

# Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself

*How to Lose Your Mind and Create a New One*



Dr. Joe Dispenza

The best-selling author of *Evolve Your Brain*

## Praise for *Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself*

*“Dr. Joe Dispenza wants to empower you to let go of negative beliefs and embrace the positive. This intelligent, informative, practical book will help you be your best, freest self so that, as Dr. Joe puts it, you can ‘step toward your own destiny.’”*

— **Judith Orloff, M.D.**, author of *Emotional Freedom*

*“In **Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself**, Dr. Joe Dispenza explores the energetic aspects of reality with sound science and provides the reader with the necessary tools to make important positive changes in their life. Anyone who reads this book and applies the steps will benefit from their efforts. Its cutting-edge content is explained in a simple language that is accessible to anyone, and provides a user-friendly guide for sustained change from the inside out.”*

— **Rollin McCraty, Ph.D.**, Director of Research, HeartMath Research Center

*“Dr. Joe Dispenza’s entertaining and highly accessible manual for rewiring your mental and emotional circuitry carries a simple but potent message: what you think today determines how you live tomorrow.”*

— **Lynne McTaggart**, best-selling author of *The Field*, *The Intention Experiment*, and *The Bond*

*“**Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself** is a powerful blend of leading-edge science and real-life applications woven into the perfect formula for everyday living.*

*“The hierarchy of scientific knowledge tells us that when new discoveries change what we know about the atom, what we know of ourselves and our brains must change as well. Through the 14 concise chapters of this book, Dr. Joe Dispenza draws upon a lifetime of experience to describe how subtle shifts in the way we use our brains are the quantum key to life-*

*affirming changes in our bodies, our lives, and our relationships. In a responsible, well-researched, and practical manual that you'll want at your fingertips for your personal practice, Dr. Joe's easy-to-use, step-by-step techniques give everyone the opportunity to experiment with their own quantum field to discover for themselves what works best.*

*“From the powerful exercises highlighting the thinking that keeps us stuck in old beliefs, to the simple practices that catapult us beyond our limiting beliefs, this book is the owners' manual to a successful life we wish we'd been given in first grade. If you've always known that there's more to you than you learned in Biology 101, but find yourself intimidated by the technical language of science, this is the beautiful book you've been waiting for!”*

— **Gregg Braden**, *New York Times* best-selling author of *Deep Truth* and *The Divine Matrix*

*“As a semiretired psychologist who has thought about many of these issues for years, I have to admit that [this book] will likely change some long-held beliefs in the field of psychology. Dr. Joe's conclusions, which are well grounded in neuroscience, challenge our ideas of who we think we are and what we think is even possible. A brilliant and uplifting book.”*

— **Dr. Allan Botkin**, clinical psychologist; author of *Induced After-Death Communication*

*“We're in the midst of an unparalleled new era of personal growth, in which a productive feedback loop has been established between the latest discoveries of neuroscience and the ancient practices of meditation. Dr. Joe Dispenza's new book masterfully yet clearly explains the 'hard science' of how our brains and bodies work. He then applies it practically in a four-week program of fundamental personal change, showing how we can use a structured meditation program to consciously rewire our neural network for creativity and joy.”*

— **Dawson Church, Ph.D.**, best-selling author of *The Genie in Your Genes* ([EFTuniverse.com](http://EFTuniverse.com))

*“Dr. Joe Dispenza brings us the manual for becoming a divine creator! He makes the brain science practical; he shows us how to break free of the grip of our emotions to create happy, healthy, and abundant lives, and how to finally dream our world into being. I’ve been waiting for this book for a long time!”*

— **Alberto Villoldo, Ph.D.**, author of *Power Up Your Brain* and *Shaman, Healer*, Sage

# Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself

**ALSO BY DR. JOE DISPENZA**

***EVOLVE YOUR BRAIN: The Science of Changing Your Mind***

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Dr. Joe Dispenza



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## FOREWORD

Your brain is involved in everything you do, including how you think, how you feel, how you act, and how well you get along with other people. It's the organ of personality, character, intelligence, and every decision you make. From my brain-imaging work with tens of thousands of patients worldwide over the past 20 years, it is very clear to me that when your brain works right, *you* work right, and when your brain is troubled, you are much more likely to have trouble in your life.

