



Shift Happens

Dr. Maurice Duffy

Small Shifts.
Big Results.
Lasting Change.

JUNE 2025

TABLE CONTENTS

01

The Lie You Tell Yourself

02

What Is Your Soul Protein?

03

Rebel, or Go Quietly into the Night?

04

You Can't outrun a Mind You Don't Train

05

**The Way We Screw Our Kids
(And Sometimes Get It Right)**

06

**Leading Without a Script: The
Mindset Shift Every Leader
Must Make**

07

**We're All Influenced; The
Question Is: By What?**

08

**Remain Static Is to Lose
Ground**

June welcome message

**THIS MONTHS REFLECTIONS / LEARNING/
THINGS TO BRING INTO july AND THINGS
TO LEAVE IN JUNE**

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**“THE LIFE YOU
WANT ISN'T ON
THE OTHER SIDE
OF PERFECTION.
IT'S ON THE
OTHER SIDE OF
YOUR SELF-
DECEPTIONS.”**

The Lie You Tell Yourself

“The most dangerous lies are the ones we whisper to ourselves.”

We are not the 50,000 negative thoughts we have each day. We are not our stories. We are what we hide. We are our lies. We say we're doing our best. That we're overwhelmed. That now's not the right time. That we're waiting—for courage, for clarity, for life to make sense. Lies on Lies. These aren't truths. They're shields. Self-serving myths. Comfortable half-truths—brushed just enough with reality to feel honest.

The truth? Most of us live in quiet deception. Not to fool others—But to avoid confronting ourselves.

We exaggerate our intentions and downplay our failures. We build narratives where we're always the misunderstood underdog, the loyal one, the one who tried their best in a world that didn't listen. We re-run old arguments in our minds—and we win every time. We say we're too tired to change, yet spend hours scrolling. We say we want connection, but ghost people who care. We say we value truth—while hiding from mirrors. We've become curators of comfort. Addicted to the familiar. Allergic to honesty.

And then there's Joe (not real name), Joe lied too. Not to manipulate. Just enough to survive the day. To keep the story neat. By 67, Joe had become a master of self-deception.



He told himself he was a good man because he never hurt anyone. He told himself he was a faithful husband, though emotionally absent. He told himself he was successful because he held the same job for 40 years. He told himself there was time. That the dreams could wait. That this version of himself was “just who he was”. But Joe was trapped. He once said to me: *“I feel like I’m behind a mirror. I can see the man I was meant to be—but I’m not in his life.”* He’d sit in the same café each morning, watching the world go by, replaying the past like a showreel. He won every argument in his head. He was always noble, always right. But what he couldn’t replay was the joy he never chased, the risks he never took, the truths he never told.

He didn't live. - He maintained. He didn't feel. He numbed. He didn't evolve. He explained. And slowly, the story he'd built to protect himself became a cage.

I call this 'The Psychology of the Mirror' - the internal story we tell about who we are and what our life means. But what if that story is pure fiction? What if your identity—your labels, traits, habits—are just rehearsed myths? You say: "I'm an introvert," so you avoid intimacy. You say: "I'm a procrastinator," so you delay action. You say: "I've always been like this," but you mean: "I'm afraid to change."

According to research, the stories we tell don't just reflect our personality—they become it. But they're rarely accurate. They're riddled with bias, ego, and fear. We filter the world through the lens of what flatters or protects us. Your self-narrative isn't a truth. It's a script. And your ego is the scriptwriter. We edit to survive. We minimise regret. We cling to traits that let us off the hook. And we trade our potential for the illusion of peace.

Ask yourself:

- If someone else told your life story, what would they say?
- If your child inherited your traits, would you feel proud—or ashamed?
- If an honest narrator replayed your life—no spin, no edits—what would they reveal?

Until you confront the lie, you can't write a better truth.

Joe never did. He died last year—not tragically, just quietly. Like a man who spent his life looking at a better version of himself through glass. And by then, the mirror was too thick to break.



