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AWAKEN THE GIANT WITHIN

*How to Take Immediate
Control of Your Mental,
Emotional, Physical
and Financial
Destiny!*

#1
National
Bestseller



ANTHONY ROBBINS

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *INNER STRENGTH
AND UNLIMITED POWER*

Awaken the Giant Within

Anthony Robbins

DREAMS OF DESTINY	1
DECISIONS: THE PATHWAY TO POWER	12
THE FORCE THAT SHAPES YOUR LIFE	28
BELIEF SYSTEMS:	44
CAN CHANGE HAPPEN IN AN INSTANT?	69
OF NEURO-ASSOCIATIVE CONDITIONING™	80
HOW TO GET WHAT YOU REALLY WANT	100
QUESTIONS ARE THE ANSWER	123
THE VOCABULARY OF ULTIMATE SUCCESS	141
THE POWER OF LIFE METAPHORS	162
THE TEN EMOTIONS OF POWER	175
CREATING A COMPELLING FUTURE	195
THE TEN-DAY MENTAL CHALLENGE	222
ULTIMATE INFLUENCE: YOUR MASTER SYSTEM	231
LIFE VALUES: YOUR PERSONAL COMPASS	242
RULES: IF YOU'RE NOT HAPPY, HERE'S WHY!	264
REFERENCES: THE FABRIC OF LIFE	284
IDENTITY: THE KEY TO EXPANSION	299
EMOTIONAL DESTINY: THE ONLY TRUE SUCCESS - DAY ONE	316
PHYSICAL DESTINY: PRISON OF PAIN OR PALACE OF PLEASURE DAY TWO	318
RELATIONSHIP DESTINY: THE PLACE TO SHARE AND CARE -DAY THREE	326
FINANCIAL DESTINY: SMALL STEPS TO A SMALL (OR LARGE) FORTUNE - DAY FOUR	329
MASTER YOUR TIME AND YOUR LIFE – DAY SIX	345
REST AND PLAY: EVEN GOD TOOK ONE DAY OFF! DAY SEVEN	348
THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE: WHAT ONE PERSON CAN DO	350

1

DREAMS OF DESTINY

A consistent man believes in destiny, a capricious¹ man in chance.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

We all have dreams... We all want to believe deep down in our souls that we have a special gift, that we can make a difference, that we can touch others in a special way, and that we can make the world a better place. At one time in our lives, we all had a vision for the quality of life that we desire and

¹ **capricious** launisch

deserve. Yet, for many of us, those dreams have become so shrouded² in the frustrations and routines of daily life that we no longer even make an effort to accomplish³ them. For far too many, the dream has dissipated⁴—and with it, so has the will to shape our destinies. Many have lost that sense of certainty that creates the winner's edge. My life's quest has been to restore the dream and to make it real, to get each of us to remember and use the unlimited power that lies sleeping within us all.

I'll never forget the day it really hit me that I was truly living my dream. I was flying my jet helicopter from a business meeting in Los Angeles, traveling to Orange County on the way to one of my seminars. As I flew over the city of Glendale, I suddenly recognized a large building, and I stopped the helicopter and hovered above it. As I looked down, I realized this was the building that I'd worked in as a janitor⁵ a mere twelve years ago!

In those days, I had been concerned whether my 1960 Volkswagen would hang together for the 30-minute trip to work, my life had been focused on how I was going to survive; I had felt fearful and alone. But that day, as I hovered there in the sky, I thought, "What a difference a decade can make!" I did have dreams back then, but at the time, it seemed they'd never be realized. Today, though, I've come to believe that all my past failure and frustration were actually laying the foundation for the understandings that have created the new level of living I now enjoy. As I continued my flight south along the coastal route, I spotted dolphins playing with the surfers in the waves below. It's a sight that my wife, Becky, and I treasure as one of life's special gifts. Finally, I reached Irvine. Looking below, I was a little disturbed when I saw that the off ramp to my seminar was jammed with bumper-to-bumper traffic for more than a mile. I thought to myself, "Boy, I hope whatever else is going on tonight gets started soon so that the people coming to my seminar arrive on time."

But as I descended to the helipad, I began to see a new picture: thousands of people being held back by security where I was just about to land. Suddenly I began to grasp the reality. The traffic jam had been caused by people going to my event! Although we had expected approximately 2,000 attendees, I was facing a crowd of 7,000—in an auditorium that would hold only 5,000! When I walked into the arena from the landing pad, I was surrounded by hundreds of people who wanted to give me a hug or tell me how my work had positively impacted their lives.

The stories they shared with me were incredible. One mother introduced me to her son who had been labeled "hyperactive" and "learning disabled." Utilizing the principles of **state management** taught in this book, she was not only able to get him off the drug Ritalin, but they had also since been transferred to California where her son had been retested and evaluated at the level of genius! You should have seen his face as she shared with me his new label. A gentleman talked about how he had freed himself from cocaine using some of the **Success Conditioning** techniques you'll learn in this book. A couple in their mid-fifties shared with me that, after fifteen years of marriage, they had been on the brink of divorce until they learned about **personal rules**. A salesman told me how his monthly income had jumped from \$2,000 to over \$12,000 in a mere six months, and an entrepreneur related that he had increased corporate revenues by over \$3 million in eighteen months by applying the

² **shroud** 1. Leichentuch; 2. übertragen hüllen

³ **accomplish** erreichen; leisten

⁴ **dissipate** (sich) zerstreuen; verschwenden

⁵ **janitor** Am. Hausmeister (in)

principles of **quality questions** and **emotional management**. A lovely young woman showed me a picture of her former self, having lost fifty-two pounds by applying the principles of **leverage** that are detailed in this book.