With a healthier brain, you are happier, physically healthier, wealthier, wiser, and just make better decisions, which helps you be more successful and live longer. When the brain is not healthy for whatever reason—such as a head injury or past emotional trauma—people are sadder, sicker, poorer, less wise, and less successful.

It is easy to understand how trauma can hurt the brain, but researchers have also seen how negative thinking and bad programming from our past can also affect it.

For example, I grew up with an older brother who was intent on shoving me around. The constant tension and fear I felt then led to a higher level of anxiety, anxious thinking patterns, and always being on guard, never knowing when something bad was about to happen. This fear caused long-term overactivity in my brain's fear centers, until I was able to work through it later on in life.

In *Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself*, my colleague Dr. Joe Dispenza is your guide to optimize both the hardware and software of your brain to help you reach a new state of mind. His new book is based on solid science, and he continues to speak with kindness and wisdom, as he did in the

award-winning film *What the BLEEP Do We Know!?* and in his first book, *Evolve Your Brain*.

Even though I think of the brain like a computer, with both hardware and software, the hardware (the actual physical functioning of the brain) is not separate from the software or the constant programming and reshaping that occurs throughout our lives. They have a dramatic impact on each other.

Most of us have had trauma of some kind in our lives and live with the day-to-day scars that have resulted. Cleaning out those experiences that have become part of the brain's structure can be incredibly healing. Of course, engaging in brain-healthy habits, such as a proper diet and exercise and certain brain nutrients, is critical to the brain working right. But in addition, your moment-by-moment thoughts exert a powerful healing effect on the brain ... or they can work to your detriment. The same is true for past experiences that can become wired in the brain.

The study we do at the Amen Clinics is called "brain SPECT imaging." SPECT (single-photon emission computed tomography) is a nuclear-medicine study that looks at blood flow and activity patterns. It is different from CT scans or MRI, which examine the brain's anatomy, because SPECT looks at how the brain functions. Our SPECT work, now over 70,000 scans, has taught us so many important life lessons about the brain, such as:

- Brain injuries can ruin people's lives;
- Alcohol is not a health food and often shows significant damage on SPECT scans;
- A number of the medications people routinely take, such as some common anti-anxiety medications, are not good for the brain; and
- Diseases like Alzheimer's actually start in the brain decades before people have any symptoms.

SPECT scans have also taught us that as a society, we need to have much more love and respect for the brain, and that allowing children to play contact sports, like football and hockey, is not a smart idea.

One of the most exciting lessons I have learned is that people can literally change their brains and change their lives by engaging in regular brain-

healthy habits, such as correcting negative beliefs and using meditative processes such as those discussed by Dr. Dispenza.

In one series of studies we published, the practice of meditation, such as what Dr. Dispenza recommends, boosted blood flow to the prefrontal cortex, the most thoughtful part of the human brain. After eight weeks of daily meditation, the prefrontal cortex at rest was stronger, and the memories of our subjects were better, too. There are so many ways to heal and optimize the brain.

My hope is that, like me, you will develop “brain envy” and want a better-functioning brain. The brain-imaging work we do has changed everything in my own life. Shortly after I started ordering SPECT scans in 1991, I decided to look at my own brain. I was 37 years old. When I saw the toxic, bumpy appearance, I knew it was not healthy. All of my life I have been someone who rarely drank alcohol, never smoked, and never used an illegal drug. Then why did my brain look so bad? Before I really understood about brain health, I’d had many *bad* brain habits. I ate lots of fast food, drank diet soda like she was my best friend, often slept only four to five hours at night, and carried unexamined hurts from the past. I didn’t exercise, felt chronically stressed, and carried an extra 30 pounds. What I didn’t know was hurting me ... and not just a little.

