't get sucked into the trap of giving advice like "Jimmy was not that good of a kid, you'll find someone much better... This happens to everyone honey you're still young, it wasn't real love, you'll be fine in no time."

That is not what your daughter needs to hear! Instead, ask her questions. How is she feeling? Why is she feeling these emotions? Can she write in her diary in order to vent the emotions, the sadness and the loss?

Would she like to see a counselor, or a minister, or someone where she could release her innermost frustrations, if she doesn't feel comfortable with you?

We need more fathers, that understand the importance of not just bringing home a paycheck, not just buying their kids materialistic stuff, but fathers who are engaged in every area of their children's lives. By showing up. By asking questions. In other words, by becoming real men.

What does a real apology, look like?

An honest, deep apology can make a world of difference in a relationship, friendship or even a work environment.

But too many people, will apologize for something but then justify their actions... Which totally rips the apology away.

I was recently working with a couple, when the wife begins telling her husband that she wants to give an apology for something she had done and the way she started it was awesome. But how she ended it, totally took the complete apology away.

"I am really sorry that once again I overspent our money last month by \$500, but I never would have done that if you didn't go on the golf outing with your buddies which cost us \$300."

Do you see how she started out great, saying she was sorry for a specific instance, but then totally blew it by justifying what she spent when comparing it to her husband, and what he had done? In other words, the apology went nowhere. And what did he do next? The same thing everyone does, he started arguing about it, justifying the golf expense as a business expense.

When you learn the art of an apology, it can be profound in all of your relationships.

It teaches us how to be humble and vulnerable, something this world needs more of.

So here are the key steps to give a true apology, start doing this today:

1. Apologize in specifics for what you did that was incorrect and then just be quiet. Let the apology hang in the air.
2. Now sit quietly. Sit in your humility. Be vulnerable. Don't use the word "but," or anything else that will take the apology away. Don't over explain it. Don't justify it. Don't rationalize it in any way whatsoever. The minute you start justifying and rationalizing why you did something that hurt someone else's feelings, you just erased the apology in its entirety.

Do you have the strength to do this? To apologize without justification or rationalization?

Study the above points, because there are very few people in this world that can actually slow down enough to give an apology the way it should be given. And when you do? Relationships heal, your self-esteem and confidence will go through the roof, and you'll find that the meaning of an apology, equals true emotional freedom.

My workaholism: A serious addiction, almost took me down.

No one is immune from the damaging affects of workaholism. I should know. I love the career that I've been in for over 40 years, yet, I have had an ongoing battle with workaholism, which almost destroyed me and definitely interfered with many different parts of my life. During most of my career, I've been an excellent role model on what it looks like to work super hard, 6 to 7 days per week, with 10 to 12 hour days being normal. I also realize it came with a huge cost.

A serious price that very few of us want to think about or talk about especially if we're doing the work we love! Over the years I've had many entrepreneurs as clients, that were in the same position, and they still might be in the same position I was back then, if we had not worked really hard to diminish their workaholic tendencies.

When is the work I'm doing enough? When do we need to pull back? When do we need to take more time off? When do we need to learn how to delegate priority tasks to other people and trust that they'll get it done?

Here's just a few signs of what workaholism or burn out might look like for you:

1. An increase in irritability.
2. A lack of patience with ourselves, and others.
3. Realizing that we may have dropped our hobbies, and we're not involved with social activities at all because we're fully dedicated to the work at hand.
4. Ongoing, low-grade anxiety and depression.
5. Addiction, an increase in the intake of food or alcoholism or other substances.
6. Low self-confidence. We believe that things should be happening quicker than they are in our business. We want to put in more time, more hours, instead of trusting the flow of life which is a sign of low self-confidence.
7. An increase in the amount of arguments with our loved ones or family members.
8. Road rage.
9. Decreasing involvement with our children if we have children. We can justify that we are working hard for their future or our future, but the reality is they need you right now!

This is serious stuff and it's something that I still have to be extremely aware of on a monthly basis. Go ahead and Google, "How to shatter workaholism," because there is no one path for everyone. But, everyone can find a path that works for them. It's so easy for time to slip by and for us to justify, "I just need a couple more hours today"... And that mantra goes on and on and on.

The quickest way to shatter workaholism? Do what I did. Hire a professional. Allow them to hold your feet to the fire and watch your life change for the better.

Is your time on social media healthy?

Do you find yourself more and more agitated over the last couple years when you're on social media? Have you been engaging in negative responses to those who post about politics, the economy and other hot topics of the day? Does it seem easier to get frustrated, with the time that you're spending on social media? Do you find yourself gossiping more, about individuals who post on social media with opposing views to your own?

Over the past year and a half, we have seen an amazing increase in the number of clients coming into our counseling practice who are totally frustrated with friends and family because of their ranting and raving posts on social media.

We've also seen an increase in agitation, anxiety, depression and anger due to the amount of negative tweets, posting and more. Not only by government officials, but by every day people who we used to look at as sane, grounded and maybe even fun to be around.

Here are four tips to help you take back your sanity and decrease your negative responses on social media, so that you can be filled with more peace on a daily basis:

1. This one's obvious. Dramatically decrease the amount of time you're spending on social media! If there's one form of social media that gets you more agitated and frustrated than another, you may even want to eliminate that from your social media viewing. I think 30 minutes a day is plenty of time to be on social media if you want to stay sane and solid in your life.
2. Instead of giving your opinion to the posts that irritate you, simply scroll past. Don't even stop to read the comments made by people who in the past you've argued with. Make a conscious decision to skim through the social media posts. Let go of the ones that irritate you and look for the good news which yes, is all around us.

3. Reduce or eliminate your own controversial posts! If you find yourself on social media trying to keep up with the Joneses, and posting your most amazing opinion on controversial issues or conspiracy theories, just stop. Think. Every post that is argumentative, that you put up, is exhausting not only to yourself but those around you. Stop.
4. Challenge yourself for the next 30 days. Only post positive, or humor related information. For many this can feel like a massive withdrawal! Almost like the addict, who misses their daily drink or drug, the more that you argue on social media the deeper the withdrawal will be. Stick with it. Your attitude, relationships and emotional/physical health depend upon you moving away from this type of insanity. Time to change.

Women looking for love, in all the wrong places?

The pressure on women to be in a relationship in our society today is absolutely crazy. Insane. And it's been going on for years. It seems that any woman who is over the age of 21, sometimes younger, is pressured by family, friends and of course society that they need to be in a relationship. And so, because of this pressure and a lack of knowledge about loving relationships, many women continue to make the same mistakes in love over and over again.

One woman I worked with just a couple years ago, saw the pattern in her dating life, that the men she had chosen were all emotionally unavailable! They were either workaholics, or struggled with addiction, or she never saw them on Saturdays and Sundays because of their involvement with sports and sporting events.

Why did she keep drawing the same emotionally unavailable men, different name different faces, but the same bottom line?

The answer ? Her upbringing. Her father, in her words, was an OK guy but he was also an alcoholic and emotionally unavailable. He didn't know how to handle a little girl, so he pushed her to the side and made sure that mom did most of her raising when she was young. She never got encouragement from her father. She was never told that she was pretty or talented or

smart or anything similar to that, so it led her to be attracted to men who also rarely gave compliments and were never really emotionally present.

And this is not rare! Millions and millions of women go through this every year, being raised by a father who is emotionally unavailable, which sets her up for major struggles long-term in regard to relationships.

From 0 to 18 years of age, if you're a woman being raised by a father that's not emotionally connected, it goes directly into the subconscious mind as a pattern. It's almost like the subconscious tells you, "This is what a real man looks like." Because that's all she saw from 0 to 18, her subconscious mind said this is the type of man you'll be most comfortable with, because it's all you've ever known.

The truth, unfortunately.

But through a variety of writing exercises, she finally came to see the reality, that while her father was not necessarily a bad guy, he just did not have the skills to raise her correctly.

First, release any resentments, anger or rage that you have against your father. You're going to have to have patience. You're going to have to be disciplined in your dating life. When you see the red flags flying in the wind, of a man that's not emotionally grounded or emotionally available or emotionally connected... You've got to be looking for the signs and be ready to move on.

My client ended up creating the success she always wanted in a deep love relationship. She followed the tips that we talked about here, and she is spreading the word to her girlfriends as well: "it's not your parents fault the way they raised you, but it is your responsibility to change those habits that are not healthy for your future to be bright."

Wise words.

Feeling hopeless? We have an answer.

Millions of people right now are struggling with mental health issues, financial issues, health issues and relationship issues... Which down the road can start to create a feeling of hopelessness. With hopelessness we start to shrink, isolate, and our mind begins to focus on one simple fact even if it is not true: "there's no way out of this situation. There's just no way out."

I understand hopelessness very well. If I had not gone through my own year of complete hopelessness in 1990, I probably wouldn't be as effective today as I am at helping people to recognize the power they have, the skills they have to resolve this feeling. Knowing your strengths, can help pull you off of the ledge of hopelessness. It's not easy, but it's so worth it. Why is it so hard to shatter our feelings of hopelessness, when if we look around there's millions of people in our same situation that have become successful?

Hopelessness is the opposite of faith. When we're hopeless, we can't believe that anything good will occur in our life. We can't see anything in the future that might change. So we go deeper and deeper into our own depression, anxiety and hopeless state.

In regard to hopelessness, the subconscious mind in the beginning, is absolutely the biggest saboteur you'll ever face. And what does that mean? The only role the subconscious mind has, is to keep the patterns of thoughts and actions that you've been feeding it up to today in tact. So that feeling of hopelessness, or deep depression of course just doesn't occur overnight. It's due to years of negative thought patterns that become cemented in our own brain.

Remember the subconscious mind will battle and fight to keep these hopeless thoughts alive. The subconscious, can be an ally or a saboteur, and when you continue to feed it hopeless thoughts, hopeless conversations, it becomes even more ingrained that your life will stay in a hopeless state.

So let's follow these steps, in order to minimize the hopelessness we might be feeling today:

1. You know what I'm going to say here, ask for help today!
This could be one of the most difficult steps when we're in a state of hopelessness to take, but it's the biggest one that we need to do immediately.
2. Remove any habits, thoughts, that are not proactive in nature. Whatever you read, watch, listen to... Whoever you talk to... Make sure you are with uplifting individuals. Make sure it's uplifting information that you're reading. Don't get stuck in the vortex of being surrounded by negativity, whether it's in the media or in your personal life.

3. Begin walking at least 20 to 30 minutes a day. We know that exercise can release feel good endorphins in the brain and at this point in our life we've got to find everything and anything to help alleviate the suffering, the hopelessness that we are in.
4. Google writings on the Internet about people that have overcome hopelessness, overcome suicidal thoughts and just like myself, have overcome serious addictions in life. If you begin reading at least one positive story a day, it will help to turn your mind around.

Today, find one safe person to reach out to. Someone, maybe a professional, who will never judge you regardless of how deep your hopelessness has become. Let's move forward together.

Lonely, yet in a love relationship?

Million of books and writings tell us that we're supposed to be in love, that if we don't have a partner there is something wrong with us. But what if you have a partner, and you still feel all alone? What do we do then?

Every week I work with clients, usually at least one or two individuals who are in a marriage or relationship, yet feel totally alone in life. This is not supposed to happen, correct?

After all, once you find that special soulmate, isn't life supposed to be grand for the rest of our existence? There's way too much pressure for all of us, when it comes to being in love. And many of us, feel lonely in love because we've possibly chosen the wrong person, but we also have the wrong approach to looking at healthy relationships.

So why would we feel lonely, while in love?

1. Could you be with the wrong person? This doesn't mean that every person who is lonely and in love is with the wrong person, but we need to check this out. Within the first 90 days of a relationship, we can find the red flags that may be telling us the relationship is not all it's cracked up to be. But some of us, with our neediness and our desire to have

someone or anyone by our side, will overlook these red flags and carry-on with the relationship, creating an extreme feeling of loneliness while being in love.

2. Have you yourself, built up walls against your partner, with resentments and more, which can make us feel incredibly lonely in our relationship every day? The more resentments we have, that we don't eliminate, the deeper the wall becomes that we build between ourselves and our partner. This wall, which is self created, can create an incredible feeling of loneliness.

Resentments that are not removed will destroy any potential healthy relationship.

3. Did you put all of your eggs in one basket? Did you believe that having a partner is the end of everything, without thinking about your own individual life and happiness?

This is huge! Many people, once they get married or enter a long-term relationship, lose themselves. They let go of all those things that used to bring them joy. They let go of hobbies. Maybe best friends. Maybe they let go of their spiritual path or their fitness routine. They're feeling lonely, because they've left a part of themselves behind.

The answer to all this?

Re-create your own life! Create deeper friendships, stronger hobbies, a deeper spiritual path, which are all signs of self-love.

Talk to your partner, see if you can create some type of mutual activity to do together so your feeling of loneliness dissipates. Not only because you're doing something new with them, but just like what I mentioned above, you're re-creating your own life!

If you can feel a sense of loneliness in your love life, that is a very good sign! That means you're grounded, connected. When you recognize what isn't working, we can then add the steps in this writing to create, the love you've always desired. And maybe, just maybe in your work, you'll find that the partner you're with, is worth being with for the rest of your life.

Tears of the 22

One of the saddest statistics that I ever heard, came from my friends who created the veterans group “Tears of the 22”.

In our conversations, they told me that the number 22 stood for the number of veterans that commit suicide every day in the USA. No wait a minute, that’s 8000 veterans per year that take their own lives... So sad, so true, so changeable!

It’s a number I never could’ve imagined would be true. It’s a number that still blows my mind. And it’s a number that I want to help decrease dramatically starting today.

Tears of the 22 was created by Matt Gillespie and Richard Chelson, two veterans who wanted to bring attention and support to those who have suicidal ideation, or have attempted suicide in the past. We made a decision to join and support their organization, and many others that are serving our veterans in active military such as: Wreaths Across America, One More Day, Red White and Blue, Wounded Warriors and so many more.

I believe the men and women of our armed forces, veterans or active military, need the type of support this organization and other organizations are offering, and as a part of the general public I encourage you to get involved in anyway that you can. We created a group “Helping Americans Heal”, a weekly program to support all Americans, including veterans and active military. Every week they receive inspirational tools to help with anxiety, depression, PTSD and more.

My deep gratitude goes out to these organizations, for the incredible work that they’re doing in the world of suicide prevention. Let’s get involved. Let’s help. Let’s reduce this number to zero.

Is it OK, to have negative thoughts?

The world of positivity can be taken into extremely unhealthy lengths. While there are huge benefits to being positive, there comes a point in time if that’s all we try to do, we are going to run into huge challenges in the short and long term.

On Instagram recently I saw a quote that has been circulating on all social media, unfortunately, for the last several weeks. And what did the quote say, that I find absolutely disgusting in nature?

“Stay with your positive thoughts only, don’t ever let a negative thought enter your mind.” Toxic positivity, is what this should be labeled.

I wanted to puke. I wanted to puke all over Instagram. This type of philosophy, unfortunately is one that I used to teach from 1980 to 1996. It is so outdated, so unhealthy.

And why does it bother me so deeply? Because it’s all about the avoidance of reality. These quotes, and many books that say the same type of nonsense, are trying to get us to avoid reality and stay in some type of Pollyanna existence where the world is simply filled with puppy dog tails and daisies. When in reality, the world can be harsh, nasty, negative and will eat up all of your positive energy if you try to live in the fantastical and unrealistic mindset of positive thoughts only.

As a matter of fact, I wrote a complete book on this subject a number of years ago and it became a number one best seller, “Positive thinking will never change your life, but this book will! The myth of positive thinking, the reality of success.”

When we try to avoid our negative thoughts, they don’t just disappear. They don’t go into some kind of foreign galaxy never to be thought of again because we’ve done such a masterful job of covering them up with positive thinking.

Do you want to know where these negative thoughts go that people are telling us we should never have? When we try to avoid, submerge or stuff down, or cover-up negative thoughts and feelings with positive thoughts, those negative thoughts and feelings become bigger, stronger. They grow roots within our own mind and body.

And what happens next? In our attempt to avoid the shame we have or the guilt we have or the rage we have or the anger we have or the insecurities we have... Or maybe even the hopelessness we feel, all of these emotions get a bigger grip. They go deeper.

And then, things like addictions can come into play because we’re not dealing with the reality of a negative thought. These submerged emotions become so big, that we start reaching out for food, alcohol or drugs... Spending... Sex... Anything to divert our mind from feeling

those submerge thoughts and emotions that are trying to get to the surface.

In our book, I asked my very good friend Scarlett Lewis, whose six-year-old son Jesse was murdered in the Sandy Hook elementary school massacre, to write about the downside of trying to cover up what sometimes we term as negative emotions with positive thoughts. She told me, not only in the book but also on multiple radio interviews with me, that she had to go into the pain, loss and anger that her son was murdered before she could do what she does today, teaching forgiveness programs and emotional regulation classes all over the world!

And she is one of the most positive people I have ever met, but she didn't use positivity to process the grief of losing her son. She used reality. She reached out for help. She used so many different psychological tools to get her to the place of being able to completely forgive the killer. As she says, even though he took her son's life, she did not want the murderer to control the rest of her life and her other son as well. Forgiveness is the key.

I love positive thinking! I use affirmations every day, but I also go into my anger, frustration, sadness and grief when they occur. I never want to avoid them. I do not want to try to cover up these emotions because they are an important part of life to feel, to learn from and to deal with.

I hope this will dismantle the concept of "thinking positively only" and maybe some individuals that keep posting this on social media will read this too. If they do, they can understand that dealing with the "negative thoughts," and feelings in life is the key to wisdom, success, extreme high self-esteem and confidence. It all comes from dealing with the way life is presented to us, not avoiding it with some type of affirmation or positive thinking. Think.

What are some of the causes of affairs in love?

Any type of an affair, a physical or emotional affair, is an act of betrayal. When we betray our partner, we are starting to create a massive wall of distrust on their side.

But what are some of the main causes of affairs and what do we do about them?

Let's take a look at just a few of the many reasons that someone might have an emotional and or physical affair in a relationship.

1. Resentment.
2. Boredom.
3. The adrenaline rush of trying to get away with something on the side.
4. A total lack of trust, a breakdown of communication skills.
5. Peer pressure from friends, who may be tired of hearing us complain about our partner. So, they recommend that we get what we want or need from someone outside of the home.
6. The need for validation. Low self-confidence and low self-esteem, can be exhibited when someone starts to give us attention outside of our main relationship that makes us feel desired, and wanted.

The above are not justifications, but just some of the many reasons people have affairs in love.

And during the pandemic? Many couples who have been struggling in their intimate life, who have been struggling with communication for years, who have been struggling with their commitment to their partner could look at having an affair as a release valve... An escape mechanism... A way to forget about the world for a while.

So now it's up to you. If you see your self leaning towards an emotional affair, or a physical affair, or maybe you're in one or both right now, this will be the time to reach out to a professional and ask for help. When you figure out why you feel the need to have an affair, you can also figure out if it's worth staying in the relationship. Can you fix yourself so that you can help the current relationship heal?

Make the right decision, one that you can live with forever.

60, is the new 30!

Do you remember when you were a kid and you thought a sixty year old person was about as close to death as anyone you could ever imagine? Do you remember even 30 years ago, when many 60-year-olds were barely

able to function in the competitive business world, or to be in shape, or to be a vital part of a healthy, sexual intimate relationship? Thank God times have changed! And they've changed in the most beautiful ways ever.

Millions of people can attest to the fact that being 60 years of age or older is the start of something big. Something new. Something huge. And something that's vital in our society today.

If someone would've asked me 40 years ago what my life would look like at the age of 65, it would've been a far cry from the way I live today. And I'm not alone. Aging in America is a thing of the past, when it comes to mindset and the capability of individuals to continue to stay an extremely vital part of life through the aging process.

On the flip-side, there are many 40, 50 and 60 year old men and women United States that are in horrendous shape. But it comes down to personal choice. If you look in the mirror today and you're happy with what you see, rock on! If you're not happy, follow these tips, so you can see what it feels like and understand why I believe that 60 is the new 30 in our country today.

1. Diet. Need I say more? Beginning in your 40s if you're not paying really close to eating clean, your 60s are going to feel like someone who's 110 years of age. Diet is the number one cause of disease in our country today. High blood pressure. Triglycerides. Type two diabetes. High cholesterol. Fatigue. Insomnia. So many of these conditions can be tied directly to our diet. If you want to feel like you're 30, when you're 60 or older, we all need to be eating a super healthy, clean diet today.
2. Attack your shadow side. Now this might seem weird, coming from a guy who loves to look young, feel young, eat healthy and exercise on a daily basis. At 65 I can tell you firsthand, that until I attacked my addiction to alcohol and drugs years ago, I would not have the energy or the body I have today. Look at your dark-side, shadow-side. What habits do you have regarding alcohol, smoking, fast food, gambling or more that could be aging and you before your time?

At first you might think that I'm offering you tips for a boring life. But far from it. When I look at friends of mine who are the same age that are on six or seven or eight medications today for cholesterol, blood pressure, depression, anxiety and more... I know right away, it's because they haven't taken care of the demons within. The Dark-side. The things that we don't want to talk about, the things that we are embarrassed about. Work with a counselor or a coach starting right now to decrease your stress and increase your vitality.

3. If you asked the late Jack LaLanne, how he looked so incredible into his 90s, he would tell you it was because he was one of the leaders in the fitness revolution that we could see on television when we were little kids. But why haven't we taken his advice? Why do we have 80% or more of Americans who live a sedentary life?

A commitment to exercise, on a daily basis, can make your 60 year old body eventually feel like a 30 year old. Go for it.

4. Our willingness to help others. This is one of the greatest anti-aging secrets that I could discuss today. When you're willing to help others, who are in need of your service, it's amazing how much more energy you bring into this world. Some people do this through activities like Habitat for Humanity. Others through their church. Others through working with the Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts or any other type of organization. Some people read to the blind. Other people bring meals to seniors who can't get out. It doesn't matter how you offer your time and expertise but it's crucial to give back, in order to feel like you're in your 30s when you're in your 60s or older.

Yes, it will take a concerted effort on your part. And I hope you know, that you are worth the work.

Nutritional supplements, for addiction recovery?

How many people who struggle with addictions, are aware that there are many nutritional supplements available today that can help them with their recovery? To not only curb their desires for their drug or alcohol of choice, but also to help them actually feel better in the process of recovery?

The answer? Very, very few. And this is one of the reasons why the success rate of addiction recovery programs United States is such a terribly low 10%.

I remember in 1990 before I got sober, a very good friend of mine who was a pharmacist, Stan Meyerson, during a casual conversation asked me how I was doing in general in life that day. I told him everything was great but that I did feel that I was on the verge of continuing to drink too much alcohol every day. Being a great friend that he was, he has now passed on, he had no judgment on my open statement. He actually knew that I was probably an alcoholic, and offered me the following information.

“David, if you look at all the amino acid supplements on the market today, I would love to educate you on the ones that are necessary to recover from alcoholism, for yourself, but also so that you can share this with other individuals that you help on daily basis to get sober.”

The supplements, along with deep emotional regulation work, saved my life. Now, the supplements did not save my life on their own, they're not a silver bullet. But they made a huge impact as I went through my withdrawal, cravings and finally recovery, helping me to get sober for life. Along with myself, there are several other doctors and counselors that I know of in the United States that use amino acid supplementation and nutritional supplements in their recovery programs. But my question is, why doesn't everyone?

The success rate of addiction recovery in our country is absolutely terrible. Yet, people are staying stuck in the past and they continue to teach recovery principles that are outdated, even terrible in regard to increasing recovery rates today. In several of my books I share the success stories, of people who struggled with opiates as well as alcohol and food and once I put them on the amino acid DLPA, often combined with the

amino acid Tyrosine, found an instant reduction in their cravings for their drug of choice.

Now, if you're on any antidepressants or anti-anxiety medication's or any mood stabilizers, never add amino acid supplementation to your daily routine until you clear it with your doctor.

Almost every individual that comes to me for work in our holistic addiction recovery program, immediately begins with these amino acid supplements. It doesn't matter if it's drugs, alcohol, food, smoking or more... We focus on helping to recover normal brain chemistry operation, that's been totally dismantled through the ongoing use of our drug of choice.

Depending on how long the addiction has been going on, it can take anywhere from several days to several weeks for people to start to feel a shift regarding how their brain operates, with focus, anxiety, depression and more. For very long term addictions, it may take 1 to 2 years for brain chemistry to return to normal.

DLPA works on the dopamine system in the brain, which is one of the most important neurotransmitters when it comes to mood and more. Tyrosine also enhances the effectiveness of the dopamine system and Tryptophan, works with serotonin, another huge aid in recovery.

CBD oil, especially the form found in medical marijuana dispensaries, used on a daily basis, has helped many of my clients dramatically decrease their anxiety when they're going through our recovery program.

The essential oil lavender, is incredibly relaxing as well, helping our clients to manage their stress during the day and it even can help them to sleep better at night.

But always remember to check with your medical professionals, before beginning any type of supplementation in your recovery from addiction.

Are you afraid, to change?

Change can be hard. Change can create fear and insecurity. Stopping drinking is hard. Stopping arguing with your loved one is hard. Stopping smoking is hard. Stopping emotional spending is hard. Change is hard. And the longer we have the challenges of depression, anxiety, insomnia and more, the harder it will be for many of us to change.