I was touched so deeply by the emotions in that room that I got choked⁶ up, and at first I couldn't speak. As I looked out on my audience and saw 5,000 smiling, cheering, loving faces, in that moment I realized that *I am living my dream!* What a feeling to know that beyond a shadow of a doubt I had the information, strategies, philosophies, and skills that could assist any one of these people in empowering themselves to make the changes they desired most! A flood of images and emotions flowed over me. I began to remember an experience I'd had only a few years before, sitting in my 400-square-foot bachelor apartment in Venice, California, all alone and crying as I listened to the lyrics of a Neil Diamond song: "I am, I said, to no one there. And no one heard at all, not even the chair. I am, I cried. I am, said I. And I am lost, and I can't even say why, leavin' me lonely still." I remembered feeling like my life didn't matter, as if the events of the world were controlling me. I also remember the moment my life changed, the moment I finally said, "I've had it! I know I'm much more than I'm demonstrating mentally, emotionally, and physically in my life." *I made a decision* in that moment which was to alter my life forever. **I decided to change virtually⁷ every aspect of my life.** *I decided I would never again settle for less than I could be.* Who would have guessed that this decision would bring me to such an incredible moment?

I gave my all at the seminar that night, and when I left the auditorium, crowds of people followed me to the helicopter to see me off. To say I was deeply moved by the experience would be an understatement. A tear slid down my cheek as I thanked my Creator for these wonderful gifts. As I lifted off the grass and ascended into the moonlight, I had to pinch myself. *Could this be real?* Am I the same guy who eight years ago was struggling, frustrated, feeling alone and incapable of making my life work? Fat, broke, and wondering if I could even survive? How could a young kid like me with nothing but a high school education have created such dramatic changes?

My answer is simple: I learned to harness the principle I now call **concentration of power**. Most people have no idea of the giant capacity we can immediately command when we focus all of our resources on mastering a single area of our lives. Controlled focus is like a laser beam that can cut through anything that seems to be stopping you. **When we focus consistently on improvement in any area, we develop unique distinctions on how to make that area better.** One reason so few of us achieve what we truly want is that we never direct our focus; we never concentrate our power. Most people dabble their way through life, never deciding to master anything in particular. In fact, I believe most people fail in life simply because they major in minor things. I believe that one of life's major lessons is learning to understand what makes us do what we do. What shapes human behavior? The answers to this question provide critical keys to shaping your own destiny.

My entire life has been continually driven by a singular, compelling focus: *What makes the difference in the quality of people's lives?* How is it that so often people from such humble beginnings and devastating backgrounds manage in spite of it all to create lives that inspire us? Conversely, why

⁶ **choke** 1. transitives Verb (er)würgen, (auch intransitives Verb) ersticken; choke back Ärger unterdrücken, Tränen zurückhalten; choke down hinunterwürgen; choke up verstopfen; 2. MOTOR Choke, Luftklappe

⁷ **virtually** praktisch, so gut wie

do many of those born into privileged environments, with every resource for success at their fingertips, end up fat, frustrated, and often chemically addicted? What makes some people's lives an example and others' a warning? What is the secret that creates passionate, happy, and grateful lives in many, while for others the refrain might be, "Is that all there is?"

My own magnificent obsession began with some simple questions: "How can I take **immediate control** of my life? What can I do today that can make a difference—that could help me and others to shape our destinies? How can I expand, learn, grow, and share that knowledge with others in a meaningful and enjoyable way?"

At a very early age, I developed a belief that we're all here to contribute something unique, that deep within each of us lies a special gift. You see, I truly believe we all have a sleeping giant within us. Each of us has a talent, a gift, our own bit of genius just waiting to be tapped. It might be a talent for art or music. It might be a special way of relating to the ones you love. It might be a genius for selling or innovating or reaching out in your business or your career. I choose to believe that our Creator doesn't play favorites, that we've all been created unique, but with equal opportunities for experiencing life to the fullest. I decided many years ago that the most important way I could spend my life would be to invest it in something that would outlast it. *I decided that somehow I must contribute in some way that would live on long after I was gone.*

Today, I have the incredible privilege of sharing my ideas and feelings with literally millions of people through my books, tapes, and television shows. I've personally worked with over a quarter of a million people in the last few years alone. I've assisted members of Congress, CEOs, presidents of companies and countries, managers and mothers, salespeople, accountants, lawyers, doctors, psychiatrists, counselors, and professional athletes. I've worked with phobics, the clinically depressed, people with multiple personalities, and those who thought they had no personality. Now I have the unique good fortune of sharing the best of what I've learned with you, and for that opportunity I am truly grateful and excited.

Through it all, I've continued to recognize the power individuals have to change virtually anything and everything in their lives in an instant. I've learned that the resources we need to turn our dreams into reality are within us, merely waiting for the day when we decide to wake up and claim our birthright. I wrote this book for one reason: to be a wake-up call that will challenge those who are committed to living and being more to tap their God-given power. There are ideas and strategies in this book to help you produce specific, measurable, long-lasting changes in yourself and others.

