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## ABSTRACT

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### **Written By: Jodi Watkins**

NASM CPT/FNS/Health Coach/Nutrition Coach

BS/BM, MS/HA-BM

Veteran/Wellness Advisor/Motivational Speaker

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# Reclaim Your Life

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## 6 Steps to Healthy Mind and Body

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## Acknowledgements

- First of all, I have to thank the Lord, the only Father I have ever had. I ran from you for many years, but I am no longer running. I am allowing You to guide me in everything I do – in life AND in business. You have been here for me just waiting patiently for me to come around. You have pulled me through turmoil and allowed, what I thought was a waste, come together in what I am doing now – serving others as You purposed for me.

I am eternally grateful that you kept me here on this earth to help others in a way that allows them to live a stress-free and healthier lifestyle. At age 41, I finally realized who was truly responsible for anything in my life and that is you, not me. You have given me the strength to write this book and an accountability partner, who forced me to finish what I started. She had no idea, but she was helping me grow just as much as I was helping her, by providing the tools she can now use and make her own in order to gain success in all areas of her life. I started this book without you, Lord, but I am finishing it in your grace. You pulled me out of the wilderness and gave me the eyes to see more for myself.

*“Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.”*

- Psalms 119:105

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I want to thank each and every person who had a part in my upbringing, in keeping me focused when the world around me seemed to be crumbling, who believed in me when I didn't have it in me to keep going. God put you all in my life for a reason. I am truly appreciative and I acknowledge you.

- To those individuals specifically who raised and influenced me in Fernandina Beach, FL, my hometown of 18 years. Many of you were trying to show me a better life, some of you were learning lessons right along with me – both good and bad. While the world around us was cold, there was some warmth with knowing we all had each other. I appreciate you more than you know.
- I had more guardians than I knew what to do with and that was how you kept me safe – My grandparents, my mom, and my Aunt “Viv” (you took me in when I had no place to go), who are all in heaven watching down on us. My Godparents, who were rightly appointed by my mom and who have truly stepped up in her absence. I could easily write a separate book about each person who helped me push through when times were rough and push forward when I felt like nothing was left. This book is the first of many that will become available as the Lord provides me with the words. I just want you to know that I appreciate you all so much. You were brought into my life as earth angels – mentors – friends. You helped me get through a time where life didn't seem to be worth living. I am truly grateful.
- To my brothers and sisters who weren't blood family, but who were family nonetheless. You were there for me just like we should be as family. To my actual sister, Morgan Kaye, who did not get to see this earth but as an angel, but who is keeping our mother company in Heaven and who has been watching over me since I was seven years old. To my crew in high school who got me into trouble, but also kept me in school. You guys did not let me quit and I can't thank you enough for that. You know who you are. We had our ring leader and then we had each other. Many of you are no longer on this earth. Some of you have gone to be with our Father and I pray you were able to get to know Him before you left this earth. Just know you are truly missed and thought about every day. For those of you who have gone down a path that seems dark, just know your circumstances CAN change. All you have to do is submit and allow God into your life. He WILL take over and He WILL give you the life He wants you to live.
- To Ms. Wallace, of Wallace-Pierson Travel in Fernandina Beach: Thank you for making it possible for me to attend Senior Night. I wouldn't have been able to go without you. I am truly grateful we are still in touch and for your continued support.
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where I needed to be mentally in order to walk my path, I wouldn't change any of it or any of the people who came into my life.

- To my “big sister,” who STILL looks out for me to this day, even though you have a family of your own. You know who you are without being named. You have never let me suffer and I can't thank you enough for that. You taught me a whole lot about life, and we are both living proof that diligence trumps mistakes. Our upbringing set us up for failure, but we refused to accept that later down the road. Failure is NOT an option. You are doing amazing things in your own life and WE have moved past anything that could have torn us apart. WE are not going to let what we didn't have define us. WE are going to make sure we give more to our own families and use our past as a motivator for what we don't want in life. God has given us both an awakening in our lives that will never be taken for granted or taken away by any human. He raised us up through the mess and gave us the opportunities to change the story in a way we never could have imagined when we were younger. Our trials are now our tribulations. Our journey is our reward. We are living lives He always knew we could live.
- To my husband, who I don't deserve. We have been through it. You have YET to give up on me. I have put you through more than you ever should have been put through due to my own insecurities and internal struggles. I spent years dwelling on my past instead of reaching for the future. I didn't appreciate you, and I apologize for that. I am thankful for you and glad you are still here with me, supporting me, and being an amazing daddy to our little girl. I don't know where my life would be had we not found each other. I do know that I couldn't imagine it differently.
- To my daughter (shown on the cover and filled with life), who inspires me and motivates me more than you will ever know. Being your mom helped me come out of my comfort zone, challenge myself, write this book, be transparent and simply, appreciate life. Little girl, you are my world. You are the reason I breathe. You are the reason I work so hard. You are my why. You simply being you is why I have found myself. You are writing books and wanting to help other children, even though you are a child yourself. You have this amazing spirit about you. I love you every day and I also love the person you have and will become. Thank you for always giving me a reason to wake up in the mornings and keep crushing my goals. You are amazing. Never stop being you – creative and funny, not worrying about what the outside world thinks, and challenging yourself. The Lord truly blessed me when He placed you inside me. He gave me a second chance. He gave me... You.
- To Community Life Ministry (CLM), who have become family to my family and supports me and continues to allow me to grow through Christ
- I also want to thank my good friend, Jamie Johnson, who I've known since our days in Fernandina Beach, for contributing her amazing story of consistency to this book. I continue to pray for her and ask that you do the same, for she is blessed beyond belief

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and also found comfort in the Lord this past year as she battles PTSD, which should be called PTSI – it's not a disorder, but an injury. In time, it CAN be healed.