When the patterns get stuck in the subconscious mind that are not self-serving, not healthy patterns, the subconscious looks at it as an important part of our existence because we've been feeding it the habits or thoughts for years.

So when we try to change, the subconscious fights back with excuses, justifications, rationalizations and even denial!

I worked with a client once that was having such a hard time letting go of her anxiety to change her life. Letting go of fears and self sabotaging behavior was hard, and every week that we worked together her independence and confidence began to shift, began to change.

I could hear it in the energy in her voice and I could see it in the amount of effort she was putting into our homework assignments. She had made a decision after years of being stuck to change, and change was arriving!

Let's take a look at some of the steps that she took in order to change her life:

1. She follows a journaling technique that I taught her called "the 4 x 4 journal technique" as a tool to help her deal with emotions seven days a week. In this journaling technique, she writes about those things that she's proud of that she accomplished every day, as well as writing about the challenges she's facing, so she can stay in the mode of reality.
2. She worked through the pain of losing a home in a state that she loved for a large portion of her life.
3. She acknowledged that both her codependency and anxiety had held her back in life and went through every exercise I gave her to shatter both of them!
4. She overcame her struggle when she decided to step away from a full-time business, one of the most powerful moves she's ever made, which led to a greater amount of freedom, and confidence.
5. She's disengaging from regular family arguments, and in her disengaging she has created a deeper well of self-confidence.
6. She completely dropped her self criticism, regarding how she believed she should be much further ahead in life.

7. She found out that her feelings of anxiety, disappointment or frustration were extremely valid, for the first time in her life. She also found that her perfectionism was a form of codependency and it had become an addiction before we began working together.
8. She learned how to set boundaries and consequences with family members, friends and even neighbors. She was becoming more independent, and shattering her codependency which had created so much anxiety throughout her entire life.

Every week I look forward to our sessions on the phone, and I just love showing her the immense amount of dramatic changes she has made since we started working together. It's easy as a counselor to see my clients potential to change, but it's not always easy for clients to see the same potential that I see. But now, she has seen the incredible human being, the amazing woman she really is, and every change she makes brings her closer to her true self. You can do the same.

Are you codependent, in your relationship?

Codependency kills relationships. It kills self-esteem and self-confidence. Codependency runs rampant in our relationships all over the world. I see so many relationships that are filled with codependency, passive aggressive behavior, enabling, which is fear of rocking the boat, and craving to be told that we are wonderful... These are all signs within a marriage or relationship that can lead to the downfall due to codependency.

If you always go along with your partner, and if you never have your own opinion, you are codependent.

If you have to win every battle and will do whatever it takes with your partner to win and you usually do, you're codependent in a different way.

If you can't have fun as a couple without alcohol or drugs or food involved, you're codependent. If you try to win your kids affection through materialistic items that you buy for them, you are codependent. If you are trying to convince someone to love you, again, a strong sign of codependency.

Codependency has 10,000 different spokes, its insidious, it can go unnoticed for years as it did in my life.

If you're staying in a long-term relationship that's unhealthy, both of you are codependent, possibly for different reasons but you're both extremely codependent.

If you're in a relationship that is struggling, the independent person would absolutely go to counseling on their own even if their partner refused to go. I have seen this happen 1 million times in my practice. Only one of the partners comes in to do the work, and believe it or not in a large portion of the time, they can actually help turn the relationship around.

If your partner has an addiction to alcohol, smoking, food or anything else and you supply them with their drugs of choice... You are codependent.

If you're afraid to be you, to have outside friends, to have activities that have nothing to do with your marriage or relationship, you are now experiencing codependency.

Codependency is so tricky to label, so insidious in nature. Most of us learn to be codependent in childhood, so it's been with us a very very long time.

It's time to shatter our codependent nature. Ask for help, do the work, please, set yourself free.

Is it OK to struggle in life?

Struggling is a part of life. When we resist struggling, we are resisting our growth.

Buddha stated it quite clearly, "Life is suffering." And he's right. Just pick up any newspaper, or go online and read the headlines, or watch your local or national news and you'll see a world full of suffering.

But even in this world of constant suffering, there are millions of people that begin every day and end every day with a powerful, positive attitude. It doesn't just come through affirmations or vision boards. It comes by shifting our thoughts, beliefs and actions starting right now in order to join the most proactive individuals on this planet today, who believe that each and every day is a blessing.

Now before I go any further, if you're struggling with any addiction

whatsoever, you're going to have to challenge yourself in life if you want to minimize the struggling.

Even though struggling is a part of life, and even though it's OK to struggle, too many times we're increasing the amount of struggle unnecessarily because we're not living a grounded, honest existence.

So let's take a look at the following steps so we can diminish our struggle, and live more in the present moment with inner peace and hopefulness:

1. Get real with any dependency or addiction. They sabotage your success in life. The struggle will continue, unless we're willing to face the facts and let go of any dependency that is currently holding us back.
2. We continue to remind clients on a daily basis, that watching what you do first thing in the morning, is so important in regards to minimizing our struggle in life. Prayer, meditation, journaling, gratitude writing will all help to diminish the struggle.
3. Visualization. I am a huge fan of all positive thinking techniques, and if you are struggling right now I believe it's crucial to be able to see yourself in a totally different situation. Even if it's only in your mind. Write about how you will feel free when you release the self sabotaging techniques that you may have been carrying for years.
4. Find more silence in your day. When you get up in the morning, don't turn on the TV, or talk shows, or even go online. Start your day in silence. The brain needs silence and more silence and more silence in order to help it to become calm, and effectively create an attitude that works in your favor.

Changing long-term habits can be a difficult and challenging step to take. But I promise you, if you want to radically minimize your stress levels, and increase your appreciation for life, your optimism and more we've got to follow these steps by accepting that struggling is part of life. Then, you have the chance to add tools, rituals and routines that will diminish that struggle as well. Does that make sense?

You'll be grateful, immensely grateful within 48 hours after setting your new rituals for life. It works. It's way past magical, it's miraculous. It won't end the struggle, but it will give you the tools necessary to move through them to a new existence. Let's go.

Depression? Follow these tips.

Depression in so many people, has been caused by the amount of stress that we're all under. Combined with lack of hope, a lack of drive, and submerged emotions, we can create depression and even apathy. Apathy is probably one of the worst emotional stages we could ever be in, because we just don't care anymore.

When people struggle with depression, their energy levels drop, their frustration can be on the surface 24 hours a day. They can struggle with sleep. Many people will use food or alcohol to try to manage their depression. Other people, go in the opposite direction! They may begin to eat less and lose more weight than may be healthy for them at this time.

In 1990 my life came crashing down to a complete halt when I was diagnosed as suicidal, with a deep clinical depression that had not been treated for years. I know the battle. I know what I had to do to save my own life. I had a therapist and a psychiatrist that literally brought me out of the depths of hell. And what I learned during my own experience, I have been able to bring forward and create programs and seminars to help people understand the origin and the solution for the depression that they might be going through right now.

1. If your depression has brought you to suicidal ideation's, where you contemplate taking your own life on a daily or regular basis, call your doctor or 911 right now! Or get a ride to the emergency room of the closest hospital right away.
2. Take a look at your lifestyle choices, are you getting enough sleep? Are you surrounding yourself with people, places, and materials to help you manage the current emotional state you're in?
3. Many times depression is caused by submerged emotions. For me, it was submerged insecurity and submerged anger,

frustration, because I had become such a perfectionist in life. Watch these emotions, because if unchecked they can lead to the deep clinical depression that I experienced myself. Unresolved anger plays a huge role in depression.

4. We say it all the time, we have to be on top of our addictions and dependencies! My own depression grew deeper over the years because of my addiction to alcohol, and when I removed the alcohol and added what we encourage other people to use, amino acid supplementation, my life changed for the better. Much better!
5. 10 minute walks during the day, simply six of them will equal one hour of exercise for people that probably have no interest in exercising at all. The positive endorphins in the brain will be released to help us at least momentarily manage the depression.

Work with a professional. Many times it can take a year or more of working with a counselor and using the emotional tools they give you in order to minimize or completely eliminate your depression.

Over the past 40+ years we have helped millions of people struggling with depression to redirect their mindset, by teaching them emotional regulation exercises, cognitive behavioral therapy and so much more. Help is available.

I remember quite well when I was in my deep clinical depression the feeling of hopelessness, that there's no way out, that I'll never feel normal again. And I can tell you as I sit here today, that my depression began to be minimized daily when I started to work , to do the work that I now teach others to do.

And I look forward to helping you, because so many people are struggling with mental health today. There is hope. There's a better future. And, I am with you right now.

Traditional marriage therapy, or couples counseling?

Up until 1996, when a couple would come in to work with me in the throes of divorce or ongoing arguments or addiction or abuse, I used to

work with them together either in person or via phone. But in that very same year I came to this incredible understanding concerning marriage counseling or traditional relationship counseling. In my opinion, when a professional works with both people at the same time, it is usually an absolute waste of time, money and effort!

What happened shocked me. I was sitting in a session, the husband and wife were across from me, 55 minutes had gone by and both of them were still arguing. Taking turns of course, but arguing for the entire session.

Which unfortunately, is extremely normal. At the end of the session, a lightbulb went off in my head and I told them: "You guys can argue and yell and scream at home for free. Why are we sitting in this room, why are you are paying me, to do what you can do at home for free?" I came to the realization that I was wasting my time, but more importantly, I was wasting my clients time and their precious money.

So in that year I radically changed my approach to marriage and relationship counseling and the results have been nothing short of fantastic.

About a month ago, a couple contacted me after using a number of other counselors to try to save the relationship. I met with them one time together, which is my ultimate limit. I told them that I would only be working with them this one time together and from then on I'd be working with them separately. I wanted to figure out what their individual challenges were, and as I told the couple in 1996, I can help you take care of your shortcomings, your fears and insecurities and at the same time strengthen your strengths in the marriage if I work with you one on one.

Since 1996, the number of couples that have reached out to me, and were pleasantly surprised that I wasn't going to put them in the same "boxing ring" together, has been phenomenal. They see the logic. And they understand that if I can help both of them work on their weaknesses, they might just be able to pull the relationship together.

The other main reason that I only do couples counseling individually, is because normally with every couple there is one who is a little more passive and one who's a little bit more assertive.

In counseling sessions you'll see the passive one become quiet, reserved, withdrawn. This doesn't help anyone at all. They may be afraid that if they tell the truth with their partner sitting there, that it will be hell on wheels on the ride home.

And the more assertive one? Well, they just do what comes normal. They can monopolize the session. With a quick glance, or a sharp word they can shut their partner down.

But when I work with them individually, the more passive one can open up and be honest, real, vulnerable without the fear of being lambasted by their partner.

And the more assertive one? We can allow them to vent, and I can also help them to redirect their energies so that they are more emotionally regulated. I can teach them the art of disengagement so they don't continue to push their partner into the wall so to speak. There's so many things I can do to help both couples heal, individually in counseling, versus together.

I want both sides of the relationship to be honest, vulnerable, and free to speak their minds.

Over the years, many counselors have contacted me to learn more about the way I work. Our success rate as I mentioned before is so incredible, that I willingly share these programs with other professionals so that they can be of more assistance to their clients as well.

If you're a couple looking to work with a professional, and you find someone that seems to be a good fit, ask them if they would work with you one on one, for the benefits that I mentioned above.

We will often do the very first session with a couple together either in person, on the phone or via zoom or Skype, but after that 100% of the time I only work with them individually.

If the counselor that you want to work with disagrees with you, and says that they don't believe they can help you unless you're both in the same office together, just keep searching. Keep looking. You will find someone who you will connect with, someone extremely open minded to this new way of professional counseling.

And remember there's two goals in marriage counseling: number one, is to try to save the relationship. But the second goal is equally important. We might find that the relationship has been unhealthy for a very long period of time. We might find that the couples should actually be apart. We may recommend our program "living apart, while staying together" to save the relationship, or maybe they really do need to separate and divorce.

My first goal is always to help save a marriage or relationship! But after

that? I don't want to force anyone to stay in a space that might be causing trauma, addiction, emotional or even physical abuse.

If you're a counselor or therapist that wants to know more about the program that we created, reach out to me at the website that you will find in this book.

If you are a couple who has struggled in life, and you've worked with counselors or therapists in the "normal program where both of you are together with a professional," and if it hasn't worked, I would try this new way. It just could save your relationship, or point you in a healthier direction to leave with love.

Why do men cheat?

I encourage everyone I meet to be honest, and vulnerable whenever possible in life. So I'm going to start this writing out with an honest response to the question above, why do men cheat? Because in the past, yes I have cheated when I was in a relationship that supposedly was filled with love.

There's probably 1 million reasons why men cheat, and women you're starting to catch up with the guys in regard to cheating in love, so we can't just blame it on one thing or another. Many mental health experts say that men cheat for the adrenaline rush... Others experts have talked about the fact that men are wired to be non-monogamous... And others will say because of trauma in childhood.

And all of the above answers could have an effect as to why a man may cheat, but I surely don't want anyone to look at these as excuses to let men off the hook.

So, what was the number one reason that I cheated in previous love relationships? Because I was afraid to face confrontation. Because I was afraid to be honest. Because I was afraid to tell my partner what I wanted that I wasn't getting. Because I was afraid that if I did tell her that I wanted something different sexually let's say, she might reject me, criticize me or abandon me.

I was so codependent, it was sickening.

If I was unhappy in love, I might just feel, erroneously so, that I deserved to get my needs met by someone else. And if I didn't do that, I

was going to start drinking more heavily. Or turn into a bigger workaholic. Instead of taking the risk in communication, I ran away like many men do. Like many women do as well.

I remember one relationship where I was very frustrated sexually, and emotionally, I just didn't feel that the love I was giving and the energy I was giving to my partner at the time, was being returned in the way that I wanted it to.

And I almost lost an incredible relationship, because I was so afraid to talk to my partner openly about our intimate life. I was afraid that she would be offended, so I didn't say anything. Several times I thought about having an affair, because I wanted something different, something unique, but this would've been the biggest mistake of my life.

I ended up doing what I recommend everyone else do. I hired a counselor. Yes, as a counselor myself, I reached out to another counselor and started to express my frustrations in my relationship, and started to vent about how I was potentially on the verge of having an affair.

This was the most humble, most vulnerable, most honest I've ever been with another professional. And it paid off.

She helped me shatter my codependency, my insecurities, my fears of rejection and abandonment and criticism. She walked through a program with me where I could learn how to take that risk, be open with my partner and if I was rejected learn how to deal with the rejection.

Something totally different was about to happen. The minute I shared my desires with my girlfriend at the time, she lit up like a lightbulb! She was so excited that after dating for a period of time, I was speaking openly about my sexual and intimate desires and she was more excited and more turned on and into me than ever before. That was in 1997, and I've never had a desire, I've never been tempted, nor will I ever cheat in a relationship again. I'd rather be open in communication and get help if it's needed, or end the relationship if we're not a match, then carry the guilt and shame of cheating.

Don't wait, another day. Do not wait until you're caught in an affair. Do not carry the shame and guilt of trying to hide an affair any longer. Today is the day to change.

Are you addicted, to chaos and drama?

Most people, when they are asked the question above, will answer it all the same way... No... No and never!

But is that true? And how do you know that you're not addicted to the world of chaos and drama, especially in relationships?

About four years ago a young woman contacted me via Skype to hire me as her counselor because she was sick and tired of attracting men that were constantly creating chaos and drama in her life. She told me upon our first session that she was filled with peace, until she got involved with a guy who is all about drama. Or chaos. As we worked together, I found out that every one of her long-term relationships, we're absolutely filled to the brim with chaos and drama from her side!

She even sent me her dating profile, from an online site that said "I do not deal with drama and chaos from any man, if this is you do not contact me."

Sounds good doesn't it? But it wasn't true. I find that people who are doing online dating, when say they don't deal with drama and chaos, more likely turn out to be the ones creating the chaos and drama they're talking about. Fascinating.

I mentioned to her that it didn't make logical sense, if all the chaos and drama came from the men that she dated, that she would stay an average four years or longer! She started to get it. She was looking at the picture from a different perspective. Even though she wanted to push back and disagree that she had anything to do with the dysfunction in her relationships, after looking at her own writings she couldn't deny the reality that she was experiencing. She finally saw for the first time in her life the truth, that she was at least 50% responsible for the chaos and drama. And the longer we worked together, she even admitted that she herself was creating it regularly.

Now, how about you? If you look back at your history of relationships, and see that most of them fell apart in ways that were filled with chaos and drama, you'll begin to see that you must have had a major role in it. Healthy people would've left someone who wasn't healthy fairly soon after they started dating.

And where does all this chaos and drama come from? In love relationships? Well, between the ages of zero and 18, we are huge sponges in our family environment, and if mom or dad were in dysfunctional relationships, we may just be repeating what we saw growing up!

And we don't even realize that we are doing it! So if mom and dad gave each other the silent treatment, or argued incessantly, or were addicted to drugs or alcohol or smoking or food... There's a good chance you're simply repeating the family pattern.

In this type of environment, your subconscious mind started to equate that drama and chaos in love is quite normal. When you see something as a child over and over again, few of us have the strength or even the knowledge of how to block that out of our existence.

If your parents were extremely impatient with each other or judgmental, or name callers, or running away and then returning to the relationship, you have just been indoctrinated as a child in the world of chaos and drama in love.

And since you have nothing to compare it to, it seems just normal. All of those experiences are tucked away in the subconscious mind. Then, when you're in a relationship and stress hits, you might just automatically go to the chaos and drama training you received as a kid.

This chaos and drama can actually become an addiction. Ongoing chaos and drama creates an adrenaline spike when we argue, or even during our passive aggressive behavior, and the body starts to crave that adrenaline rush. So when one or the other person in the relationship actually begins a fight, it may not be because the topic is so important to them, but because they crave that rush of adrenaline! Fascinating isn't it?

All of this can be changed, but it won't be changed by ourselves. Get professional help today.

Can we use separation, to save a marriage?

Relationships around the world are struggling. Many of them anyway. There's more arguing, fighting, addictions on the rise and upheaval in relationships now than I've ever seen. Waiting until the end of the pandemic, which can be used as a cause for part of this dysfunction, is surely not the answer.

And yet, when the average person hears us talking about how using separation might actually help to save the relationship or marriage, they look a little confused at first.

Over 20 years ago I started talking about this, how to save relationships through separation, or how to save a relationship by living apart while trying to stay together. A couple out of Philadelphia had been constantly arguing for years. When I shared with them that we might be able to save their marriage by having them live separately, instantly they were interested!

By separating for 90 days with a contract that I helped them create, they were able to save their marriage and slowly begin to heal together with a totally new outlook on love. As a matter of fact, they were so successful during the 90 days that they decided to purchase a duplex, where one lived on one side and one lived on the other, meeting every day for breakfast and dinner as well as three nights a week for intimacy. They felt more connected than they ever had in their existence.

Now, if there's extreme emotional or physical abuse, or extreme addiction I would highly recommend separation with the potential of divorce if we can't heal the abuse or addiction.

Let's look at a few details regarding the program living apart while staying together:

1. In order to break the tension, in order to break the resentments and the anger, it's extremely beneficial for one of the couple to move out to another residence for 90 days. This 90 day separation will give everyone a chance to calm down, learn emotional regulation skills, and at the same time, understand how important it is to agree to disagree in arguments that are never ending.
2. In the contract it states that they will stay monogamous, out of any emotional and or physical affairs. We also make sure that there's several days a week that they're getting together for social activities. Then, several days a week, they're getting together to talk about the negative patterns that they've had over the years and how to shatter them.
3. When they're apart, hoping to get back together, I can work with them individually on any addictions they might have,

insecurities, or issues like separation anxiety or depression, in order to help them begin to improve their own life individually before they move in back together.

4. Every week the couples check in with me individually for our session, and talk to me about what went well, what didn't work and what changes they see that they need to make on their side of the relationship in order to bring them both back together.

Here's one couples response, that had been married for over 30 years, when they decided to try to save their marriage by living apart and staying together.

"There's no way in the world we'd still be married today if it wasn't for David Essel's living apart but staying together program. My husband and I have been married for over 30 years, 26 of them were not happy or healthy at all. I wanted to divorce. During my individual work with David he recommended that we do the 90 day living apart but staying together program and it was miraculous!

My husband was not into it at all in the beginning, but he finally came around and he became the man I always wanted him to be. I myself? I shattered my own codependency through my work with David, making me a stronger more independent wife, which actually is a thrill and turns my husband on. If you're in a relationship or marriage that is on the rocks, you've got to give this program a try. The results for us, have been nothing short of phenomenal." Debbie, New York

So please don't give up yet! Don't wait for tomorrow it might be too late! Let's start today and save your relationship.

Is being overweight a choice? Or genetics?

This topic of discussion could last for centuries, with some people arguing on the side of genetics and other people arguing on the side of choice.

According to one study from the University of Florida, only about 6% of people who were overweight or obese had any genetic link at all. With up to 80% of our population struggling with weight, what could be the real problem here?

In 1990 I began my work in the world of weight loss by working with an individual who wanted to lose 50 pounds, and had been up to over 100 pounds overweight for most of her life. She had hired the best trainer and nutritionist, but somehow could not stop her emotional eating routine. She had seen several writings I had written in fitness magazines and thought I might be the guy that could help her lose it once and for all.

As I examined her weekly charts with food and exercise sessions, I saw the real issue with her was self sabotage. She would do great Monday through Friday and then absolutely blow her eating program and exercise on the weekends.

It reminds me of people that I've seen in a gym for five or six years. They are there six days a week, but they never see a change in their body. They never see an increase in muscle definition or a decrease in body fat, because their exercise cannot make up for their incredibly poor eating habits.

Food can be a savior, or a saboteur.

Many times, just like other bad habits, it could easily come from when we were growing up. If mom and dad were stressed, they ate. Or when we did good in school we were given food. Or when we finished our peas, we got dessert. All of these can sabotage our attempts later on in life to keep the weight off for good.

And once a pattern of over eating, or eating junk food has been placed in the subconscious mind, it can be really hard to change it. The subconscious uses the tools called justification, rationalization and denial in order to continue the pattern of eating too much, or simply the wrong types of food on a daily basis.

We can justify and rationalize that we had a rough week and we deserve this pie. Or we had a rough day and we deserve these cookies. Or that this is all because of genetics, no matter what I do I can't lose weight, so I might as well just enjoy all the food I can eat now.

Does that make sense?

And how do we turn the subconscious mind around, that encourages us to have that extra dessert, or the sugar or salty foods in the evening? It all begins with your action steps. Not your mindset, but your action steps.

I tell people in all of my addiction programs, which includes emotional eating and weight loss, that the real power comes from their discipline.

When they increase their desire to eat clean and exercise, they will slowly start to see a shift in their subconscious mind.

Other people will tell you that the most important thing is to change your mind first. But, we have never seen much success with people with only a positive attitude regarding losing weight, versus people who just go and do the work!

Sure it's great to have a positive attitude, but it's even more important to eat clean and exercise than to worry about having a great attitude while you're doing both things.

I'll never forget one of my clients who needed to lose 80 pounds. She was in a marriage that was not fulfilling and had the responsibility of working two jobs and taking care of three kids pretty much on her own.

She told me at first there was no time for her to exercise, and when we looked at her schedule there absolutely was time! It may have been 10 o'clock at night, but there was time for her to hit the gym.

And so she did. Six days a week 10 at night to 11 PM, she was in the gym working her butt off, had eliminated all fast food and all junk food, and lost the entire 80 pounds in less than a year!

When she came in a year later, I did not even recognize her! Oh my Lord it was a totally different person, with a smile as big as the state of Montana, sitting in front of me with incredible confidence and self-esteem. I'll never forget her success and how she looked and how she felt after our work together.

You can do the same thing. Get an accountability partner. Empty your kitchen, your cars, your office of any type of junk food. Sugar, salt, white flour or fat are all emotional eating foods. Learn emotional regulation techniques like meditation and contemplation. Hang around with people who respect their bodies and exercise and eat clean like you're starting to as well.

The choice is yours. Let's make it a good one.

The big lie: The purpose of life, is to be in love with your soulmate.

Is the above statement, a little shocking? We are bombarded every day via all kinds of media as well as friends, family members and neighbors

that tell us the real purpose of life is to find your soulmate and live happily ever after.

But is this really true? Or is it a product of mass consciousness that is driving people in the wrong direction in life? For years I traveled the world talking about the power of love, divine love and the reason for our existence must be expressed by finding that one special person, that soulmate and moving forward in fields of daisies for the rest of our life.

And you guessed it, I was dead wrong. I had bought into the propaganda, that sucks us all into this vortex, creating more chaos and drama than you could ever believe.

There are many other experts that will disagree with me, but when we put so much pressure on ourselves to find that one special soulmate to live happily ever after, we are denying the reality of love.

Many people, when they first heard about this concept, think I must be insane. Because, I'm expressing the exact opposite philosophy of what you're going to see and read in media and popular talkshows today.

Look at the insanity in love relationships today. First marriages crumbling still at about 55%. Second and third marriages end up even worse.

And what about the huge percentage of people that stay stuck in relationships and marriages that are horrible? Why do they stay?