My last scan looks healthier and *much* younger than it did 20 years earlier. My brain has literally aged backward—that’s how changeable your brain is, too, when you make up your mind to take care of it properly. After seeing my original scan, I wanted my brain to be better. This book will help yours be better, too.

I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I did.

— **Daniel G. Amen, M.D.**,  
author of *Change Your Brain, Change Your Life*





## INTRODUCTION

### The Greatest Habit You Can Ever Break Is the Habit of Being Yourself

When I think about all the books on creating the life we desire, I realize that many of us are still looking for approaches that are grounded in sound scientific evidence—methods that truly work. But already new research into the brain and body, the mind, and consciousness—and a quantum leap in our understanding of physics—is suggesting expanded possibilities on how to move toward what we innately know is our real potential.

As a practicing chiropractor who runs a busy integrated-health clinic and as an educator in the fields of neuroscience, brain function, biology, and brain chemistry, I have been privileged to be at the forefront of some of this research—not just by studying the fields mentioned above, but also by observing the effects of this new science, once applied by common people like you and me. That’s the moment when the possibilities of this new science become reality.

As a consequence, I have witnessed some remarkable changes in individuals’ health and quality of life when they truly change their minds. Over the last several years, I have had the opportunity to interview a host of people who overcame significant health conditions that were considered either terminal or permanent. Per the contemporary model of medicine, these recoveries were labeled “spontaneous remissions.”

However, upon my extensive examination of their inner journeys, it became apparent to me that there was a strong element of mind involved ...

and their physical changes weren't so spontaneous after all. This discovery furthered my postgraduate studies in brain imaging, neuroplasticity, epigenetics, and psychoneuroimmunology. I simply figured that something had to be happening in the brain and body that could be zeroed in on and then replicated. In this book, I want to share some of what I learned along the way and show you, by exploring how mind and matter are interrelated, how you can apply these principles not only to your body, but to any aspect of your life.

### ***Go Beyond Knowing ... to Knowing How***

Many readers of my first book, *Evolve Your Brain: The Science of Changing Your Mind*, voiced the same honest and heartfelt request (along with a fair amount of positive feedback), such as the person who wrote: "I really liked your book; I read it twice. It had lots of science and was very thorough and inspiring, but can you tell me *how* to do it? *How* do I evolve my brain?"

In response, I began teaching a workshop series on the practical steps anyone can take to make changes at the level of mind and body that will lead to lasting results. Consequently, I have seen people experience unexplainable healings, release old mental and emotional wounds, resolve so-called impossible difficulties, create new opportunities, and experience wonderful wealth, just to name a few. (You will meet some of those people in these pages.)

It's not necessary that you read my first book to digest the material in this one. But if you *have* been exposed to my work, I wrote *Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself* to serve as a practical, how-to companion to *Evolve Your Brain*. It is my earnest objective to make this new book simple and easy to understand. There will be times, though, that I will have to give you bits of knowledge to act as the forerunner to a concept I want to develop. The purpose is to build a realistic working model of personal transformation that will help you understand how we can change.

*Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself* is a product of one of my passions—a sincere effort to demystify the mystical so that every person understands that we have, within our reach, all we need to make significant

changes in our lives. This is a time when not only do we want to “know,” but we want to “know how.” *How* do we apply and personalize both emerging scientific concepts and age-old wisdom to succeed at living a more enriched life? When you and I can connect the dots of what science is discovering about the nature of reality, and when we give ourselves permission to apply those principles in our day-to-day existence, then each of us becomes both a mystic and a scientist in our own life.

So I invite you to experiment with everything that you learn in this book, and to objectively observe the results. What I mean is that if you make the effort to change your inner world of thoughts and feelings, your external environment should begin to give you feedback to show you that your mind has had an effect on your “outer” world. Why else would you do it?

