



**TAKING —
— CHARGE**
OF YOUR LIFE

CHOICES

WHAT TO EXPECT

CHOICES: THE KEY TO PERSONAL POWER

The capacity to make choices is essential to being in charge of our lives.

Many find themselves unable to make consistently positive decisions. Do you feel like that sometimes? You would like to be more in control but . . .

This booklet is designed to help you with:

- A deeper understanding of the importance of our day-to-day choices.
- Identifying the blockages to choosing what we really want in life.
- Overcoming the habit patterns of those same old mistakes.

“We are free up to the
point of choice, then
the choice controls the
chooser.”

|
MARY CROWLEY

QUOTED IN
TOP PERFORMANCE



PROGRAMMED OR FREE TO CHOOSE?



“Our programming influences what we think, how we feel, day in and day out in every area of our lives.”

Dr. Helstetter

Our decisions in life are all too often influenced by environmental factors. The fact that we are “programmed” in so many ways (personality, values, tastes, etc.) might suggest we are largely victims of circumstances and there is no real freedom of choice after all.

GENETIC PROGRAMMING

Our genetic programming determines the colour of our hair, the shape of our face, our body type and our aptitudes.

The environmental programming influences our choices.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMMING

A huge amount of our programming is environmental. Our brain has an incredible array of chemically and electrically imprinted programmes that drive and affect our behaviour.

Our parents, our brothers and sisters, our friends, our teachers and our work associates are the major factors in our programming. We are also influenced by the media—the things we read, watch on television, etc.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- Are we the masters of our journey through life?
- Is happiness a choice?
- To what extent do we have freedom of choice?

“Every choice we make,
whether it is good or bad,
has consequences.”

ZIG ZIGLER

TOP PERFORMANCE



OUR PROGRAMMED LIFE PRINCIPLE

“Our programmed Life Principle is dominant in the development of character. In the twilight of life, it becomes all the more apparent, defining and dictating our actions and reactions.



We will die as we have lived. People who, in old age, prove quite self-centred and demanding, as well as those who are mellow and tolerant, did not become so only in their last years of life. Old cranks and old saints have practiced all their lives. They have simply practiced different life principles.

Our Programming, that in turn has such an impact on our Life Principle, can so easily be imposed by the other people in our lives.”

Dr. John Powell, *Unconditional Love*

Dr. John Powell writes about the dominant “life principle” that has been “programmed” into each of us.

Some, for example, make their choices from the perspective of safety, others from the perspective of seeking wealth and prestige. Still others operate on power and control. Duty, religion, and service are the central life principle of many.

Note, in the quote above, Dr. Powell asserts, “We will die as we have lived” with the same life principle. He even applies this to personality and character traits.

He then concludes that our programming can so easily be imposed by the other people in our lives.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Can we take charge and change the direction of our lives—or does our programming make it futile?

THE INNER CHILD



“Research shows that about 85 percent of one’s adult personality is formed by the time a person is six years old.”

Drs Minirth, Meier & Arterburn, *Complete Life Encyclopedia*

The inner child concept helps us understand the programming process during our tender, developing years.

Psychologists, psychiatrists and people involved in addiction recovery, use the model. The inner child model helps explain the relevance of childhood experiences to our present quality of life.

The inner child is the essential you that existed before you began to acquire your role and identity in society.

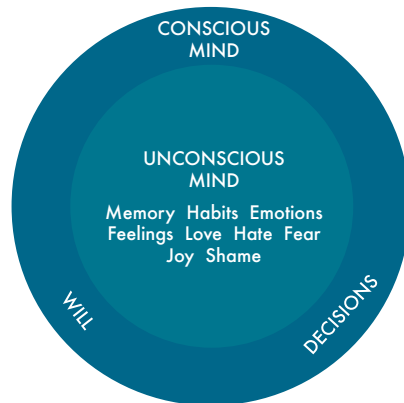
At birth, we are uninhibited, spontaneous and totally vulnerable. There are no defences, no masks and no image to protect.