Well, one of the biggest reasons, is because they're afraid of being alone and they don't want to be one of those "single people in society." Well meaning people are constantly saying "You're such a great catch, how come you're single?"

The pressure can seem overwhelming to many.

Several years ago, a gentleman contacted me to go through my course "Codependency Kills," which explains how we can become "codependent to be in love," simply because society says we should be.

He was exactly the type of person, and there are millions of people that fall into this category, that never wanted to be alone. He told me during our first session that even though he knew something was wrong with his approach to life and love, he hated being by himself on any Friday, Saturday or Sunday evening. After we were together for a while he said to me during a session, that he still thought the purpose of our existence was to be in love with someone, and he was missing out.

A lot of us think the same way, but we are all dead wrong if we think the purpose of this existence is simply to be in love with a soulmate.

So, if you're still with me, what is the purpose of our existence?

1. To be of service. To help others. To make a positive difference in this world. To leave gossip and judgment behind, to become independent and make a difference in your own way.
2. To be happy. I really think the second purpose of our existence, after finding our way to serve others, is to create happiness, which could easily happen simply by serving others! So if you're stressed about being single, the odds of you being happy are not very good at all.
3. I think the third purpose of our existence is to be at peace. To be filled with peace and learn emotional regulation techniques, so when things don't go your way, you have the tools necessary to bring you back to center. To bring you back to grounding, to bring you back to internal happiness.
4. Think about this. If you can't find incredible happiness by serving others, if you cannot find joy and peace by being single... You'll never attract a healthy person to be in a relationship with, ever. Needy people, insecure people Will try to find their happiness in someone else, never themselves.

I tell all my clients, never get into the world of dating until you're happy as hell being single! It really is true.

I know my work might seem to be out of the box, I don't follow the crowd, even the professional crowd anymore. The next time you see a book that talks about the purpose of your existence is to be in love with another person, pause, hesitate and come back and read this writing. That's all about mass consciousness. You're not missing anything if you're single, but you might have a chance to create incredible happiness if you pause, slow down and look at the reality of what I'm writing right now.

Do you know what is really missing when you can't figure out how to be happy on your own? Your life's purpose.

Could certain spiritual practices, lift us above this pandemic?

From prayer to contemplation, visualization to healing ceremonies, there are one million or more spiritual practices that could be of great benefit to all of us during this pandemic. But instead, most of us are simply focusing on the pandemic.

People are still arguing left and right on social media about the vaccine, about the pandemic and all the craziness in this world. But they're forgetting something really important. There is a spiritual tool, for any situation, that can help alleviate stress and increase our faith in life. And of course the definition of faith is very simple, "Faith is believing in the unseen."

So as a minister, former pastor and counselor I'm going to give you a list of spiritual practices that could totally help us deal with, and maybe even rise above, a lot of the craziness this world is going through right now.

1. Work on your faith. Increase your faith. Shift your beliefs from worrying about challenges to focusing on expectations that you desire in life.

Read writings about people who have deepened their faith during challenging times, which you can find all over the Internet these days.

2. Awareness as a spiritual tool for growth can be very powerful. Start to become aware of how much time you spend on social media. How much time you spend on television. How much time you spend discussing the pandemic or the vaccines. Once you're aware that you're arguing more on social media, or watching too much television, take that time and put it into spiritual practices.
3. Prayer. In his number one best selling book, "Prayer is Good Medicine," physician Larry Dossey offers a string of double blind placebo controlled studies of how prayers help people to heal even when they didn't know they were being prayed for!

While my mom passed this year, for as long as I can remember, both my mom and dad had a list of people that they would pray for every night before dinner. Thank goodness I was on that list!

4. Meditation, one of my favorite spiritual tools that you can do anywhere. Through meditation, we relax the body, boost the immune system and decrease potentially both anxiety and depression.

Studies have also shown the people who meditate regularly can reduce their addiction rate, and begin to feel more in control of their thoughts and actions.

5. Reading spiritual books can be a great way to deepen your faith. You can use the Bible, or scripture from any religion or spiritual practice, or you can look at books by people like the Dalai Lama, or Mother Teresa as a way to enhance your own faith.

As churches and temples and spiritual centers fully reopen again, this is a great time to start to enter them. Follow the protocol with masks and more, because being in the energy of other people that want to deepen their faith, will help you go deeper as well.

To deepen our faith takes time. Be patient. Don't expect instant gratification or instant results. The more work you do, the deeper your faith will become. Let's go today.

Let it go, let it go, let it go...

Imagine this. You're ready to change. You're ready to react to the unpredictable world we're living in today.

And you're ready to react differently.

As you read this book, are you coming across writings that maybe feel a little too close to home? That are actually calling you out, in a positive way, that this AREA of your life needs to change?

And in the past? You would've kept reading. Pretending that wasn't for you. Pretending you don't need to change whether it's an addiction, relationship issue, financial issue, emotional issue... You get the picture... But you're ready now to do it differently.

Or imagine this. You're ready to pick up that drink tonight, but you recall this writing, and you know it's all about a choice. And you make a different choice. You are now learning the art of life mastery.

Let me repeat that.

If you follow this writing, you are now committed to learning the art of life mastery.

Imagine this. Your partner just frustrated you again, and you hesitate before you react. And you choose not to react. 90% of what couples argue over is usually small potatoes. So you choose, to act differently.

You are choosing, to let it go. And let it go again.

As you continue to think about changes you need to make, you realize that along with 80% of the population, you've gained weight over the last couple years. We can blame it on the pandemic, part of it, a small amount of it, but as you read this, you realize something really important: you need to let the past go, and start eating clean today.

And you do. Because, you are learning the art of life mastery.

When we learn to master life, we are trusting so deeply, that we don't have to react to every negative comment. We don't have to have that drink ever again if it's created issues. We don't have to soothe our emotions by eating snack foods at night. We don't have to buy those extra pair of jeans. We are living a life of mastery.

We are choosing to overcome limitations, we are choosing to let go of things that would ruffle our feathers in the past. We are choosing life mastery.

Or maybe this is part of your existence. There's an individual, that you were with in the past as a partner or best friend, that you have still carried forward huge resentments against.

And you choose to let every one of them... Go.

Or better yet! Your current partner, or maybe even a best friend, did something yesterday or 10 years ago that you've never let go of.

Because you're reading this book and because you're on a path of life mastery, you forgive everyone, for anything they've ever done to hurt you!

Sound possible?

We need to learn to let it go.

I've personally worked with victims of incest, who forgave their family member and lost 75 pounds in that first year without even trying.

They let go of the event, and their anger, not for the family member, but for themselves.

They are actively engaged in the art of life mastery.

How about my client, that regardless of what department she was transferred to in a large company, always felt that she was picked on. Never appreciated. Given extra work, compared to the other people in these departments.

She went to work jaded every day. Every day she had a chip on her shoulder. Every day she was unhappy.

Until, she let it all go. Read that again. She let it all go.

Letting these issues go, and learning the art of life mastery, is probably one of the most profound ways that you could ever change your life. And it will radically change! People around you, will not even recognize who you are. You will become a role model to so many people in your existence, as they see this shift, from a lack of personal self-care to maximizing your personal self-care.

And it all begins, by letting it go.

You're reading this book, and especially reading this writing because the message is directly aimed at you. And me. And your neighbor. And your family. And your coworkers. And my family. And my co-workers. And my teammates. And my neighbors.

Every time we act in life mastery, every time we radically change our previous approaches to something more grounded, more logical... We are the role model that this world needs right now.

Imagine this. Imagine that every person in this world is reading this writing right now, and every person in this world decides to let it go. Can you imagine the radical change we would see all over our planet? Can you imagine the compassion, humility, vulnerability that would be oozing out of every person on this planet?

Let's make it happen.

End of Section Questions

Stop! Now is the time to take your pen and pencil with the lines below and answer the questions so that you can get the most out of our book.

1. What was covered in detail, that grabbed your attention the most in this section? Write your answers below.

2. What action steps can you take, including reaching out to a professional, or finding or hiring an accountability partner, related to this section that could radically improve your life? Write your answers below.

Any and all changes that you would like to make are totally possible, I know you can do this!

Part Three

**In this book, we are offering hope.
Compassion. And love.
Take it! Run with it! You deserve it!**

Love, David

The real key to changing habits? This will definitely surprise you!

Bad habits can be really hard to break. Smoking. Drinking. Eating junk food. Staying up too late. Procrastination. Nicotine. Pot. Or maybe you're one of those people that has had a habit of always having to have the last word, to win every argument! Or maybe you've just gotten into a lifestyle that's extremely lazy, you're not taking care of the temple, the body or the mind.

So what should we do? What are the most important key steps, that we need to take to change any bad habit?

Here's a shocker gang... It may have nothing to do with what you think! Isn't that amazing? For years we've been told that "attitude is everything" and I'm here to tell you that that is not always the case. To state it more strongly, there might be a better way to change your habit, your bad habit then trying to change simply the way you think.

In my daily work, I've seen people in the pits of depression, the pits of anxiety, the pits of addiction who radically changed their life even when their attitude sucked! Most people when they're faced with bad habits, do not want to change.

If it was so easy just have a great attitude and that would absolutely enable you to quit drinking, quit over eating, actually get into the gym when you say you're going to... There would not be one problem in this world today. If all you had to do was have a good attitude, all challenges would be solved. Obviously, attitude isn't the only key to changing habits. A positive attitude is great and can definitely help you, but I want you to know this: you can have a crappy attitude and still be incredibly successful in changing bad habits.

And how does this work? Listen closely. What you do, influences what you think, much more than you may realize in the long run. Does that make sense? It should, because it's a major key to success in any area of life. So if you start to actually do things, action steps like going to the gym even though you don't want to, making your lunch at home so it's healthy instead of going to a fast food place, getting to bed earlier, these action

steps will change your mindset for the long term! Positive thinking, while it's beautiful, will only change what you're doing for a very short period of time if you're relying on this to change bad habits on its own.

I spend two hours every morning focusing on my thoughts, gratitude and more. However, I would never rely on that to actually change my life. I wouldn't rely on my positive thoughts on their own to help me change habits that may not be healthy.

Thinking plus action is the key. I remember working with a woman who had created vision boards to attract her soulmate, had gone to every seminar in the world about soulmate attraction and had even written affirmations about attracting the special man in her life... But five years of following this pathway, brought her no closer to finding the man of her dreams. When I asked her to start looking at the men that she already knew as potential partners, she was surprised to find that there was one guy that had been in her life for years who actually could be a great partner! So she created an opportunity for them to get together on a weekly basis for business which turned into this incredible amazing love affair. So all of her positive thinking never brought her the man of her dreams, but taking action and reaching out did!

Or, how about another client who for three years straight every morning wrote affirmations for an hour and a half and then after those three years she was still broke, had never been in a healthy relationship and had gained a lot of weight. When we got her out of her incessant writing and put her into early morning action steps, everything changed. She doubled her income in the next year. She lost a lot of weight. And she actually went into a new career that was incredibly fulfilling. None of this would've happened if she just relied on her thinking or her positive thoughts or her daily writings of affirmations.

So please remember this: if you totally want to change your life and accomplish huge goals, focus on doing the action steps daily that you would rather not do and allow your mind to catch up to the change. The mind will follow your actions, and as an example, if you start going to the gym four days a week, before you know it your attitude is going to improve because of all the endorphins rushing through your brain!

I know this is not the easiest thing to do, and I know most of us have been brainwashed into thinking that attitude is everything and positive

thinking will bring you whatever you desire. But as you read the above, you can see that that's not actually true. Let's act, right now!

Do you struggle with sleep? Millions do!

According to a variety of studies, over 30% of Americans alone struggle with sleep every evening. Some struggle with getting to sleep. Some struggle with staying asleep. Some struggle with both! And with everything we've been going through in the last number of years, I think that percentage is under reported. In my personal counseling practice, we see about 50% or more of our clients, regardless of why they're working with me, struggling with getting deep, restful sleep.

I myself have struggled for years with sleep. With both my ADD and ADHD, it takes a little bit of an effort to make sure my sleep routine and sleep hygiene is on mark. But, I made a huge mistake a long time ago when I started using alcohol as a way to help me sleep. And if you're like most of us who tried to use alcohol to relax and fall asleep, we will need more and more on a daily basis to get the same sleep effect. And then actually, after just a short period of time, alcohol becomes one of the biggest deterrents to getting a great nights sleep.

Like sugar and nicotine, alcohol can actually create a huge dysfunction in our sleep cycles, which is counteractive to the effect we were hoping to get. And caffeine? Oh my Lord, another major player in disruptive sleep.

Here are a couple ideas in regard to a very powerful sleep routine that you may want to follow:

1. Stop all nicotine, caffeine, and sugar if you struggle to sleep by 2 PM or earlier every day.
2. Alcohol. There's nothing good about this substance when it comes to sleep long term. Eliminate this , even if you need the help of a professional, to allow your brain to find its way back to a normal sleep cycle.
3. Television. Social media. Movies. All these can be disruptive to sleep and the best advice would be to have your mind clear of all electronic devices at least two hours before you go to sleep.

Watching or listening to something extremely relaxing is a totally different story, but be careful about the news, or any type of show that would create an adrenaline response, or excitement in anyway.

4. Exercise can be a great sleep aid if done early enough in the day, but with many people, if you're exercising after 7 o'clock at night it may actually increase the release of endorphins and adrenaline, making it more challenging to sleep. Now everyone is different. I have some clients that go to the gym at 11 at night and they get home at 12:30 and fall asleep instantly. Most of us might need time to calm the body down after our exercise.
5. Eliminate any serious business discussions or relationship discussions late in the evening. Many times couples will get into the habit of talking about very difficult or sensitive topics before bed, which obviously can get out of control... So we are asking all couples if you're going to talk about relationship issues, to do it in the early afternoon at the latest. Or wait until the weekend. But too many times we lose sleep because we end up frustrated over conversations that could have been had at a different time.
6. Meditation, crystal bowl meditation, journaling, prayer, and even light yoga stretches, can be very beneficial prior to sleep.

Follow all the steps above, every day if it's possible. Give your brain and your body 2 to 3 months to reset. When you're making these changes, keep your discipline at all time high. There's nothing better than to go from a terrible sleeper, to a sound sleeper. Our life will change in many beneficial ways.

The four steps to use, to come to closure, after a failed love relationship?

Have you ever heard anyone say, "I just need closure from my last failed relationship."

Not many people say it, but everyone should be in the same mindset after the loss of a love relationship. If you don't come to closure after a failed relationship, if you don't let go of the past, you're doomed to repeat a very similar fate in your future relationships as well.

Coming to closure means we let go of resentment, hurt, disappointment and frustrations. Coming to closure after a failed love relationship means we take seriously our role in the dysfunction. Yes, we have a role, and closure will let ourselves off the hook, and move forward positively in life.

People that don't take the time to come to closure after a failed love relationship? Are jaded. Impatient in love. They are looking for reasons to escape the next relationship, before they may even have a reason to end it! They become insecure. Confidence in love decreases when we still have relations from the past hanging in the wind, because we haven't resolved them.

Now this is really important: there's no need to come to closure in the physical sense, by sitting down and talking with your former partner. This usually blows up in your face!

Unfortunately, many still teach that if you want to come to closure you've got to sit down with that former partner, to leave on good terms. But it rarely happens. It turns into a pissing match, a nightmare. Instead of trying to waste your time to get your former partner to sit down to talk and accept responsibility of why your relationship failed, follow these steps instead:

To come to closure, take the time, work with a professional, write letters of frustration to your former partner, that will never be sent to them. These letters are only for you and the professional to read, outlining, venting all of your anger, disappointment, resentment and maybe even rage that you are carrying forward with them from the past. Once you've written multiple letters, it might take 14 days or 60 days to get all this poison out of your system, you're ready to go on to phase number two.

1. Once you become bored with writing about your resentment or anger, now we go into the concept of writing letters of forgiveness. We actually write letters to your former partner, once again never sent to them, forgiving them for every specific item we were angry about in phase 1. This allows you

to get off the hook. It has nothing to do with letting your former partner off the hook, when you forgive them, you are now free.

2. Call yourself out. Write letters to yourself about the things you did in the relationship that were dysfunctional, because everyone has a role when a relationship that fails.

Were you passive aggressive? Dominating? Codependent? A bully? Push over? Did you not speak honestly with your partner about things that were going on in your mind? Did you shut down when you needed to be open when discussing tough topics? Hold yourself accountable to the part of the dysfunction that's your responsibility, and get help to change it today.

3. Forgive yourself for everything you wrote about in phase 3. Forgive yourself for being obstinate, stubborn, passive aggressive, forgive yourself for isolating, or avoiding, forgive yourself for everything you've ever done in this relationship that was not healthy. Some of us absolutely need a professional to get to the core, if you can't do it on your own reach out for help.

When do you do the above steps in the order they are given, with great intensity, you can come to closure on your own with anyone who's hurt you in the past and never contact them or see them again!

You will find yourself in a place of grace. You will drop any negative judgement towards the opposite sex. You'll drop your resentment, rage and anger at former partners and you will be free.

These stages have worked for every client I've worked with over the past 42 years in ways they never imagined possible! The old form of closure, sitting down with a former partner, rarely ever works. But the above four steps? Will bring you the freedom that you deserve.

The most unique approach to anxiety, that you'll ever hear about!

We all know that anxiety is rampant in our society today. And even with the challenges, I have witnessed some incredible turnarounds with clients who are suffering daily with deep anxiety. We have used everything from cognitive behavioral therapy, meditation, journaling, exercise, and also amino acid supplementation for brain chemistry. We even teach the art of contemplation, which has a beautiful effect on reducing anxiety as well.

But the most unique exercise that I've ever come up with to help deal with my own actual anxiety first, came out of a conversation I had with a friend around 2007. We were walking on the beach together and I was in a lot of pain. I was suffering greatly in my career. The real estate debacle had just happened and I lost three homes and was filled with anxiety. How am I going to make it in this world? What do I need to do for my career to revive it? Everyone around me is drowning in debt and even I can't find a way out, and I'm supposed to be the expert!

As we were walking down the beach I finally just turned to the ocean and screamed "F**** you anxiety! Yes, I'm talking to you! F**** you anxiety, get the hell out of my life right now and forever!"

And what happened next shocked me. The largest wave of calm came over me. My friend looked at me and said "What did you just do? You were like a madman! And now all of a sudden you're cool as a cucumber... What the hell was that?"

I looked at her and started laughing so hard! I had no idea of what was going on, but I had this huge urge within to become rageful at my own anxiety. To get pissed off at my own anxiety and tell her to get the hell out of here. So when I turned to the ocean and started screaming, thank God no one else was around, that wave of calmness hit me so hard, I knew I was onto something different.

Now, if you don't like swearwords, go ahead and substitute any word that has a similar meaning to you, that's absolutely fine.

We continued to walk for another hour, talking about this experience I just had. I was wondering, as a counselor, author and minister, could

I actually use this technique with my clients? Would they think I was insane? Would they think it was too vulgar to do this?

Well, from this one experience on the beach, I have shared this with so many people who have found great relief by following the exact program I created above, with deep emotion! In other words, the key is to access that deep rage, that deep frustration, that deep anger and anxiety and throw it out into the world! Throw that anxiety right out into the world! Or maybe grab a pillow if you're afraid someone might hear you and scream into that pillow!

I'll never forget a woman not too long ago who had struggled with anxiety, so much so she had become almost agoraphobic, afraid to leave her house. After working for eight months, we had found many great breakthroughs with all these other techniques, but there was one final hurdle we had to face. I was hesitant, but I shared this new technique I had created to release anxiety, and she loved it!

She practiced it right in my office and instantly felt better! She was smiling, shaking her head and saying "David how the hell does this work!"

I started laughing... Because honestly I'm not sure how or why it works. Then, several other clients found great result with this as well. There are times in my life today when I'm still struggling, and I do the same thing with anxiety or any type of insecurity I might face... I scream at her to go away! Now I also use 1000 other tools, and all my clients use a variety of different tools as well, we never just get stuck on one emotional technique. But this one has turned out to be more powerful than I could ever believe.

And if it works? Why not follow it.

So who do you share your personal pain with?

Interesting question, isn't it? So many of us, including myself, can take years upon years before we realize that we need people in our corner to share our pain with. This requires incredible vulnerability. Also, humility. Third, many people may think that sharing pain may diminish their self-confidence and self-esteem, but when we become vulnerable, the opposite is true!

In my own life, after struggling with addictions for 30 years, I knew I needed to talk to someone. But I was afraid that I couldn't share my extreme pain and discomfort, caused by my addictions, out of my own fear of being judged. Even as a counselor, who judges none of my clients, I felt that I might be judged if I shared my honest authentic pain.

Thank God the opposite was true. The more I shared with my professional counselor, the better I eventually felt and it allowed me to pick up new tools to change my life. My actions changed the way I lived, and one of those action steps was letting go of the substances that were destroying my confidence and self-esteem. I did that, by sharing the pain within about my own insecurities, and my own perceived failures as a human being.

How about you? Do you share your pain with anyone?

Recently I was working with one of my clients who was a first responder and he was telling me that if he shared his thoughts of depression or anxiety with his team, that he would be written up which would affect his career advancement. Another client, a military veteran felt the same way. When he went to get help, he received all kinds of medication's but no specific therapy. He was confused because after being on all these medications he had not seen any improvement at all. He knew there was a lot of demons, and deep pain within. He needed to find a way to share, but there was no professional that he could find and afford, to sit down and go through his deep emotional concerns.

I was able to work with both of these individuals. Our work is 100% confidential, which allowed them to share their pain during our sessions so that we could find solutions and begin the process of healing.

We all need a place to share our pain. Anonymously is best. And once we get on the process of healing, we may decide sometime down the road to share our feelings with others, as a way to inspire them to reach out and ask for help. Men in our society for years have been told that asking for help is a sign of weakness. Thank God this is radically changing!

When I started my mental health counseling business 42 years ago, 90% of my clients were women. Now, 60% of my clients are women and 40% of men! A great sign!! More men are asking for help. Fantastic.

We need to risk, reach out and share the discomfort whether it's addiction, anxiety, depression, relationship challenges, financial challenges or low self-confidence... We need someone we can rely on to share our

deepest pain. And it's crucial to know that help is here! So please, reach out, start the healing process right now.

Are you sabotaging your marriage or relationship and don't even realize it?

It's so easy to become jaded in a love relationship isn't it? It's so easy to believe that the opposite sex is our enemy, because of past or current experiences. I've seen potentially great relationships and marriages go down the drain because of one tip I'm going to share with you today that sabotages the hell out of every relationship possible.

But this tip, if reversed, can do the opposite: by reversing this trend you may actually save the relationship you're in.

And what is this one tip, the self sabotaging technique that destroys love and the potential of a healthy relationship?

It's called scorekeeping. Scorekeeping. And many of us do it, maybe even subconsciously on a daily basis. Recently, when working with a new couple, the wife told me that she had been keeping score with her husband for the past 10 years. If he didn't do something that he normally did on any given day, let's say bring her coffee when she's reading out on the porch, she would stick this "mistake," in the back of her brain. Later on that evening, if he asked her to do something for him, she would hesitate or make up an excuse of why she couldn't do it at that time.

Instead of dealing with the reality that maybe he simply forgot that morning, or maybe he got super busy, she would just keep score. Another term for this, that many people really do not like is "vindictive love."

In a vindictive love relationship, the person will also make comments like "I'm just giving you what you gave to me, I'm returning your negative energy directly in your face right now."

Does that sound like a healthy, loving relationship? When it happens over and over again? No, it's unhealthy, vindictive love.

It's scorekeeping at its worst.

Men do this too. Too many people, rely on scorekeeping in love, or vindictive love techniques instead of dropping that small ego and getting into the reality of what it really takes to have a healthy, long-term relationship.

In scorecard type love relationships, resentments are building, frustrations are building, walls around our heart are being built and eventually the relationship is either going to implode or explode.

Eliminate all scorekeeping from your life. Evaluate how you can live differently. And, once the vindictive love techniques are removed, you might just have a chance to save that relationship.

My depression: The causes, the healing. The same can happen to you.

I was a pretty angry child. Super competitive, which can often lead to challenges with frustration and an attitude that was not always optimistic. Growing up in Syracuse New York, I was diagnosed with a variety of different allergies as a child which the doctors at that time told my parents was probably the creation or the cause of my irritability, unsettledness and daily frustration.

But now looking back, I don't think that was the case at all. During these early years and even into my teens, I self medicated beginning with sugar and then alcohol and every kind of hard drug known to man.

Later in life, I was self-medicating with success, money and relationships. In other words, for as long as I can remember, until I was able to get help for my own depression and anxiety, I was always covering up something that I didn't want to deal with.

And while some people will blame their depression on genetics, in my own life and in my personal professional practice I see that it's much more environmentally based. In other words, we just aren't taught coping skills young enough in life, to be able to handle rejection, frustration, loss and more.

Through my own self medication I was able to mask my depression for years. Until 1990, when everything came crashing down. I was living on the beach, doing the work I loved and yet I became suicidal. Thoughts of suicide raced through my head every day. I started to isolate. I became agoraphobic. I was able to stay in my home, with alcohol as my primary self-medicating tool, and still do the work that I love so much.