If you take intellectual information that you learn as a *philosophy*, and then *initiate* that knowledge into your life by applying it enough times until you *master* it, you will ultimately move from being a philosopher to an initiate to a master. Stay tuned ... there is sound scientific evidence that this is possible.

I do ask you up front to keep an open mind so that we can build, step-by-step, the concepts I outline in this book. All of this information is for you to do something with—otherwise it’s just good dinner conversation, isn’t it? Once you can open your mind to the way things really are, and let go of your conditioned beliefs with which you are accustomed to framing reality, you should see the fruits of your efforts. That is my wish for you.

The information in these pages is there to inspire you to prove to yourself that you are a divine creator.

We should never wait for science to give us permission to do the uncommon; if we do, then we are turning science into another religion. We should be brave enough to contemplate our lives, do what we thought was “outside the box,” and do it repeatedly. When we do that, we are on our way to a greater level of personal power.

True empowerment comes when we start to look deeply at our beliefs. We may find their roots in the conditioning of religion, culture, society, education, family, the media, and even our genes (the latter being imprinted by the sensory experiences of our current lives, as well as untold generations). Then we weigh those old ideas against some new paradigms that may serve us better.

Times are changing. As individuals awaken to a greater reality, we are part of a much larger sea change. Our current systems and models of reality are breaking down, and it is time for something new to emerge. Across the board, our models for politics, economics, religion, science, education, medicine, and our relationship with the environment are all showing a different landscape than just ten years ago.

Letting go of the outmoded and embracing the new sounds easy. But as I pointed out in *Evolve Your Brain*, much of what we have learned and experienced has been incorporated into our biological “self,” and we wear it like a garment. But we also know that what is true today might not be true tomorrow. Just as we have come to question our perception of atoms as solid pieces of matter, reality and our interaction with it is a progression of ideas and beliefs.

We also know that to leave the familiar life that we have grown accustomed to and waltz into something new is like a salmon swimming upstream: it takes effort—and, frankly, it’s uncomfortable. And to top it off, ridicule, marginalization, opposition, and denigration from those who cling to what they think they know greet us along the way.

Who, with such an unconventional bent, is willing to meet such adversity in the name of some concept they cannot embrace with their senses, yet which is alive in their minds? How many times in history have individuals who were considered heretics and fools, and thus took the abuse of the unexceptional, emerged as geniuses, saints, or masters?

Will *you* dare to be an original?

### ***Change as a Choice, Instead of a Reaction***

It seems that human nature is such that we balk at changing until things get really bad and we’re so uncomfortable that we can no longer go on with business as usual. This is as true for an individual as it is for a society. We wait for crisis, trauma, loss, disease, and tragedy before we get down to looking at who we are, what we are doing, how we are living, what we are feeling, and what we believe or know, in order to embrace true change. Often it takes a worst-case scenario for us to begin making changes that

support our health, relationships, career, family, and future. My message is: *Why wait?*

We can learn and change in a state of pain and suffering, or we can evolve in a state of joy and inspiration. Most embrace the former. To go with the latter, we just have to make up our minds that change will probably entail a bit of discomfort, some inconvenience, a break from a predictable routine, and a period of not knowing.

Most of us are already familiar with the temporary discomfort of not knowing. We stumbled through our early efforts to read until this skill became second nature. When we first practiced the violin or the drums, our parents wished they could send us to a soundproofed room. Pity the hapless patient who has his blood drawn by a medical student who has the requisite knowledge but still lacks the finesse that she will only gain through practice.

Absorbing knowledge (*knowing*) and then gaining practical experience by applying what you learned until a particular skill became ingrained in you (*knowing how*) is probably how you acquired most of the abilities that now feel like a part of your being (*knowingness*). In much the same way, learning how to change your life involves knowledge and the application of that knowledge. That is why this book is divided into three overarching sections.