YOU WERE PROGRAMMED

- **to manipulate**
—by making noises soon after birth—that is how your comfort and food needs were met.
- **to develop social skills**
—how to get on with others, how to attract favourable attention.
- **to adopt positive and negative attitudes about yourself and your worth as a person**
- **to avoid rejection**
—you soon discovered people would accept or reject you based on the things you said and did.
- **to develop defence mechanisms**
—to hide your thoughts and feelings to avoid emotional pain or shame.
- **to wear your mask to keep others from the real you**

PROGRAMMING OUR HABIT PATTERNS

The conscious mind is where we make decisions and the unconscious mind is the seat of memory and habit. The habits gain entry through the conscious mind and repetition transfers them to the unconscious mind.



“Childhood experiences can influence: the kind of partner we choose, how we function in a relationship, our understanding of a relationship’s open and hidden purpose.”

Claire Carmichael, *Getting it Right*

A great many of our attitudinal, value and social habit patterns are programmed by others when we are too young and tender to understand what was happening.

Have you ever attempted to get rid of an unwanted habit pattern? Golfers, for example, can develop the habit of a flaw in their swing. Public speakers can develop unhelpful characteristics in their body language.

Do you have negative or even damaging habit patterns you would like to get rid of? Have you discovered the frustration of trying to get rid of unwanted habit patterns? Do not be discouraged—we all have! We must therefore confront the question of how then we can take charge of our lives.



THE POWER OF CHOICE

The central theme of the Taking Charge of Your Life program is that you have the power of choice. You can take control of your life in spite of your programming.

Read Anthony Robbins statement on the next page:

“We don’t have to allow the programming of the past to our present and future.”

Our potential to be in charge of our lives is determined by our capacity to make choices. (See second quote below)

“Our lives are the sum total of our decisions - whether in business or personal spheres.”
Edwin & Sally Kiester, *Readers Digest*

Many wonder about the possibility of choosing to turn their backs on the mistakes of the past and make a new start. The Bible speaks about renewing our minds. (note the quote from Romans 12:2 below)

“ . . . be transformed by the renewing of your mind . . . ”
Romans 12:2, NIV Bible

Does that mean we can choose to end negative or unwanted habit patterns—somehow reverse the old programming?

Some wonder if our minds can be reprogrammed in the same way we reprogramme a computer—eliminate all the junk from the memory and reprogram from scratch.