When I did go out in public, I wore the face of a champion! I was always happy, upbeat, hosting a nationally syndicated radio show with

Westwood One for three hours every Saturday and Sunday. I was in heaven. At least partially. But when the show was over, I would go back to my house, lock the door and drink myself to sleep.

I had finally reached an all time low. I went to the store and bought materials, everything I needed in order to end my life. I decided the next day, was going to be the day that I finally got myself out of this outrageous pain that I've been in for such a long period of time.

However on that day my anxiety became so high that I couldn't follow through with taking my own life, so I called every psychiatrist in town begging someone to let me see a doctor today. No one would take me. Everyone had a three month waiting list. I didn't feel comfortable going to the hospital emergency room, so instead I picked one psychiatrist out of the phonebook, drove to his office, walked into the reception area and said I will not leave until I see the doctor.

I begged. I pleaded with the receptionist. Finally she relented and the doctor saw me hours later, which was another massive turning point in my life. It was a day that my life was saved. He immediately put me on heavy antidepressants, and over the next several months, he adjusted dosages because the side effects were so terrible. Yet, even with the terrible side effects, the suicidal thoughts finally went away.

He encouraged me to see a therapist in the area named Aina, and I worked with her every week for a year while we adjusted or tried to adjust the multiple medications I was on. One to battle depression. One to battle insomnia. One to battle anxiety. After a number of months, I wanted to stop all the medications because the side effects were so terrible. But I persevered. My counselor was amazing, and blew my mind one day when she shared with me that my depression was caused by my low self-confidence, low self-esteem and zero coping skills on how to deal with the pressures of every day life. What? Can you believe that? I had just been on the cover of several fitness magazines, Lifetime Television had just said that I was "The number one life coach in America!". How could I have low self-confidence?

I was helping people every day with their own struggles and challenges, but I couldn't help myself? And the answer was, no I could not. I needed immense help, I needed a village to help raise this adult child.

Months upon months went by and then something shifted. I walked

into my counselors office and said, “You’re not going to believe this but the birds are back on the beach.” To which she looked at me and said, “David we live in Florida, the birds are always here... You are the one who just came back.”

I cried. I cried more. I was so emotionally touched with tears of joy, and right now the tears are starting to come back. Tears of gratitude that I’m still here, on this earth, trying my best to help others who struggle as well.

After 12 months of being on medication, and working with my counselor, we started to titrate down until I was completely free of all the anti-depressant and sleep medication that I had been on for those 12 consecutive months. I started to take amino acid supplementation to help with brain chemistry and it worked. Eventually I got completely sober from alcohol and cocaine and anything else I could get my hands on to self medicate. Then I took everything I learned from my own experience and started sharing it with thousands of people all over the world.

We brought our program on helping to heal depression to veterans, Active military, first responders. Even major-league professional athletes from every sport you can imagine, have come to us to go through our program on healing depression and anxiety.

Like myself, many of my clients struggle with depression and anxiety because of all of the submerged emotions that we don’t want to deal with: anger, shame, rage, guilt, addiction, low self-confidence, low self-esteem, extremely high levels of insecurity and more!

But there is a way out. And it works. Let’s heal together today. Not on your own, but with help. I am here to help as well. Let’s talk.

Sobriety: When is it appropriate to share this life change with others?

Every year, millions of people from around the world become sober. Every year, the same people are getting a new lease on life. And every year, too many people, speak too soon about their attempt at sobriety and recovery before they’re actually grounded in the work.

A few years ago a client contacted me because she wanted to get sober, but didn’t even know how to start the process. She was a very successful

business person, admired by many, but knew she had a problem. It was affecting not only her relationship with her family, but also relationships with people in the workplace.

She had contemplated getting sober for years, but was never sure if she was ready to actually do the work. But she did great! For the first 30 days, she was absolutely amazing. And then unbeknownst to myself, She started posting all over social media how she decided to get sober, she was in recovery and was doing phenomenal. When she came in the next week, she was beaming! She had over 400 likes on her social media post and 300 comments congratulating her on her new life of sobriety.

She was so happy, but she also saw that my response wasn't what she expected. So she asked me, why I wasn't as excited as she was.

"Do you remember when I mentioned to you during our first session, that we really don't want to talk or share about our own personal journey into sobriety until we have had a very strong foundation built, in my opinion at least one year, so we don't risk the chance of relapse? Do you remember talking about "The Pink Cloud" in recovery, where early in sobriety we may be more confident, then we should be?"

She looked at me and nodded her head yes. When I asked her why she posted so soon on social media, she told me the truth. She wanted validation. She was searching for people to tell her she was amazing. A strong sign of low self-confidence for sure.

She wanted instant gratification. The validation. But it wasn't enough. Seven days later, after making that post, she relapsed harshly. She was an absolute mess. She had gone out of town to meet some old friends that she used to drink with, and was not prepared with the emotional coping skill tips that are needed by everyone in recovery, before they put themselves back into the lions den.

If you're early in sobriety, early in recovery, we recommend that we don't mention a thing to anyone outside our immediate family, until we have at least 365 days in a row of sober living, recovery living. Now this also includes 365 days in a row of not cross addicting, like many people do from alcohol to caffeine or alcohol to sugar or alcohol to nicotine.

We wait to 365 days so we can go through the seasons, holidays, birthdays, weddings, funerals, fights, celebrations, without the thought of having a drink and especially without ever having a drink.

Once you make the decision to get sober, slow down. No need to broadcast the news. As a matter of fact, even though I've been sober a very long time, I never tell people the amount of years that I'm sober because it really doesn't matter. I've met people with 30, 40 and 50 years of sobriety that have so many of the negative alcoholic personality characteristics still, that they're not really sober. It's called being a "dry drunk."

So as I just mentioned above, slow down. Wait until your recovery is incredibly grounded in reality before you share it with the world.

If you ever choose, to share it with the world.

Peak performance for men and women: What does it really take?

To operate at peak performance, think of yourself as an athlete whether you're a man or a woman, and the type of training that they have to put in on a daily basis to maximize their potential in life.

I want you to think of yourself as an athlete, reaching for peak performance with your mind, body, soul, finances, career relationships and more.

1. Let's begin with health and fitness. Without great health, no matter how wonderful you are in relationships or how much money you make you'll never be able to maximize your potential in life. Our health is everything. Studies still show that only about 15% of Americans exercise 3 to 4 days per week, yet every man and woman could benefit dramatically even by walking for 30 or 60 minutes every day.

The second part of the health equation is going to be your diet. What we eat can either increase or decrease our chance of disease, and, increase or decrease the chances of conditions like irritability, frustration and more that can come simply from low blood sugar levels!

And, there's a lot of controversy over the best way to eat. We still believe that men and women should be consuming some type of healthy clean food every 3 to 4 hours to keep blood sugar levels normalized. Lean proteins, a ton of vegetables, some fruit and complex carbohydrates like

brown rice are great ways to start improving your diet.

Removing salt, sugar, high fat foods and processed foods is also part of the equation. Obviously, removing alcohol, nicotine and drugs would be another part of the health solution for both men and women to find peak performance.

2. Communication skills. Women have been known to be better verbally in regard to communication, but men are catching up quickly in our society today.

Both men and women need to learn emotional regulation skills in communication, how to agree to disagree, some of the basic principles of communication that we could all improve. Being honest. Humble. Vulnerable. And being able to communicate those feelings and emotions is crucial as men and women try to reach higher levels of maximizing their own potential in life.

3. Past the age of 30, for many people these days, hormone levels can start to dramatically drop for both men and women regardless of what you're doing for your body, mind and spirit. The only way that you will know if your hormones are allowing you to operate at peak performance would be to work with a hormone specialist. Go through a complete hormone panel of estrogen, testosterone, DHEA and more, to see if your hormone levels are at peak performance or not. Supplementation these days, is incredibly easy.
4. Downtime. Men and women who are looking to perform at the highest level ever, need downtime for themselves. If it's walking every morning for a half an hour in nature, joining a tennis or bowling league or maybe taking a class on photography... Men and women need the downtime in order to keep their minds active and creative in nature.

As you can imagine, this is just the beginning of looking at how to maximize your performance in life. Who you hang out with is also crucial. What you listen to will either bring you up or down. What you read will

either inspire you or hold you back. Peak performance, at this time in our world, is incredibly important for both men and women to put time going after. Start today.

Men: Do you have a missing link with your father?

How deep is your relationship with your father right now? Now I'm going to exclude those men reading this writing who left their father because of abuse or neglect or whose father is no longer here. This writing may or may not help you in your growth as a man.

But for every adult male reading this whose father is still alive, this writing could have a huge impact on your life. Even though I've been doing this work for over 42 years, I still need to learn on a daily basis. What I'm going to share with you below is one of the greatest teachings I've ever learned in my entire life.

Like most men when I was young, I had a very surface relationship with my mother. This dramatically deepened over the years and even became more profound through her suffering with dementia before she passed away not too long ago.

The relationship with my father was very similar, very surface relationship until a very short time ago. Over the years, I've spoken to my brother Terry and other adult men about this, that we have a tendency to shy away from telling our parents the truth about our lives. Our addictions. Our money issues. Our relationship challenges. And so many other things that we're afraid to be open and honest about with our fathers and mothers.

Now for some of us, this makes sense. If we've been rejected, put down, emotionally abandoned by our father, most men are not going anywhere near the depth of intimate, honest communication because we're afraid of the end result. Or maybe we're afraid that our father might worry about us, so we don't tell them the truth about our lives because somehow we think we're saving them from going through some type of grief. Or maybe we have a macho image, that it's weak to show our own failures to our fathers, so we choose to hold it all in.

Last year, I had the most intimate conversation with my father that included tears and laughter, and most importantly allowed me to be 100%

honest with him about my entire life for the first time in my existence. I think I made up all kinds of erroneous beliefs like: because my father was an accountant, because my father was not overly expressive emotionally, that it wouldn't do any good to share with him certain things about my life because he wouldn't understand anyway.

I could not have been more wrong. I could not have been more incorrect in my beliefs about what my father was capable of doing with any of my emotional states that he was presented with. So I started telling him what I learned from him and what I'm still learning from him as we grow older together.

I reminded him, over and over what incredible role model he was throughout my whole life, and just seeing him at my Syracuse University basketball game, sitting in the stands with his egg salad sandwich every night, was an absolute joy for me to see! It said, that my dad loved me.

I'm not sure why I waited this long to speak to him so openly, maybe it's because he's 94 years of age and has an incredible amount of medical health issues. And even with all these issues, he battles through them with an amazing attitude every day of his life. I really have no idea how he does this.

As a man reading this, I want you to really slow down and think about the power of having these type of conversations with our fathers while they're still here with us on earth. My dad, for 30 minutes straight, never left eye contact with me. In other words, for the full 30 minutes he stared directly into my eyes as we both smiled, laughed and cried together. I had no idea that my own father had this type of emotional strength, because to stay so focused and look into someone's eyes for 30 straight minutes without breaking contact takes a very evolved, very emotionally grounded, very beautiful and strong human being.

My father, blew my mind that day. I wanted to thank him, for all of the reasons and all of the experiences that I had with him, that I never thanked him for before in my life. My life at that moment went to a much deeper level, because of my dad's openness that he shared with me in that brief 30 minutes of time.

I ended up telling him all that he taught me. I told him that my mom, who had passed on recently, had also taught me some of the most amazing things in the world and I couldn't be more proud to call them my parents.

I know not every person reading this will have the same feelings about their mother and father, and for those who suffered greatly, I am so sorry that you did not receive what you needed in life.

I hope somehow, through the work you'll do, that you will rise above your childhood experiences if they were negative, and try your very best to let them go.

I went on to tell my dad about struggles in my life that he had no idea I went through. I told him about how hard it was losing my mom and how I broke down over and over in the cemetery, when the reality hit that she was gone forever.

The whole time that I was telling him all these challenges, he never turned away. He let me know that he was fully present with every word I was saying. And even though he has these incredibly powerful hearing aids, that sometimes block words that I share with him, he never missed a word that day.

Over the 65 years that I've been on planet earth, I can never remember a time of ever crying with my dad. I can never remember the intense eye contact that we both shared for 30 minutes. I can never remember telling him in the past any of my own personal secrets, and all of these emotions that were pouring out of my mind, my heart and even my eyes in this very deep, intimate conversation.

If you do this with your own father, understand that yes, there could be a risk of rejection. A risk of embarrassment. A risk of abandonment. And all I can tell you, is that it's worth the risk to be real with your father.

I never wanted to go to my grave without being able to express, what I expressed to my dad that day. Don't wait. Don't think there's going to be a better day. We have no idea how long we're going to be on this earth, and if you're ready willing and able, this is the time to have possibly one of the deepest intimate conversations you'll ever have in your life... With your very own father.

Are you over the age of 18? Read this right now!

If you're over 18, the information in this writing could possibly change your life forever. I just turned 65 years of age and I wish someone would've presented this concept of challenging our beliefs earlier in life. Since no

one did this for me, I want to do it for you. As a way to give back and help you move forward in life, so you can live the best life ever.

1. Become more independent. Rely less on others opinions, to make your own opinion. Now if you're thinking right now that you're incredibly independent, and this isn't important for you, I used to think the same thing. And I was dead wrong. I thought I was the most independent man in the world until 1997 when I began working with another counselor on a 52 week course on codependency. Within the first first four weeks I realized without a doubt that I was extremely codependent in my intimate relationships. And probably many other places as well.

You see, the independent person does not need validation, they really don't care what other people think. Not in a cruel way, but just in a very self-confident fashion. Independent people are leaders. Independent people make decisions for themselves, not simply relying on what their partner or parents say, or their next-door neighbor or even a professional. Independent people will take outside information, and then they will make a decision even if everyone around them thinks it's wrong.

I'll never forget when I sat down to write our first number 1 best selling book "Positive thinking will never change your life... But this book will!" Until I reached a high level of independence, I could never have written this book. Earlier in my career? Forget it. I would've been so afraid of pushback and criticism. But guess what happened? When I became independent and didn't care what other people thought about my philosophies regarding positive thinking, the book became a number one best seller. This is what happens for independent people. We need to trust ourselves, yes ask others for opinion, but the final decision should always be within your own independent mindset.

2. Become more creative, to make a bigger difference in this world. We need to walk out on the ledge of life. We need a challenge ourselves regarding how creative we are,

because the most creative people in the world are constantly adapting to the world around them. Constantly adapting to the challenges and coming up with new patterns to serve themselves and the world. They are more creative.

It doesn't matter what you do! Hairstylist? Painter? Counselor? Nurse? Convenient store clerk? Stay at home mom or dad? Whatever you do, add more creativity today. The most creative people in the world are constantly pushing the edge, trying new things. It doesn't always work. But you cannot become more successful without stretching your own limits in life.

3. Learn to love yourself. Deeply. If you look in the mirror and you can honestly say, that you have no addictions to any substances, no addictions to any behaviors, no addictions at all that need to be corrected... In my opinion you are on a strong pathway to self-love.

If you look at the above paragraph, we are probably cutting out a major percentage of the population because most of us struggle with one form of addiction or another.

But with self-love, we release the negative thoughts, the victimhood and the addictions. With self-love we treat our body like the temple it should be treated like. We know we are here to serve the world and we love ourselves more by going deeper into greater service for humankind .

Look into the eyes of the homeless. Look into the eyes of the obese. Talk to them. Ask them their name. Send them prayers of love. When you do this, you're loving yourself at one of the deepest levels possible.

4. Let go of the past. If we have resentments against ourselves or others, we are living in the past. I know as you read this, if someone betrayed you or deeply hurt you, you might really struggle with thinking about the concept of forgiveness. Hire a professional and learn the art of forgiveness, it's one of the most powerful things you can do to radically improve your life.

5. Death is coming! And this is a positive statement! When you respect death, you live life to the fullest. When you respect death, there's no time to be a victim in this existence. When you respect death, you maximize every moment of every day. When you respect death, you live in the moment, looking for that beautiful bird or that gorgeous cloud in the sky! When you respect death, you live life!

Being on this earth for years now has not given me the answer to all of humanity's problems. But it has given me some insight of how I need to change, even in regard to the above points, to make sure I'm living in the moment. To make sure that I'm still maximizing my potential in life. I want to respect life and I want to respect death so much, that when the end comes knocking on my door, as we used to say in basketball, "I've left it all on the court."

I gave it my all. I gave it my best. Now I can rest with God.

How do we live a life, full of bravery?

When most people think of living a life filled with bravery, they think of standing up for the underdog. Defending someone against a bully. Or, maybe even going to war. And these are all examples of bravery. But, there's many more examples that you and I can benefit from in order to start to create a life filled with not only bravery, but success, motivation and more... The end result of living a brave life.

I look at bravery as one of those words rarely used these days, but it's very important to bring back into our vernacular because it describes so many people that I'm going to talk about below.

The stories will include so many characteristics of individuals who are extremely brave and successful and happy in life!

I had a client once that was raped and left for dead. They came to me approximately eight years after the experience and we were together for a complete year, to help her overcome this incredible tragic and almost life ending event. Why do I consider her so incredibly brave? Because she faced her greatest fears during our sessions. She did every ounce of homework I gave her. And this work is very intense when you're dealing

with overcoming something like rape or incest. She is one of the bravest people I've ever met in my life!

Or how about my friend Evelyn Keiling, who faced the fact that she was 240 pounds overweight and did everything possible to change her situation. And she did. After making the major life changes and losing her weight, she walked on stage in Las Vegas, Nevada in front of 15,000 screaming fans with this massive weight transformation! That's bravery!

Or how about the alcoholics and addicts in the world that finally reach out for help, in order to get rid of addictions that have been ruining their lives!

How about Rosa Parks? Pure bravery. Or what about one of my clients, an emotionally abused woman in a marriage, who finally agreed to go to a women's shelter, that not only saved her life but also the life of her children. Pure bravery.

How can you become more brave, if needed, like the people have mentioned above?

1. Get humble. Get vulnerable. Ask for help. They knew that there was no way they were going to pull themselves out of their challenges if they tried to do it on their own.
2. Just don't give up! It doesn't matter how much weight they've lost, or how large the addiction was, these people just keep moving forward. They refuse to get sucked into the vortex of peer pressure, and return to unhealthy habits or beliefs. They are independent, powerful and proud.
3. They carefully select individuals that they want to interact with in their life. Their friends, associates, even lovers are all people they hand pick, individuals who also lead a life of bravery.

Brave people are not afraid to start to diminish the time they spend with individuals who might be negative in nature. Or struggle with addictions that they don't want to change. They look to fill their life with people who are incredibly supportive, maybe some people who have gone through the same challenges they have in the past as well.

Today is the day for you to become brave. Or maybe just braver.

Today is the day for you to reach out for help. Today is the day for you to celebrate your strength, your bravery by walking into the pain, by walking into your challenges versus trying to escape them.

Are you ready, to be brave? Let's go.

Are you a man, with a drop in your sexual desire?

You've seen the ads on TV. You've seen the billboards and the writings telling us that our low sexual drive as a man is probably due to low testosterone. And it very well could be. But is that the only, major reason that men struggle with sexual drive or sexual desire?

Several years ago I suffered a major loss of my life. Someone who I thought would be with me until I left this planet was taken away, way too early. I was stunned. Absolutely stunned. If someone told me a year before this would've happened, I never would've believed them. Because the loss was so deep, so intense, my body reacted in the most bizarre way I could ever imagine.

Even though this person that I lost had nothing to do with my sexuality or sexual drive, we were very best friends that's all, my mind and body completely shut down. Now, because I've worked in the world of mental health and personal growth for over 40 years, I knew that even though I was getting older, that my sex drive should not just disappear overnight for God's sake. I couldn't figure it out, I had no clue of what was going on.

And it wasn't just about getting on Viagra or some other medication like that. I just had no interest in sex at all. So not only did my desire die, my sexual drive died, but then a couple weeks later I couldn't even get an erection if someone paid me \$1 million! That, is simply the truth. So in doing some introspection, I found the answer: I needed to grieve the loss of my friend, I needed to grieve the loss of this friendship, I need to forgive this person, and forgive myself for anything I may have done that created this upheaval.

I spent the next eight months journaling, writing, forgiving, letting go, releasing and then loving myself and others once again. The end result? My sexual drive came back. Finally! My ability to be a healthy calm, functioning male had finally returned.

And this is one of the things I try to help men with all the time, the lack of sexual drive or desire may not always be physically related. Now if this is ongoing for you, the number one step to make would be to get in with your doctor and to check your hormones to make sure there isn't something physical stopping your sexual drive. Or, maybe there's a medication that has a side effect of diminishing your sexual desire. Your doctor can help you with those issues for sure.

But what I found, in regard to my drop in sexual desire and function, was that it was 100% emotional.

Since doing the deep internal emotional work regarding my own loss of sexual drive and desire, there have been so many men that I've talked to, who began to share their same stories with me. And once they clear up the emotional damage, they can then follow the principles of changing their lifestyle, as we know that smoking and alcohol can both have a negative affect on our ability to function sexually. If you're a woman reading this and your partner who happens to be a guy has lost his sexual drive, pay attention to everything in this book. Share this writing with your man. I know how terrifying it can be, how debilitating it is when a man loses his ability, and his identity as a virile, sexual man. It may be physical, but at the same time, it might be something much deeper as well.

Lacking joy? Read this.

When we feel joyful, the world is a happy place. Joy brings a sense of peace, for some individuals joy even brings laughter and smiles. Joy, should be one of the major goals we have in life. Reaching joy on a daily basis in order to have more fun in this dance called life, is crucial as we move forward in our existence.

But many times, we may think that we are joyful when we're actually not. I'll never forget my experiences interviewing the founder of Transcendental Meditation, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. It was 1996 and we were the only media outlet, my nationally syndicated radio show with Westwood one, that he selected to celebrate The 40th anniversary of Transcendental Meditation. This was the form of meditation that the Beatles took worldwide with them after meeting Maharishi in the early 60s.

After this incredible interview one of his assistants flew down to Florida to actually interview me after I spoke at a major conference in Orlando, Florida. During the interview, this young lady who had been with Maharishi for 36 of his 40 years, asked me what I remembered about my interview with him. I told her that this is weird, it's a hard question but the only thing I can remember was his child like Joy.

What she said next floored me. "David the reason you remember his joy, is because you don't have any. This may be tough to hear right now, but it's the truth. Everyone who spends time with Maharishi walks away with one key element they remember, and it's almost always what is missing in their life."

I was flabbergasted. She didn't even know me, how could she tell me I didn't have any joy? Three weeks later, on Tuesday afternoon at 2:30 PM in 1996, I came out of another three day binge. I looked in the mirror and said, "David, you have no joy." She was right. I had money. A house on the beach. Mercedes convertible. I did the work I love. But my addiction to alcohol and cocaine had robbed my life of joy on a weekly basis.

My lack of joy, was self induced.

Let's take a look at some of the reasons that can create a lack of joy in our life today:

1. Staying in a long term, incredibly unhealthy love relationship. This will rob people of joy quicker than anything. So many relationships are filled with insanity, chaos, drama and codependency, which rips away any amount of joy you might be looking for. Either get help, serious help or end the relationship. You deserve joy.
2. Working a job you hate will destroy any amount of joy you might want to find in life. You may have to suck it up for a while, but then work your butt off to get into a position that you enjoy, that can become joy like.
3. Victimhood. If you're one of those people that likes to blame everyone else for your sadness, your financial challenges, your weight gain, if you blame the government, your boss, your children, your partner, your parents for your lack of joy in life you are a victim. And victims never heal.

Take a look at the above points, and circle the one that you believe could have the greatest impact on reducing your joy in life.

Focus on that one change. Get help for that one change. Create a daily routine to shatter that one area that is robbing joy from your life. And when you do, you'll become an incredible role model for people around you to do the same thing.

How to correct our mistakes in life?

From 1980 until 1996 I traveled the world. I was actually on the road for 40 weeks or more, speaking both across the United States and internationally. And during those travels, I continued to tell people that “whatever you believe you can achieve, your positive thinking will always bring you the end result you desire.”

And I was dead wrong. And I apologize to anyone who followed me back then for the misinformation I was sharing. I am so sorry.

It's not the easiest thing in the world to apologize for the mistakes that we've made in life, but it's absolutely necessary to have the integrity to do so. So I apologize.

It just doesn't work to put positive vibes or thoughts out into the universe and expect your income to increase, your body to shed pounds of fat or even to attract that perfect soulmate. We've been fed a bunch of bull. And I was part of the problem. I was teaching things like the law of attraction, that has very little to do with reality, if you want me to be honest with you. Of course, after making a mistake like this for 16 years and teaching a philosophy that's not true, I had to make up for my past errors. And I've done it through multiple books I've written since that time, including this very writing.

And how about you? Are you telling people things because famous people taught them to you? Are you believing certain principles about success because someone who sold 1 million books told you it's true, even though when you try to apply the same principles in your life, you don't get the same results? Well, that's what I did. I was a big parrot. Repeating things just because other famous people in my field repeated those same things. I always remember this quote, “If it sounds to be good to be true it probably is.”

Philosophies like the law of attraction are interesting but rarely valid. I'll never forget my first major interview with Jenny McCarthy, the celebrity who hosts the famous television show "The Masked Singer," on her previous SiriusXM radio show.