You see, I believe I know who you really are. I believe you and I must be kindred souls. Your desire to expand has brought you to this book. It is the invisible hand that guided you. I know that no matter where you are in your life, you want more! No matter how well you're already doing or how challenged you now may be, deep inside of you there lies a belief that your experience of life can and will be much greater than it already is. You are destined for your own unique form of greatness, whether it is as an outstanding professional, teacher, businessperson, mother, or father. Most importantly, you not only believe this, but you've taken action. You not only bought this book, but you're also doing something right now that unfortunately is unique—you're reading it! Statistics show that less than 10 percent of people who buy a book read past the first chapter. What an unbelievable

waste! This is a giant book that you can use to produce giant results in your life. Clearly, you're the kind of person who won't cheat yourself by dabbling. By consistently taking advantage of each of the chapters in this book, you'll ensure your ability to maximize your potential.

I challenge you not only to do whatever it takes to read this book in its entirety (unlike the masses who quit) but also to use what you learn in simple ways each day. This is the all-important step that's necessary for you to produce the results you're committed to.

HOW TO CREATE LASTING CHANGE

For changes to be of any true value, they've got to be lasting and consistent. We've all experienced change for a moment, only to feel let down and disappointed in the end. In fact, many people attempt change with a sense of fear and dread because unconsciously they believe the changes will only be temporary. A prime example of this is someone who needs to begin dieting, but finds himself putting it off, primarily because he unconsciously knows that whatever pain he endures in order to create the change will bring him only a short-term reward. For most of my life I've pursued what I consider to be the organizing principles of lasting change, and you'll learn many of these and how to utilize them in the pages that follow. But for now, I'd like to share with you three elementary principles of change that you and I can use immediately to change our lives. While these principles are simple, they are also extremely powerful when they are skillfully applied. These are the exact same changes that an individual must make in order to create personal change, that a company must make in order to maximize its potential, and that a country must make in order to carve out its place in the world. In fact, as a world community these are the changes that we all must make to preserve the quality of life around the globe.

STEP ONE

Raise Your Standards

Any time you sincerely want to make a change, the first thing you must do is to raise your standards. When people ask me what really changed my life eight years ago, I tell them that absolutely the most important thing was changing what I demanded of myself. I wrote down all the things I would no longer accept in my life, all the things I would no longer tolerate, and all the things that I aspired to becoming.

Think of the far-reaching consequences set in motion by men and women who raised their standards and acted in accordance with them, deciding they would tolerate no less. History chronicles the inspiring examples of people like Leonardo da Vinci, Abraham Lincoln, Helen Keller, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Albert Einstein, Cesar Chavez, Soichiro Honda, and many others who took the magnificently powerful step of raising their standards. The same power that was available to them is available to you, if you have the courage to claim it. Changing an organization, a company, a country—or a world—begins with the simple step of changing yourself.

STEP TWO

Change Your Limiting Beliefs

If you raise your standards but don't really believe you can meet them, you've already sabotaged yourself. You won't even try; you'll be lacking that sense of certainty that allows you to tap the deepest capacity that's within you even as you read this. Our beliefs are like unquestioned commands, telling us how things are, what's possible and what's impossible, what we can and can not do. They shape every action, every thought, and every feeling that we experience. As a result, changing our belief systems is central to making any real and lasting change in our lives. We must develop a sense of certainty that we can and will meet the new standards before we actually do.

Without taking control of your belief systems, you can raise your standards as much as you like, but you'll never have the conviction to back them up. How much do you think Gandhi would have accomplished had he not believed with every fiber of his being in the power of nonviolent opposition? It was the congruence of his beliefs which gave him access to his inner resources and enabled him to meet challenges which would have swayed a less committed man. Empowering beliefs—this sense of certainty—is the force behind any great success throughout history.

STEP THREE

Change Your Strategy

In order to keep your commitment, you need the best strategies for achieving results. One of my core beliefs is that if you set a higher standard, and you can get yourself to believe, then you certainly can figure out the strategies. You simply will find a way. Ultimately, that's what this whole book is about. It shows you strategies for getting the job done, and I'll tell you now that the best strategy in almost any case is to find a role-model, someone who's already getting the results you want, and then tap into their knowledge. Learn what they're doing, what their core beliefs are, and how they think. Not only will this make you more effective, it will also save you a huge amount of time because you won't have to reinvent the wheel. You can fine-tune it, reshape it, and perhaps even make it better.

This book will provide you with the information and impetus to commit to all three of these master principles of quality change: it will help you raise your standards by discovering what they currently are and realizing what you want them to be; it will help you change the core beliefs that are keeping you from where you want to go and enhance those that already serve you; and it will assist you in developing a series of strategies for more elegantly, quickly, and efficiently producing the results you desire.

You see, in life, lots of people know what to do, but few people actually do what they know. Knowing is not enough! You must take action. If you will allow me the opportunity, through this book I'll be your personal coach. What do coaches do? Well, first, they care about you. They've spent years focusing on a particular area of expertise, and they've continued to make key distinctions about how to produce results more quickly. By utilizing the strategies your coach shares with you, you can immediately and dramatically change your performance. Sometimes, your coach doesn't even tell you

something new, but reminds you of what you already know, and then gets you to do it. This is the role, with your permission, that I'll be playing for you.

On what, specifically, will I be coaching you? I'll offer you distinctions of power in how to create lasting improvements in the quality of your life. Together, we will concentrate on (not dabble in!) the mastery of the five areas of life that I believe impact us most. They are:

1. Emotional Mastery

Mastering this lesson alone will take you most of the way toward mastering the other four! Think about it. Why do you want to lose weight? Is it just to have less fat on your body? Or is it because of the way you think you'd feel if you freed yourself of those unwanted pounds, giving yourself more energy and vitality, making yourself feel more attractive to others, and boosting your confidence and self-esteem to the stratosphere? Virtually everything we do is to change the way we feel—yet most of us have little or no training in how to do this quickly and effectively. It's amazing how often we use the intelligence at our command to work ourselves into unresourceful emotional states, forgetting about the multitude of innate talents each of us already possesses. Too many of us leave ourselves at the mercy of outside events over which we may have no control, failing to take charge of our emotions—over which we have all the control—and relying instead on short-term quick fixes. How else can we explain the fact that, while less than 5 percent of the world's population lives in the United States, we consume more than 50 percent of the world's cocaine? Or that our national defense budget, which currently runs in the billions, is equaled by what we spend on alcohol consumption? Or that 15 million Americans are diagnosed every year as clinically depressed, and more than \$500 million worth of prescriptions are written for the antidepressant drug Prozac?