Steps to Break the Lie:

1. Audit Your Myth; What's the story you always tell yourself? "I always put others first.", "No one's ever really helped me.", "I'm not made for more." Write it down. Say it out loud. Now ask: is this truth—or comfort?
2. Step Outside the Mirror; Ask someone who loves you to describe a version of you in one sentence. Don't correct them. Just listen. It may feel hard—but it will be honest.
3. Do the Thing You Fear; Make the phone call. Say the sorry. Submit the application. Do the thing that makes your stomach turn. Because that is where your lie wants you quiet.

The life you want isn't on the other side of perfection. It's on the other side of your self-deceptions. You weren't born to rehearse regrets. You weren't made to play small. And your story, if you choose it—can still be rewritten. But only if you stop whispering excuses into the dark and start telling the truth in the daylight.

Don't be Joe.

“

**“STOP FILTERING
YOUR INSTINCTS.
YOUR SOUL
ALREADY KNOWS
WHAT MATTERS.
NOT ALL JOY IS
EQUAL. SOME OF
IT KEEPS YOU
ALIVE.”**

What Is Your Soul Protein?

I was asked a question recently that caught me off guard:

"What is your soul protein?"

Not your job title. Not your morning routine. Not what you're good at or known for. But what feeds your soul. What keeps you alive—not just breathing, but truly alive—when everything else falls apart.

I paused. I didn't have a rehearsed answer. And for someone who usually does, that unsettled me. I could list what I love easily enough. I love reading. I live by the sea—those morning walks are non-negotiable. I love teaching, challenging others to grow. I love speaking—on stage, in workshops, in the chaos of real life. I love to run—it's where I meet myself honestly. But were any of these my soul protein? I wasn't sure.

I didn't find the answer in stillness. I found it in grief. In the quiet pain of watching someone you love disappear in fragments. My wife, Karen, is battling a rare and aggressive form of Alzheimer's. She didn't just love music—she was music. It pulsed through her, shaped her moods, moved her soul. Now, even in moments when she no longer recognises herself, a melody will bring her back—if only for seconds. When almost everything else is gone, music stays.

That's when I understood. Soul protein is what disease, hardship, betrayal, or failure cannot strip away. It's what remains. What resists erasure. What you come home to, even in darkness. And then I saw mine clearly. Truth.



Not abstract truth. Not facts. But unfiltered, inconvenient, gut-punching honesty. With myself. With others. With life. When I speak truth—on stage, with clients, to my son, or into my own journal—I feel whole. It's taken me ages to understand that. When I compromise it, I feel like I'm betraying something sacred. Truth has cost me. Professionally. Personally. Publicly. But I'd rather lose what's fake than betray what's real. And that's how I know it's my soul protein.

I used to be called a big beast in any jungle—or the kind who doesn't wait to put gloves on to pull nettles. I often say: you don't need to wonder what I'm thinking—I'll tell you. Because the truth matters. I've lived in the shadows of lies. Life can be brutal. But I've learned this: truth hurts—but lies trap. As the old line goes, *"Oh what a tangled web we weave, when first we practise to deceive."*

So...

Be unapologetically you. Not by default. By design.

Stop filtering your instincts. Your soul already knows what matters.

Not all joy is equal. Some of it keeps you alive.

Three Actions to Find Your Soul Protein

1) Notice What Survives the Storm

When the world falls apart, what still matters? What still feels like you? That's your signal.

2) Live for Alignment, Not Applause

Say yes to what fuels you, even if it's messy. Say no to what drains you, even if it's expected.

3) Name It, Claim It, Build Around It

Don't just feel it—articulate it. Say it out loud. Then design your life to orbit around it.

So... what's your soul protein?

Not the story you sell. Not the image you protect. Not the thing that gets you "likes."

Not that but...

The thing you can't live without. The thing that calls you back to yourself when everything else is gone.

Find it.
Feed it.
Let it lead.

Because nothing else will sustain you quite like that.



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**“EVERY DAY IS
STILL YOURS.
EVERY CHAPTER
UNWRITTEN.
YOUR
RELEVANCE
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UNLESS YOU
ALLOW IT TO.”**

Rebel, or Go Quietly into the Night?

Ageing gracefully is overrated. The real question is: will you shrink back, or show up and raise hell?