Jenny had invited me on the show because our new book, "Positive thinking will never change your life... But this book will!", Grabbed her attention. She was a huge fan of The Secret and the Law of Attraction, and wanted to hear what I had to say. I loved her open mindedness!

After introducing me to her massive audience, she stepped back and said, "Ladies and gentlemen you know I've been a huge fan of positive thinking and the law of attraction, my next guest David Essel has a brand new book out that says this might not be true. I'm giving David three minutes to sell me, and then after his time is up I'll give you my feedback."

And I rocked it. I also mentioned during that interview and several other interviews I had with Jenny that I needed to make amends, and apologize for my past promotion of things like the law of attraction, when they were not valid at all. You can't just use your positive thoughts to become a millionaire.

And after my three minutes, Jenny shook her head gave me a big smile and leaned into her microphone and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, you have just heard the truth. David Essel has changed my mind, he is now the new leader of the positive thinking movement!"

Oh my Lord! My mistake, and admitting my mistake and writing a book talking about my mistake actually lead to a major breakthrough, and our first number one best selling book.

Mistakes can lead to greatness, once we admit them and change them.

And through my mistakes I found a secret formula for success: 20% of massive success will come from your thinking, but 80% will come from you being willing to do the work that you're probably not doing right now. This has been a hard lesson for me, to look back and write apologies in my writings and books for teachings that I used to believe in, that were filled with nonsense. But now we know the truth. Do the work. Do the work. And do the work.

And if you make a mistake on your way to becoming more successful in life? Admit it. Change it. And move on.

Is kissing necessary for a great sex life?

Can you have a great sex life, without kissing? Can you have a great sex life, with minimal kissing? I would've never guessed in 1 million years, that by throwing this topic about kissing and sex on my national radio show, would've brought such a torrid response from my listeners!

And I would've never guessed what their answer was, from 80% of the respondents who all agreed with the same concept. Are you ready?

80% of people that called in said kissing was not necessary for a great sex life! As a matter of fact, several of them who had been with the same partner for 25 years, said that they hadn't kissed while having sex in the past 15 years! And the super surprising thing about this response, was that most of the people who called in... Were women! I couldn't believe it!

I had to wonder, was there something these people were avoiding? Was kissing too intimate? Or were they just bored with their partner and wanted to just get into the sexual acts, have their mutual orgasms, and then move on for the rest of the day? Or simply to go to sleep at night?

This radio show led me to write several books on relationships, and it also started to open up more and deeper conversations with many of the couples that I'm working with. Those who had avoided kissing for so long, found out that when they went back to starting their foreplay with kissing, especially French kissing, their drive and desire for each other went much deeper than simply having sex without kissing.

Kissing, opens a deeper emotional connection between two people. The number of nerve endings in the lips and the tongue are so immense in nature, that it's one of the greatest ways to create deep sexual arousal.

One couple that had avoided kissing for over 15 years, but had a very shallow sexual life, took my challenge and started every time they were going to have sex with a minimum of 15 minutes of straight kissing! And they loved it! It rekindled the deeper emotional and physical flame within each other. Every time I met with them, they couldn't stop talking about the power of the kiss.

Now if the thought of kissing your partner is not attractive, maybe you've never really learned how to kiss effectively, or maybe it's just not your gig, that's OK as well. If you and your partner both agree that kissing

isn't necessary, and you're really happy with your emotional connection and your sexual connection, don't change a thing! But if you're looking for something a little different, a little more... Kissing might just be the answer.

Do you remember how turned on we all got in high school, by simply making out in the back of a car? Beautiful, beautiful memories. It might be Time to bring them back.

Is it healthy to accept everyone in your life as they are right now?

Recently, a very famous minister sent out a worldwide email, claiming that we needed to learn how to accept everyone around us exactly as they are today. Regardless of what they bring to the table. Regardless of how much baggage they have, that could be negatively affecting our lives.

While this sounds deeply spiritual, and similar to unconditional love, is it really healthy?

I fully believe that learning to love individuals who are different than we are, and accept individuals who are different than we are, is one of the traits of a deeply connected, spiritual individual. Someone who is living in deep consciousness, someone who is very present in life.

But does that mean, that we should accept people into our lives who are not honest? Gossipers? Addicts? Liars? I know this sounds brutal, but would you look at the list above and say that you would like to have people in your life with those characteristics? I don't think so. Me either.

I believe there's too many simple motivational sayings like the one above, too many philosophical quotes, too many spiritual teachings that truly are far off base. That may actually hurt us versus helping us. The thought that we should accept everyone in our lives exactly as they are, even if their habits, beliefs and actions are hurting us, is filled with peril. It seems to me to be a very codependent belief system.

And this is a fine line to walk isn't it? We want to be accepting, compassionate, and loving to everyone around us... But if our inner circle consists of alcoholics or addicts or manipulators or victims or liars... Are these the type of people that we should accept? Or should we have the

independent strength, the independent knowledge, to welcome them to stay in our lives if they're willing to drop the habits that are negatively affecting us as well as themselves?

Let's take a few simple logical steps in order to make better decisions regarding people that we associate with:

1. Decrease the amount of time that you're spending with friends whose morals or ethics, are not at the highest level necessary. We want honesty. Humility. Vulnerability in our inner circle.
2. You may have to separate from people for a while, or maybe even leave them for good, if their behaviors are extremely harmful to you emotionally and or physically.
3. Learn the art of setting healthy boundaries and healthy consequences with everyone in your life. This is the art of independence. And extremely difficult for codependent people to do.

Would you have the strength to say this to a member of your family?

"Uncle Jim, we would love to have you over for Christmas again this year. In the past, there have been many arguments about politics and religion that have happened because of your strong opinions and also because of the amount of alcohol you drink at these occasions. So we would love to invite you over again this year, but there will be no alcohol served and we are going to ask you upfront not to drink before you come or bring alcohol with you. We want this to be a really beautiful family event, and we're also going to eliminate conversations about politics, the pandemic, vaccinations and more. If this is all acceptable to you, we cannot wait to have you with us! Looking forward to your reply."

This is the world the independent person lives in. They're not here to have everyone love them or everyone like them but they're going to make sure that they will surround themselves with people who are healthy both emotionally and physically. Accepting others is awesome, but with a caveat. Keep moving forward today.

Is it time to let go of alcohol for life?

Alcohol is often used as a social lubricant, or relaxant, and also as a way to avoid the emotions or the reality of life. So how do you know when you go from a social drinker, to one who becomes dependent or even addicted to alcohol?

I myself was an extremely high functioning, high level alcoholic for over 30 years. I never got a DUI. I was never late for work. And yeah, looking back, there was no doubt in my mind that I became dependent on and then addicted to alcohol.

How about you? Can you handle it well? Has it brought into your life any problems? You don't have to get a DUI, you don't have to get arrested for battery, you don't have to get alcohol poisoning in order to realize that alcohol needs to be released forever. According to statistics from our own government, about 30% of Americans struggle with dependency or addiction to alcohol. Unfortunately, most of us think of alcoholics as those living underneath the bridge, but that's not the case at all. Look at me. Very successful, for a very long time, and very much an alcoholic during many of those years.

Here's some thoughts to think about:

- If you've gotten a hangover in the last 365 days, you probably have a problem with alcohol.
- Do you find that with your partner or friends, that the most common way you hang out on weekends or evenings is surrounded with alcohol?
- Do you have ongoing arguments in friendships or relationships where alcohol is involved?
- Reading this writing, does it bother you? Then you probably have a problem with alcohol.
- Do you have children? Well, now, it gets serious. It's probably a good idea if you have more than one simple drink a day, to let alcohol go. You're a role model. The most important one they may ever have.

- When you get really upset, or really tired, or really hurt or really bored... Does the thought of having a drink pop into your mind regularly?

Alcoholism is deceptive, tricky and outrageously seductive in society today. When I drank, I used so many justifications that allowed me to continue with this habit even though it was destroying many areas of my life. I deserve this drink to relax. I want to go to the networking event and have drinks with some men so that we can create deeper business collaborations together. It's my vacation. I only take it once a year and I deserve to have a great time and drink if I want to.

Alcohol, when abused, strips freedom from life. Our freedom from living at the highest potential. And our freedom to be the most amazing role model that people around us need to see.

If you see yourself in this writing, anywhere in this writing, you just might consider reaching out for help.

What is situational depression?

Situational depression, rarely talked about, but it's exactly what it sounds like. I've worked with clients over the past 40 years who have gone into deep depression after the ending of a marriage, or the loss of a parent or sibling. Or loved one. Or the loss of a career or job. I've had people go through situational depression when it comes to losing their home, or recovering even from an addiction.

During the holidays, I've helped hundreds of my clients over the years work through the situational depression that occurred because it was the first time they were celebrating the holidays alone... After the loss of a family member or divorce or maybe even just because of a move to a new city. In these cases, the holidays can be filled with millions of people facing situational depression.

During situation depression, the brain shuts down from an overload of stress, anxiety, worry and more. And the submerged emotions that go hand-in-hand with any of the above, become deeper and deeper when we're not dealing with them. And even if we're at the top of our game,

taking care of our body with exercise and good nutrition as well as having a daily spiritual component of prayer and meditation, does not protect us from going into situational depression.

As stated above, situational depression can be created when we experience an event that wears down our emotions, mindset and even physical body.

Here are some of the signs that you might face if you're going through situational depression:

1. A loss of joy in life. Nothing seems to lift our spirits anymore.
2. A craving, or desire to numb our brain with food, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, television or other forms of media.
3. Shutting down emotionally. We may become irritable, angry at the drop of a hat, and impatient.
4. Insomnia or a great struggle to get the amount of rest necessary on a daily basis.
5. A negative attitude. Nothing seems right, no one's opinion around us is correct, we are basically down in the dumps.

Situational depression is more common than we might think. Right now in the pandemic, many people are going through a situational depression, and they may have been in the situational depression for the past year and a half. And that would be normal.

But what's not normal, is staying stuck in the situational depression. We must reach out to others for help. We must take a look at our own self-care, our own self love. We can give ourselves a break, maybe after the loss of a loved one you could say that you're going to take a certain amount of time off from work in order to go through the grieving process and hopefully alleviate long-standing depression, that can come from untreated situational depression.

And always remember, you are never alone.

The most powerful intimacy exercise in the world?

In 1997, I went through a 12 month training program on codependency, and as a counselor I was shocked to see how codependent I was in my intimate relationships. When I came out of that 12 months of work, clearing up my own intimate codependent nature, I decided to create an intimate exercise to help people whose relationship was on the rocks, or just not at the level that they would like. But you might be surprised to hear that this most powerful intimacy exercise in the world does not include sexual intercourse!

When I first started using this exercise with couples, several of them were shocked that here I was working with them, trying to help save their marriage, yet they weren't being told to have sex! As a matter of fact they were told "no sex!" I know that sounds crazy, but wait until you read the rest.

There are four phases to this exercise and each of them must be followed in the specific way they're given.

Couples then will write down their experiences during the sessions, and share them with me during our counseling work so that I can stay on top of how they're progressing together in love.

1. Lay down and face your partner in bed, fully clothed if you like. Women can wear lingerie and men can wear shorts or you might both choose to be naked.
2. Mentally, open your heart. Wide. Visualize your heart opening and going towards your partner. And your partner does the same thing, opening their heart and visualizing it coming to you.
3. Stare into each others eyes. This can be quite a challenge for many of us. Then gently kiss them and pull back. Stare once again into your partner's eyes, gently kiss and then pull back.

This opens up a world of intimacy. Some people might feel incredibly vulnerable and they could start giggling and laughing or turn away... And that's OK!

The first time you do anything new, especially something this intimate, there could be a wide array of reactions. Allow your partner to be who they are. Recently, we had a woman go through this exercise with her partner and she was giggling for the entire 10 minutes straight! Her partner was phenomenal. He just allowed her to giggle and within those few minutes she had overcome her own sense of vulnerability and was then totally able to get into the exercise.

4. As you gently kiss each other, and then pull back and look deeply into each others eyes, you might have some very low-key conversation about what you love about each other, special times that you've spent. Keep it special.
5. While you're staring into each others eyes, take your hands and put them on your partner's shoulder, at least one of them and allow it to slowly rub their shoulder, then their arm, all the way down to their hands. Hold their hands. Physical touch is very important and it's also a way to open the heart just a little wider.

Do the first part of this exercise for 10 minutes. It might seem like an eternity, but you will eventually get used to it and it will become one of the most beautiful experiences you've ever had with any partner in your life.

Continue to stare at each other's eyes, talk softly, and kiss gently.

Make sure you do this exercise at least once a week. I recommend for the rest of your life, because we have found in our research that it takes doing this exercise once per week to create a true opening of the heart. You can't do it every couple months and expect to get great benefits.

Now what about sex? I'm asked this all the time. If people get super turned on during these sessions, is it OK to have sex? And I say no! I ask people to hold off on sexual intercourse, until the next day. Why? I want the effects of this exercise to linger longer. I don't want people to start rushing through the eye contact just to make love. Sex is not the point of this exercise.

Intimacy is the point of this exercise.

Connection is the point of this exercise.

Now, as one couple recently told me, for four straight weeks they did phenomenal in holding off on having sex that evening. They choose every Saturday night to do this exercise, but then they also shared their truth: first thing, every Sunday morning, they're ripping off each others night clothes and making wild mad love with each other!

And they've told me many times, had they not reconnected emotionally with this incredible eye contact, deep intimate exercise, the relationship would've been doomed forever.

Let's all, give this exercise a chance.

How do we stop making excuses in life?

Excuses are the number one reason why people from all over the world stop going after important goals in life. "I'm too tired, I'm too young, I'm too old, I don't have money, it's my genetics, I don't have time..."

So why do we make up excuses anyway, when the goal that we want to achieve could radically change our life? Well first, we might be following the role model of our mom, dad, grandmother or grandfather. We might've grown up in a household where people promised to do things, never did, then came up with excuses why they couldn't achieve the life they've always wanted.

Or maybe, we created a pattern in the subconscious mind that justifies, rationalizes and defends the reasons why, "We really don't have to get up early in the morning to walk to lose weight, we shouldn't have to put a certain percentage of our paycheck aside for savings, I don't think this is the right time to get sober because there's a wedding coming up in just three weeks."

Excuses are all around us. But they don't have to be a part of our life anymore.

There are so many amazing role models around us, that can help us shatter any excuse that we're using, that is holding us back in life. My mentor Joe Cirulli, was homeless, living in an abandoned building in Gainesville, Florida, in the summertime. A magical moment hit him and he quit accepting his current life, where he had no money or even a place to live. He completely turned everything in his life around, when many other people would've stayed in a victim mindset. He's amazing. He's an

immense role model. He's someone I look up to every day. He's been on the cover of so many different business magazines, a multi millionaire, private plane, homes in various places, all from his humble beginnings as a homeless person.

Or how about another client, who dropped out of high school after being belittled by her mother for her entire life. She was repeatedly told she would never be successful in life. So, she became a hairstylist, without a GED, and began earning a salary of \$150,000 a year at the age of 21!

At first she had excuses about blaming her mother and everyone else in the world for the inability to do what she wanted, to make the money she wanted. She dropped her excuses, found a career that was a perfect match for her God-given talents.

She is now a rockstar for her children, a rockstar role model.

Or how about my other client that needed to get sober, but worked in a restaurant as a bartender? Oh my Lord he had every excuse in the world why he could never get sober, until he did the work. And then the excuses flew out the window, and within 12 months he was completely sober from an extremely long, deep alcoholic life. He returned to the same job as a bartender, but chose to never drink again for the rest of his life.

Pick a day that you're going to shatter your excuses. Like today would be a great day. Throw your victim mindset out the window. Drop every excuse that ever pops into your head. The minute an excuse comes, act in the opposite direction. Reach out and ask someone to hold your feet to the fire. Read exciting stories about people who overcame great odds, to become incredibly successful in life. They are no different than you. Other than the fact, that they dropped their excuses and did the work. You can too!

Can we openly and honestly talk about intimacy in your relationship?

The closest, deepest relationships are filled with intimacy. And we're not even talking about physical touch, we're talking about something really different.

Even as a counselor, it took me a long time to learn how to be intimate in my relationships.

And what does true intimacy really mean? It means that we're 110% honest with our partner . How many people can say that about their relationship today? Not many. So when it comes to talking openly, honestly with your partner, are you able to do that regarding your intimate desires? Make sure that all of your cards are on the table. That all of your partners cards are on the table. As you move forward with open honest dialogue regarding what you desire in the relationship. A lack of communication about our intimate desires, can easily lead to affairs, emotional affairs, addiction to pornography, alcoholism, workaholism and so much more. So many couples that I've worked with, had never shared their deep, intimate or erotic desires with their partner because they are afraid of being criticized! Rejected! Abandoned !

One of my clients was married to an accountant, who for years had seemed very frigid when it came to his sexual desires and his willingness to talk about sex with his wife. She had almost given up. When we were together, I gave her a series of exercises to write about and questions to answer regarding how many times she had talked to her husband about sex? How many times she had asked him if he would be willing to do something differently? The answer even surprised her. Not one time, in the history of her marriage, has she ever been open enough to talk to her husband about creating a different approach to their intimate existence.

And to her absolute shock, when she opened the door one day and told him that she wanted to do something different in the bedroom, she wanted to try blindfolds, she wanted to wear an extremely erotic set of lingerie, he was 100% on board! And she couldn't believe it! She told me she would've bet her life savings, that the minute she brought up something about blindfolds and erotic lingerie that he would've ran for the door. It wasn't until she stretched her own limits, that she found her partner, her husband, was on the exact same page.

Don't give up on your intimate life if it isn't fully satisfying right now. If you work with a counselor like myself, we might be able to help you to get super creative in how to approach your partner on topics that you might think they will reject right away.

If you never try, you will never win.

**Shocking alert! Every addiction in the world...
Is caused by this.**

The cravings will begin today for millions of people. Sugar. Alcohol. Opiates. Nicotine. Video games. Spending. Sex. But where do these cravings originate from?

Every type of addiction in the world has one main purpose: to numb emotions. Emotions like anger, rage, insecurity, boredom, even excitement and more.

We go to Addiction, because we do not have the coping skills necessary to deal with life.

At eight, I found that consuming large amounts of sugar would diminish my anger at my mother, brother, sister and father. At 12 I found that alcohol did the same thing to my brain, but even better. At 14 pot. At 16 cocaine. At 18 Quaaludes and speed.

Psilocybin mushrooms were next, followed by LSD and the list goes on and on and on. And every time I reached out, I was doing it to escape reality. To live in an alternate reality, even if it was just a short period of time, in order to avoid the emotions I didn't want to deal with.

So what are the solutions, to dramatically decrease the addiction rate in our country?

We need to learn emotional coping skills for anxiety, or depression, or boredom, or excitement. We need to use techniques like cognitive behavioral therapy, the Sedona method, as well as what I've talked about so many times in my life, amino acid supplementation, meditation, and emotional regulation through contemplation.

Some of these words might sound fancy, but they're all basically saying the same thing: when we learn how to deal with life, not run away from it, we will see our addictions begin to fade away forever.

We need powerful emotional coping skills so we can deal with the loss of a loved one. The loss of a job. The loss of a best friend, without spiraling down into the world of addiction. We can leave any and all addictions behind us forever.

And the great news? It's a level playing field. If you want to learn how

to handle the emotions of life, there's millions of courses, teachers and online videos to help you do just that.

Once you learn how to deal with life, the ups and the downs, the demons, the emotions and the frustrations... Addictions will be a thing of the past for all of us.

Learn to let go of, the end result of your goals in life.

Doesn't that sound like crazy advice? I mean let's admit it, we set goals to accomplish something specific. What would the benefits be of letting go of the end result of all of your hard work?

When we're working towards a goal, but we're not attached to the end result coming to us in a specific period of time, we have now learned how to master life.

Isn't that amazing? We can go after goals, work super hard, but if they don't come to us at the time, place or space we had imagined, it does not upset our apple cart. That is a person with huge self-confidence and massive self-esteem.

It doesn't matter if the goal is weight loss, money, love, or addiction recovery... We all just need to focus on doing the work and let go of when the end result is going to come to us.

I was taught this lesson earlier in my career, probably about 30 years ago when I started writing books. I wrote books to help change peoples lives, but I also wrote books because I wanted to sell millions of copies, become a famous author, and retire on the beach.

Soon after my first book was published though, I learned that this might not be the case with every book I write. The competition is fierce. And if the only reason that I was writing books was to make money, I was screwed. So I changed my whole approach. I wrote books, to help change peoples lives. I wrote books, to get what I hoped was a unique voice out into the world of personal growth. In other words, I wrote books as a way to fulfill my role in life, regardless if the book sold or did not.

And so I wrote. And wrote. And wrote for 20 years... Before we got our first number one best seller.

If I did not let go of the end result, of my own personal expectations

that my book should've been selling millions of copies from day one, I probably would've quit writing books!

The first six or eight books sold nothing! I mean the royalties from those books was so tiny, that it couldn't even pay a monthly mortgage. But once I change my mindset, it didn't matter at all. I was writing, for the sake of writing. I had an ultimate goal. And it wasn't based on sales or success or recognition or validation.

And because I had dropped the pressure to have a best selling book, the best selling books started flowing in. Now we have four number one best sellers, and the book you're reading right now? Absolutely will be, a number one best seller.

But if it doesn't? I'll probably just write volume two of this book and then volume three and then volume four... LOL I think you get the picture.

Let go of the end result of your goals, while still doing the hard work daily, and you might find benefits down the road you never dreamed of!

End of Section Questions

Stop! Now is the time to take your pen and pencil with the lines below and answer the questions so that you can get the most out of our book.

1. What was covered in detail, that grabbed your attention the most in this section? Write your answers below.

2. What action steps can you take, including reaching out to a professional, or finding or hiring an accountability partner, related to this section that could radically improve your life? Write your answers below.

Any and all changes that you would like to make are totally possible, I know you can do this!

Part Four

**Relax. Believe. Breath. Practice.
Self-improvement has no final stage.
We are all in this together. You are never alone!**

Love, David

Why is it so hard, to be compassionate in life?

We have heard for years now, that the key to inner peace is compassion. We've read about the Saints, even Mother Teresa, who through compassion, lifted lives all over the world.

So why is it so hard for you and I to be filled with compassion for others? Why is it so easy to judge those who have a different colored skin? Why is it so easy to judge others who have different political ideas than we do? Why is it so easy to pull judgment on the extreme overweight? Or the addicts? Alcoholics?

Why is it so easy, for most of the world, to completely lose compassion for our brothers and sisters?

Compassion, a completely lost art, can be regained if you're willing to do the work below. Even as a counselor, there are times in my life where I have struggled greatly to be compassionate for others... Let me be real. I hold very high expectations of myself in life. I always expect myself to be on time. I always expect myself to follow my words. And 99% of the time? I do. Now that might sound brilliant, but did you know there's a downside to the way that I live? The downside is, often times I do not have compassion for myself when I make an error. Many times I do not have compassion for myself if I slightly slip up and don't follow the words I've given to someone else completely.

And when I lose compassion for myself as a human being, it can make it difficult for me to be grounded and have compassion for other people as well. That may not be a pretty statement to read but it's the truth, and I'm working on it every day.

Here are some of the top reasons that we lack compassion for others:

1. We lack compassion for ourselves, so we judge others harshly. When we're never happy with our body, or our income, or our relationships or any other area of life, it's really hard to have compassion for others when we lack compassion for ourselves. It's time to lighten up, maybe just a little bit?
2. If we are raised in a family that lacked compassion, that was filled with judgment, the odds are we're going to start

out our young adult life lacking compassion and filled with judgment as well.

I was talking to a client the other day during our session, he mentioned to me that his grandfather was incredibly prejudiced, extremely judgmental. Since he was raised in that environment, it was natural to lack compassion for others and he mentioned to me that it wasn't until his 30s that he was even aware that he was filled with the same prejudice as his grandfather!

Whether it was your father, mother, grandfather or grandmother, aunt or uncle or even close relative, if you're raised in an environment with high judgment and very little compassion, you might be following the same path that you were raised in.

3. Who we hang out with, can either heighten our compassion or diminish it. I'm not going to go into great detail here, but if you're hanging out with people that are constantly arguing about politics, the vaccine, the pandemic or any other topic including religion, where they have an extremely judgmental opinion, you might be falling into the same trap because of who you associate with. Time to change.
4. What we watch, listen to and read can either heighten or diminish our compassion for others. This is so simple. If you're addicted to social media or the news or any conspiracy blogs, it will be extremely difficult to have compassion for others.

And how do we turn this around? Just look at the above steps and begin to change. Begin to change, maybe everything about you!

Do you need to have more compassion for yourself? Do you need to change your friends or associates who are highly judgmental? Do you completely need to change what you watch, listen to and read in order to have more compassion in life?

It's time to change. It's time to help America heal. It's time to help all of our brothers and sisters in this world to heal via our compassion as well. Having compassion means that we are on the lookout to be more compassionate for the homeless, the marginalized in society and the

struggling. Having compassion means we look at these people in their eyes, directly in their eyes and offer at the very least our support of love. Direct love. A smile. Having compassion is an art and I challenge you to expand your compassion today to every single person in this world... And watch your life change.

ADD : A blessing? A curse?