- If you would ever like to share your story, I would love to hear from you. There will be more books to follow and much more on the horizon. As God is my witness, I am taking everyone on this journey with me who wants to be here. I appreciate you all and I look forward to continuing the journey God currently has placed before me. See Jamie's story in the "Consistency" chapter of this book.

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## Forward

My true health journey began with the loss of the person I knew all my life – my mom. While we didn't have the best relationship for many years, she definitely taught me a lot about life, mostly what NOT to do, but that is perfectly fine. All the lessons made me the person I am today. I wouldn't change any of it now. I am now learning to cope and using what I have seen in my past to help others deal with their pain in hopes they don't have to endure it for as long as I did. I forgive my mom, I forgive myself, and we are made to always forgive those who forsake us. This is what I have done in my life now and will continue to do from this day forward. The Lord will bring us through the mud if we allow Him to. All I had to do was submit.



Diane Lynn Van Hoose (Knott) 2/2/50-9/29/09

Dear Lord, You have taken me down this journey I know as my life and have allowed me to use everything in it to help others in their journeys as well. I am truly grateful You never gave up on me. You forgave me for my sins as Your son paid the ultimate price for us humans. You have provided me with these gifts that I never knew were there, but You always did. You have allowed me to give everything I have learned and sew into others what you have sewn into me. Lord, I just ask that everyone who reads this book, reads with an open mind and willingness to know what I did not know for so long – it is not up to us to control everything in our lives. It is up to us to learn how to grow through You and adopt a mindset that will allow us to gain understanding in areas in our lives we may never have understood before.

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Lord, I ask that you provide and bless each person reading this book and give them the insight you have given me. Father, you are the only Father, and without you, we are nothing. You are forever King. You have taken me out of the darkness, where I was once lost, and have become the forever light at my feet when I take a step out. You tell me to go and I just go now. I no longer worry about where I am going or where you are taking me. I just go. I am truly grateful you have placed the gift of writing within me. You have taken what I once used as a way to release and have allowed me to use it in a more powerful way, to share with others what You have shown me. Thank you, Lord. You are our Savior. You are our provider. As long as we are with You, we are without nothing. You provide everything we need and I am truly humbled by what you have provided me – the gift of truly living. In Your precious son's name, Amen.

Thank you again and God bless you!

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# Introduction

**Why Are You Here?  
Live the Life You've Always Dreamed!**

*jw*  
J O D I W A T K I N S

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*“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God in your hearts.”*

• Colossians 3:15-16

This book encompasses the journey and steps that have been truly helpful in my own life. I pray you will read this so you can reach total health and fulfillment in your own lives. Read it carefully, but put into *practice* the insight that was given to me to share through years of a constant process. I hope this will get you to stop wasting money on “get skinny quick” fads and allow you to understand and begin to use science-backed principles to achieve everything you *desire*. Know that everything I wrote in this book comes from the heart – they are words given through journey that never made sense to me up until this past year. The Lord has brought me through, and He will do the same for you if you allow Him to. He provided me with the curiosity that allowed me to alleviate all the confusion in my own journey by getting educated and believing in the *possibilities*. Through experience, I’ve made it a consistent practice in my life. I pray you will do the same. Each day is a journey, but if you are willing to become aware of things in your life that are holding you back, you may be amazed at what and how much you can accomplish.

Do I know everything? Not at all. Nevertheless, I have been chosen to give everything that I have picked up over the years. I have the desire to continue walking in this path so that I will continue to learn and provide more to those who rely on me. The great thing about human sciences is that new data gets released every day. The not so good thing is there are so many people out there who are telling you how to live your life, it can pull you into another direction. This is where research comes into play and knowing what to look for and what is not the best information. The Lord has guided me to the right people in my own journey. I constantly research and rely on Him to ensure I am using the best and latest in science to help those who yearning for a healthier life. I am still using the tactics and knowledge I have been given and will for the rest of my life. Consistency is key. Patience and persistence are vital. You didn’t become unhealthy in thirty days and you won’t achieve total health in thirty days. It worries me when people brag about losing 70+ pounds in one month. Not only is this not healthy and is internally damaging if not done correctly, but it also normally causes a dip in metabolism and is not something that can or will last. This is why many people get discouraged when it comes to their health journeys and quit.

Nevertheless, if you are willing to put one foot in front of the other and become more patient, you may just find that achieving a life of total health is not as hard as you once thought it to be. Change your habits little by little, change your life. The choice is yours. You can continue to be miserable or you can take ownership and be willing to change. You can achieve literally anything you put your mind to if you want it badly enough. Wanting it a little bit isn’t going to get you anywhere. You have to REALLY want it. You have to wake up each day smiling, knowing God has placed you in total control of your thoughts and choices, whether you are ready to believe that or not.

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Through my own journey and the mentorship I provided to others over the years, the Lord has equipped me with a six-step process that can and will change your life forever. But you must be open to the possibility that you can live this life without misery or frustration. It takes constant effort to make necessary changes. Reading this book will not change you. However, if you read this and *put it into practice*, you will realize a healthy lifestyle is feasible. Wishing it will NOT make it so. DOING the work is what produces change and growth.

This process will not work for you if you would rather find the magic pill that does not exist. This is not for you if you would rather continue wasting money on the latest fads just to lose the progress you made once you get tired of that method. This is not a 30-day fix or 100-day challenge. This is your *life*. Those are great to help you get started, but how you finish is the important part. It's great to start, but you also must enjoy it and embrace it to want to continue. This process is for those who are ready to step out and achieve total health through *proven* methods and the Spirit that is working through me to give you this information.