They tell us to age quietly. To slow down. Step aside. Keep our opinions, our energy, and our ambition in check. To take the tablets, accept the wrinkles, and smile sweetly from the shadows. But here's the truth: I'm not going anywhere quietly. And neither should you.

As the years stack up, so do the assumptions. What we should wear. What we should think. What we should stop doing. They treat ageing like a descent. But I see it as a relaunch. We live in a culture that worships youth but forgets the value of age. Youth is potential. But age? Age is power. It's wisdom forged through pain. It's courage born from failure. It's clarity sharpened by experience.

Let's be honest—wrinkles aren't a weakness. They're the creases left behind by great smiles and fierce battles. And if the joints creak and the mirror doesn't flatter, who cares? That mirror doesn't reflect your soul, your spirit, or the grit you've earned just to stand upright some days.

Going quietly is neat. Polite. Expected. But that's not for me. Because if you've made it this far, you've earned the right to rebel. Rebellion doesn't mean shouting. It means refusing to disappear. It means dancing when they tell you to sit down. Speaking up when they expect you to nod along. Starting again when they whisper, *"It's too late."*



We are told to make way for the next generation. And yes, we must pass the torch. But who says we can't run a few more laps with it first? The greatest myth is that we're done after 60.

Done dreaming.

Done disrupting.

Done daring.

Absolute nonsense. Every day is still yours. Every chapter unwritten. Your relevance doesn't expire unless you allow it to. You're not fading—you're refining. You're not slowing—you're choosing where to sprint. So what do we do?

We rebel. We stand tall in rooms where we were expected to shrink. We show the world what lived-in skin, a sharp mind, and a fearless heart can still do. We make noise, not for applause, but because our truth deserves air.

And when our time does come, let it find us in motion. Worn out, not faded. Smiling, not silent. Let it find us with nothing left unspoken, nothing left undone.

So, rebel. Or go quietly into the night. But let no one ever say you didn't choose.

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**“IF YOU WANT
PEACE,
TRAIN FOR IT.
IF YOU WANT
STRENGTH,
EARN IT.
IF YOU WANT
CLARITY,
BUILD IT.”**

You Can't Outrun a Mind You Don't Train

Negative thoughts, left unchecked, act like a slow-release poison in the body. Despite this, many of us allow them to persist—ruminating daily on past mistakes, perceived inadequacies, comparisons, and imagined failures. We think we are in control of our thoughts. More often, they are in control of us.

The idea that one can simply push negativity aside and carry on is a fallacy. Suppressing thought does not transform it. Real change begins when one confronts, reframes, and replaces the narratives that do us harm. You cannot think your way out of a toxic mindset using the same thoughts that led you there. I teach the disciplines of meditation, affirmation, visualisation, and cognitive reframing. And, inevitably, I hear the refrain: "That sort of thing doesn't work."

One such comment came from Anne, a seasoned marathon runner.

I asked her: *"Anne, could you run 26 miles tomorrow without training?"* She laughed and said, *"Of course not."*

"Then why," I asked, *"do we expect the mind to change overnight without any effort?"*

We readily accept that the body needs conditioning, that improvement comes with repetition and discomfort. But with the mind, we expect transformation without the sweat. Peace without process. Growth without tension. Mindset work is neither indulgent nor inconsequential. It is serious, essential, and far from optional if one seeks to change. Toxic thinking does not resolve itself. It entrenches. To dislodge it requires effort. Meditation, contrary to popular misconception, is not escapism. It is the act of meeting one's thoughts, and not flinching. Affirmation is not wishful thinking—it is resistance against the internal critic.



Reframing is not deception—it is the truth, told more helpfully. And visualisation is not fantasy. It is mental rehearsal for what life might demand.

Dismiss mindset training after a single difficult attempt, and you do your future self a disservice. You wouldn't dismiss running because your first jog was painful. The longer we host negative thoughts unchallenged, the more deeply they root. And make no mistake: allowing them to settle is not a neutral act—it is harmful. Over decades, I have coached athletes, CEOs, and ordinary people navigating extraordinary pressures. The difference between those who remain stuck and those who move forward is not intellect, privilege, or luck—it is discipline. It is the choice to do the work, even when it feels futile. Mental clarity, like fitness, is built, not wished for. If you want peace, train for it. If you want strength, earn it. If you want clarity, build it.