In this book, you will discover what makes you do what you do, and the triggers for the emotions you experience most often. You will then be given a step-by-step plan to show you how to identify which emotions are empowering, which are disempowering, and how to use both kinds to your best advantage so that your emotions become not a hindrance, but instead a powerful tool in helping you achieve your highest potential.

2. Physical Mastery

Is it worth it to have everything you've ever dreamed of, yet not have the physical health to be able to enjoy it? Do you wake up every morning feeling energized, powerful, and ready to take on a new day? Or do you wake up feeling as tired as the night before, riddled with aches, and resentful at having to start all over again? Will your current lifestyle make you a statistic? One of every two Americans dies of coronary disease; one of three dies of cancer. To borrow a phrase from the seventeenth-century physician Thomas Moffett, we are "digging our graves with our teeth" as we cram our bodies with high-fat, nutritionally empty foods, poison our systems with cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs, and sit

passively in front of our TV sets. This second master lesson will help you take control of your physical health so that you not only look good, but you feel good and know that you're in control of your life, in a body that radiates vitality and allows you to accomplish your outcomes.

3. Relationship Mastery

Other than mastering your own emotions and physical health, there is nothing I can think of that is more important than learning to master your relationships—romantic, family, business, and social. After all, who wants to learn, grow, and become successful and happy all by themselves? The third master lesson in this book will reveal the secrets to enable you to create quality relationships—first with yourself, then with others. You will begin by discovering what you value most highly, what your expectations are, the rules by which you play the game of life, and how it all relates to the other players. Then, as you achieve mastery of this all-important skill, you will learn how to connect with people at the deepest level and be rewarded with something we all want to experience: a sense of contribution, of knowing that we have made a difference in other people's lives. I've found that, for me, the greatest resource is a relationship because it opens the doors to every resource I need. Mastery of this lesson will give you unlimited resources for growing and contributing.

4. Financial Mastery

By the time they reach the age of sixty-five, most Americans are either dead broke—or dead! That's hardly what most people envision for themselves as they look ahead to the golden age of retirement. Yet without the conviction that you deserve financial well-being, backed up by a workable game plan, how can you turn your treasured scenario into reality? The fourth master lesson in this book will teach you how to go beyond the goal of mere survival in your autumn years of life, and even now, for that matter. Because we have the good fortune to live in a capitalist society, each of us has the capability to carry out our dreams. Yet most of us experience financial pressure on an ongoing basis, and we fantasize that having more money would relieve that pressure. This is a grand cultural delusion—let me assure you that the more money you have, the more pressure you're likely to feel. The key is not the mere pursuit of wealth, but changing your beliefs and attitudes about it so you see it as a means for contribution, not the end-all and be-all for happiness.

To forge a financial destiny of abundance, you will first learn how to change what causes scarcity in your life, and then how to experience on a consistent basis the values, beliefs, and emotions that are essential to experiencing wealth and holding on to it and expanding it. Then you'll define your goals and shape your dreams with an eye toward achieving the highest possible level of well-being, filling you with peace of mind and freeing you to look forward with excitement to all the possibilities that life has to offer.

5. Time Mastery

Masterpieces take time. Yet how many of us really know how to use it? I'm not talking about time management; I'm talking about actually taking time and distorting it, manipulating it so that it becomes your ally rather than your enemy. The fifth master lesson in this book will teach you, first, how short-term evaluations can lead to long-term pain. You will learn how to make a real decision and how to manage your desire for instantaneous gratification, thus allowing your ideas, your creations—even your own potential—the time to reach full fruition. Next you'll learn how to design the necessary maps and strategies for following up on your decision, making it a reality with the willingness to take massive action, the patience to experience "lag time," and the flexibility to change your approach as often as needed. Once you have mastered time, you will understand how true it is that most people overestimate what they can accomplish in a year—and underestimate what they can achieve in a decade!

I'm not sharing these lessons with you to say that I have all the answers or that my life has been perfect or smooth. I've certainly had my share of challenging times. But through it all, I've managed to learn, persist, and continually succeed throughout the years. Each time I've met a challenge, I've used what I've learned to take my life to a new level. And, like yours, my level of mastery in these five areas continues to expand.

Also, living my lifestyle may not be the answer for you. My dreams and goals may not be yours. I believe, though, that the lessons I've learned about how to turn dreams into reality, how to take the intangible and make it real, are fundamental to achieving any level of personal or professional success. **I wrote this book to be an action guide—a textbook for increasing the quality of your life and the amount of enjoyment that you can pull from it.** While I'm obviously extremely proud of my first book, *Unlimited Power*, and the impact it's had on people all over the world, I feel this book will bring you some new and unique distinctions of power that can help you move your life to the next level.