This system has not only changed my life, but it has also changed the lives of those who have allowed me to be their guide. It also changed my family dynamic. Now that I am in a better place, I am able to approach situations differently in my family. I am not nearly as reactive as I used to be. I am more open to the fact I cannot change anyone else. All I could do was focus on changing me and allowing my walk to be the mentorship others need. When it comes to health, I am blessed to have a child who is active and healthy. My husband was able to come off his blood pressure medication and get more quality sleep at night through regular exercise and paying more attention to what he was putting into his body. When you read this book, I ask that you share it with your friends and family. Allow them to see how God is working in your life and how you have developed into the person you always wanted to be. They will begin to ask questions. I pray you will tell them all about your journey so they will also be inspired to live a healthier lifestyle. This should be contagious and I never want you to hold it in. Share it with others. Help them become better versions of themselves. Let's build a community together.

What really changed everything for me mentally was my willingness to finally open up to the spiritual aspect of things. Due to my internal pride and habitual nature, it took a true act of God to finally get me to say, "Enough is enough" and stop trying to control every situation. I was to a point where it seemed everything in my life was going down the drain. I wasn't able to unleash the gifts God gave me. I was limiting myself. I finally had to do what the famous quote says – "Let go and let God." Once I did that, doors began to open, the people I met were of a different energy, and my life truly changed for the better. If you have not learned to allow the Spirit to be inside of you, that may be the first thing you look into. Once you have done that, you may find you want to be led in a way you've never been led before. You will be more open to using the tools in this book and you will want to learn more about yourself.

Let's talk about the system God has given me to share with you.

What is the system?

**STEP ONE: Mindset Shift.** In order to truly receive the gifts of God, we have to stop blaming others, take ownership in our flaws (turn the mirror around), stop dwelling on the past, and

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believe in ourselves. We must truly believe that we CAN achieve *anything* as long as we put forth the effort.

#### STEP TWO: Time Management.

Establishing a good routine is so important in our daily lives. I divulge how schedules can help you “find more time in your day” just by becoming more accountable. You’ll do a time audit and you may find that what you thought you didn’t have time for, maybe just wasn’t a priority in your life.

#### STEP THREE: Self-Care and Positivity.

Let’s focus on self-care and positivity. If you don’t love yourself, how can you expect anyone else to love you? You will literally sabotage anything good in your life because internally, you don’t feel worthy. I did it for years unintentionally.

#### STEP FOUR: Nutrition

Science is always your best bet when it comes to nutrition. Time is your most valuable asset. Stop wasting it on temporary fad diets that don’t teach you anything! It’s time to wake up and do the work! INVEST in your health and be willing to put some effort into this portion of the process.

#### STEP FIVE: Exercise

You don’t necessarily need a gym to get a good workout. Hiring someone who has experience with your needs is a great way to get started the right way and not get frustrated or more importantly, injured. It doesn’t take a whole lot. It just takes you wanting to start and having a goal so you continue. The key to overall success is all in step six: consistency and practice. If you want to become better at something, you must repeat it over and over. This is called practicing. Reaching goals takes consistency, letting go of any pride that may get in the way, and being open to learning new ideas. Otherwise, goals become dreams. The journey does NOT stop once you reach your first goal. You have to continue setting goals so you have incentive to keep going. Once you reach a certain point in your journey, you should WANT to continue because you have come so far and are *no longer* looking back. By this time, you have most likely empowered so many others to begin their journeys that you’ll want to learn even more. It will be a *desire*. This is where the *lifestyle* begins.

The Lord has empowered me to find true health and happiness by developing the new habits that led me to the goal and have an agenda that has allowed me to be more successful in my own life. I had to stop wanting more and operating out of lack. I had to become more appreciative of what I already had (which is a lot more than many people).

Now, I use my desires as a way to self-reflect. I pray about them and know that if they are meant to happen, they will. Without a mindset shift, literally nothing will begin to change in our lives. We all have to go through this. It is so important to focus on getting your mind right before we even dabble in the world of food diaries and customized workout programs. Otherwise, it all becomes a more complicated set of instructions than it needs to be and you will quit.

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Without the proper mindset that allows for prosperity and growth, the root of the problem will not surface. Through examining ourselves, we may just find that we are holding ourselves back from all things great. For instance, through self-reflection, I learned I was very confident, yet lacked self-esteem. This held me back tremendously. It will take a *breakthrough* for goals to be accomplished. Put the information in this book to use and you may just find that everything you need to get where you want to be is inside the person you see in the mirror. If you have not done so already, ask the Lord to guide you as you read this book. Ask Him to be the leader in your heart. Ask Him if this is the right process for you and to help you use these tools as you are meant to use them in your own life.

Start today and learn the steps, keep a journal and answer the questions in this book. Do the worksheets at the end. Then see how your life changes for the positive over time. Will it happen overnight? Of course not! But did the root of the problem happen in one day? Not at all. It took you years to learn how to be stressed and overwhelmed and develop habits that do NOT provide a path towards your health and wellness goals. Now it's going to take some time to undo all that.