Your mind is not a junkyard. Don't leave it to rust.

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**"EVERY SHARP
WORD BECOMES
AN ECHO IN
THEIR HEAD.
SPEAK WITH
CARE. YOUR
LANGUAGE
TODAY BECOMES
THEIR SELF-TALK
FOR LIFE."**

The Way We Screw Our Kids (And Sometimes Get It Right)

I've been a parent across decades.

My eldest children are now in their late 30s. My youngest son is 16. That's a lifetime of trial, error, love, regret, and learning. Parenting across such a time span feels like watching yourself in a mirror at different angles, seeing what you once were, and what you are now, and realising how often you misunderstood both.

There are things I got wrong the first time round. Things that still leave shadows in my grown-up children's lives. I see it in how they handle stress, in what they fear, in what they question about themselves. These aren't just their struggles, they're echoes of mine. Echoes of the father I was when I didn't know better.

Now, I do some things differently.

I listen more. I lecture less. I show up—not as the expert—but as a real person, flawed, learning, present. I don't believe in perfection anymore. As I often say, it's our imperfections that make us beautiful. And the most powerful thing I can give my son now is presence, not performance.

But I still get it wrong.

I tell him to listen, but forget that kids copy what they see, not what they hear. I think I'm busy with important things, but forget that he is the important thing. I raise my voice in frustration, but forget that my words don't disappear, they echo for a lifetime.



As a top coach to so many top performers, I often forget to listen to my own advice. One of my key strategies when helping people change is teaching them to connect with their inner child. And too often, that inner voice sounds painfully familiar—like my own voice when I was too busy, too distracted, too impatient with my kids. What we say becomes what they believe. Especially the negative stuff. And those beliefs grow into who they are.

Our kids will become us.

**So we must grow into who we
want them to be.**

We parent not from a textbook—but from who we are.

And that's the terrifying truth: if we want to raise kind, strong, emotionally intelligent children, we must become kind, strong, emotionally intelligent adults.

So here's what I know now—not as a perfect parent, but as a real one, still learning:

Three Things to Do If You Don't Want to Screw Up Your Kids:

1. Grow into who you want your kids to become.

"They won't listen to your advice if your life doesn't reflect it. Your children will mirror you, not your words. So stop performing—start evolving."

2. Be real, not perfect.

"Your children don't need a flawless parent—they need a human one. Your vulnerability gives them permission to be whole. Stop chasing perfection. Show up instead."

3. Watch your words—they become their voice.

"Every sharp word becomes an echo in their head. Speak with care. Your language today becomes their self-talk for life."



We all screw up. The secret is to stay in the game. To love hard. To show up. To evolve. Parenting is never done. And the question isn't whether we'll fail. It's whether we'll grow from it.

Parenting ['perə
support a child
physical, emoti

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**“LEADERS WHO
THRIVE NOW ARE
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Leading Without a Script: The Mindset Shift Every Leader Must Make

“The leaders who will matter most in the future are not the ones with the answers—but the ones asking better questions.”

At the recent Reimagined Leadership Conference, I facilitated a workshop on the premise that traditional leadership models are no longer fit for purpose. The world has moved on. So must leadership. We are navigating an era of relentless complexity—AI disruption, generational divides, fragile trust, and a workforce that is no longer content with command-and-control. The best leaders I see today aren't holding on tighter. They're letting go—of ego, of perfection, of the need to have all the answers.

In our workshop we explored eight behaviours essential for leading now. Here are four that resonated most powerfully:

1. Master yourself before you dare to lead others.

Leadership begins where self-deception ends. A leader who doesn't know themselves—or worse, refuses to—can't build the credibility or human connection people crave. Self-care isn't a wellness buzzword; it's a strategic necessity. Those who lead with a fractured inner world fracture those around them. The new leader must learn to sit with discomfort, own their mental state, and show up with grounded presence. Without that, there is no trust.