We'll be reviewing some of the fundamentals, since repetition is the mother of skill. Therefore, I hope this will be a book you'll read again and again, a book you'll come back to and utilize as a tool to trigger yourself to find the answers that already lie inside you. Even so, remember that as you read this book, you don't have to believe or use everything within it. *Grab hold of the things you think are useful; put them in action immediately.* You won't have to implement all of the strategies or use all of the tools in this book to make some major changes. All have life-changing potential individually; used together, however, they will produce explosive results.

This book is filled with the strategies for achieving the success you desire, with organizing principles that I have modeled from some of the most powerful and interesting people in our culture. I've had the unique opportunity to meet, interview, and model a huge variety of people—people with impact and unique character—from Norman Cousins to Michael Jackson, from coach John Wooden to financial wizard John Templeton, from the captains of industry to cab drivers. In the following pages, you'll find not only the benefits of my own experience, but that of the thousands of books, tapes, seminars, and interviews that I've accumulated over the last ten years of my life, as I continue the exciting, ongoing quest of learning and growing a little bit more, every single day.

The purpose of this book is not just to help you make a singular change in your life, but rather to be a **pivot point** that can assist you in taking your entire life to a new level. The focus of this book is on creating **global changes**. What do I mean by this? Well, you can learn to make changes in your life—overcome a fear or a phobia, increase the quality of a relationship, or overcome your pattern of procrastinating. All these are incredibly valuable skills, and if you've read *Unlimited Power*, you've already learned many of them. However, as you continue through the following pages, you'll find that there are key **leverage points** within your life that, if you make one small change, will literally transform every aspect of your life.

This book is designed to offer you the strategies that can help you to create, live, and enjoy the life you currently may only be dreaming of. In this book you will learn a series of simple and specific strategies for **addressing the cause of any challenge and changing it with the least amount of effort**. For example, it might be hard for you to believe that merely by changing one word that is part of your habitual vocabulary, you could immediately change your emotional patterns for life. Or that by changing the consistent questions that you consciously or unconsciously ask yourself, you could instantly change what you focus on and therefore what actions you take every day of your life. Or that by making one belief change, you could powerfully change your level of happiness. Yet in the following chapters you'll learn to master these techniques—and many more—to effect the changes you desire.

And so it's with great respect that I begin this relationship with you as together we begin a journey of discovery and the actualization of our deepest and truest potentials. Life is a gift, and it offers us the privilege, opportunity, and responsibility to give something back by becoming more.

So let's begin our journey by exploring ..

DECISIONS: THE PATHWAY TO POWER

Man is born to live and not to prepare to live.

BORIS PASTERNAK

Do you remember when Jimmy Carter was still the President of the United States, the Empire was striking back, Yoda and Pac Man were the rage, and nothing came between Brooke Shields and her Calvins? The Ayatollah Khomeini had come to power in Iran and held our fellow Americans hostage. In Poland, an electrician from the Gdansk shipyards named Lech Walesa did the unthinkable: he decided to take a stand against the Communist hold. He led his co-workers in a strike, and when they tried to lock him out of his place of work, he simply climbed over the wall. A lot of walls have come down since then, haven't they?

Do you remember hearing the news that John Lennon was murdered? Do you remember when Mount Saint Helens erupted, leveling 150 square miles? Did you cheer when the underdog U.S. hockey team beat the Soviets, and went on to win the Olympic gold medal? That was 1980, a little more than ten years ago.

Think for a moment. Where were you then? What were you like? Who were your friends? What were your hopes and dreams? If someone had asked you, "Where will you be in ten or fifteen years?" what would you have told them? Are you today where you wanted to be back then? A decade can pass quickly, can't it?

More importantly, maybe we should be asking ourselves, **"How am I going to live the next ten years of my life? How am I going to live today in order to create the tomorrow I'm committed to? What am I going to stand for from now on? What's important to me right now, and what will be important to me in the long term? What actions can I take today that will shape my ultimate destiny?"**

You see, ten years from now, you will surely arrive. The question is: Where? Who will you have become? How will you live? What will you contribute? Now is the time to design the next ten years of your life—not once they're over. We must seize the moment. We're already immersed in the early part of a new decade, and we're entering the final years of the twentieth century/ And shortly we'll be in the twenty-first century, a new millennium. The year 2000 will be here before you know it, and in a mere ten years, you'll be looking back on this day and remembering it like you do 1980. Will you be pleased when you look back on the nineties, or perturbed? Delighted, or disturbed?

In the beginning of 1980, I was a nineteen-year-old kid. I felt alone and frustrated. I had virtually no financial resources. There were no success coaches available to me, no successful friends or mentors, no clear-cut goals. I was floundering and fat. Yet within a few short years I discovered a power that I used to transform virtually every area of my life. And once I'd mastered it, I used it to revolutionize my life in less than a year. It was the tool I used to dramatically increase my level of

confidence and therefore my ability to take action and produce measurable results. I also used it to take back control of my physical well-being and permanently rid myself of thirty-eight pounds of fat. Through it, I attracted the woman of my dreams, married her, and created the family I desired. I used this power to change my income from subsistence level to over \$1 million a year. It moved me from my tiny apartment (where I was washing my dishes in the bathtub because there was no kitchen) to my family's current home, the Del Mar Castle. This one distinction took me from feeling completely alone and insignificant to feeling grateful for new opportunities to contribute something to millions of people around the world. And it's a power I continue to use every single day of my life to shape my personal destiny.

In *Unlimited Power*, I made it abundantly clear that the most powerful way to shape our lives is to get ourselves to take action. The difference in the results that people produce comes down to what they've done differently from others in the same situations. **Different actions produce different results.** Why? Because any action is a cause set in motion, and its effect builds on past effects to move us in a definite direction. Every direction leads to an ultimate destination: our destiny.