Throughout Parts I and II, I will build ideas in sequence, forming a bigger and broader model of understanding for you to personalize. If some ideas seem repetitive, they are there to “re-mind” you about something that I don’t want you to forget. Repetition reinforces the circuits in your brain and forms more neural connections so that in your weakest hour, you don’t talk yourself out of greatness. When you ease into Part III of the book with a sound knowledge base, you can experience for yourself the “truth” of what you learned earlier.

### ***Part I: The Science of You***

Our exploration will start with an overview of philosophical and scientific paradigms related to the latest research about the nature of reality,

who you are, why change has been so difficult for so many, and what is possible for you as a human being. Part I will be an easy read, I promise.

— **Chapter 1: The Quantum** You introduces you to a bit of quantum physics, but don't be alarmed. I start there because it is important that you begin to embrace the concept that your (subjective) mind has an effect on your (objective) world. The observer effect in quantum physics states that where you direct your attention is where you place your energy. As a consequence, *you* affect the material world (which, by the way, is made mostly of energy). If you entertain that idea even for a moment, you might start focusing on what you want instead of what you don't want. And you might even find yourself thinking: *If an atom is 99.99999 percent energy and .00001 percent physical substance, <sup>1</sup> then I'm actually more nothing than something! So why do I keep my attention on that small percentage of the physical world when I am so much more? Is defining my present reality by what I perceive with my senses the biggest limitation I have?*

In Chapters 2 through 4, we will look at what it means to change—to become greater than the environment, the body, and time.

— You've probably entertained the idea that your thoughts create your life. But in **Chapter 2: Overcoming the Environment**, I discuss how if you allow the outer world to control how you think and feel, your external environment is patterning circuits in your brain to make you think “equal to” everything familiar to you. The result is that you create more of the same; you hardwire your brain to reflect the problems, personal conditions, and circumstances in your life. So to change, you must be *greater than* all things physical in your life.

— **Chapter 3: Overcoming the Body** continues to look at how we unconsciously live by a set of memorized behaviors, thoughts, and emotional reactions, all running like computer programs behind the scenes of our conscious awareness. That's why it is not enough to “think positive,” because most of who we are might reside subconsciously as negativity in the body. By the end of this book, you will know how to enter into the operating system of the subconscious mind and make permanent changes where those programs exist.

— **Chapter 4: Overcoming Time** examines how we either live in the anticipation of future events or repeatedly revisit past memories (or both) until the body begins to believe it is living in a time other than the present moment. The latest research supports the notion that we have a natural ability to change the brain and body by thought alone, so that it looks biologically like some future event has already happened. Because you can make thought more real than anything else, you can change who you are from brain cell to gene, given the right understanding. When you learn how to use your attention and access the present, you will enter through the door to the quantum field, where all potentials exist.

— **Chapter 5: Survival vs. Creation** illustrates the distinction between living in survival and living in creation. Living in survival entails living in stress and functioning as a materialist, believing that the outer world is more real than the inner world. When you are under the gun of the fight-or-flight nervous system, being run by its cocktail of intoxicating chemicals, you are programmed to be concerned only about your body, the things or people in your environment, and your obsession with time. Your brain and body are out of balance. You are living a predictable life. However, when you are truly in the elegant state of creation, you are no body, no thing, no time—you forget about yourself. You become pure consciousness, free from the chains of the identity that needs the outer reality to remember who it thinks it is.

## ***Part II: Your Brain and Meditation***

— In **Chapter 6: Three Brains: Thinking to Doing to Being**, you will embrace the concept that you have three “brains” that allow you to move from thinking to doing to being. Even better, when you focus your attention to the exclusion of your environment, your body, and time, you can easily move from thinking to being without having to *do* anything. In that state of mind, your brain does not distinguish between what is happening in the outer world of reality and what is happening in the inner world of your mind. Thus, if you can mentally rehearse a desired experience via thought alone, you will experience the emotions of that event before it has physically manifested. Now you are moving into a new state of being,

because your mind and body are working as one. When you begin to feel like some potential future reality is happening to you in the moment that you are focusing on it, you are rewriting your automatic habits, attitudes, and other unwanted subconscious programs.