2. Don't play happy family—build respectful relationships.

Respect is the ignition key to meaningful connection. Teams don't want artificial harmony or yet another away day; they want dignity. Leaders must create environments where difference is not just tolerated but needed. Respect doesn't mean agreement. It means everyone has a voice, and that voice matters. The best cultures aren't built on smiles—they're built on challenge, clarity, and care.



3. Show grit. Hold the line. Flex the edges.

Real leadership is clear at the core, fuzzy at the edges. Vision must be ruthless—what are we here to do, and what won't we compromise? But how we get there should flex. Leaders today must be adaptable without becoming vague, and tough without becoming closed. When the storm hits, people don't look for a cheerleader—they look for calm, courageous conviction.

4. Build layered leadership—don't hog the mic.

The age of the heroic leader is over. The best organisations are now networks, not pyramids. Smart leaders build layered leadership—they cultivate people who can step up, not just follow orders. They don't need to be the smartest in the room. They just need to make space for brilliance to emerge. When everyone owns the mission, no one needs to be the boss.

We also examined four more emerging competencies shaping the future:

5. Embracing AI while doubling down on human connection and loyalty.
6. Leading beyond profit toward genuine impact and social care.
7. Shifting from control to evolution to transformation.
8. Creative beyond imagination.

The truth is, no one has the full script for what leadership must look like next. The world is moving too fast, too unpredictably, for certainty. But what today's leaders can do is keep questioning—relentlessly, honestly, and with humility. The leaders who thrive now are not those with all the answers, but those brave enough to challenge the old ones.



"If you're still clinging to yesterday's playbook, you're already behind. The question is no longer 'What should a leader do?'—but 'What must a leader become?'"

“

**“YOU ARE BEING
NUDGED.
DAILY.
POLITELY.
QUIETLY.
SOMETIMES IN
YOUR INTEREST.
OFTEN NOT.”**

We're All Influenced; The Question Is: By What?

"People don't buy with logic. They buy with emotion — and justify it with logic later."

We like to think we're in control. That we make decisions based on facts, reason, and free will. But decades of behavioural science suggest otherwise. We are not as rational as we think; we are predictably irrational. And whether in politics, marketing, or everyday life, influence is everywhere.

When I led global sales teams, we didn't teach manipulation; we taught understanding. Not to deceive, but to decode what really drives human behaviour. We developed eight detailed psychological buyer profiles, each rooted in a dominant emotional need: control, certainty, recognition, belonging, achievement, novelty, safety, or legacy. Once identified, we matched each with a behaviourally intelligent strategy.

Some buyers want data. Others want connection. Some fear risk. Others crave momentum. Matching communication to personality wasn't manipulation—it was respect. But influence, if misused, becomes control. That's why we anchored everything to seven ethical principles:



Authority; People are more likely to follow those they perceive as credible or experienced. It's why surgeons wear scrubs. Why professionals display certificates. The symbol gives weight to the words.

Reciprocity; Give before you ask. Help someone, offer something of value, and they are far more likely to engage. Reciprocity builds trust—genuinely.

Scarcity; What's rare is valued. A limited offer or rare opportunity draws more attention. But when false scarcity is used, credibility dies.



Social Proof; People follow people. If others are doing it, we assume it's right. That's why reviews, testimonials, and popularity metrics matter. They're psychological shortcuts.

Consistency; Once people commit, even in small ways, they tend to follow through. It's why good communication starts with alignment—because momentum matters.

Framing; The way a message is presented shapes how it's received. "90% survival rate" feels safer than "10% mortality rate"—same facts, different frame.

Cognitive Ease; People are more likely to act on what feels easy to understand. Simplicity is power. Confusion kills conversion.

Overlaying all of this was **nudge theory**, the subtle art of guiding behaviour without coercion. Small design tweaks, placement of information, defaults in a form—nudges work by shifting the environment rather than the argument. A cafeteria puts fruit at eye level: more people choose it. It's not manipulation; it's design with intention. And yes, it works. But with great effectiveness comes ethical obligation. Just because you can influence doesn't mean you should. Influence is neutral. Its morality comes from intent.