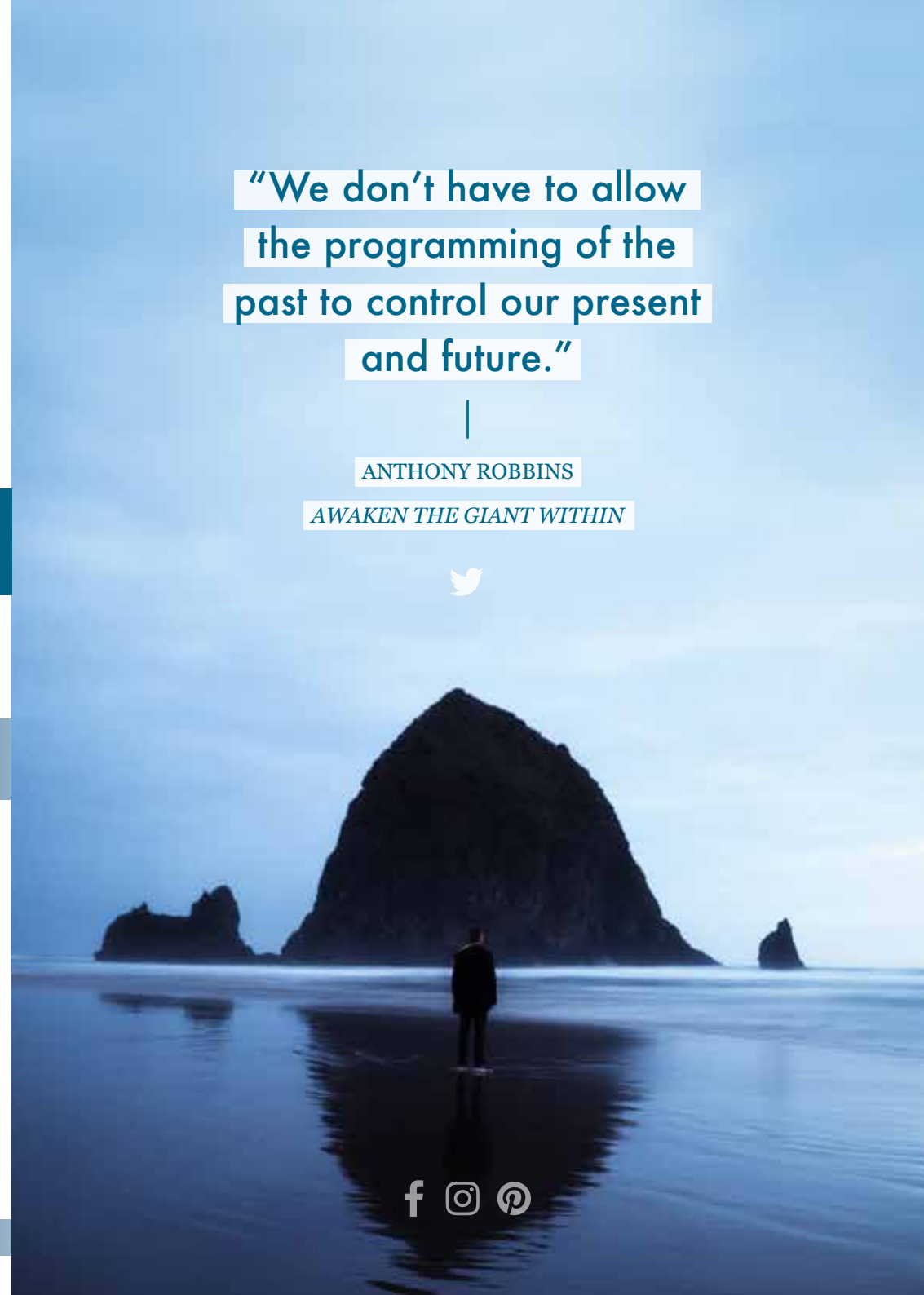
The mind is not like that. It is not like pressing a button and suddenly all the negative memories are gone.

We can choose, rather, to change direction—begin a new process—trigger a new set of thoughts, attitudes and habit patterns.

“We don’t have to allow
the programming of the
past to control our present
and future.”

ANTHONY ROBBINS

AWAKEN THE GIANT WITHIN



DEALING WITH NEGATIVE HABITS



“We all have areas where temptation is strong and habits are hard to conquer . . . we must deal with our areas of vulnerability.”
Insights—1John 3:8, 9 Life Application Bible

Do you find yourself struggling with weaknesses or old unwanted habit patterns? (Don't despair. See quote above). It is important to identify and confront your own weaknesses and needs as a first step to growth.

Identify any negative habit patterns you would like to deal with:

- lack of confidence
- impatience negative attitude
- anger
- failure to listen
- drinking
- smoking gambling
- lack of care
- always criticising
- careless driving tardiness
- self centredness laziness
- sadness untidiness
- lack of organisation overeating
- empty promises discontentment

While you can't eliminate negative habits from the memory the following steps will help you:

1. **Identify your negative habit patterns.**
2. **Choose to confront them.**
3. **Change your thinking and self-talk**—note the Biblical quote on the next page, that speaks of focusing thoughts on the good and positive—there is power in positive thinking.
4. **Build alternative, positive habits.**
Many find the more they struggle to get rid of the old habits the more they are ensnared.

“Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

NIV BIBLE





The quote on the next page speaks of the power of being positive. It says to overcome evil with good. Look at the suggestions below and see if there are any negative habit patterns that you can replace with positive actions:

- Unhappiness** _____ List your blessings
- Tardiness** _____ Practice being early
- Negative attitude** _____ Practice positive thoughts & talk
- Self-centredness** _____ Focus on the other person
- Procrastination** _____ Set goals & make a start
- Untidiness** _____ Establish tidy habits
- Overeating** _____ Arrange alternative activities
- Empty promises** _____ Set up a strategy with deadlines
- Always criticising** _____ Be encouraging and affirming
- Careless driving** _____ Make skillful driving a hobby
- Lack of confidence** _____ Review the things you enjoy doing

Try to identify two or three positive habit patterns you would like to commence and set dates:

- 1 _____
Starting date _____
- 2 _____
Starting date _____
- 3 _____
Starting date _____

 "The habit patterns you feed will determine the fundamental direction of your life."
Zig Ziglar, *Top Performance*

 "The beginning of a habit is like an invisible thread, but every time we repeat the act we strengthen the strand, add to it another filament, until it becomes a great cable and binds us irrevocably, thought and act."
Orison Swett Marden quoted in *Top Performance*

"Do not be overcome
by evil, but overcome
evil with good."