— **Chapter 7: The Gap** explores how to break free from the emotions that you've memorized—which have become your personality—and how to close the gap between who you really are in your inner, private world and how you appear in the outer, social world. We all reach a certain point when we stop learning and realize that nothing external can take away those feelings from our past. If you can predict the feeling of every experience in your life, there is no room for anything new to occur, because you are viewing your life from the past instead of the future. This is the juncture point where the soul either breaks free or falls into oblivion. You will learn to liberate your energy in the form of emotions, and thus narrow the gap between how you appear and who you are. Ultimately, you will create transparency. When how you appear is who you are, you are truly free.

— Part II concludes with **Chapter 8: Meditation, Demystifying the Mystical, and Waves of Your Future**, in which my purpose is to demystify meditation so that you know what you are doing and why. Discussing brain-wave technology, made simple, I show you how your brain changes electromagnetically when you are focused versus when you are in an aroused state due to stressors in your life. You will learn that the true purpose of meditation is to get beyond the analytical mind and enter into the subconscious mind so you can make real and permanent changes. If you get up from meditation as the same person who sat down, nothing has happened to you on any level. When you meditate and connect to something greater, you can create and then memorize such coherence between your thoughts and feelings that nothing in your outer reality—no thing, no person, no condition at any place or time—could move you from that level of energy. Now you are mastering your environment, your body, and time.

### *Part III: Stepping Toward Your New Destiny*

All of the information in Parts I and II is provided in order to equip you with the necessary knowledge so that when you demonstrate (apply) this information in Part III, which supplies the “how-to,” you will have a direct experience of what you’ve been taught. Part III is all about applying yourself in an actual discipline—a mindful exercise to use in your daily life. It’s a step-by-step meditation process, created so you can actually do something with the theories given to you.

By the way, did your mind balk when I mentioned that multistep process? If so, it’s not what you think. Yes, you will learn a *sequence* of actions, but soon you will experience them as one or two simple steps. After all, you probably perform multiple actions every time you prepare to drive your car (for example, you adjust the seat, put on your seat belt, check the mirrors, start the car, turn on the headlights, look around, use a turn signal, apply the brake, put the car in drive or reverse, apply pressure to the gas pedal, and so on). Ever since you learned to drive, you have executed this procedure easily and automatically. I assure you, the same will be true once you learn each step in Part III.

You may be asking yourself, *Why do I need to read Parts I and II? I’ll just jump to Part III.* I know, I’d probably be thinking the same. I decided to offer the relevant knowledge in the first two Parts of the text so that when you get to the third section, nothing will be left to conjecture, dogma, or speculation. When you begin the steps of the meditation, you’ll know exactly what you’re doing and why. When you comprehend the *what* and the *why*, the more you will *know* and thus the more you will *know how* when the time comes. Therefore, you will have more power and intention behind the practical experience of truly changing your mind.

By using the steps in Part III, you may be more prone to accept your innate ability to change so-called impossible situations in your life. You might even give yourself permission to entertain potential realities that you never considered prior to your exposure to these new concepts—you *might just begin to do the uncommon!* That is my aim for you by the time you finish this book.

So if you can resist the temptation to jump ahead to Part III, I promise that when you get there, you’ll be quite empowered by what you learn. I’ve seen this approach work throughout the world in the series of three workshops I lead. When people gain the right knowledge, in such a way

that they understand it completely, and then have the opportunity for effective instruction to apply what they comprehend ... then like magic, they can see the fruits of their efforts in the form of changes that serve as feedback in their lives.

Part III will give you the meditative skills to change something within your mind and body and to produce an effect outside of you. Once you can notice what you did inside of you that produced an outcome outside of you, you'll do it again. When a new experience manifests in your life, you'll embrace the energy you feel in the form of an elevated emotion such as empowerment, awe, or immense gratitude; and that energy will drive you to do it again and again. Now you are on the path to true evolution.