Today, those same behavioural tools we once used to build trust are being used to shape elections, mask truths, and push consumerism disguised as choice. The danger isn't in influence; it's in silence about how it works.

**You are being nudged.
Daily.
Politely.
Quietly.
Sometimes in your interest.**

Often not.

So don't fear influence, understand it. And ask: is this helping me decide, or pushing me where I didn't mean to go?

“People don't buy with logic. They buy with emotion – and justify it with logic later.”

But when influence serves truth not control it becomes something powerful: trust.



point of view.
Trust [trʌst] n
confidence in
dependence

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**“WE ARE NOT
WHO WE ARE-
WE ARE WHAT
WE HIDE FROM
OURSELVES.”**

Remain Static Is to Lose Ground

We live in a world that moves faster than our willingness to evolve. Technology accelerates. Cultures shift. Crises mount. But most of us? We cling to old stories. We scroll. We binge. We perform survival disguised as routine—and we call it life. Here is the life so many of us enjoy! Work. Scroll. Sleep. Repeat. You wake, perform, please. You come home, eat, scroll, zone out, and collapse. You watch the lives of others and call it relaxation.

But here's the truth: that's not living—it's sedation. Psychologists call it **hedonic adaptation**—we normalise the mediocre, then defend it. We settle into discomfort and stitch together justifications. But neuroscience is clear: growth requires disruption. The brain rewires through discomfort—not avoidance. We carry the past like a debt. We rehearse the future like a tragedy. And in between?

We perform comfort, pretending it's contentment. The comfort you feel isn't safety—it's slow death. We don't resist change because it's hard—we resist it because it reveals. And most people would rather stay broken than be exposed. Better to be numb than to face the truth: You've always been capable—but convenience has always won. We are not trapped—we are trained. By routine. By fear. By the echo chamber in our own heads. You are not a victim of circumstance. You are the architect of your stagnation. And every day you don't move? The world moves without you. Progress doesn't pause for your permission. No More Lies. If you won't face your truth, life will rip the mask off for you. Not gently. Not politely. But violently—through breakdowns, burnouts, betrayals.



You'll watch others live with fire while you numb your days with noise. You'll pretend you don't want more—but envy will gnaw at you quietly, daily. And worst of all? You'll bury the person you were meant to become. Because here's the part you never admit—not even to yourself: You are an imposter. You wear masks for acceptance. You perform for applause. You avoid silence—because silence tells the truth.