Do you currently struggle with ADD or attention deficit disorder? Do you find it a curse? Or do you find it a blessing? About 90% of the worlds population would say it's a curse, and about 10%, who have done some deep work, may just say that this condition has been a blessing to them.

I've worked with many clients over the past 40+ years dealing with ADD and or ADHD, which is attention deficit hyper activity disorder.

And most people come to me, because their ADD has created great conflict in their work, social life, relationships or with their family. And it can be quite challenging!

A person with attention deficit disorder has a very hard time normally focusing on any one task at the time. Their mind will jump from one topic to the next. They may start to clean out the garage and a quarter of the way through, if they go inside, they might decide to do the dishes. And they get halfway through the dishes, and then they get a phone call and... I think you know where I'm going.

For kids in school, it can be quite challenging because they're often seen as the "troublemakers," or that they lack discipline because they can't focus on one thing at a time. I recently worked with a member of our military who would become very frustrated, because no matter what position he took in the military it demanded extreme focus. He was normally placed in some type of a desk position and it was the worst job in the world for him.

Throughout our work together, I discovered that in high school, he was absolutely obsessed with cars, motorcycles and more. So I encouraged him to see within his branch of the military, if it would be possible to move from his desk position to a more active position in mechanical repair.

And it worked! Beautifully. Every day was a different task for him and sometimes every hour could be a different task which worked perfectly

with his ability to focus. But unfortunately, this is one of the successes that most people will never read about.

Instead, the person struggling with ADD may go on medication that might work, but without the correct therapeutic skills and emotional regulating tools, it's very easy for the person with this condition to become depressed, frustrated or turn to addiction.

We've had many young adults come in to work with me who were put on Adderall or Ritalin, two stimulants that can help them to focus. But with many of these people, when they started to use one of these two drugs it became a recreational drug, and eventually began snorting it to get high.

In my case, I wasn't diagnosed with ADD and ADHD until my 30s, which totally explains part of the reason that I became an alcoholic and stayed that way for so long. Alcohol calmed my brain, at least momentarily. Not the best of choices for sure! But I was doing the best I could in that moment.

And then I realized, that if I set up my career where every hour was a different topic, a different person in my counseling practice, or maybe one hour I would write an writing, the next hour I would do a personal growth video... My life began to change dramatically.

I started to reframe my ADD from negative to positive! And it was one of the best moves I could ever make.

Becoming an entrepreneur forced me to wear so many hats and juggle so many responsibilities every day that it actually fit right in with my ADD.

If you're an adult with ADD, the very first thing I would look at is your current job. Is there a position, if the one you're in isn't working for you, even a lateral move that would put you into a placement that would be more active, more stimulating to match your ADD? And while I'm not against taking medication, most of the medications for ADD are highly addictive. I would try every lifestyle move possible like finding the right position at work, or if you're a student breaking up your study habits into 15-20 minute sessions. This will allow you to focus, rest and then focus again.

If you're not on any type of ADD medication, you might try an amazing amino acid supplement called Tyrosine, which can help many people in regard to focus and the brain.

I can still get frustrated when my brain starts going in 1000 different directions, but it happens very rarely these days. Because of my constant changing of attention from one task to something completely different, my world has changed and ADD has actually become an asset to my career and growth.

It's time to change the conversation around ADD. It's time to change the mindset. There are solutions, even if you have to combine it with pharmaceuticals. Just watch the amount that you're using. There are many solutions available today that you can use in order to work with, versus against your ADD. It's time to change.

I was told I was an extrovert, but am I really?

One of the most shocking things I ever learned about myself, was that for years I had projected to the world that I was an extrovert. And, people around me would reinforce that notion by telling me that my extroverted personality was the reason that I was becoming more successful in life! But the reality? Was quite different.

Yes, in my career I'm considered an extrovert, speaking in front of 5000 people, hosting my own television and radio shows for over 30 years, being heavily involved with the public would make it seem that I am extroverted in nature.

But I learned a very tough lesson through my addictions. They were trying to tell me something: while my work was that of an extrovert, my natural state was that of an introvert! What a shock!

And after I got sober? It was very easy to see that I had used alcohol and drugs for years to put up the façade that I was an extrovert, when in actuality I crave alone time, downtime and in this case I crave a lot of time on a daily basis for my spiritual practices.

So I've re-named my world as "an introvert in an extroverted career."

And now, it's easier to help other people unravel their perception of who they were or who they are at the same time! And can you imagine, someone that I'm working with, who perceived that they were an extrovert when in reality they were an introvert? Or, vice versa?

That can be a hard pill to swallow for many.

But if you need alcohol or drugs to go to a networking event or a

birthday party or a social event... it could be because you have low self-confidence, or low self-esteem. But, it also could be because you're wearing a hat, called extroversion, that doesn't fit your head very well at all.

And since my sobriety, oh my Lord how my life has changed! I find incredible joy being alone. I find outrageous joy with my two hours every morning outside my home in my courtyard doing my contemplation, meditation, prayer and gratitude work every day.

If I have a choice between doing something like that, or maybe landscaping around my house, versus going to a social event... I think you can get the picture of where I'm going. Nowhere! LOL.

It seems that extroverts are celebrated in our society, while introverts are looked at as being different, maybe even a little weird. But if you're an introvert, relish the fact that you have this amazing gift, that you don't need a lot of outside stimulation to be happy in life.

And if you're an extrovert? Oh my Lord go to those parties! Go to those events! Find people who are just like you, that love to be out and about in public on a regular basis.

There's no right or wrong here. Being an extrovert is amazing. Being an introvert is amazing as well. Just get to know who you really are, and quit playing the role that you think you might be to satisfy a vision of yourself that might be incorrect. Or to satisfy the needs of those around you.

Now you get to choose, who you truly are, both the inside and the outside of you.

Counseling via email and or text?

The world of counseling and the world of life coaching has become more popular than ever over the past 20 years. People who would never normally ask for help, or admit they have issues that need to be worked on, are now coming out of the woodwork and asking counselors and coaches to give them a hand in creating a new, dynamic life.

Now, many counselors and coaches are offering answers to clients questions via email and text. Is this really the way we want to go? I love the evolution of what's happening in counseling, therapy and life coaching. I love those counselors and coaches that have kept up with the times,

who consistently challenge themselves to become more intelligent, more compassionate and creative as they try to help as many people that they can on a daily basis.

But there's been a new trend that has come along in the last couple years that I am extremely opposed to. It's called online counseling or online text counseling.

And as the title sounds, you can send an email asking a question and you'll be charged a certain amount of money, many times as little as \$15 or \$25 for a response from a professional. And to me this is absolutely the worst thing we could do as counselors and life coaches.

Why? Let's take a look at three major reasons why no one should ever reach out to a counselor or a coach for advice via email or text:

1. There's no way in an email, that a counselor or life coach can get the background information needed at the depth needed to give anyone advice on anything that is valid. Recently a gentleman sent me an email asking for my advice with the divorce he's currently going through, and he told me he would pay me whatever I charged for an answer via email. Wait a second. With just an email, I have no idea what his position is in the divorce or what his wife's position is. I have no idea what caused it. But because he read an writing in his local newspaper that said counselors and coaches are now doing work via email and text, he assumed all counselors and coaches would do this.

I responded back that I needed a lot more information on his role, his wife's role in the dysfunction. How long they have been together? What his childhood was like? What her childhood was like? Who was asking for the divorce? Are they going to a mediator or are they both using the same attorney? He was dumbfounded. He couldn't realize why I needed so much more background information before I gave him an answer.

And just for the record, at the end of the email, I told him this was why I could not answer his question via email or text. We needed to do a lot of work before I had anywhere near the information needed to give him a valid reply.

2. Do you know how easy it is to get an email or a text from someone and read into the email or read into the text things that aren't even there? I hear this all the time with couples that I counsel, where they'll come in complaining about how their husband or wife send texts that are nasty. Or, they can't understand what is being said. But, when they talk to their partner about what the text meant, their partner was surprised that they had assumed something that wasn't even true!

Paying for counseling or coaching via email or text is just a terrible idea. There's too many things that could go wrong.

3. And here's probably the most important point I could make. In my opinion, the world of counseling and coaching should not be about the counselor or the coach giving clients answers to their questions. Yet, that's what this new movement is all about. Both counselors and coaches should be asking incredible questions, and giving great assignments based on the clients answers to our questions. But, we should not be giving them advice unless it's absolutely necessary.

I believe, that the only time a counselor or coach should give anyone a complete answer of what they should do is about 10%. Ninety percent of the time, we should be giving them questions and asking them to go deeper as a way to empower them to find their own answers in life.

On the other hand, if I saw within a couple that there was extreme emotional or physical abuse, or extreme addiction, yes in that case I may recommend that these people separate or divorce.

But that's only 10% of the time.

And, I can back this up with even a more powerful description. I've been certifying people that want to become life coaches since 1996, and one of the things that we say in our courses is that "90% of your work as a coach should be asking questions and giving great assignments to your clients. Ten percent of your work should be giving advice, and that's only

when the red flags are so huge that you must help them with your own personal advice.”

I believe it's not only ridiculous but potentially harmful for counselors and coaches to simply use email or text as a way to communicate with a client and give them advice, when we normally need a lot more information before we would do that.

If money is an issue, save your money until you can afford doing work the right way. Or, borrow money as long as you know you're going to pay it back. Or, see if you can barter your services with a counselor or life coach before you rely on a simple answer via text or email. It could actually make your situation much worse than it is right now.

Stop grinding after your goals?

Over the past 30 years, I have been one of the leaders in the personal growth industry telling people to grind, grind and grind some more when they're going after major goals. And even today, for my clients that are starting a new business or expanding the way they do business, I still encourage them to grind for a period of time.

Working 60 or 70 or 80 hours a week because you're opening a brand new business is not unheard of at all. And for many, that's what it takes to become successful, at least in the beginning.

But after you've been in business for a few years, are you still grinding? Are you still pushing the river, trying to accomplish goals that seem elusive?

For myself, I decided to change the complete story. In the past, I used to grind myself into mental exhaustion. I've grounded myself into addiction, depression, anxiety and workaholism to say the least. And now, I want people to go after their goals with a slower movement, more ease, less stress, less driving, less grinding.

And I'm not saying don't work hard, I'm saying don't put so much stress on yourself mentally and emotionally that you burn out. For many, grinding is an act of valor. It becomes their identity. They often go around telling people how they never take vacations, they don't have time for hobbies because they're so serious about their business.

Many of these people are also neglecting their loved ones and their children as well.

Through constant grinding, we can see a drop in our attitude. We might begin to argue more with our children and our partner. Addictions can start to grow. Insomnia can become part of your every day life. There's a whole list of negative end results when we're grinding, grinding and grinding some more.

If your success isn't coming quick enough, and for many it rarely does, slow down. Way down. Get advice, from someone who has gone through the trials and tribulations that you have, and see if there's a way they can help you to cut down on the grind. The pandemic has offered so much stress, so many challenges to both our personal, financial and relationship lives that we need to start changing our whole approach to the way we live. Stop grinding.

Over the years I've changed my philosophy greatly from encouraging people to grind and grind some more to now I encourage individuals to let it flow, trust. Have faith in you and the work you're doing. We can drop the mental exhaustion, when we drop the grinding.

Today, would be the best day in the world to begin your new approach as you release the grind, and find success in a whole new way.

Things I wish I knew, before my first year of sobriety.

When I decided to get sober, it was after a 30 year battle with alcohol. I never received a DUI, I never got fired from my job, probably because I worked for myself the whole time. I never saw alcohol as a problem. Even though it was one.

But when I finally decided to get sober, I wish someone would've told me the following truths about recovery:

1. It won't be easy. Unless you're lucky and a miracle happens, sobriety will not come easy for most of us. And that's OK, it's just the truth.
2. Sobriety is hard because most of us integrate it into every part of our life. If we're happy we drink , sad we drink, bored we drink, on vacation we drink , after a long day we drink ... I think you get the picture. If alcohol is a part of most days

of your life, sobriety could be a little bit more difficult than we think, but still so worth it.

3. Emotional, psychological and physical withdrawal.

Withdrawal from alcohol covers many areas of life, and we need to have the teaching or the teachers to help us prepare for the various amounts of withdrawal we're going to go through.

Peer pressure, is one of the withdrawals that we're going to have to face. I remember after getting sober, I lost 90% of my friends! Several of them, even knowing I just returned from a treatment center, invited me out for a glass of wine, telling me that "since you've been sober for 30 days, we're sure you can join us for just one drink, will be meeting around 9 PM."

What these people didn't realize, is how challenging sobriety can really be.

The other thing I wish I knew, was that my anxiety would go through the roof during my first year of sobriety! I had no idea this was going to happen, and when it did I had to reach out again to professionals to try to figure out what was going on. I felt anxious being alone. I felt anxious being with others without a drink. Anxiety, began to run my life, and if I didn't have the professionals to go to, I would've never known how to handle it at that time.

Boredom, no one mentioned to me that I needed to stay pretty active, and if I got bored it could create cravings to once again fall off the wagon and start drinking again.

Are you kidding me I thought? Boredom creates, or could create relapse?

And the very last tip, that I share with all my clients now, is that consistent ongoing professional help is necessary for at least the first year of sobriety.

Even after getting out of a 30 Day Treatment Center, the best move I ever made was to hire a professional addiction counselor, someone who does the exact work that I do, to hold my feet to the fire.

Because I have been through the experience of sobriety, if you follow the above steps, your recovery will be much easier than mine was, which

will make me so happy for you! If you would like, let's work together so I can help make the process a little easier for you.

What is the real message being given in one of the top books ever written, "Think and Grow Rich?"

At first glance, you might think I'm a little crazy with the title above. I mean isn't the message in the book to teach us how to think and grow rich? But my answer might really surprise you.

I'll never forget the very first time I picked up Napoleon Hill's number one best selling book "Think and Grow Rich." I really wanted to accomplish exactly what the title said, I wanted to think really hard and get super rich. I kept imagining that whatever was in this book, must be incredibly powerful. I was tired of working so hard to make the money I wanted to make. I wanted to relax and get rich at the same time.

But by the end of the third chapter, I realized something extremely important: the message in the book had nothing to do with simply thinking our way to riches, but it had everything to do with something else. Napoleon Hill was more brilliant than any of us could have thought, because he titled his book in a way to grab great marketing and branding attention. But, when you read the book, there's a major turn around, and it became a totally different message.

And what did the book become once you start to really get into the chapters? The answer is quite simple: every successful person he wrote about, from his son who was born with no ears but learned how to hear, to Charles Schwab who convinced some of the most successful businessmen in the world of steel to join together, each of the stories was about working hard, collaboration, determination and persistence and more!

Let me repeat this: every story in this amazing book, still one of my favorite books ever written on success, describes how individuals started with very little or sometimes even nothing, and then through persistence, determination and powerful action steps into the uncomfortable on a daily basis, they all became incredibly successful!

They all had great faith, believing in the yet unseen, as they worked their way to success. They practiced the art of extreme determination, never giving up once they put their mindset into an incredible goal they

wanted to achieve. Yes, he talks a lot about affirmations, visualization and mastermind groups with people who have already passed on. But his main message never changed: if you're not willing to work your butt off, if you're not willing to ask for help, if you're not willing to collaborate with others... Getting rich is going to be very hard.

If you haven't read the book, I would grab it today. Right now, I'm re-reading his book as I do every year. And every year I read it and I just smile, and realize with even more certainty and depth that Napoleon Hill was right on, you can think and grow rich... If you're willing to do the hard work.

What are some of the best sleep supplements for you?

Millions of Americans struggle with sleep every day. With the pandemic, it's only gotten worse. With all the military challenges around the world, it's gotten worse once again. With so many people struggling financially, in their careers and their relationships, healthy sleep has become a thing of the past for so many people. So what do we do?

I personally have struggled with sleep ever since I was a little kid. Honestly I don't think there's probably been one night in my 65 years that I fell asleep effortlessly. Part of that could be due to some different struggles I have with ADD or ADHD. For me to get really good deep sleep, I have to be extremely careful about my routines, my schedules and my sleep routine.

So even counselors can struggle with deep sleep habits! And working with sleep specialists, many of them have said that my brain is so hyper creative, that it's running 24 hours a day seven days a week, just like with many other people who have a deep creative side. So we have to learn how to work with the cards that we are given, not try to avoid our sleep problems by using alcohol or drugs or too much television or video games, we need to slow it way down.

So here's some sleep supplement recommendations that may work for you, but always check with your doctor before you try anything new:

1. CBD oil. Now this is a massive surprise to me, because when CBD oil was first released, so many of the studies and

the oils purchased over the counter showed very little if any CBD!

I would recommend only purchasing CBD from a medical marijuana dispensary, and as many marijuana doctors have told me, this can be an incredibly massive help with anxiety, which is one of the reasons many people have trouble falling asleep at night. Anxiety is rampant in our society today.

CBD has also been found to be incredibly effective with restless leg syndrome, something that can interfere with anyone's attempt to get a good night's sleep. The key? From the experts anyway, they've all told me the same thing. CBD needs to be taken on a daily basis, for at least 30 to 60 days nonstop to see if it's the right supplement for you.

2. The supplement called "Calm". This is a magnesium supplement specifically designed to reduce anxiety, increase relaxation which may just allow you to fall asleep faster. As with the CBD, give it a minimum of 14 days to see if it's effective for you before you give up on it.
3. THC which is the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana. A number of years ago, with our clients that were struggling with addictions to sleep medications like Ambien or anti-anxiety medication's like Xanax, we would have them actually fly to Denver where marijuana was legalized, and ask them to look for the "Indica strain," which is extremely relaxing. This has helped many of our clients finally get the rest they've always wanted.

Now the only concern I have, is that if you've struggled with addictions in the past, I would encourage you to start out very slowly with any THC product that you get from a medical marijuana dispensary. And let them know about your past struggles with addiction. This is crucial.

4. Here's a few older supplements that many people still love. Melatonin. Theanine. Valerian Root. Hops. These supplements have been around forever, and many people will

use them individually or combine them all together as a way to get deep rest.

Have patience. Many of our poor sleep habits or routines have been developed over the years and it will take time, patience and trying many of the different supplements I've listed in this writing, before you find the one that works for you.

How to shorten our arguments, to find greater love and peace in life.

It's natural at times to not be in agreement with your partner. Which could lead to arguments, frustration, resentments and more arguments. Remembering that we are not perfect human beings is an important part of any and all relationships. Give your partner a break from time to time when they're not perfectly acting, speaking or doing what we would like them to do.

Or maybe there's a complete disconnect in belief systems whether it's about politics, religion, money, addictions or more. We may have a totally different belief system than our partner, which can create disagreements and arguments as well. These resentments from the past that are never cleaned up can create World War III when your partner just rolls their eyes over a comment that you made.

So how do we diminish the amount of arguing in relationships, which during the pandemic are at an all-time high?

1. Take care of resentments from the past, the ones that are unresolved can lead to arguing in the present and in the future.
2. 80 to 90% of arguments are an absolute waste of time! Think about this one.
3. The 15 minute rule. I ask all my clients to consider this: you're in argument with your partner and it's been going on for several minutes, now is the time to take a break.

The break might be an hour long or three hours long. But the point is, we can't come to an agreement together if all we're doing is arguing.

Take a break. Cool down. Try to come to some form of resolution on your own and then go back to your partner to try and calmly sit and talk.

If an argument resumes, this is what I recommend:

"Honey, if we continue arguing like this it's going to get worse, it's going to go way south, and that's not what's needed right now. I love you very much, so I'm going for a 30 minute walk or one hour car ride to clear my head and try to get back into a more stable state.

When I come back, would you be open to sitting down and talking about this again?"

Taking a break, also called disengagement, is one of the most powerful tools you have to start to diminish the amount of arguing going on in your love life.

If the arguments continue, consider even sleeping in separate rooms for a night or two to see if you can get the emotional upset to calm down. Adrenaline, which is always released during arguing, can continue to run through your system interfering with sleep habits, which is the last thing you need when you're already irritable, impatient or frustrated with your partner.

Slow down. Slow down. Slow down.

Affirmations or intentions? They can be powerful, but also very limiting.

I'm sure by now you've heard so many people over the years talking about the power of our intentions or the power of our affirmations. In our practice we use the words interchangeably, we look at affirmations as intentions and we also look at intentions as a form of affirmations.

I remember in 1980, reading an writing in a magazine about the power of affirmations and intentions. The author, who I totally forgot their name by now, drilled into my head that if you have the correct affirmation or the correct intentions, life would respond in kind. And I bit it. Hook, line and sinker. I started focusing on my affirmations and intentions every day, making sure if I had a free moment, I was filling it with one affirmation after another.

I felt so optimistic and knew my life would radically change for the better. The problem? It didn't. So I kept thinking I was doing the affirmations and intentions wrong.

And I'm not the only one who has fallen victim to the premise that affirmations can change our lives, and all we have to do is get ready for the ride ahead. I wish this was true, but I've never seen it happen in my life or any of the clients I've worked with in over 40 years. Now don't get me wrong, I love intentions and affirmations as much as anyone else. But I also understand their incredible limitation in actually having our life change for the better.

Let's take a look at some of the keys on how to use affirmations or intentions the correct way:

1. I use affirmations or intentions every day, first thing in the morning to start my day. Remember, how you start your day, can have a huge impact on the success you receive or not.
2. Use affirmations or intentions that are exciting yet realistic.
If you're earning \$50,000 a year and you have an affirmation that says "I am earning \$1 million a year," you're out of integrity because you're lying to yourself.

Earning \$1 million a year means that you are actually making \$83,000 per month. Only a tiny percentage of the population has the talent, skills, gifts and determination to find a way to make \$83,000 a month! So don't create affirmations that are lies, create affirmations or intentions that are exciting and realistic.

So in the form of your income it might look something like this: "I am currently earning \$50,000 per year, and I making 15 new prospecting calls every day. I will increase my income to \$75,000 annually over the next eight months."

Now that's an affirmation or intention that's realistic and exciting, and once you hit the \$75,000 mark you can then increase it to \$100,000 or \$150,000, but start slowly.

3. Never expect an affirmation or intention to change your life.
Many times people will actually become demotivated with

these affirmations that are out of this world, because they say them every day but after six months or 12 months there's been no change in their life. They become discouraged, actually demotivated. Be careful.

4. No surprise here. Hire an accountability partner in order to hold your feet to the fire with your new affirmations or intentions. This is one of the greatest things that you'll ever do for yourself, when you invest time and money into your own personal growth.

Take your time. Write and rewrite your affirmations until they're exciting and still realistic. Use your accountability partner as the key to changing your life, once you have your affirmations and intentions set in the right direction. Now, you are ready to rock!

Can strict goal-setting, actually decrease your chance for success?

Now this, is an interesting topic. We've been taught and encouraged to set many huge goals in life on a daily basis. Many people have told us that we need to set multiple goals at the same time, one for finances, one for love, one for our house, one for our body and the list goes on and on.

But could strict goal-setting actually be holding us back from the path we are supposed to be on in life? I love goal-setting. In all of my books, 11 to date, we talk about the importance and power of setting goals. But I do have concerns, as I look at my own life and thousands of clients I've worked with over the past 40 years, that we might be taking this goal setting stuff a little too seriously. And what do I mean by that?

In one of our books I mention the story of my friend Marquette King, who at the time was the starting punter for the Oakland Raiders in the NFL.

In his story that he shared with me on my syndicated radio show, he talked about his dream of becoming a wide receiver in the NFL. He was in college, working his butt off as he did every year, trying to become the best wide receiver ever. And then on one fateful day, when the quarterback did not show up to do their normal pass and catch routine practices, just

for the heck of it and out of boredom, he started to kick the football all around the field. Within just a few minutes, he saw the power of his leg, and was amazed. One of his coaches, who was passing by the field noticed this football sailing high through the air and he had to come around the corner to see who it was that had the “big leg!”

And there was Marquette, doing the kicking. I’m sure the coach was thinking how the heck is our wide receiver punting with such distance, height and efficiency? It was then that Marquette King, changed from becoming a wide receiver in the NFL, to becoming a star punter. But just imagine this. If he stayed so soundly focused on being a wide receiver, and didn’t want to change positions to become a punter, he possibly would’ve missed out on becoming a star in the NFL.

And how about you? Are you so stuck on a certain goal, working on it for an extremely long period of time, and you know this is what you’re supposed to be doing in life but it’s not panning out?

Could you be missing signs along the way, that there was a different path for you to take? That you were barking up the wrong tree? That you were beating your head against the wall?

I know these questions might be hard to answer, but it’s worth doing some introspective work to see if the goals that you’re setting are the correct ones for you.

A very long time ago, I was at a bookstore doing a presentation for a group of teachers. After I was done speaking a woman came up to me and asked if I would preach at her Baptist church this coming Sunday.

I looked at her like she was crazy. Me? Preach? I’m not even a minister. And here’s what she said:

“Mr. David, you’re the best minister I may have ever met. I am devoted to the Baptist church, and I’m listening to you preach, or in your words teach here today, but all I’m hearing are the words of a minister. I still want you to come to our church, I still want you to do a sermon for us, I think our congregation would absolutely love you.”

I didn’t know what to say. I’ve always had an outrageously deep spiritual path, I’ve spent time in a monastery, I’ve gone through very deep spiritual training on my pathway in life, but at no time was there ever a goal that I had to become a minister, or a preacher, or even a pastor!