I can attest from experience, it is well worth the wait and the work. I would rather get my you know what together in my 40's than never – ending up on my death bed with tons of regrets – wouldn't you? Hopefully you're younger than me when you read this book and can work on your limiting beliefs even sooner than I have, but maybe you're my age or older. Age does not matter. If you are doing it, *that is all that matters!*

Research has shown that most people do not reach their full potential until after the age of 40. Most of us have to go through the mud before we open our hearts to allow the Lord to guide us. This is what allows us to have a story to tell. We are broken, but we are *gracefully broken* in order to take on the journey and be vulnerable. The key is being willing to make some key internal changes. If you are not willing to change and take steps that will allow you to become a better overall version of yourself, don't expect anything in your life to change for the better – that includes your health.

# Chapter 1

## Mindset Development

### 1.1 Stop Blaming Others

Be Free Through Forgiveness of Others and YOURSELF!

*“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”*

• Ephesians 4:32

When I was a little girl, I learned to suppress and bury everything. My childhood was NOT pretty to say the least. The home wasn't just broken, it was shattered. I became a person who blamed that situation for everything else in my life even up through my 30's. However, that did NOT do me justice. That way of thinking was not going to allow me to prosper at all. I realize now that even though I thought I had forgiven, I really had just suppressed it all and acted as if it didn't happen. But it did happen. It was embedded into my subconscious mind and would surface from time to time without my acknowledgement. I was too proud to admit I was being controlled by my past. *I was in control!* Or so I thought...

As time went by and things continued not to go in my favor, I kept asking why. Why did I have to witness all the things I witnessed early in my childhood? Why did my dad leave and never resurface? Why did my mom think she could “save” the men in her life? Why didn't I get a scholarship in college? Why did my mom die? Why did it seem as though every door I worked hard to open closed on me soon after? Why didn't this happen? Why didn't that go to plan? Why did I treat that person like I did? *SO MANY THOUGHTS* of why. All it did was keep me in a place where I could NOT grow!

I later found myself regretting getting out of the military or not researching my options well enough. I regretted so many things. I had wasted so much time trying to do different things. I blamed myself. I needed to take ownership and move on, but I was allowing the past to dictate my future. The negative thoughts in my mind were holding me back from literally everything. Something I had to learn: shoulda, coulda, woulda does not get you anywhere. Now is the time to put your vision to the test and do whatever you can to be the best possible version of yourself.

I will not sit here and say I never looked back. For years, living in the past kept me from becoming the person I was meant to be. I had to forgive others, forgive myself, and stop living in

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the past. I had to stop comparing myself to others. I had to stop scrolling through my news feed. How many of you are vicariously living through other people's social media? How many of you are then comparing your current situation to others you see? If this is you, it's time to stop! If you are letting the comparisons to others and to your old self guide you in a positive direction, so be it. However, if you are allowing comparisons to take you out of your path to success in accomplishing your goals, I highly advise reprogramming your mind so you stop holding yourself back. I hear it all the time: "I used to look like this" or "I used to make this amount of money." I did the same thing and compared my current situation to my past, possibly better situations. The problem is, when I did that, I began to self-sabotage. It caused me to become a bit depressed.

Now that I have become aware of my own limitations, I let the pain and memories and comparisons propel me. I am no longer living in fear as I was before. I am now aware of my fears so that I can face them. I step out of my comfort zone and I challenge myself. I am no longer walking in my past. I have forgiven those who have wronged me. Most of all, I have forgiven myself. If you do not forgive yourself, you will NEVER grow.

*"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.*

– Luke 6:37

It is not our place to judge anyone else. Most of the time, when we judge those around us, it's because we are not willing to look at ourselves closely. When we condemn others, it's because we don't want to face the wrongs we have done to others. Forgiving ourselves is a very difficult thing to do, especially when we are holding so much inside. The Lord asks us to release. He doesn't want to see us in pain. He wants to see us release that pain and learn to listen to Him. This is what I had to do in my own life and it has helped me in literally every area of my life.

I write these steps not only to help others, but to help myself and hold myself accountable. When I mentor others, everything I tell them is what I have to do as well. While I am giving them assignments and things to accomplish in their own lives, I am doing the same things. We are ALL on this journey. I am just as human as the next person. I am being led by the Lord to bring the lessons in my life to others in hopes they will be able to achieve mental stability and fulfillment in their lives. The only difference between me and some others is that I have made the CHOICE to not allow my past to control my future anymore. I now allow it to propel me to be the best possible version of myself. I am now led by the Spirit instead of my own mind, which got me in trouble more times than I can count.

What else do I have that allows me to stay motivated? I have a why! Her name is Jasmine. She is my blessing and she is the reason I refuse to stay in the past. It never did anything for me except hold me back and keep me from learning how to change my outcome. We stay where we are because we allow ourselves to get comfortable. We would rather stay in our comfort zones that step outside of them.

Today, I am a testimony that everything truly DOES happen for a reason. I used to get upset when people say that, but it was because I didn't know just how true it was. I couldn't see the

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future so I was propelled by fear of the unknown. You grew up in a broken home? That doesn't mean you have to be broken. You dealt with addiction in your family? That doesn't mean you have to be an addict. You grew up around violence and constant betrayal? That doesn't mean you have to be violent and betray others. You were lost? It's ok...because if you never give up and you keep plugging and get through all the turmoil in your life, you will look back and you will be thankful for all the things you saw and went through...maybe even that you did...and you will be a stronger and better person for all of it. Have faith you will be found, just as I have been.

Maybe you are in a place where you don't believe in the higher power. Maybe you don't believe in God and his capabilities. I am not trying to tell you what to believe or change your belief system. Only you can do that. What I am doing is simply sharing my journey in hopes it will help you. Maybe you will begin to open up to possibilities as I did.