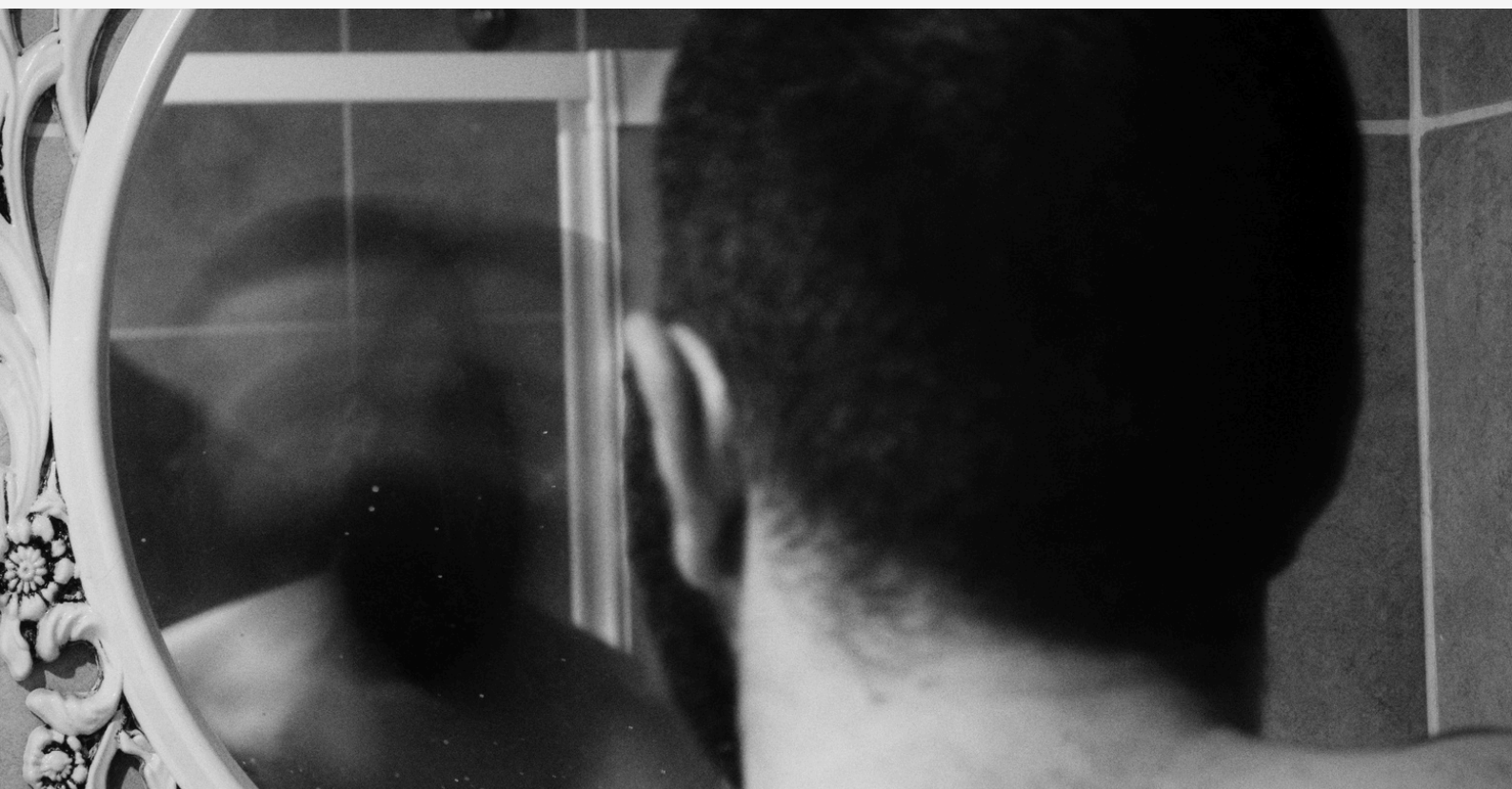
You fear your own thoughts—because deep down, you know they've been shaped by what others expect of you. You don't know what you believe anymore. You just repeat what keeps you safe. You carry a past that chains you, wounds you, defines you—yet you refuse to let go. Not because you can't. But because pain is familiar. And you've mistaken familiarity for safety.

You'll watch others live with fire while you numb your days with noise. You'll pretend you don't want more—but envy will gnaw at you quietly, daily. And worst of all? You'll bury the person you were meant to become. Because here's the part you never admit—not even to yourself: You are an imposter. You wear masks for acceptance. You perform for applause. You avoid silence—because silence tells the truth.

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So here it is. The mirror. Look in it:

- Cut the comfort. It's your cage. It's killing your potential, your spirit, your truth.
- Burn the script. Stop living the life they told you to want. Start writing the one you ache for.
- Move. Now. Before the dream dies. Before regret is all that's left. Before you become one of those people—grey, bitter, quietly broken—who spends a life defending the choices they never had the guts to question.



Keep Connected with Maurice

Dr. Maurice Duffy is a globally recognised mindset coach, leadership expert, and motivational speaker with over 30 years of experience in transformative change. He serves as a Visiting Professor of Innovation and Transformation and Entrepreneur in Residence at the University of Sunderland's He has worked with a diverse range of clients, including global corporations such as Google, Sony, Coca-Cola, Siemens, HSBC UK, P&G, Barclays, JP Morgan, BP, and AXA. His expertise extends to elite sports, having coached international teams and athletes like the Australian Cricket Captain Steve Smith, Durham Cricket Club, Ryder Cup players, and Premiership football players. Additionally, he has advised political figures in Westminster, Washington, and Durban, and has served as Advisor to the Mongolian Government. Beyond coaching, Dr. Duffy is a bestselling author, columnist, and BBC presenter. He regularly shares insights on mindset and personal development through his blog and social media platforms.



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