

the
three
conditions

how INTENTION, JOY, *and*
CERTAINTY *will* SUPERCHARGE
YOUR LIFE

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 **sounds true**
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Introduction

It All Started Out like a Dream

Much like many kids growing up in Los Angeles, I dreamed of being a rock star, and when I was thirteen years old, I started writing and performing as the lead singer of a pop-punk rock band. Overall, I spent seven years living the rock-star life, touring and opening for some of my favorite bands. My dream had manifested itself, and it was really all a kid could ask for.

At the release party for our debut album, a good friend asked me a question that changed my life: “Hey, man, how long are you going to do this for?”

“Do what?” I said, still smiling as we celebrated with family and friends.

“You know, play music?”

What kind of question is that to ask a musician? I thought.

I responded, “I don’t know, until we’re successful, and then I guess I’ll settle down and start a family.”

“When is that?” he pushed on.

A little more than irritated, I asked him, “When’s what?”

“When is successful?”

I’d had enough and told him to grab another drink and bug off. But I woke up the next morning with that question still burning in my mind, and I didn’t have an answer. I’d never thought about it before. I was just living my life using the talents I’d been given, having fun, and going on a quest to become a world-famous rock star.

It wasn't long after that that I stepped into a deep existential search for my life's purpose and what success actually meant, and I made the hardest decision of my life. After seven years of making beautiful memories with my best friends, record label, managers, and agents, living a life of touring and being on the radio and MTV, I left the band and went on what Viktor Frankl calls "man's search for meaning." Following my heart left those closest to me broken and angry, and although I wish I could have left without causing anyone pain, I knew I couldn't live with the inner knowing that if I stayed, I would be choosing comfort over truth. In the coming pages of this book, I look forward to sharing the answer I found to that burning question: What is success?

You can change your entire life today if that's what you really want. This is the gift of being alive. This is the gift of being human. Over the last decade or so, I have had the privilege of studying Torah, the synthesis of psychology, philosophy, theology, ethics, spirituality, and metaphysics, and I must say we are very lucky. We live in a golden age where we have access to all of the most amazing wisdom. When it comes to expanding our minds and hearts, there are simply no excuses anymore.

There are so many opportunities to find and develop a connection with the inner dimension of life, be it a religion such as Christianity or Islam, a spiritual path such as Buddhism, or something more contemporary such as *A Course in Miracles* or new age spirituality and self-help. You can also walk through the door of science and quantum physics. My entry point was through the lens of Judaism, the metastructure of Torah, Kaballa, and Chasidus. In addition to studying the profound depths of the Torah tradition, I feel blessed to have learned from many of the great masters in the field of spiritual consciousness and self-development. However, which gate you walk through matters less than where you're going. When you dig all the way to the innermost point of every spiritual tradition, you'll find they all lead to the same place: the placeless. My desire in writing this book is to help you access your already beautiful and light-filled life, regardless of your race, color, or creed.

I walked off the stage of my last concert, gave my best friend a hug, and said, “We’ll make it through this,” to which he said, “No. We won’t.” Taking the sting of those words with me, I got into a car and headed straight for a flight to Jerusalem. I was going to study in a yeshiva, a school that focuses on the study of Torah wisdom, and I fell deeply in love with the richness of what Torah is all about. The ideas were deep and alive, they were meaningful and relevant, and the most important thing for me was that they validated so much of how I viewed and experienced spirituality. I knew this was a huge part of my calling, and I was compelled to follow where it led.

Over the next twelve years, I devoted my life to digging deeper and deeper into Torah’s vision of human spirituality, psychology, self-development, and general metaphysics. I fell in love with Kaballa and Chasidus, which emphasize self-actualization and the elevation of consciousness. I began to develop and give lectures on my favorite topics, working with large groups as well as one-on-one with people who wanted to take their spiritual practice and education further.

I once again felt like I was living my dream.