Through my own mindset shift and renewed beliefs, I was finally brought back into the light. I am truly thankful for that. I had to gain something I did not possess for a long time: Faith. I cannot say enough about this because had it not been for this breakthrough in my own life, many things would not be where they are today. For one, you would not be reading this book. Secondly, I would be working some dead-end job that I hate just to pay the bills. I would not be developing relationships with people that I am now developing – trusting relationships with people who want to propel me, rather than pull me back. I would have continued to sabotage my marriage because I did not believe I was worthy of that type of love. Lastly, and probably the worst thing I can think of, is that I would not be a good role model for my daughter. I would let her down because I would be giving her what I had growing up – no direction.

## 1.2 Don't Dwell on the Past

*“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past.”*

- Isaiah 43:18

No matter where your past took you before, that doesn't have to be your path now. Find an outlet of some sort. Talk to someone who is equipped to listen and help guide you, talk to God (his ears never close and He doesn't make you go into debt), write a book, say your fears out loud when no one else is around or when everyone is around – whichever works out the best for you. If you believe in God, pray. We all need an outlet.

I have implemented so many more things into my own routine. My entire life is better now because I am no longer blaming others or living in the past. I am living life. I was put on this earth to make an impact on the world and I am now finally doing just that. You were put here for the same reason. Don't hold back. Now is your time too!

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*“The same God distributes different kinds of miracles that accomplish different results through each believer’s gifts and ministry as he energizes and activates them. Each believer is given continuous revelation by the Holy Spirit to benefit not just himself but all.”*

- 1 Corinthians 12:6  
(Holy Bible, The Passion Translation)

Think of a gift you possess. Really dig deep. What is that one thing that just comes naturally to you? Write it down here:

---

Now use the space here to write down why you are not using that gift to its full potential:

Take a moment to reflect. Do you dwell on the past? Do you think about situations that have pained you so much that it keeps you from reaching your full potential or believing in yourself enough to take a leap of faith?

In the bible reading plan, *Release Forgiveness Towards Others and Yourself*, by Eric Celerier, it states “when...memories come back to haunt us, we need to forgive...actually, forgive again. This forgiveness is a choice...”

Here’s the thing – if we are constantly reliving the same scenarios that kept us from stepping into our true selves, we will never heal. Those same scenarios will continue to hold us back. In order to get past all the pain we have endured in a past life (going back to point 1.1 – Stop Blaming Others), we have to learn how to forgive as many times as we need to. Not only are we constantly forgiving others for past wrongdoings, but we must also continue to forgive ourselves.

*“Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, ‘Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times’”*

- Matthew 18:21-22

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Your biggest ally in this journey will be awareness. Learning to be aware of yourself and how you react is how you begin the next portion of mindset development – taking ownership.

## 1.3 Take Ownership

*“You will plant but not harvest; you will press olives but not use the oil, you will crush grapes but not drink the wine.”*

- Micah 6:15

What does this verse mean to you? Take a moment to think about it.

Have you ever wondered how it has come to pass that you work so hard for something, but the door closed without warning? Was that the path you were meant to take? If the door closed, it was not the correct path for you.

Let's explore this a little more.

Are you currently being led by love or fear? Think about it.

One of the most important parts of step one, and the most difficult for people (including me), is believing in yourself. Fear has taken me from my true potential and allowed me to just be mediocre for so long. It made me doubt my abilities and what I had to offer as a person.

While others believe in me now, up until very recently, I still doubted myself. Instead of thinking about all the things I HAVE accomplished, I would find myself thinking about and dwelling on the things I had not accomplished. Why do we do this to ourselves?

Research shows that people who come from a broken home or who had a parent leave at one point in their life (especially if both occurred) tend to constantly seek approval from the outside world.

In a study about children who are exposed to domestic violence (which I was most of my childhood and into my teen years until I left home), “Children and youth who are exposed to domestic violence experience emotional, mental, and social damage that can affect their developmental growth. Some children lose the ability to feel empathy for others. Others feel socially isolated, unable to make friends as easily due to social discomfort or confusion over what is acceptable”<sup>3</sup>

What happens when the situations around you become toxic? Are you able to recognize this quickly or are you so consumed in trying to please them and gain acceptance that you are blinded by the reality of what is happening?

I believe that we allow ourselves to invite toxic people into our lives so that we can subconsciously replay the scenarios we grew up with. We seek pleasure and happiness through others, instead of first reaching inside ourselves.

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Not only is this detrimental to our personal growth, but it can also destroy any great relationship we may have somehow developed, and can lead to constant self-sabotage. If we are used to not receiving true fulfillment in our lives, we will revert back to where we are comfortable. An author named Dodinsky once said: “You have to love yourself because no amount of love from others is sufficient to fill the yearning that your soul requires from you.”

What does this quote mean to you? Does it speak to you? Take a moment to really ponder the quote and use the space below to journal your thoughts in order to make them real. If nothing comes to you, seek God for assistance. Learn to “hear” from Him. Allow Him to give you direction on this quote and then continue.

It's time to write a new story. How do you begin to rewrite your story? First, you have to be willing to believe you are worthy of the great things in life. This is the most difficult part because believing in ourselves is NOT normal. This is especially true if you were brought up by someone who did not tell you that you were deserving and loved on a regular basis. Society also writes our story for us if we let it. Negativity can truly hold us back from anything great in life.

I wondered why things weren't working out for me, but it was because deep down, I was not allowing myself to be happy. I was so used to things not working out for me that I actually pulled that negative energy more towards me. All these years it was a vicious cycle.

Think about some things you may have worked toward in your life. How did those things work out for you? Were you doing those things because you felt you were doing good towards others or was it more for monetary gain and social acceptance? Think about it...what were your true intentions?