My goal to become a number one best-selling author, a number one

radio and television host, a number one rated counselor and life coach we're all I really cared about until this incredibly fateful day.

This woman, put a thought in my mind that I could never get rid of. Eventually I did become a minister and the pastor of a church. Goals that I had never set for myself, but goals at the same time that gave me an opportunity to serve this world in a different way.

Don't get too set on how you think life should work out. Be open to messages coming in from other people every day. If you pay close attention, you might just find that a new goal you never thought of, was really the whole purpose that you're here on earth for.

We can prevent suicide.

Over the years, there's been much controversy between professionals arguing the point: Is suicide preventable or not? I can tell you that I believe, without a shadow of a doubt, that about 90% of suicides are preventable. In our practice, we see people with extremely deep mental and emotional dysfunction, rarely ask for help in life. These people, with extreme mental dysfunction, may be able to be saved with the correct intervention.

I've had the opportunity to work with families whose teenage children have committed suicide, helping them to grieve and heal... I've worked with middle-age family members where one of their partners took their own life, and we worked with these adult children and the remaining parent to be able to process what happened and take them through the grieving process. And I've worked with families where an older parent has taken their life and helped them through this tragedy, to come out with some sense of closure or peace which is not an easy thing to do at all.

Here are some recent statistics from the CDC:

1. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States
2. In 2019, 47,000 Americans committed suicide!
3. In 2019, more than 1.3 million Americans attempted suicide.
4. That's 130 Americans a day who commit suicide, and 22 of those are United States Veterans!

But there's some really good news. In a recent poll 93% of Americans believe that suicide can be prevented! I just loved that beautiful statistic and it's one that we really need to focus on.

Because I was one of those people that had attempted to take my own life in 1990, suicide prevention is hugely important in my practice. Let's take a look at some of the reasons that someone may consider taking their own life:

5. Extremely poor health, either mental or physical.
6. Addiction, of any type can continue to wear down our mind, body and spirit. Leading some people to believe they have no other option than to leave this world.
7. The fear of asking for help. This runs through the veins of almost every American, including myself at times. But it also runs through the veins of our active military personnel, veterans and first responders.

Many of these professionals have told me confidentially, that they had battled with suicidal ideation for years, but were afraid to tell their commanders or their supervisors because not only would it limit their ability to earn their current paycheck, but they all believed it would stop their career advancement in their tracks. Extremely sad, extremely real information.

8. The feeling that no one cares. I remember working with a family of a teenager that took his life, and he left a note saying that he just didn't feel anyone at school, his friends or his family really cared about the depression he was going through. Many of our veterans have expressed the same thing to me, that they go and put their life on the line for our country and when they return, they're not getting the support, the therapy or the career searching support that they were needing to receive.
9. Undiagnosed mental health conditions like bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder, deep clinical depression and more.

Mental health challenges have never been more at an all-time high than what we are seeing today. Asking for help, from your workplace, your church, wherever it might be can be very scary for a lot of people to do. Accepting the fact that we need help to heal, is a reality we all need to understand.

Having close, healthy friendships that keep us out of isolation would be a huge step for many of us, in order to decrease the thought of taking our own lives. We need our government, corporations, the military, and even major sports organizations to offer more emotional support, more counseling, more therapy, more life coach assistance so that individuals don't feel alone. They need to know there are avenues available in which they can go to get the help they need.

Dropping addictions, asking for help, possibly even going deeper on your spiritual path, can also aid in decreasing the concept of suicidal ideation and then the attempt at taking ones on life.

While in this writing, I can't put everything that's available for help people to heal, at least this is a start. Work with me, help me spread the message, let's get this book into the hands of millions of people so they can learn new emotional coping skills, emotional regulation, and drop the fear that asking for help means that they're not a strong person. As a matter of fact, asking for help shows that we are stronger than we could ever believe. If you need help, reach out to me directly. I have been there and I would love to be here for you now.

Can we actually create miracles in our own life?

To create miracles, is one of the greatest gifts that we have today. But did you know, that there are two different ways that you can create miracles in your own life?

I see miracles every day in my work as a counselor and life coach. Like the woman who was raped and left for dead and recently contacted me, to tell me she was ready to go back out into the world of dating. A miracle? You bet. Or how about the woman who was struggling to make ends meet, with a high school diploma. She was told her whole life she would never amount to anything. She was told she would never earn

much money. But, through a program I created, in a short period of only 90 days, tripled her income! A miracle? You bet.

And in my own life, on a Tuesday afternoon at 2:30 in 1996 my addiction to cocaine was totally lifted, totally taken away, never to return. A miracle? You bet.

To me, a miracle is an unexpected positive end result to a challenge that we have experienced in life. Miracles are often created out of great pain, out of great need, out of a personal surrender of beliefs, where we come to believe in something greater than ourselves, that can help us during our most challenging times.

The miracle that I received regarding cocaine, or the desire for cocaine, was totally removed from my life, was very passive in nature. On that afternoon in 1996, after a long binge weekend, I prayed to God to take the addiction away. I prayed that I was lost and I had no idea what to do. Within seconds, the craving was gone and it never returned.

Since then I've been invited to many parties, social events that I've gone to where cocaine was available. Not once, did I ever have a craving or an urge or desire to snort another line. It was gone. A complete miracle, after a 30 year addiction.

While this might be considered a passive miracle, my client Angela experienced a very active miracle in her life.

She had contacted me a number of years ago, because she was working at a bank, barely made enough money to survive and could not stand the work she was doing.

I told her if she did the work that I recommended, that within 90 days she would double or triple her income, which sounded too good to be true at first. But then down the road, she would see a miracle occur.

Every night, she would put in two hours of homework that I gave her, five days per week. She searched for new jobs and contacted as many people that she knew from high school, who might have contacts in a position she was looking for.

Every morning she got up at 4:30 AM to call me for our session, and every evening after working nine hours a day at her banking job, put in two hours a night doing the work I'd recommended.

Exactly 90 days later, the offer came in at triple her income! A miracle?

Oh my Lord yes, but it was an active miracle, meaning that she went above and beyond and opened the doorway for miracles to rush into her life.

Are you ready to do the same?

If you have extremely negative attitude about life, and you've had that attitude for years, and within a few months you could turn yourself around to be an outrageously positive person... To me, that's a miracle. And millions of people have done exactly that!

So let's not waste any time, reread this writing again and let's start creating more miracles in your life. You deserve them.

Mental scars from love? Emotional baggage?

Very few of us go through life without being scarred in love. It might start in childhood with our parents neglecting us, and continue on as we choose partners that are not grounded, or compassionate or even educated in the world of love.

Emotional baggage. That's what many people refer to when we're talking about pain from past love relationships or pain from our core family that have never been resolved. Everyone has baggage. Everyone. Some of us the baggage is so intense, so deep and so horrific that we don't even want to look in the mirror and see what we're carrying forward that we need to let go of. Others, because of baggage they've never released, become cheaters, alcoholics, or very jaded individuals.

Many become incredibly codependent, staying in terrible relationships year after year because they don't have the confidence or self-esteem to move forward in life.

So what are causes of some of these mental and emotional scars or baggage?

1. Neglect Or abandonment from our family members or a former lover.
2. Emotional abuse by our current or past partners.
3. Physical affairs, or emotional affairs carried out on us by our current or past partners.
4. Codependency. Afraid to rock the boat. We continue to carry

the emotional pain from the past because we've never dealt with our own codependent nature.

Emotional baggage or scars in love are very difficult to remove ourselves, so working with a professional is the number one tip to eliminate them from our life. If you're single, and had a tough time in love, stay single until you get rid of these emotional scars.

People who don't do the work, move forward jaded in life and carry their baggage with them, which creates chaos and drama with all of their future partners.

Do the work. Create rituals of self-care and self-love every day. Be willing to leave a relationship early if it's unhealthy. Be willing to ask your partner to change, if their habits, actions or behaviors are causing deep pain with inside your heart and soul.

We can release the baggage, we can release the scars. But we must be willing to do the work.

Single and looking for love? Slow down. Read this.

There's one major mistake that people looking for love, who are single right now, make on a regular basis. This will guarantee a life filled with relationships, that are less than what we had hoped for. We should never, ever, ever date until we are extremely happy by ourselves being single! For many, this opening statement is hell on earth. Most of us don't want to hear this. We don't want to wait until we're happy, we want love right now!

However the reason I'm making such a strong point is that most individuals at the end of a relationship, jump right into another one. They avoid looking within. They avoid even asking if they are happy on their own. They just move forward looking for that elusive thing called love.

Don't jump quickly into another relationship and then realize the characteristics of this new person might never work for you . We need to be happy and single on our own. And I mean really, really happy and single before we go back into the world of dating .

One of my male clients recently was on a trip and met this extremely gorgeous woman that he couldn't keep his eyes off of. The next day, she came over to him at his lunch table and sat and just started a casual

conversation. Within a few minutes the conversation turned very sensual and he could tell that she wanted something more than just a quick conversation.

Within 20 minutes she was telling him that she thought she had met the man of her dreams... Him! She went on to tell him that the characteristics he had were actually everything she had been looking for, and did he have any interest in joining her for dinner that night, and then coming back to see the new apartment she had just moved into?

When he asked her when the last relationship ended that she was in, she just calmly looked at him and said "30 days ago." He thought 30 days? Are you kidding me?

And then he asked her why she thought she was ready to date someone new, after a four year relationship, that only ended 30 days ago. Her answer? "I really hate being alone, I love to be in the company of wonderful gentleman like you, and even though the relationship ended poorly I'm ready to put myself fully into a new one."

Red flag. Red flag. Red flag.

It is only when we are supremely happy with ourselves as a single person, that we can truly offer the next relationship everything we have regarding our gifts, talents and love. So right now, if you're single, slow down and pay attention to this writing. I've had thousands of individuals following this very program I'm writing about, to become incredibly happy without a partner, so they can finally find that fulfilling relationship they have dreamed of. It's worth the work. It's worth being patient. And it's worth being single a little longer, until you find that path that combines happiness and single-hood. Now you're ready to date.

Sobriety one day at a time? Marriage one day at a time?

If you're going to get married, would you agree with your fiancé that you're going to marry them, one day at a time? Or would you say, let's make a commitment for life?

And with sobriety, are you going to take the same easy way out and try to stay sober one day at a time? Or do you think it's time to make a major commitment, like sobriety for life?

It's kind of funny isn't it? I mean as a minister I've married so many

people but I've never had a couple come up to me and say "Reverend David, we would like to be married just one day at a time."

Do you know why no one has ever said this to me? Because their partner would run out the door in a split second! You see, if you have a major goal in life and you want to accomplish something huge, you've got to commit for life. You can't commit one day at a time. In our practice, we see so many people that try getting sober one day at a time, but 90% of them relapse in less than a year!

And if getting sober one day at a time works for you, do not change a thing. Change nothing. If it works, and you haven't cross addicted, stay on your path.

To me, recommending that a client gets sober one day at a time simply gives the alcoholic a foot out the door. If they relapse they could just say "well I'm just going to begin again tomorrow because I need to get sober one day at a time."

Over 30 years ago I believed in the one day at a time theory, but after I got sober I realized that there has to be a bigger commitment, there's got to be more "skin in the game." We have to take this more seriously and claiming sobriety for life is the most amazing technique I've ever brought into my addiction recovery practice!

Since the recovery rate from Addiction is about 10% in this country, it's time to change the old beliefs, and bring in new programs that work much better. In our holistic addiction recovery program, we encourage everyone to commit to sobriety for life.

And in the past 20+ years, our success rate is off the charts. If you wouldn't commit to marriage one day at a time, I would highly recommend that you don't commit to sobriety one day at a time either. Commit to sobriety for life.

Why is it so easy, to be negative in life?

How many people are truly positive in life that you know right now? I'm not talking about the over the top positive, the over the top cheerleader type, the over the top so positive person, that you know it can't be real. I'm talking about the every day person, who is able to flow with life, without getting caught into the vortex of negative conversations on a daily basis.

How many people like those do you know? For me? Even with the work I do? There's very few people who are authentically happy because it's so easy to go into a negative mindset. And why is that? Even though I'm a fan of positive thinking, positive thinking alone cannot, long-term anyway, overturn a negative thought process or victimhood or arrogance. Eventually the negativity rises up from the subconscious to take over the conscious mind.

So negative thinkers don't become negative thinkers simply because they don't know how to think positive, it goes much deeper than that.

Once again, the people that struggle with negativity need to begin with their lifestyle. What we read, watch and listen to has everything to do with a positive or negative mindset. I remember a number of years ago working with a veteran who was struggling with PTSD, and had an extremely negative mindset. When I asked him to write down what he was watching, listening to and reading... He was shocked! Everything that he watched from the news, to conspiracy theories on the Internet, continued to fill his mind with negativity. Once he stopped and changed what he was watching, listening to and reading? His mindset return to a natural positive flow. The same can happen to you.

If you're surrounded with negative people you're going to become more negative in nature. Check out who you listen to, check out who you talk to, check out who you hang out with on a regular basis.

You can create a new attitude but first you need to release the old one. If you don't let go of the habits and the people that we hang around with, that contribute to our negative mindset, there's no way in the world you can create a new positive one!

After you release the habits and people that are not serving you, now it's time to replace them with habits and people that will serve your positivity, enhance your self-confidence and encourage you to go after your dreams in life.

Always remember this when you're trying to make a lifestyle change: remove what is not working first before you add what will work second. This formula will work in any challenge you face, and I hope you'll start using this formula right now.

Enhancing your mental health: start right here.

Now is the time for change. Our mental health situation continues to worsen. Depression, anxiety, addiction, relationship challenges, financial challenges continue to rule this world! As we've talked about throughout this book, insomnia is growing, procrastination is growing, apathy is alive and well unfortunately the world over.

We need to get back together! We need to start to become more social, in a very smart way. In small groups, pay attention still to the assistance of masks and distancing and any other form of help needed, including vaccines if that's what you know you need, in order to stop the mental health crisis that we're in.

And even as the pandemic starts to slowly fade away, even as more people get vaccinated and hopefully protected from the virus, the mental health effects of this are going to go on for years and years and years.

It's like when I work with veterans who return from war. They're out of the war experience, but they still struggle with anxiety, insomnia, depression, addiction and of course PTSD. And this is not a negative statement I'm making right now, this is a positive, realistic one! Just because they're out of the war doesn't mean the war is out of them, and the same analogy can be done with the pandemic.

Maybe you feel safe from the pandemic because you wear your mask and you've been vaccinated or whatever other techniques you've done to protect yourself. But that doesn't mean that we're still not struggling mentally with the isolation, job upheaval, or relationship issues, or addictions!

If we start today, at least creating a plan to be more social in safe settings, we are going to be in a much better position, five and 10 years down the road regarding our mental health, then if we just take an apathetic approach and stay stuck inside.

Don't wait for the pandemic to end, to take care of your mental health. This may include becoming at least a little more social right now. Become proactive. Plan and act today. Start living your life again in a sane, safe way. This is the steppingstone that will lead us to a more grounded, peaceful and enhanced mental health position in life.

It's time to live in gratitude!

Everyone knows that when we feel grateful about our life, the brain releases a myriad of feel good chemicals which is a bonus for everyone. Living in a state of gratitude is so rewarding, and so damn hard!

The brain has a tendency to focus on what is not working in life, versus what we have going for us that is positive, constructive, life enhancing. Many people get stuck looking internally at their own life for gratitude, while missing a huge opportunity to take that gratefulness and make a bigger difference in the world by serving others.

Recently on a large radio show in New York City, the host asked me to give my feedback on gratitude. At the end of about a three minute explanation, you could almost hear him “drop the mic,” in excitement, after what I told him. And what did I tell him?

1. Don't make your gratitude statements all about you. One of the most beautiful things that I started 40 years ago, during my morning meditation and walks with my dog, was to a send prayers of gratitude for everyone who is suffering in this world. And right now? There's millions of people suffering, and the more prayers of gratitude that you send out to the world, the better you're going to feel about yourself, and you might just help others along the way.
2. Create a list of gratitude for the things that are happening immediately in your life today. And I'm talking about the simplest things. Not just that you won the lottery, or met your soulmate, or lost 100 pounds. But rather, the simple things that we might take for granted. Like the gifts and talents that you have. For your health. For your persistence in going after goals. Maybe for the beautiful plants in your yard. Or the birds that sing early in the morning. Have gratitude for what you have right now, it's one of the most important steps you could take.
3. Send out gratitude for the people who are in your life that you love so much. Maybe it's a family member, child, partner

or neighbor. Maybe it's your boss. Maybe it's your minister. But every day be grateful about the people that you have in your life that make a difference to you, just like the difference you make to them.

4. Gratitude For the home you have, the money you have, the car you have... Even if they aren't perfect!
5. If you're deeply spiritual or religious, having gratitude for your spiritual guides, your angels or even God would be a beautiful thing to do right now.
6. Say thank you every day. The Reverend Matthew Fox, who I think is an amazing teacher, when I asked him during an interview what his favorite form of gratitude was, he answered it very simply by saying this: "David, the only prayer I say every day is thank you. I thank God for my challenges as I move through them. I thank God for my blessings as I accept them. All I do is thank God for everything and my heart is filled with gratitude!"

The above tips can give you an idea, or several ideas on how you can move from where you are to a life filled with gratitude.

When you get up tomorrow, look for that flower on your way to work. Or, the beautiful sunrise or sunset that can bring a smile to your face. Look for the opportunity to lift other people with your smile. There's so many ways to feel grateful, but you and I are the only ones in control of our gratitude.

And the greater the gratitude that you have, the greater your attitude will become. It is so worth the work.

How to support your partner in a marriage, when your child is struggling.

When parents have a child who is struggling in school, or battling an illness, or struggling with some behavioral issue, it can become a dividing line between them, which unfortunately happens way too often.

The stress of knowing your child is in the hospital, or struggling in school, or maybe even the stress if your child is bullied, can be too much

for many parents to handle who do not have the proper emotional coping skills available.

Many times when a child is in their initial part of the struggle, it can actually bring a mom and dad together. But, if the stress goes on for any length of time, it can be incredibly difficult to support your partner, who may have different beliefs than you do in regards to what is the best next step for your child.

So here are a few keys to think about in order to keep your marriage intact, your relationship healthy while your child or children are struggling in life:

1. Come up with a plan. This is so crucial, that you both get on the same page and negotiate with each other, collaborate with each other, in order to come up with a plan of how you both are going to be unified in your approach to help your child.
2. Follow that plan! Put it in writing! Run it by an expert! If you create a plan, but it's not in writing, it really is not solid. Both partners need to see the plan in writing, and then give their feedback before the final plan is accepted .

And then once it's in writing, and both parents agree to it, we must follow it every day, or it will just turn into an item that could possibly create chaos and drama between the parents.

3. Self care. If you notice that your partner is overly stressed, create an open dialogue where you encourage them to take the day off from the hospital. Or that you'll go in and meet with the principal, or you're the one that's going to take the child to the doctor this time... Many times because of work schedules, or the roles we play in relationships, we expect our partner to be able to maybe do more than they can in the current moment.

Be aware. Be grounded. Be conscious. You might even recommend that they get a massage on one day that they're overly stressed and drive

them there, drop them off and then come back to pick them off so they can stay in that relaxed state after the massage is over.

4. Work with a therapist, counselor, medical professional, behavioral expert in order to come up with the best plan for your child.

Parents can only know so much.

My father, at 94 years of age tells me on a regular basis, “David, when your mother was alive we never really knew if we did parenting correctly. And honestly, I still don’t know if I’m doing it correctly.”

I’ve heard that comment millions of times over the 42 years of my professional work in the world of mental health, there is no parenting guide that works for everyone!

There are general rules, like the ones I put above if a couple is struggling because a child is struggling, but there’s no rulebook in raising children.

Guidelines? Yes! Rulebook? Never.

There’s too many personality differences between children, pain tolerance can be greatly different between one child or another, and emotional challenges can make raising a child very difficult in the times we are currently living in.

Try your best to become more patient with your partner. More compassionate. More empathetic. Everyone handles stress totally differently, and if you can get on the same page or close to the same page with your partner, offering them words of support, words of love, actions of support, actions of love, you can begin the process of moving through the challenges, while keeping your love together.

A constant source of love, that guided me in life.

It’s not often that I hear other 65+ year old men, talking about a specific form of love that guided them during their entire lives.

A lot of us guys, have a hard time getting to this emotional level, this level of vulnerability, this level that states “if it wasn’t for this person, I may not have ended up where I am today.”

A lot of men, like to take credit for their success. I know I’ve done

that in the past, thinking that I , that just possibly, I was the reason for the success that I've garnered in my career.

But that's not necessarily true at all. If it wasn't for the love I received, even when I didn't see it as love, I could've never persevered through the addictions, bankruptcies, divorces, and challenges like depression, anxiety and ADD that I have been exposed to my entire life.

So this writing is in honor of my mom, Pat Essel, who I literally owe so much of my success to, who loved me when I'm not even sure I felt I was lovable in life.

My father, Ed Essel, played a huge role as well, he was the grounding force. He was the logical one that tried to get me to make decisions in life based more on logic, since I'm such an emotionally driven person.

And my mom, I smile and cry at the same time as I write this, because I still do so many things she taught me to do as a child. I still put my work clothes out every morning just like she put my school clothes out for me when I was a child.

I still make my lunches and meals the night before work, just like she made my lunches the night before school. I still pack my gym bag every night, just like she packed my gym bag when I was in school.

I still put birdseed out every morning, just like she did every day when I was a child. I still go crazy over almost any type of animal, especially dogs, just like my mom did when I was a child.

She was without a doubt my biggest cheerleader! When I say I was not a good kid, I was not a kind child, that is an understatement. My parents struggled greatly, greatly with me when I was young. I think they struggled with me until I was out of the house to be honest with you, but they never gave up on me.

My addiction started at the age of 12, but my parents never gave up on me. My mom had 1 million reasons, to not love me as deeply as she did, to not support me as much as she did, but she loved and supported me more than I could've ever believed she was doing at the time.

I didn't realize until I was in my late 20s, how incredibly powerful my mom was in my life. When I finally decided to get sober, who did I dedicate my sobriety to? My mom. And it's been a very very long time, but every October 26, I look up into the heavens and say, "thank you God so much for my mom! My incredible long-term sobriety, was all dedicated to her."

You may not have been as fortunate as I was to have a mom and dad who did love me and did their very best to support me, but is there someone else who played that role for you? When you look back at your life, was there at least one person who believed in you? Was there at least one person who never gave up on you?

The answer to the question isn't it as important as this: is there someone out there today that you can support unconditionally? Is there someone in your life today that needs your warmth, your smile, your kind words even in a text every day? Is there someone struggling that you know, that maybe dropping off a meal for them would make all the difference in the world?

So while this writing is about celebrating my mom, and acknowledging that I never would've created the life I did without her, is it possible for you to find someone in your past that impacted you as well?

An elementary school teacher? High school teacher? College teacher? A former boss? A current boss? A former neighbor? Current neighbor? A current best friend? A past best friend?

Cherish, even if it's just one person, that cared for you in the past or cares for you today. It just takes one person. And knowing this, to help this world heal, to help us all come back into unity, reach out to someone who needs you. Show the world you care. I know you have the power to do this right now.

So, what's our next step in life?

Congratulations on finishing this book, and getting to the final page. It's an absolute sign of the depths of love that you have for yourself and your desire to move forward in healthier ways in life.

With the information in this book, we hope that you'll be able to narrow it down to one or two areas of life that you really need to put your focus on, so we can ultimately heal ourselves. And by healing ourselves, we can help to heal the world around us!

So let's consider a few points to remember on our way out, that could help us really solidify the information that you've been reading, with changes you'd like to make in your life:

1. Read this book all the way through one time. Answer the questions as you read through it the first time, don't say you'll finish the book and then come back and answer the questions later. Most people never come back to answer the questions. We know through our experience in the world of personal growth, that anything put in writing has so much more power than a concept kept in our mind as thought.
2. Now, reread this book every week. Every week. Yes, every week. There's an immense amount of information here that none of us can probably digest in one setting, but if you read this book once a week for four straight weeks, the internal motivation will increase, the excuses if there are any will start to disappear, and you'll begin taking action steps to radically change your life!
3. Compassion. Patience. The very first thing to remember is to have compassion for yourself as you try to make any major changes in life. And remember to have patience with yourself, when you're starting to make major changes in life.

When you can begin to master compassion and patience within your own life, it will be natural for you to have more compassion, more patience for those around you.

4. Change is possible, regardless of how long you may have had challenges with your attitude, finances, relationships, addictions, career choices and so much more.

Change is possible. We need to remember, that regardless of where we are right now, that we can radically change our lives if you're willing to put in the work, on a daily basis.

5. Hire an accountability partner. If your number one challenge is finances, look for a financial advisor, or even a CPA, someone who can help set you up with correct financial budgeting and investment advice.

If it's relationships where you see your greatest challenge, as soon as possible find a counselor, therapist, or life coach trained in the world of relationships. Don't go it alone. When you have an accountability partner, you are much more likely to do the work that you may not want to do on your own.

We created a course specifically designed to help all Americans, as well as the world, heal during these crazy times that we're facing with the pandemic, the vaccine and everything else that's upside down in this world.