Breakdown Followed by Breakthrough

Then I had a spiritual ~~breakdown~~ breakthrough, a real dark night of the soul. It started when my first child was born. What do I mean? Well, if you have kids, you likely already know where I am going with this, and if you don’t, please don’t let this discourage you from having children. I love my children with all of my heart. I have more love for them than I could ever express, but let me tell you, the challenges they opened up for me were on another level. At night my wife and I were up almost every hour or so, there was incessant crying, the bills were getting harder to pay, and my personal time was disappearing more and more by the day. I was stressing about everything and everyone.

But in truth, it really had nothing to do with my kids and everything to do with me. Turns out, I had a big ego.

It's true, the children may have triggered the series of events that followed, but it was *my* interpretations and reactions that perpetuated the problem. You see, I knew it intellectually, but I hadn't yet internalized the spiritual truth that everyone is given the exact set of circumstances they need to proceed to the next step in their spiritual evolution. These situations just happened to be mine. In fact, when I look back today, I realize that my inner disrepair had very little to do with my children and much more to do with what I allowed myself to believe. I had a whole gamut of limiting beliefs that seemed to be scripting my life.

I was subconsciously weighing exactly what I had to do to be successful and what I had to do to be worthy of praise. Children triggered the part of me that had to deal with what happens when I don't have the luxuries of time, energy, and sleep. I believed I needed those luxuries to accomplish all the things I thought I had to do to be a success.

Things didn't get better before they got worse.

Over the ensuing years, I put on over sixty pounds, developed stress-induced psychosomatic symptoms in different parts of my body, suffered from bouts of rage, and felt constant guilt about my reactions and behavior. I also experienced anxiety and depression, and in the wake of this, I began to truly feel like a failure. I had lost myself.

The peak of this strange series of life circumstances was a turn of events I couldn't possibly have imagined. I dedicated year after year to my spiritual development, and nevertheless, I was hit like a ton of bricks with the realization that I felt more distant and disconnected than I had ever been. I had lost touch with my sense of inner guidance, my intuition that I had relied upon so heavily throughout my youth. I had a difficult time understanding life's hardships, I stopped seeing synchronicities in my day-to-day life, and I felt a total estrangement from what I call God.

Now, this was terribly disturbing because, remember, my day job was to study and teach spiritual ideas that, at this point in my life, I

wasn't experiencing anymore. I would walk into a lecture and wow an audience with oohs and aahs of intellectual wizardry, and then I would come home and collapse on my couch in pain from the deep feelings of shame and failure. I took solace in food. I neglected my body, and my energy levels dropped dramatically. I was so lethargic, I found myself sleeping in most days of the week. Oh, and if that weren't enough, my financial situation wasn't thriving either.

Here is the scary part: nobody around me knew. Outside my marriage and my very close circle of friends, I was actually viewed as a great success. To my peers and mentors, I was a scholar, a published author, a great lecturer, a mentor, and a prolific songwriter. I had a beautiful and supportive family, and I was well established in my community. Nevertheless, the pounds kept coming on, the anger wasn't dissipating, I still felt loads of shame, and I was unaware that I had created an imaginary tower to success that I was desperate to climb.

Knowledge Is Only Potential Power

What I didn't know yet was that even though I was plowing through book after book, attending lecture after lecture, and developing relationships with some of the most notable figures in my field, I was still intellectualizing most of the ideas I was learning; I wasn't living them. I had garnered quite a wealth of knowledge, yet I felt as if I'd found very little power.

You see, I was always under the impression that knowledge is power. I found out the hard way that, unfortunately, this isn't always the case. Much of the time, knowledge is *potential* power and the *application* of knowledge is power. If we don't apply what we learn, we end up being smarter people with the same set of issues. Understanding alone isn't enough, but the knowledge is there, waiting for you to use it. Information is just a seed in your mind. What makes it grow is your inspired action.

Accessing your power isn't a small task, but it may be your most important one. It is the first step in the liberation of your soul.