For me, I can remember being in school and being made fun of because I was wearing hand-me-down clothes. My mom and her husband were addicts, so I just felt very lost and afraid of what my true potential was. That was embedded in me at an early age. While I can no longer blame any of this on the life I have now, I can say that it set the stage for the years to come.

I was so lost during college and even pretty much my entire 15-year military career. I was decent at what I did, but I knew it wasn't what I wanted to do my entire life. When my mom passed away and I had a child, you would think I could have found some direction. In all actuality, I became more lost. I entered a program I thought I was meant to be in, but looking back, I did that for social acceptance and monetary gain. I did it for a title I thought I needed in order to be more prestigious in the world.

It did not take long for reality to set in and for that program to become a fond memory. It devastated me when things fell apart at that time because I had worked so hard. However, I worked really hard on it for all the wrong reasons. I told myself I was doing it to serve others, but in reality, I was doing it more to serve me. Being relieved from that program took an even bigger toll on my confidence.

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As the years went by, I felt like I just went deeper and deeper into a hole that I could not get out of. I began to think that everyone was against me. In reality, I was against me. Therefore, I would never get out of the rut because I was not allowing myself to move forward. I kept going back to that child who was so involved in trying to gain acceptance that she became lost in her own mind with no true direction or path to take.

It wasn't until the past year or so that I finally decided enough was enough. There are so many people out here doing great things that don't know half of what I know and are leading others down a path that won't allow them to be truly successful. I wanted to be able to influence these people on a broader spectrum, share my story, and hopefully impact them in a positive way. But how? Again, I had no direction. I was doing tons of research and helping others daily, but I still lacked the confidence to take it further.

I've always enjoyed writing, so it just seemed natural to use that strength to get my ideas out so that hopefully the script will be a way to help others along their journeys and keep them from enduring the same pain I endured for all these years, mostly without even realizing it.

My journey now is not perfect. Yours won't be either. No person's journey is linear. WE are not perfect beings. We simply must aim for progress.

There will be bumps in the road, life WILL happen, and you WILL have to pick yourself up during these times...make sure you pick yourself up. There are still many days where self-doubt and lack of confidence – fear of the unknown – surface within me.

The difference now is that I can identify it before it takes me down a path of self-destruction. I am clearer on what I want to do. While I still don't have an exact plan of how to do it, I am working on it. Whether your journey is in life, a goal, getting healthier, making better choices, no matter what it is, the journey is never linear. There will be times you are afraid and want to quit. There will be times you enter a room, all eyes on you, and you want to turn back around. There will be fear. There will be doubt. The way you overcome that is to continue taking steps in a forward direction. Don't turn around. Walk into that room with your head held high. You have made it. You are here. You are doing what you were put here to do.

Make it your priority to be your biggest fan even if no one else supports you. Maybe you feel as though you walk in the room and no one knows you. Maybe they don't. But you know you. That's all that matters. They WILL know you because you were put here to be known and to have an impact on others.

I am truly grateful for those who have supported me through my venture. Not everyone has, of course. There have been some who didn't think I had it in me. Nevertheless, many who know me and have come to know me, have made it possible for me to get over my own self-doubt and keep pursuing what I am truly meant to do – help as many people as possible. Maybe you didn't have a rough upbringing, but other things in your life have happened that have made you not want to try again. Whatever you do, don't be like that. Do not let other things dictate what you do or don't do.

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Listen to your heart. If you know in your heart you were put on this earth to make an impact, do whatever it takes to make that impact. Believe in yourself. Be your biggest fan. That way, when no one else believes in you, you still keep moving forward in the direction that will take you further than you have ever been before. Don't worry about what the rest of the world is doing. If you want to help people, help them. Find people who will guide you on your journey. People who have done it themselves. Listen to those people. Don't listen to the people who don't want you to succeed. Listen to those who do. Listen to YOU.

How do you reprogram your subconscious mind after years of writing old stories over and over? Let's take a formula from a very well-known book that I highly recommend. Read on and use the information to begin the process.

I began using this formula soon after reading it. I highly recommend trying it for yourself. You may get surprised as to where you are able to go from here. It is called the "Self-Confidence Formula" and can be found in the book, *Think and Grow Rich*, by Napoleon Hill.

Here is a little bit of what you will find as you go through this formula. I highly recommend this book as part of your reading list.

"The Self-Confidence Formula (abridged):

1. I know that I have the ability to achieve the object of my Definite Purpose in life.
2. I realize the dominating thoughts of my mind will eventually reproduce themselves in an outward, physical action and gradually transform themselves into physical reality.
3. I know through the principle of autosuggestion that any desire I persistently hold in my mind will eventually seek expression through some practical means of attaining the object.
4. I have clearly written down a description of my *Definite Chief Aim* in life. I will never stop trying until I developed sufficient self-confidence for its attainment.
5. I fully realize that no wealth or position can long endure unless built upon truth and justice."

Why is all of this so important? Well, it's simple really. In order to change your situation, you have to believe you are worthy of change. You will not succeed in anything you do until you truly believe you are someone who deserves what you are working for. This goes for anything, whether it be health and wellness, your career, and basically any situation you come across in life. You will not achieve what you dream until you give yourself a pass and allow yourself to understand that you are still here for a reason. You are here to change the world. You are 100% deserving of everything good in life. Getting to this point may require saying and believing things to and for yourself until you allow yourself to accept who you are and the impact you were placed on this earth to have. None of us were put here by chance. There is a plan for each of us.

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## 1.4 Believe in Yourself...You CAN DO THIS!