"Helping Americans Heal", is a weekly program, that for only \$9.98 every week you'll receive an immense amount of tools to help you with your life changes in regards to podcasts, interviews, television show interviews, books, online video courses and a weekly newsletter that will bring a lot of this information to you.

You'll also receive every month A mastermind video, where David will personally answer all questions that you email him, without ever mentioning your name as we want this program to stay 100% confidential and anonymous.

Repetition is the key to change. When you join this program, and every week you will receive more information to help you wrap your mind around the power that you hold within. With daily repetition, you will change.

It's not unlike an example from my favorite sport, basketball. If you're a free-throw shooter, and you're going to the gym every day and with correct form shooting 100 free throws, the average basketball player will dramatically improve their free-throw percentage shooting because of the repetition. And if this person were to have an accountability partner with them, making sure their form was perfect with every free-throw, their improvement would happen even more radically!

And the same for you. As you read this book every week in it's entirety for four straight weeks, and you do the writing exercises, and you follow the advice given about potentially finding an accountability partner for your goals, your life will radically change. Your attitude will change. Your action steps on a daily basis will change. You may begin adding more rituals in the morning, taking advantage of the first hour when you wake up to put into your own personal growth work.

In order for us all to find a greater sense of inner peace, calmness and more, we need to radically change the way that we're approaching life and the way we're living life. With my 42 years of experience in the world of personal growth, I am absolutely committed through this program, "Helping Americans Heal", as well as through this book, to continue making a difference in any way possible.

Continue believing in the power of choice. Continue believing that we as Americans, can radically start to change our attitudes and opinions today so that we can become more unified as a nation.

The division that's happened over the last several years can be completely, turned around, if we're willing to follow the advice here. There's no need for Americans to be adversarial towards each other, instead, let's find a common ground of unity by doing the work necessary so that we can have more compassion and patience for ourselves and others.

And imagine this. As the United States becomes more unified, filled with passion, patience and compassion, we can actually then begin to help the rest of the world as we lead by example. Do not ever downplay the influence that you on your own can have, when you make major changes in life.

People will be watching you. They'll see the change. They will want the same change for themselves. And then you can be the new role model, the new teacher, to help everyone around you make changes necessary in order to live a more beautiful existence. An existence, that's available for everyone today.

We wish you the peace you desire. We send you love and joy, in hopes that you'll find great success from this moment forward.

Final message from David Essel.

I cannot tell you how much I appreciate the fact you've taken the time, to go through this book and to read about the many different ways we can radically change our lives.

Writing this book has been an absolute joy! I feel so blessed, that my passion has continued at the highest level ever in my desire to help people change, heal and find real joy within side themselves.

I know during this pandemic, which has affected everyone in many ways, that we need resources to help change our mindset, our belief systems and the way we act in this world.

I would love to call upon every corporation in America, to seriously consider adding more mental health support, addiction recovery support, and even relationship support to their associates and employees regardless of where they live.

Corporations can make a huge difference in this world, during the pandemic. If corporations can look at their resources, the people that work for them, and see the help that's needed, let's give them that help starting today.

I would also love to call upon every major-league sports team, regardless of what sport it is, and get them to be more in the role of leadership in their communities by promoting the importance of mental health.

The percentage of people in this country that struggle from addiction, anxiety, depression and more is increasing every day, and because sports teams have such an incredible impact on this country, it would be amazing to see them start to put out even more messages about the importance of mental health support.

I'm also going to call upon every fire department, police department, every hospital, all first responders need to be supported in ways that we have not supported them up to this point.

I believe that every organization that is considered a first responder organization, can add so much more value to both their staff and patients by continuing to upgrade the information that they're sharing regarding insomnia, suicide prevention, financial recovery, relationship recovery and so many other topics that both their employees and patients need to be more aware of.

And for all veterans organizations and active military personnel, we also would love for these organizations to become even more involved in the world of healing for anxiety, depression, insomnia, addictions and more.

We know as a country we can do a much better job taking care of the men and women who risk their lives every day for our safety. We cannot leave these people behind. The pandemic has created so much hell

on earth, and for people under the stress and pressure that our veterans and active military are daily, they need even more attention than possibly they're getting right now.

We would love to walk hand-in-hand with any military base, or veterans organization that could use our 42 years of experience in the world of mental health, healing and relationships, to bring even more information to their members.

Our program, "Helping Americans Heal", involves everyone! We are open and willing to do whatever it takes to help our military and veterans, as well as corporations and every first responder organization in this country.

And then how about you and I? I'm going to call upon you, to make the major changes necessary in your life so that you do become that role model for people around you. I'm going to challenge myself as well, to spend more time working on my spiritual path, more time working on compassion, more time working on how can I serve this world at a deeper level, even deeper than we are right now!

We are all in this together! We can make a bigger difference if we realize this and work together.

If you're involved with a major corporation, if you work for any of the first responders organizations, if you're associated with any major or minor league sports team and you need help in trying to create a stronger mental health program, a stronger addiction recovery program, a stronger family-based program, reach out to me today. Allow me to help you, make greater inroads into what we're all facing in regards to lifestyle, stress management and more.

I am here, available and waiting. I've dedicated the past 42 years to do the work that I'm doing right now, and I would love to dedicate the next 42 years to do the same thing.

If I can help you directly, become more focused and more organized so that we can all move through this pandemic more smoothly, please reach out to me today. I am here. I am available. I am waiting.

My gratitude goes out fully to you: there's 1000 different things you could be doing in this world but the fact that you slowed down, purchased this book as a way to try to figure out how to be happier, and

more successful regardless of the environment that we live in, is absolutely bliss for me to experience.

If I can ever help you personally, do not hesitate to reach out to me at our website that you'll find throughout this book and on the back cover.

I'm sending you love, peace, compassion, patience, joy and more!

Love, David

End of Section Questions

Stop! Now is the time to take your pen and pencil with the lines below and answer the questions so that you can get the most out of our book.

1. What was covered in detail, that grabbed your attention the most in this section? Write your answers below.

2. What action steps can you take, including reaching out to a professional, or finding or hiring an accountability partner, related to this section that could radically improve your life? Write your answers below.

Any and all changes that you would like to make are totally possible, I know you can do this!

Helping Americans Heal!™ the Program

David Essel, #1 Best Selling Author, Counselor and Master Life Coach offers a new monthly program to help ALL AMERICANS to heal. THAT IS YOU! Civilians, Veterans, First Responders . . . EVERYONE! From Love Challenges, Financial Problems, Focus/ADD/ADHD, Attitude, Addictions, Depression, Anxiety, Insomnia, PTSD, Career Challenges & More!

According to the statistics, there has been a 1,000% increase in alcohol sales alone in the last year. And, this is only one major issue we face in this country.

If we want to look at more statistics, it actually becomes quite depressing. Millions of relationships are in need of so much help and yet there does not seem to be enough resources to go around.

Since the pandemic hit in 2020, there has been an incredible increase of dysfunction in relationships, addictions, insomnia, low self-confidence, low self-esteem, loss of identity, suicide and so much more.

After 42 years as a counselor, minister, number one best selling author and master life coach, David has been blessed to have the opportunity to work with so many Americans, to help them with all of the challenges they're going through, but he realized, once again: So many people are in such a difficult financial situation that they cannot afford the help of counselors such as myself! So what do we do? We create a program just for YOU, that's exactly what we do.

ALL AMERICANS? YES! Hairstylists, First Responders, small business owners, moms, dads, plumbers, veterans and families, students, accountants, nurses, single moms, single dads, counselors, active military personnel and families, executives and everyone else who lives in this amazing country!

And that's one of the reasons we created our new program, Helping Americans Heal™, because our greatest area of experience over the past 42 years is mental health.

Pandemic or no pandemic, we desperately need help to change how we approach the challenges we are all facing.

Through our program, Helping Americans Heal™, we will be offering everyone:

- 1) A FREE copy of David Essel's number one best selling book in PDF format, *Positive Thinking*.
- 2) A weekly newsletter offering articles, podcasts and videos that are all inspirational and proactive.
- 3) A monthly Mastermind Video, where David will answer your personal questions on life's challenges, with love, money, health, addictions, anxiety, depression and more.
- 4) Every several months, you will also receive an online video course to give you additional tools in order to handle stress and set fantastic goals!
- 5) You can get David's free audio: *Meditation/Relaxation To Distress, Relax*.
- 6) And you can get a FREE annual subscription to *Recovery Today Magazine*, at no charge!

Your questions, and your involvement in this program, will always be anonymous and 100% confidential.

He has experienced personally, many of the challenges that you have faced as well, and not to compare my challenges with anyone else's, he believes his own struggles will help those who are part of this program, as well.

Remember: You Are Never Alone . . . We Are Here For You!

Through our program we will help YOU in a variety of ways:

- Stress Management, Anxiety, Depression.
- Emotional Regulation, Attitude Healing.
- Holistic Addiction Recovery.
- Marriage & Relationship Assistance.
- Weight loss.
- Insomnia.
- Post Traumatic Stress Growth and PTSD.
- Career Growth.
- Financial Budget and Support.

HELPING AMERICANS HEAL

Helping Americans Heal™, will become a mainstay in the United States of America, as one more organization that is dedicating our time and resources to help people learn how to deal with the stress, uncertainty, isolation, and other challenges we are facing due to the pandemic and many other challenges our country is facing today.

**Please, Do Not Suffer In Silence.
Join Our Proactive And Powerful Group Today!**

Joining the Helping Americans Heal” program is only \$39.95 per month or \$9.98 per week. Monthly or weekly, everyone will be able to join us at a price point that they can afford to get the help they need.

Go to www.DavidEssel.com to sign up today!



Endorsements



SHOTCALLERS

Next Level Marketing for Business Leaders

13 Proven Writing Tips for Blogging Success

How to Add Landing Page Videos to Increase Conversion

How to Unleash Your Online Business's Full Potential

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Developing Your Motivational Voice and Challenging the Law of Attraction with David Essel

MotivationandSuccess.com
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David is verified as one of the top relationship counselors and experts in the world by Marriage.com

Psychology Today

David is verified as one of the top Life Coaches and Counselors in the USA with *Psychology Today*



David Essel was selected as one of 28 personal development experts, authors and blogs to follow in 2019!!!

Bookauthority

#1 Best-Seller

*Focus! Slay Your Goals... The Proven Guide to Huge Success, A Powerful
Attitude and Profound Love,*
was selected as one of the top 100 goal setting books of all time by
bookauthority.org.

About David Essel, M.S.

David Essel's destiny is to help you become more alive in every area of your life. —Dr. Wayne W. Dyer

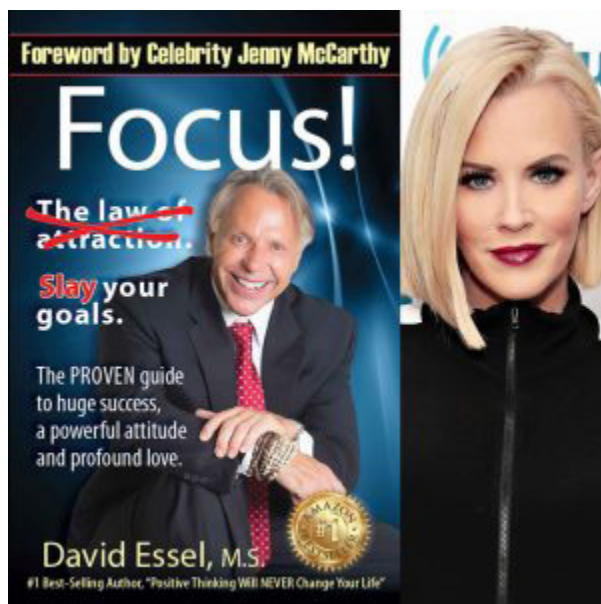
David Essel, M. S. O.M., is a number one best-selling author (12), counselor, master life coach, international speaker, radio/tv host and minister whose mission is to positively affect two million people or more every day, in every area of life, regardless of their current circumstances.

David Essel is the new leader of the positive thinking movement.
—Celebrity Jenny McCarthy

His latest program, which is in combination with this book, *Helping Americans Heal*, delivers inspiring tools every week to help everyone learn how to deal with the challenges we are all facing.

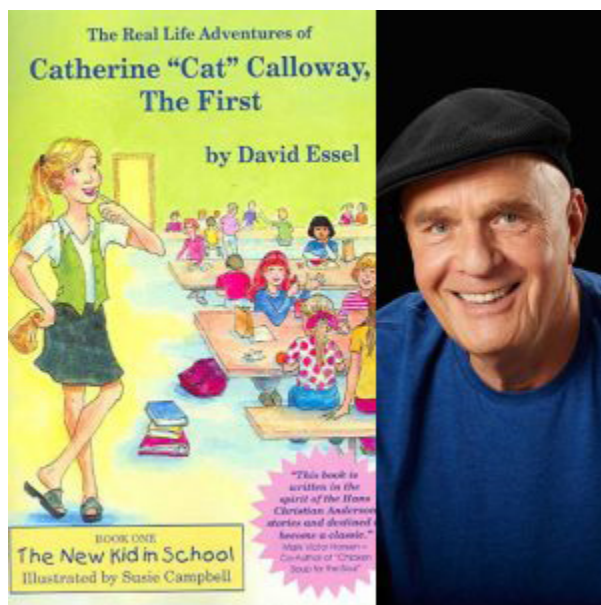
His latest #1 Best-Seller, *Love and Relationships Secrets . . . That Everyone Needs to Know!* explores the concept of codependency in all of our lives. Another book, #1 Best-Seller, *Focus! Slay Your Goals . . . The Proven Guide to huge Success, A Powerful Attitude and Profound Love*, was recently selected as one of the top 100 goal setting books of all time by bookauthority.org.

David's work of 42 years is also highly endorsed by the late Wayne Dyer, *Chicken Soup for the Soul* coauthor Mark Victor Hansen, as well as many other celebrities and radio and television networks from around the world. He is verified through *Psychology Today*, *Theravive* and *Therapy Tribe* as one of the top Counselors and Life Coaches in the USA and is verified through *Marriage.com* as one of the top relationship counselors and coaches in the world. David accepts new clients every week into his 1 on 1 programs from around the world at www.davidessel.com



Selected as one of the top 100 goal setting books of all time by
bookauthority.org

David Essel is the New Leader of the "Positive Thinking Movement!"
—Jenny McCarthy, Radio/TV host, actress, author.



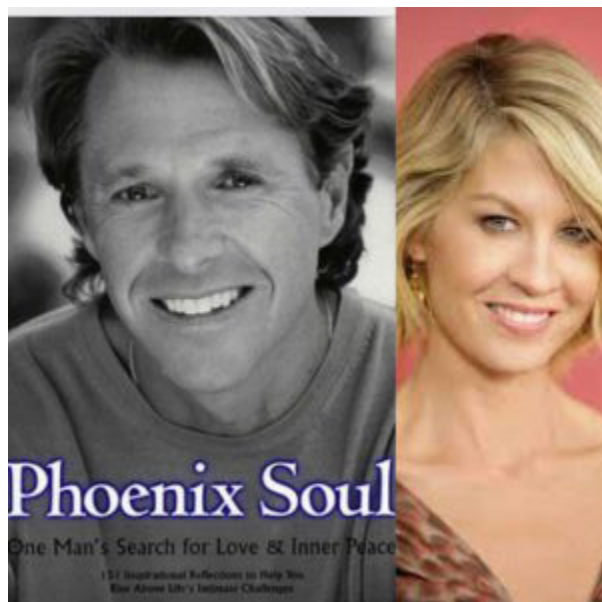
Inspiring. High energy messages for our precious children.

—Wayne Dyer, best-selling author talking about David's book,
The Real Life Adventures of Catherine "Cat" Calloway, The First



If you are seeking answers about love, Angel on a Surfboard, brings you to them in this beautifully crafted and imaginative narrative.

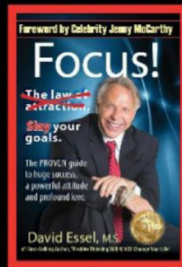
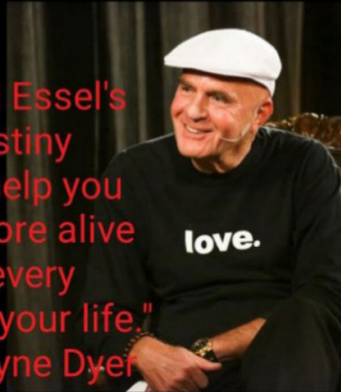
—Marala Scott, Oprah’s Ambassador of Hope
talking about David’s book, *Angel on a Surfboard*



I love it! You are very talented and bright and insightful.

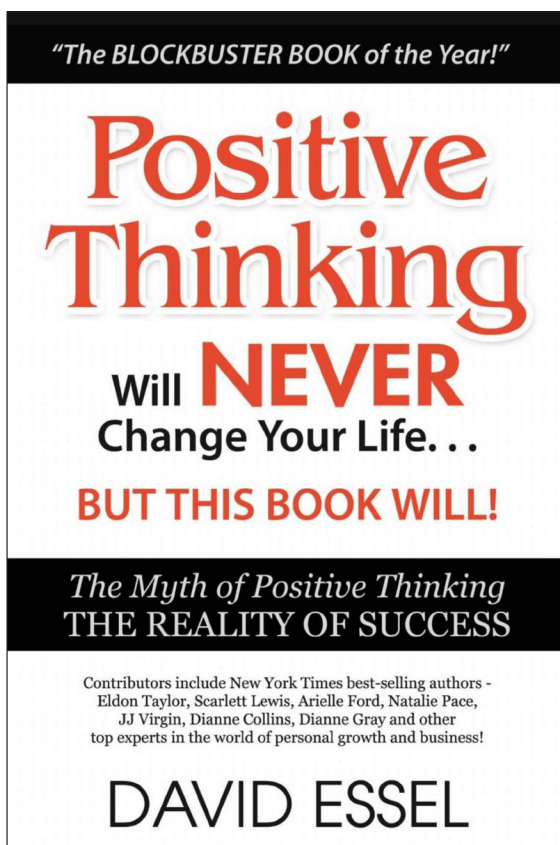
—Jenna Elfman, television star and actress tells us what she thinks after reading *Phoenix Soul* by David!

"David Essel's
destiny
is to help you
feel more alive
in every
area of your life."
Dr. Wayne Dyer



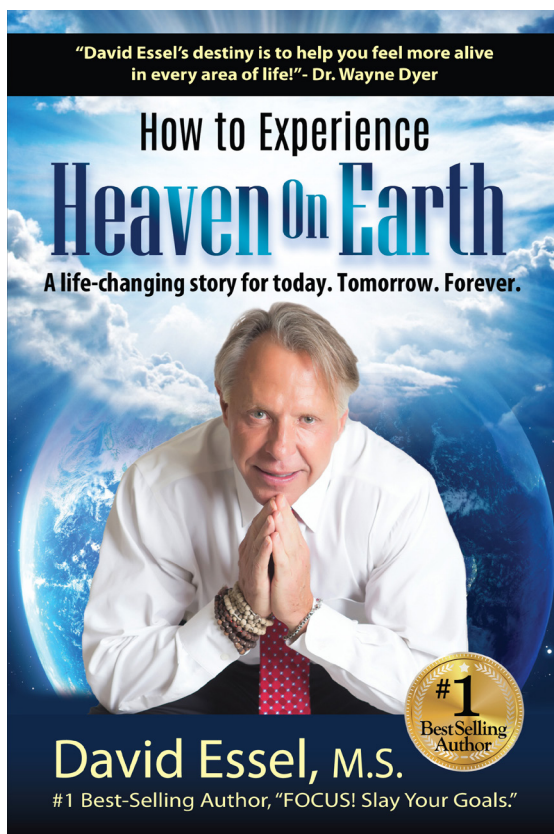
WWW.DAVIDESSEL.COM
SIGN UP FOR OUR FREE DAILY BOOST VIDEOS.

David's books and CDs are available at
www.amazon.com
or for more info visit
www.davidessel.com



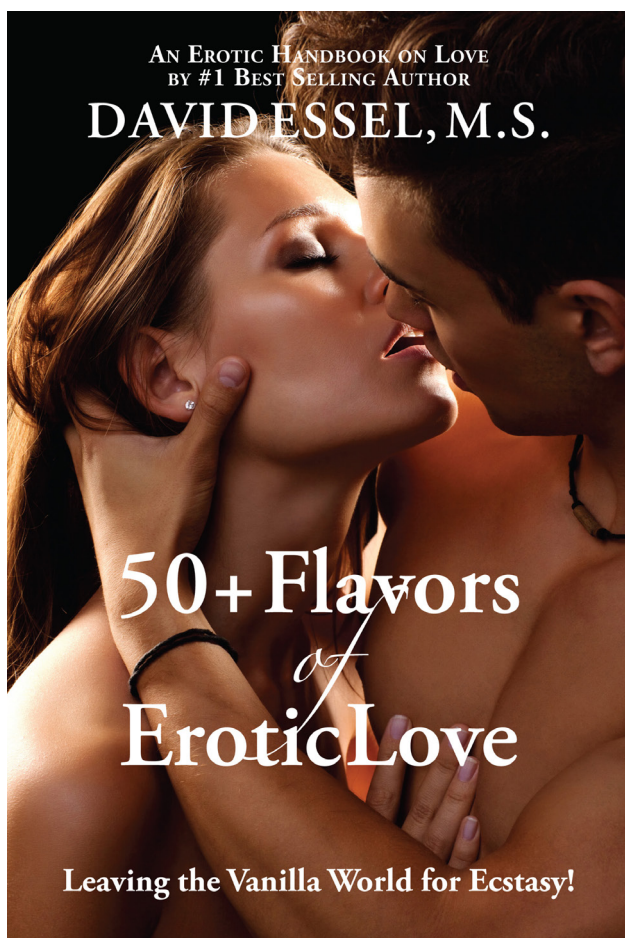
This is David's First #1 Bestseller! This book is the bible of personal growth. Positive thinking is critical for success, but the real keys to goal achievement lie in transforming the subconscious mind into an ally versus a saboteur. Eleven other best selling authors join David in this book, adding value, and credibility for your benefit. This is your book for radical success.

Available at Amazon.com in print and eBook.



Through this transformational book, David Essel was given the message that is about to change the way millions of people think, believe and act, as he proves that the heaven we seek, the one we believe we have to wait for, is right here and NOW! And the best news? Heaven is available today to anyone who truly wants it.

Available at Amazon.com in print and eBook.

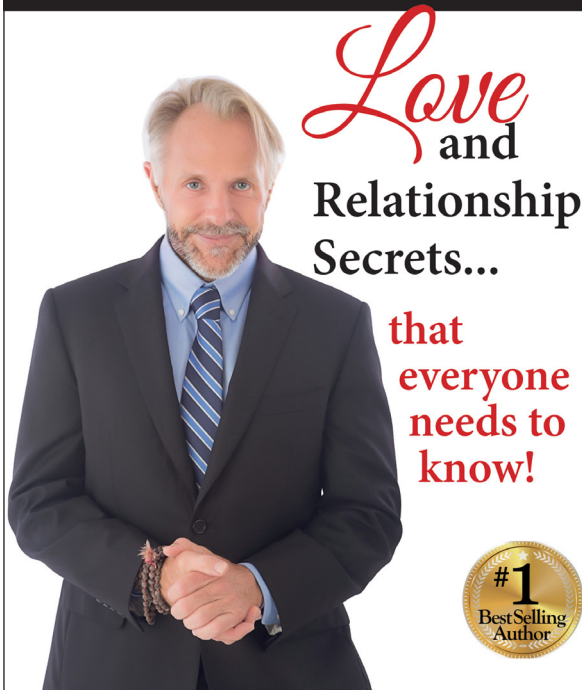


Discover the world of erotic love within a unique sexual and heart connection, offering an intoxicating euphoric relationship! Learn how to create a relationship with fierce passion and sensual energy that ignites your souls and bodies daily!

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"David truly understands the human psyche."

—Dr. Laurie Betito



David Essel M.S., O.M.

#1 Best Selling Author: "Focus! Slay Your Goals!"

This book is about relationships, and the work we've done for 30 years, which has helped to radically change the lives of millions of people from around the world. It is designed to cut to the core, to go deeper than surface thinking, in order to radically change our beliefs, behaviors and actions in regards to love, friendships, family relationships and self-love.

Available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) in print and eBook.

David Essel is THE NEW LEADER of The Positive Thinking Movement. —Jenny Mccarthy

Finally! A book dedicated to help us ALL heal during these challenging and chaotic times!

Did you know?

1. 79% of Americans needed more emotional support than they received in the past year. (A.P.A.)
2. 40%+ struggle with anxiety and depression daily.
3. Addictions, of all types, are climbing out of control.
4. 80% of relationships are extremely stressed and unhealthy.
5. Attitude challenges, anxiety, depression, insomnia, and more!

In this book, we have the solutions for our challenges. You are never alone.

Along with his new monthly program *Helping Americans Heal™* this book discusses how to deal with and overcome depression, dependency, addictions, and other afflictions brought on by these stressful times.

David Essel, M.S., O.M., is a #1 Best Selling Author of 12 books, counselor, minister, master life coach, radio and television host and speaker.

Join his new program, *Helping Americans Heal™*, or work with him one on one at www.DavidEssel.com