Each meditation step delineated in Part III is associated with a piece of meaningful information presented earlier in the book. Because you'll have cultivated the meaning behind exactly what you're doing, there should be no ambiguity that might cause you to lose your vision.

Like many skills you've learned, in the beginning it may take all of your conscious effort to stay focused as you learn how to meditate to evolve your brain. In the process, you must restrain yourself from your typical behaviors and maintain your thoughts on what you are doing, without wandering to extraneous stimuli, so your actions are aligned with your intention.

Just as you might have experienced when you first learned to cook Thai food, play golf, dance the salsa, or drive a stick shift, the newness of the endeavor will require you to practice this ability continually, training both mind and body to memorize each step.

Remember, most types of instruction are formatted in bite-size chunks so that the mind and body can begin to work together. Once you "get it," all the individual steps you kept reviewing merge into one smooth process. The methodical, linear approach seamlessly flows into a holistic, effortless, unified demonstration. This is the point of personal ownership. At times, the effort this takes can be tedious. But if you persist with a certain amount of will and energy, in time you'll enjoy the results.

When you *know* that you know "how" to do something, you're on your way to mastering it. I am overjoyed to say that many people around the world are already using the knowledge in this book to make demonstrable changes in their lives. It is my sincere passion that you, too, break the habit of being yourself and create the new life you desire.

Let's get started....





**PART I**

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**THE**  
**SCIENCE**  
**OF YOU**

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## CHAPTER ONE

### THE QUANTUM YOU

Early physicists divided the world into matter and thought, and later, matter and energy. Each member of those pairs was considered to be entirely separate from the other ... but they're not! Nevertheless, this mind/matter duality shaped our early worldview—that reality was essentially predetermined and that people could do little to change things through their own actions, let alone their thoughts.

Fast-forward to our current understanding—that we are part of a vast, invisible field of energy, which contains all possible realities and responds to our thoughts and our feelings. Just as today's scientists are exploring the relationship between thought and matter, we are eager to do the same in our own lives. And so we ask ourselves, *Can I use my mind to create my reality?* If so, is that a skill that we can learn and use to become who we want to be, and create the life we want to experience?

Let's face it—none of us is perfect. Whether we'd like to make some change to our physical self, emotional self, or spiritual self, we all have the same desire: we want to live life as an idealized version of who we think and believe we can be. When we stand in front of the mirror and look at our love handles, we don't just see that slightly too-pudgy vision reflected in the glass. We also see, depending on our mood that day, a slimmer, fitter version of ourselves or a heavier, chunkier version. Which of our images is real?

When we lie in bed at night reviewing our day and our efforts to be a more tolerant, less reactive person, we don't just see the parent who lashed out at our child for failing to quietly and quickly submit to a simple request. We envision either an angelic self whose patience was stretched like an innocent victim on the rack or a hideous ogre laying waste to a child's self-esteem. Which of *those* images is real?

The answer is: *all of them are real*—and not just those extremes, but an infinite spectrum of images ranging from positive to negative. How can that

be? For you to better understand why none of those versions of self is more or less real than the others, I'm going to have to shatter the outmoded understanding about the fundamental nature of reality and replace it with a new one.

That sounds like a major undertaking, and in some ways it is, but I also know this: The most likely reason why you were drawn to this book is that your past efforts to make any lasting change in your life—physical, emotional, or spiritual—have fallen short of the ideal of yourself that you imagined. And why those efforts failed has more to do with your beliefs about why your life is the way it is than with anything else, including a perceived lack of will, time, courage, or imagination.

Always, in order to change, we have to come to a new understanding of self and the world so that we can embrace new knowledge and have new experiences.

That is what reading this book will do for you.

Your past shortfalls can be traced, at their root, to one major oversight: you haven't committed yourself to living by the truth that *your thoughts have consequences so great that they create your reality*.

The fact is that we are all blessed; we all can reap the benefits of our constructive efforts. We don't have to settle for our present reality; we can create a new one, whenever we choose to. We all have that ability, because for better or worse, our thoughts do influence our lives.