*“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

- Romans 12:2

The beliefs you have of yourself is where it begins – a renewal of the mind. These beliefs are called affirmations. The infamous Tony Robbins puts emphasis on another ritual called “incantations.” So, what is the difference between the two?

What are affirmations and why use them? Affirmations “are spoken words of encouragement.” Incantations, on the other hand, “are about embodying the meaning *behind* the words, which is why they are so powerful. With incantations, not only are you speaking words of empowerment, you are using your body and your voice.” This makes it more of a reality.

So how can you come up with your own affirmations?

First, what is a negative thought that you feel about yourself? One example of this would be, “I am not worthy of anything good.” Another example that I hear a lot when I talk to people is, “I hate the way I look.” The first example is one that I had to overcome myself.

Second, you need to write it down. Now get rid of this thought by tearing, burning, or shredding the piece of paper you just wrote that thought on. (See mine and Elsie’s video at <https://youtu.be/fKolmL7mGmU>).

Lastly, you need to write down the complete opposite of what you wrote before. The opposite of that negative thought is the center of your first affirmation. For example, “I am worthy of ALL things good” or simply #3 on my list: “I am worthy.”

Have your affirmations hanging up where you will see them each morning when you wake up and every night before you go to bed. Then use incantations to say them aloud, moving around and even yelling them if you have to! I don’t care how silly or stupid you feel! The point of this is to retrain your subconscious mind so that you will allow yourself to succeed without fear and without sabotaging yourself unintentionally. I often tell people to “become comfortable feeling uncomfortable.” That is the gateway to change. If we want to change, we must take risks. We have to become uncomfortable. It is scary. It is not easy. However, it is amazing to become transformed more and more each day as you progress. I am a true testimony.

As my spiritual journey became stronger, I relied on verses to get me through the day. The verse that I kept everywhere and looked at mostly was Psalms 139:14, “*I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful. I know that full well.*”

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I really like the Passion Translation of this verse. It says, *“I thank you, God, for making me so mysteriously complex! Everything you do is marvelously breathtaking, it simply amazes me to think about it! How thoroughly you know me, Lord!”*

He knew me before I knew me. The reason I went through all the trials in my life was so that He could bring me where I am today. I am able to share all this with you because of what I have seen in my life. None of it was my fault. I just wasn't being led by the right person. I was being led by people instead of the Lord. In knowing that now, I have been able to do so much work on me from the inside out and can now help others do the same. This is the book that needed to be written, the way it needed to be written. This is the story that can now be shared.

In order to get through the chaos in your mind and the negative thoughts, you will want to dig deep with this because learning to love yourself is the first step in truly changing your life and allowing yourself to be successful in virtually anything you do. I have and will continue to take these steps for as long as I am willing.

Remember, just like anything else, once you have made a breakthrough, you must continue the process. Saying the affirmations out loud for one or two days is not going to make it true. It is NOT going to change the limiting beliefs you currently have about yourself. You need to speak these new truths until your subconscious mind takes over and allows you to truly BELIEVE what you are saying.

Here is my list of daily affirmations. You may use what I have written here or come up with your own in the space provided. Regardless of what you choose, you must remember that it requires you to make the effort to change. Saying you want something doesn't matter until you put forth the action to make the changes.

***Jodi's Daily Affirmations/Incantations:***

*I love myself*

*I am beautiful*

*I am worthy*

*I DESERVE all great things in life*

*I attract people who KNOW I am valuable to their lives*

*I am the expert in my field and willingly exemplify integrity and discipline*

*I am a survivor*

*I bring about positive change*

*I am amazing*

*I BELIEVE in myself and my capabilities*

*I do not allow the world to bring me down*

*I have divine intervention leading me on my path*

*I conquer all challenges*

*I get out of my comfort zone each day*

*I make an impact each day*

*I AM persistent*

*I DO NOT QUIT!*

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If you are having trouble coming up with affirmations for yourself, let's go back and use the tools above to help.

First, choose a negative thought you have about yourself and externalize it by writing it down here:

---

Once you have done that, think of the opposite and write that down. This is the time to let go of that negative thought and focus only on the positive thought. Therefore, take out a new sheet of paper and write the positive thought down there. This is how you begin writing your new story.

---

Use this space to come up with 5-10 affirmations of your own.

Will there be hard times? Yes. Will there be situations that challenge you in every way possible? Yes. If you are in the mindset that you are not deserving, you will never be able to see the positive in any situation. You will encounter others and will never impact their lives in a positive way because you are too much in your own head. You will attract the energy you give out. Therefore, if you are constantly miserable and worrying, you will attract others who will pull you down even more. This is NOT acceptable in your life!

Repeat after me: "I REFUSE to accept negativity in my life." From here on out, live by those words. Reach out to God when times are hard. Get in the Word. You will find all your answers there. I know I have so far. Continue putting God first in your life and allowing Him to lead you. Doors that once were closed may begin to open. The door you are meant to go into will surely open. All you have to do is be obedient and have Faith. According to Dr. Stephanie L. Foster, the three basic steps in developing Faith That Delivers are: "Believe, Receive, and Act." You can NOT change unless you are willing to act on the ideas and thoughts driven by the Holy Spirit. It does you no good to hear the word. You must be "*doers of the word*" (James 1:22).

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You worry about what others think of you. You worry about what you say and what you do. You want to fit in. Can you relate to these statements? They described who I was for the better part of my life. It wasn't until I finally released myself from my own bondage that I was able to view the world in an entirely different way and impact lives in a whole new way.