ROMANS 12:21

NIV BIBLE



ACHIEVING WHAT WE EXPECT

Our attitude toward and expectation of others, positive or negative tends to be mirrored in their performance. This also applies to our self-expectations.

This is called the Pygmalion or Mirror Effect.

“PYGMALION

George Bernard Shaw developed the theme of the creative artist Pygmalion (1912), from which was later derived the musical play *My Fair Lady*.”

Encyclopaedia Britannica

The stage and screen musical play, *My Fair Lady* illustrates the principle (see quote). Professor Higgin’s expectations and specialised training of a Cockney flower girl enabled her to pass as a lady. Her life was changed because she lived up to those expectations.

It can be a positive loop. We communicate positive attitudes and expectations to others. This produces positive performance which stimulates even more positive expectations. These in turn build increasingly positive expectations . . . and so on.

This motivational principle can inspire you and the people in your life:

- your children
- your spouse
- your colleagues
- your employees
- your boss

APPLYING THE PYGMALION EFFECT

This powerful life-enriching principle can begin working for you immediately. Just begin with the following three steps:

1. **Look for the best**—positive thinking and attitude.

See how J. S. Livingston writes about the Pygmalion effect in the quote below: “Leaders who their followers to succeed exert influences.”

“Leaders who expect their followers to succeed exert positive influences and obtain extraordinary short-term and long-term results. In addition, their followers feel competent, confident, and enthusiastic. They face their subsequent tasks with the expectation of success.”

J. S. Livingston, “Pygmalion in Management”, *Harvard Business Review*, July-August, 1969

2. **Now do something**—translate the positive attitude into positive action. William Jarnes, the father of American psychology, said we become how we act.

3. **Use the positive act as a basis for expanding your self-image.**

Our self-image is the key to our behaviour. Change the self-image and we change the behaviour. It even sets the boundaries of individual accomplishment. It defines what we can or cannot do. Expand the self-image and we expand the area of the possible.

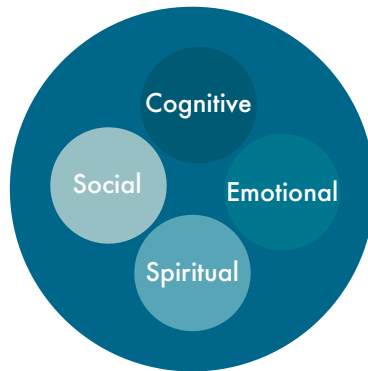
“Life is a self-fulfilling prophecy; you won’t necessarily get what you want . . . but in the long run you will usually get what you expect.”

Denis Waitley, *Seeds of Greatness*

According to Dennis Waitley:

“Life is a self fulfilling prophecy; you won’t get necessarily what you but in the long run you will usually get what you” (see quote)

OUR DEEPER VALUES



Our deeper values are the key to the passions that drive us to great achievements. Getting in touch with our values involves the spiritual dimension of our natures.

Many find inspiration by looking at growth from a spiritual as well as an intellectual, emotional and social perspective.

It is in the spiritual dimension that we find an appreciation for love and the other intangibles of life. It is here where we come to grips with our self-esteem and ourselves.

The Bible speaks of the core value of life—unconditional love. It points to the love of God—a love that is constant in spite of the rejection and dysfunctional behaviour of humans.

He has demonstrated His love through the gift of His “one and only son” to be the Saviour of all who believe and accept. (See quote)

The prayer below is used by many in moments of introspection and need. You may find it meaningful in your own process of growth and fulfillment.



“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.”

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

JOHN 3:16






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CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY

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