I'm sure you've heard that before, but I wonder whether most people really believe this statement on a gut level. If we truly embraced the notion that our thoughts produce tangible effects in our lives, wouldn't we strive to never let one thought slip by us that we didn't want to experience? And wouldn't we focus our attention on what we want, instead of continually obsessing about our problems?

Think about it: if you really knew that this principle were true, would you ever miss a day in intentionally creating your desired destiny?

***To Change Your Life, Change Your Beliefs about the Nature of Reality***

I hope this book will shift your view of how our world operates, convince you that you are more powerful than you knew, and inspire you to demonstrate the understanding that what you think and believe has a profound effect on your world.

Until you break from the way you see your present reality, any change in your life will always be haphazard and transitory. You have to overhaul your thinking about why things happen in order to produce enduring and desired outcomes. To do that, you'll need to be open to a new interpretation of what is real and true.

To help you shift into this mode of thought and begin to create a life of your choosing, I have to begin with a bit of cosmology (the study of the structure and dynamics of the universe). But don't be alarmed—we're merely going to skim through "The Nature of Reality 101" and how some of our views about it have evolved to reach our present understanding. All of this is to explain (of necessity, in a brief and simple way) how it is possible that your thoughts shape your destiny.

This chapter just might test your willingness to abandon ideas that have in a sense been programmed into you for many years on a conscious and subconscious level. Once you gain a new conception of the fundamental forces and elements that constitute reality, it won't fit into that old perception in which the linear and the orderly rule the day. Be prepared to experience some fundamental shifts in understanding.

In fact, as you begin to embrace this new outlook, your very makeup as a human being will change. It is my wish that you will no longer be the same person you were when you began.

Obviously, I'm about to challenge you, but I want you to know that I'm entirely empathetic, because I too have had to let go of what I thought was true and leap into the unknown. To ease into this new way of thinking about the nature of our world, let's see how our worldview was shaped by the early belief that mind and matter were separate things.

***Always Matter, Never Mind?***

***Always Mind, Never Matter?***

Connecting the dots between the outer, physical world of the observable and the inner, mental world of thought has always presented quite a challenge to scientists and philosophers. To many of us, even today, the mind appears to have little or no measurable effects on the world of matter. Although we'd probably agree that the world of matter creates consequences affecting our minds, how can our minds possibly produce any physical changes affecting the solid things in our lives? Mind and matter appear to be separate ... that is, unless there's a shift in our understanding about the way physical, solid things actually exist.

Well, there has been such a shift, and to trace its beginnings, we don't have to go back very far. For much of what historians consider modern times, humanity believed that the nature of the universe was orderly, and thus predictable and explainable. Consider 17th-century mathematician and philosopher René Descartes, who developed many concepts that still have great relevance to mathematics and other fields (does *I think, therefore I am* ring any bells?). In retrospect, however, one of his theories ultimately did more harm than good. Descartes was a proponent of the mechanistic model of the universe—a view that the universe is controlled by predictable laws.

When it came to human thought, Descartes faced a real challenge—the human mind possessed too many variables to neatly fit into any laws. Since he couldn't unify his understanding of the physical world with that of the mind, but he had to account for the presence of both, Descartes played a nifty mind game (pun intended). He said that the mind was not subject to laws of the objective, physical world, so it was completely outside the bounds of scientific inquiry. The study of matter was the jurisdiction of science (always matter, never mind)—whereas the mind was God's instrument, so the study of it fell to religion (always mind, never matter).

Essentially, Descartes started a belief system that imposed a duality between the concepts of mind and matter. For centuries, that division stood as the accepted understanding of the nature of reality.

Helping to perpetuate Descartes's beliefs were the experiments and theories of Sir Isaac Newton. The English mathematician and scientist not only solidified the concept of the universe as a machine, but he produced a set of laws stating that human beings could precisely determine, calculate, and predict the orderly ways in which the physical world would operate.