In essence, if we want to direct our lives, we must take control of our consistent actions. It's not what we do once in a while that shapes our lives, but what we do consistently. The key and most important question, then, is this: What precedes all of our actions? What determines what actions we take, and therefore, who we become, and what our ultimate destination is in life? What is the father of action?

The answer, of course, is what I've been alluding to all along: the **power of decision**. Everything that happens in your life—both what you're thrilled with and what you're challenged by—began with a decision. **I believe that it's in your moments of decision that your destiny is shaped.** The decisions that you're making right now, every day, will shape how you feel today as well as who you're going to become in the nineties and beyond.

As you look back over the last ten years, were there times when a different decision would have made your life radically different from today, either for better or for worse? Maybe, for example, you made a career decision that changed your life. Or maybe you *failed* to make one. Maybe you decided during the last ten years to get married—or divorced. You might have purchased a tape, a book, or attended a seminar and, as a result, changed your beliefs and actions. Maybe you decided to have children, or to put it off in pursuit of a career. Perhaps you decided to invest in a home or a business. Maybe you decided to start exercising, or to give it up. It could be that you decided to stop smoking. Maybe you decided to move to another part of the country, or to take a trip around the world. How have these decisions brought you to this point in your life?

Did you experience emotions of tragedy and frustration, injustice or hopelessness during the last decade of your life? I know I certainly did. If so, what did you decide to do about them? Did you push beyond your limits, or did you just give up? How have these decisions shaped your current life path?

Man is not the creature of circumstances; circumstances are the creatures of men.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

More than anything else, I believe it's our decisions, not the conditions of our lives, that determine our destiny. You and I both know that there are people who were born with advantages: they've had genetic advantages, environmental advantages, family advantages, or relationship advantages.

Yet you and I also know that we constantly meet, read, and hear about people who against all odds have exploded beyond the limitations of their conditions by making new decisions about what to do with their lives. They've become examples of the unlimited power of the human spirit.

If we decide to, you and I can make our lives one of these inspiring examples. How? Simply by making decisions today about how we're going to live in the nineties and beyond. If you don't make decisions about how you're going to live, then you've already made a decision, haven't you? You're making a decision to be directed by the environment instead of shaping your own destiny. My whole life changed in just one day—the day I determined not just what I'd like to have in my life or what I wanted to become, but when I decided who and what I was committed to having and being in my life. That's a simple distinction, but a critical one.

Think for a moment. Is there a difference between being interested in something, and being *committed* to it? You bet there is! Many times people say things like, "Gosh, I really would *like* to make more money," or "I'd *like* to be closer to my kids," or "You know, I'd really *like* to make a difference in the world." But that kind of statement is not a commitment at all. It's merely stating a preference, saying, "I'm *interested* in having this happen, if I don't have to do anything." That's not power! It's a weak prayer made without even the faith to launch it.

Not only do you have to decide what results you are committed to, but also the kind of person that you're committed to becoming. As we discussed in Chapter 1, you have to set standards for what you consider to be acceptable behavior for yourself, and decide what you should expect from those you care about. **If you don't set a baseline standard for what you'll accept in your life, you'll find it's easy to slip into behaviors and attitudes or a quality of life that's far below what you deserve.** You need to set and live by these standards no matter what happens in your life. Even if it all goes wrong, even if it rains on your parade, even if the stock market crashes, even if your lover leaves you even if no one gives you the support that you need, you still must stay committed to your decision that you will live your life at the highest level.

Unfortunately, most people never do this because they're too busy making excuses. The reason they haven't achieved their goals or are not living the lives they desire is because of the way their parents treated them, or because of the lack of opportunities that they experienced in their youth, or because of the education they missed, or because they're too old, or because they're too young. All of these excuses are nothing but B.S. (Belief Systems)! And they're not only limiting, they're destructive.

Using the power of decision gives you the capacity to get past any excuse to change any and every pan of your life in an instant. It can change your relationships, your working environment, your level of physical fitness, your income, and your emotional states. It can determine whether you're happy or sad, whether you're frustrated or excited, enslaved by circumstances, or expressing your freedom. It's the source of change within an individual, a family, a community, a society, our world.

What's changed everything in Eastern Europe in the last few years? The people there—people like you and me—have made new decisions about what they'll stand for, what's acceptable and unacceptable to them and what they'll no longer tolerate. Certainly Gorbachov's decisions helped pave the way, but Lech Walesa's determination and commitment to a higher standard built the road to massive economic and political change.

I often ask people who complain about their jobs, "Why did you go to work today?" Their answer usually is, "Because I had to." You and I need to remember one thing: there is virtually nothing that we have to do in this country. You certainly don't have to go to work. Not here! And you certainly don't have to work at a particular location on a particular day. Not in America! You don't have to do what you've done for the last ten years. You can decide to do something else, something new, today. **Right now you can make a decision:** to go back to school, to master dancing or singing, to take control of your finances, to learn to fly a helicopter, to turn your body into an inspiration, to begin meditating, to enroll in ballroom dancing, to attend a NASA space camp, to learn to speak French, to read more to your children, to spend more time in the flower garden, even to fly to Fiji and live on an island. **If you truly decide to you can do almost anything.** So if you don't like the current relationship you're in, make the decision now to change it. If you don't like your current job, change it. If you don't like the way you feel about yourself, change it. If it's a higher level of physical vitality and health you want, you can change it now. In a moment you can seize the same power that has shaped history.