Author and world-renowned medical intuitive Caroline Myss addresses this in her book *Anatomy of a Spirit* when she says, “Power is essential for healing and for maintaining health. Attitudes that generate a feeling of powerlessness not only lead to low self-esteem, but also deplete the physical body of energy and weaken overall health.”¹

Myss explains that inner power is cultivated by a belief in your self-sufficiency as opposed to an external source. When you believe your power is attached to something outside yourself, the moment you feel it slipping away, you begin to lose energy and the power to live your life at the highest level.

Power is the root of the human experience. Our attitudes and belief patterns, whether positive or negative, are all extensions of how we define, use, or do not use power. Not one of us is free from power issues. We may be trying to cope with feelings of inadequacy or powerlessness, or we may be trying to maintain control over people or situations that we believe empower us, or we may be trying to maintain a sense of security (a synonym for power) in personal relationships. Many people who lose something that represents power to them—money, or a job, or a game—or who lose someone in whom their sense of self or power is vested—a spouse or lover, a parent or child—develop a disease. Our relationship to power is at the core of our health.²

It is clear that shifting our beliefs and attitudes about life is the center point for accessing our inner power, and no amount of knowledge without application will ever achieve this.

At this very low point in my life, I was in a frantic search, looking everywhere for a way out of this dark space that I had, in essence, created for myself. I didn’t want to numb the pain with food anymore, and I missed my intuitive self-knowledge and inner awareness of the Oneness that exists and pervades all of reality. I knew I had fallen asleep. I had fallen unconscious,

spiritually speaking. I was ready to return to my higher Self, the Truth of who I am, but I didn't know how to get there.

If it wasn't for my best friend and partner in life, my wife, I don't know if I would have made it out the way I did. I am blessed to be in an awesome, loving, and committed marriage. She not only afforded me the time and ability to spend nearly a decade of our marriage studying and researching the depth of reality, but she supported my process and growth and held space for me the entire way.

I spoke with my rabbis and mentors, sought therapy, and met with a number of spiritual guides and mediums, searching and digging everywhere I could to find the answers to my life's riddles. In the process, I found a lot of answers, but I also found many new questions and people who resonated with my story in their own way. This book is the answer to those questions.

Let me explain.

Many people feel trapped in their lives by something they don't even know how to describe, and worse, they don't know how they got there. Many of us are in pain and will do just about anything we can to relieve it.

The metaphysical text *A Course in Miracles* says that every communication is either an extension of love or a call for love. This is exactly what Chasidus says about the thoughts we have in our mind. At their core, every thought we have is either an extension of our inner light or a call for help. Every time we try to numb our pain, we're really calling for safety, peace, and love. I was no different.

Awakening from the Shell of Fear

Even though I had all the information at my fingertips, it was only through personal experience that I underwent a transformation. The breakthrough didn't happen until I was willing to take an honest look at the mental agreements I had made with reality and question how I really felt about life. At some point along the way, I had sold my inner knowing of Truth for the trophy

of fitting into a mold. I didn't even know there were different molds in the world of spirituality, but I found myself cornered in a space where I was convinced I couldn't fully express the colors of my *Self*.

I realized that if I were to fully jump into the stream of the life that I wanted and deep down believed in, it would likely confuse and offend some people and possibly cut off certain relationships I spent years developing. I knew my social status and integrity might both be questioned. But for the first time, I understood that none of that mattered. I was starting to wake up to a new reality.

As I explored the twelve steps of the anonymous programs that were founded with the intention of helping cultivate authentic spiritual experience, Shula, my therapist, took me on a deep journey into my *Self*, one that I am eternally indebted to her for. In a life-changing session, she looked at me and asked who I would be if I'd taken a different road when I hit one of the forks in my journey. Upon answering her, I saw immediately in her face that she knew something very important.

"You're Chasidic!" she exclaimed.