I've written this book to challenge you to **awaken the giant power of decision** and to **claim the birthright of unlimited power, radiant vitality, and joyous passion that is yours!** You must know that you can make a new decision right now that will immediately change your life—a decision about a habit you'll change or a skill that you'll master, or how you'll treat people, or a call that you'll now make to someone you haven't spoken to in years. Maybe there's someone you should contact to take your career to the next level. Maybe you could **make a decision right now** to enjoy and cultivate the most positive emotions that you deserve to experience daily. Is it possible you might choose more joy or more fun or more confidence or more peace of mind? Even before you turn the page, you can make use of the power that already resides within you. Make the decision now that can send you in a new, positive, and powerful direction for growth and happiness.

Nothing can resist the human will that will stake even its existence on its stated purpose.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Your life changes the moment you make a **new, congruent, and committed decision.** Who would have thought that the determination and conviction of a quiet, unassuming man—a lawyer by trade and a pacifist by principle—would have the power to topple a vast empire? Yet Ma-hatma Gandhi's indomitable decision to rid India of British rule was a virtual powder keg that set in motion a chain of events that would forever change the balance of world power. People didn't see how he could accomplish his aims, but he'd left himself no other choice than to act according to his conscience. He simply wouldn't accept any other possibility.

Decision was the source of John F. Kennedy's power as he faced off Nikita Khrushchev during the tense Cuban Missile Crisis and averted World War III. Decision was the source of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s power as he gave voice so eloquently to the frustrations and aspirations of a people who would no longer be denied, and forced the world to take notice. Decision was the source of Donald Trump's meteoric rise to the top of the financial world, and also the source of his devastating downfall. It's the power that allowed Pete Rose to maximize his physical abilities to Hall of Fame potential—and then ultimately to destroy his life's dream. Decisions act as the source of both problems and incredible joys and opportunities. This is the power that sparks the process of turning the invisible into the visible. True decisions are the catalyst for turning our dreams into reality.

The most exciting thing about this force, this power, is that you already possess it. The explosive impetus of decision is not something reserved for a select few with the right credentials or money or family background. It's available to the common laborer as well as the king. It's available to you now as you hold this book in your hands. In the very next moment you can use this mighty force that lies waiting within you if you merely muster the courage to claim it. Will today be the day you finally decide that who you are as a person is much more than you've been demonstrating? Will today be the day you decide once and for all to make your life consistent with the quality of your spirit? Then start by proclaiming, "This is who I am. This is what my life is about. And this is what I'm going to do. Nothing will stop me from achieving my destiny. I will not be denied!"

Consider a fiercely proud individual, a woman named Rosa Parks, who one day in 1955 stepped onto a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, and refused to give up her seat to a white person as she was legally required to do. Her one quiet act of civil disobedience sparked a firestorm of controversy and became a symbol for generations to follow. It was the beginning of the civil rights movement, a **consciousness-awakening** ground swell that we are grappling with even today as we redefine the meaning of equality, opportunity, and justice for all Americans regardless of race, creed, or sex. Was Rosa Parks thinking of the future when she refused to give up her seat in that bus? Did she have a divine plan for how she could change the structure of a society? Perhaps. But what is more likely is that her decision to hold herself to a higher standard compelled her to act. What a far-reaching effect one woman's decision has had!

If you're thinking, "I'd love to make decisions like that, but I've experienced real tragedies," let me offer you the example of Ed Roberts. He is an "ordinary" man confined to a wheelchair who became extraordinary by his decision to act beyond his apparent limitations. Ed has been paralyzed from the neck down since he was fourteen years old. He uses a breathing device that he's mastered against great odds to lead a "normal" life by day, and he spends every night in an iron lung. Having fought a battle against polio, several times almost losing his life, he certainly could have decided to focus on his own pain, but instead chose to make a difference for others.

Just what has he managed to do? For the last fifteen years, his decision to fight against a world he often found condescending has resulted in many enhancements to the quality of life for the disabled. Facing a multitude of myths about the capabilities of the physically challenged, Ed educated the public and initiated everything from wheelchair access ramps and special parking spaces to grab bars. He became the first quadriplegic to graduate from the University of California, Berkeley, and he eventually

held the position of director of the California State Department of Rehabilitation, again pioneering this position for the disabled.

Ed Roberts is powerful evidence that it's not where you start out but the decisions you make about where you're determined to end up that matter. All of his actions were founded in a single, powerful, committed moment of decision. What could you do with your life if you really decided to?

Many people say, "Well, I'd love to make a decision like that, but I'm not sure how I could change my life." They're paralyzed by the fear that they don't know exactly how to turn their dreams into reality. And as a result, they never make the decisions that could make their lives into the masterpieces they deserve to be. I'm here to tell you that it's not important initially to know how you're going to create a result. What's important is to decide **you will find a way, no matter what.** In Unlimited Power, I outlined what I call "The Ultimate Success Formula," which is an elementary process for getting you where you want to go: 1) Decide what you want, 2) Take action, 3) Notice what's working or not, and 4) Change your approach until you achieve what you want. Deciding to produce a result causes events to be set in motion. If you simply decide what it is you want, get yourself to take action, learn from it, and change your approach, then you will create the momentum to achieve the result. As soon as you truly commit to making something happen, the "how" will reveal itself.

Concerning all acts of initiative and creation, there is one elementary truth—that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves, too.

—JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

If making decisions is so simple and powerful, then why don't more people follow Nike's advice and "Just Do It"? I think one of the simplest reasons is that most of us don't recognize what it even means to make a real decision. We don't realize the force of change that a congruent, committed decision creates. Part of the problem is that for so long most of us have used the term "decision" so loosely that it's come to describe something like a wish list. Instead of making decisions, we keep stating preferences. Making a true decision, unlike saying, "I'd like to quit smoking," is cutting off any other possibility. In fact, the word "decision" comes from the Latin roots de, which means "from," and caedere, which means "to cut." **Making a true decision means committing to achieving a result, and then cutting yourself off from any other possibility.**

When you truly decide you'll never smoke cigarettes again, that's it. It's over! You no longer even consider the possibility of smoking. If you're one of the people who's ever exercised the power of decision this way, you know exactly what I'm talking about. An alcoholic knows that even after years of absolute sobriety, if he fools himself into thinking that he can take even one drink, he'll have to begin all over again. After making a true decision, even a tough one, most of us feel a tremendous amount of relief. We've finally gotten off the fence! And we all know how great it feels to have a clear, unquestioned objective.

This kind of clarity gives you power. With clarity, you can produce the results that you really want for your life. The challenge for most of us is that we haven't made a decision in so long we've forgotten what it feels like. We've got flabby decision-making muscles! Some people even have a hard time deciding what they're going to have for dinner.

So how do we strengthen these muscles? Give them a workout! **The way to make better decisions is to make more of them.** Then make sure you learn from each one, including those that don't seem to work out in the short term: they will provide valuable distinctions to make better evaluations and therefore decisions in the future. Realize that decision making, like any skill you focus on improving, gets better the more often you do it. The more often you make decisions, the more you'll realize that you truly are in control of your life. You'll look forward to future challenges, and you'll see them as an opportunity to make new distinctions and move your life to the next level.

I can't overemphasize the power and value of gaining even one, single distinction—a sole piece of information—that can be used to change the course of your life. **Information is power when it's acted upon**, and one of my criteria for a true decision is that action flows from it. The exciting thing is that you never know when you're going to get it! The reason I read over 700 books, listened to tapes, and went to so many seminars is that I understood the power of a single distinction. It might be on the next page or in the next chapter of this book. It might even be something you *already know*. But for some reason, this is the time it finally sinks in and you begin to use it. Remember that **repetition is the mother of skill**. Distinctions empower us to make better decisions and, therefore, create the results that we desire for ourselves. *Not* having certain distinctions can cause you major pain. For example, many of the most famous people in our culture have achieved their dreams but have still not found a way to enjoy them. They often turn to drugs because they feel unfulfilled. **This is because they are missing the distinction between achieving one's goals and living one's values, something you will learn to master in the pages to follow.** Another distinction that many people don't have causes pain in their relationships on a regular basis. It's a rules distinction, another key element we'll be examining in our journey of self-discovery. Sometimes, not having a certain distinction can cost you everything. People who run strenuously⁸ yet continue to eat fatty foods, clogging up their arteries, court heart attacks.

For most of my life, I've pursued what the famed business expert Dr. W. Edwards Deming calls *profound knowledge*. To me, profound knowledge is any simple distinction, strategy, belief, skill, or tool that, the minute we understand it, we can apply it to make immediate increases in the quality of our lives. This book and my life have been committed to pursuing profound knowledge that has universal application to improving our personal and professional lives. I'm constantly figuring out how to communicate this knowledge with people in ways that truly empower them to improve their mental, emotional, physical, and financial destinies.

It is in your moments of decision that your destiny is shaped.

—ANTHONY ROBB1NS

⁸ **strenuous** anstrengend; unermüdlich

Three decisions that you make every moment of your life control your destiny. These three decisions determine what you'll notice, how you'll feel, what you'll do, and ultimately what you will contribute and who you become. If you don't control these three decisions, you simply aren't in control of your life. When you do control them, you begin to sculpt your experience.

The three decisions that control your destiny are:

1. Your decisions about **what to focus on**.
2. Your decisions about **what things mean to you**.
3. Your decisions about **what to do** to create the results you desire.

You see, it's not what's happening to you now or what has happened in your past that determines who you become. Rather, **it's your decisions about what to focus on, what things mean to you, and what you're going to do about them that will determine your ultimate destiny**. Know that if anyone is enjoying greater success than you in any area, they're making these three decisions differently from you in some context or situation. Clearly, Ed Roberts chose to focus on something different than most people in his position would. He focused on how he could make a difference. His physical difficulties meant "challenge" to him. What he decided to do, clearly, was anything that could make the quality of life for others in his position more comfortable. He absolutely committed himself to shaping the environment in a way that would improve the quality of life for all physically challenged people.

"I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor."

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU

Too many of us don't make the majority of our decisions consciously, especially these three absolutely crucial ones; in so doing, we pay a major price. In fact, most people live what I call "**The Niagara Syndrome**." I believe that life is like a river, and that most people jump on the river of life without ever really deciding where they want to end up. So, in a short period of time, they get caught up in the current: current events, current fears, current challenges. When they come to forks in the river, they don't consciously decide where they want to go, or which is the right direction for them. They merely "go with the flow." They become a part of the mass of people who are directed by the environment instead of by their own values. As a result, they feel out of control. They remain in this unconscious state until one day the sound of the raging water awakens them, and they discover that they're five feet from Niagara Falls in a boat with no oars. At this point, they say, "Oh, shoot!" But by then it's too late. They're going to take a fall. Sometimes it's an emotional fall. Sometimes it's a physical fall. Sometimes it's a financial fall. **It's likely that whatever challenges you have in your life currently could have been avoided by some better decisions upstream.**

How do we turn things around if we're caught up in the momentum of the raging river? Either make a decision to put both oars in the water and start paddling like crazy in a new direction, or