Although Chasidism is a denomination of Jewish practice, what she meant was "Your heart is in another world. You're not living the life you want to live." I was mesmerized by her clarity, as it immediately resonated. I didn't know what the next step was, but I knew it was needed.

In the aftermath of my awakening, I took a trip back to Los Angeles, where I hadn't been in over a decade. I hoped to make peace with someone who had been my best friend and touring manager, whom I had abandoned all those years earlier. He wanted nothing to do with me. He wouldn't even sit down for a meeting. Later I found out that he wasn't the only one who had those feelings, and some people held a strong grudge against me for what I had done and how I had done it. It was a very painful trip but almost like an act of grace because I came to the harsh realization that there were people in this world who really didn't like me. But

that was OK. My understandings of life and my life experiences met, like a wedding between my heart and mind.

This event was significant because of what it meant. As a chronic “people pleaser,” I had just experienced what it meant to die. That is, my closest friends truly hadn’t forgiven me, people still hated me, yet I was OK. I was still standing. I had made the right decision for myself all those years ago even though people around me were upset by it. Somewhere in my subconscious, I knew that I now had the freedom to do the same, and this time without fear. Even if I decided to shift the direction of my life—my behaviors and expressions—if the shift was in alignment with my higher Self, following my calling, it wouldn’t matter if my new family, my new community, would accept me or my decisions. Somewhere deep inside, I now knew that there is nothing to fear when it comes to following your heart and soul.

After over ten years of studying and searching I finally understood the essential idea of all spiritual teachings. Yes, I read, watched, and attended lectures of the great thinkers of our generation, and although my clarity expanded, I started to feel closer to the Truth only after I tasted it myself. This wasn’t an intellectual understanding or an emotional reality but rather a deep resonance of Truth that reverberated throughout my entire being. I was free. The wall separating me and everything I knew to be true was gone. The cloud had lifted. The darkness had passed.

What was it? What was holding me back from living my most authentic, powerful life?

Fear.

That was it. I was living with a perpetual subconscious fear. Not the type of fear you have if you’re standing in front of a hungry lion but the fear that whatever you’re doing will never be enough. The fear that things may not work out for you. The fear that your life is unstable, and anything you do can and will be used against you. The fear that if you mess up, the entirety of the responsibility and blame is on you. The fear that what you wear, how you speak, and what you read

and discuss label where you stand in society. The fear that whom you know and what credentials you've received are what define your level of success. Fear is the culprit of all the negativity that we experience in our lives on this planet. Much of our collective consciousness is buried in fear, and our sympathetic nervous system doesn't know the difference between the survival stress of staring down a lion and the human-created stress of getting an MBA.

I can't pinpoint exactly which elements of my personal transformation caused it, but after years of introspection, meditation, spiritual exploration, and therapy sessions that taught me how to forgive and fully accept myself, something miraculous happened. My wall of fear was removed, and for the first time, I truly felt a sense of "I don't care anymore," which really meant "I don't fear anymore." You see, I was living in something that Kaballa calls "the shell of the world." When you live in the shell of the world (the outer experience), you perceive only the external reality as the truth.

No matter how much you intellectually think of things spiritually, if you still identify strongly with the external reality, you won't experience the inner truth of the world, and you will be caught in the shell. When you live in the shell of the world, you live as a shell of yourself. And when you live as a shell of yourself, you live in a man-made hell, a mental space of fear that there isn't enough (a scarcity mentality). A fear of the finite and failure. The fear of pain and death. That is what drives the insanity of the shell of the world. It happens when we believe more in the body than in the soul, more in the world than in spirit, and more in judgment than in acceptance.

That day in LA changed my future. And of course, it wasn't just the one day. It was years of study, practice, and pain. It was learning the core program of the twelve steps and therapy. My teachers believed in my growth. And most of all, I was helped by the love, support, and faith of my wife. But it was on that one day, like an act of grace, that I felt the wall come down, and what I experienced as miracles started flowing in.