Our limitations are programmed by our own subconscious mind. We dictate our own outcome. We have the ultimate decision to make: are we going to allow ourselves to be buried under the past and things we are unable to control? Or are we going to free ourselves and allow ourselves to experience a happier, more fulfilled life? Our happiness does not come from the outside world.

You will never be happy and fulfilled if you are constantly living in fear, scarcity, and doubt. Keep this in mind as you continue your day. If you want to change, you have to get outside of your comfort zone in your own head first and foremost.

Otherwise, you will say you want a different life, but your habits and rituals that got you where you are will continue to hold you back. You will always go back to your comfort zone and revert to self-sabotage until you make it a point each and every day to deliberately take yourself OUT of your comfort zone.

You will have to develop new rituals and habits strategically in order to progress. Will you fail from time to time? Of course. These failures you endure are there to hold you back. They are there to push you to be the greatest version of yourself over time. You just have to make the effort to change. If you are not willing to do that, you might as well close this book now and go back to where you were – never fulfilling your true potential in life and staying where you are and where you are comfortable.

If you are ready for a change, continue. Implement what you read through the guidance I have been provided and the journey I have been on. Take massive action, and see the rewards you receive as you continue this for the rest of your life. The journey is nonstop and will challenge you in every possible way.

How will you overcome the challenges? Will you shut down and hope it gets better, or will you push through and continue working for what you desire? You have to allow yourself to get there. You have to say things to yourself that will make you want it and do what it takes to get there. You have to believe in yourself and know you are capable of so many amazing things. This is the first step in total health. Once you have done this, the possibilities are endless.

For years, actually up until recently, I was limiting myself. I don't know why. Not believing in myself never made me feel better. It just made me sad, frustrated, and feeling unhappy with my situation. I blamed my choices on others, when the decisions were all mine. I blamed others for what was happening in my life. While these things may have impacted my earlier thinking, it should not have remained an excuse later on in life. But it did – and things continued to happen that kept me in this negative state to where I just kept blaming the world for what was happening to me.

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This quote stood out to me as I was learning about letting go:  
“You can't feed today's hunger with yesterday's meal”  
— TJ Milam

This is so true! How many times have you thought about changing your ways or doing something amazing, but then your fear and your memories of your past and the things you did not accomplish crept into your thoughts and held you back? Failure makes you stop. If you let it, it will keep you from pursuing your goal. We have all been there I'm sure. I used to dwell on so many things. It took me so long to realize that everything I thought was happening TO me was actually happening FOR me. I also had to realize the failures were actually pushing me to where I truly needed to be. However, we do not see what is right in front of us when our plans are not being carried out as we hoped.

When physician assistant school didn't work out (the program I entered for a title and acceptance and what I was working toward when my mom passed away), I blamed the Air Force. However, it wasn't their fault. I wasn't focused. I didn't put my all into it. I was still mourning the loss of my mom, who passed away while I was taking my prerequisite finals for the program. While, in my mind, I wanted to change the healthcare system by being in it, all the wrong reasons came to the forefront and became more important than my beginning driver: monetary gain, social acceptance, and to avenge the death of my mom which came out of hospital negligence. I was depressed for a while, but my coping mechanism was to bury it all. I just buried it and moved on to the next. I slapped a band-aid on it because that is what I was good at doing – covering it up and continuing on. I wrote a poem about it, but I never shared until a couple years later at an open mic night during NCO (Non-Commissioned Officer) Academy in 2012. I thought the wound was healed, but it wasn't. I called it the dagger in my heart. It led me into a dark corner, but I couldn't completely shut down or mope around. I still had obligations and had to continue on the flight line. I was also working on my master's degree at the time and began taking prerequisites to apply for nursing programs. That was my way to keep going. Suppression does not create healing, it just creates a standard in your life where you bury things and think they will go away. Nursing school didn't work out either. So, what did I do next? I went to the Air Force Reserve recruiter and found another way. That didn't work out either.

What I didn't know at that time was that I was holding myself back from greater things. I thought it had to be one way. I had to constantly feel like I was working towards something that would give me status in this world. I craved *success*! That's all I could think about. I wasn't thinking about the journey. I wasn't thinking about how I would get there. I wanted a title on my name. I wanted to *belong*. I wanted to feel achieved. Have you ever felt this way? Have you ever allowed these feelings of wanting to fit in somewhere to absolutely control you? This is where I was. The sad part is I did not even realize what I was doing.

The problem is, subconsciously, I didn't truly BELIEVE any of those things were going to work out for me because I had been let down most of my life.

This is the time you must sit down and evaluate yourself.

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What in your life has held you back from your true potential? Go ahead and write it down here. Think of 5-6 things in your life you can think of that happened in your childhood that is still resonating in your mind today:

Now that you've written these things down, *let them go*. Stop allowing them to keep you from being the amazing person you were meant to be!

Have you ever seen a poor person walking down the street? Do they look happy or do they look like they've let life beat them to a pulp? Have you ever thought to ask why they are in the situation they're in?

If you do ask them, are you present? Do you truly *listen* to their story? Is it different from yours or is it they just allowed situations that were out of their control get them to a point where they just gave up? Listen and take notice.

Are you willing to allow yourself to get to that point? What do you want out of life?

What do you TRULY want? What are your *desires*?

Answer here:

---

Being willing to examine yourself is a frightening adventure, believe me. However, it is one I highly advise anyone going on who may be in the same boat I was in before my journey began. As I said before, it won't be easy. Nevertheless, the most fulfilling things in life aren't easy. They are, however, *worth it*.

When you feel like you can't keep going, remember these words that I wrote back in 2017. You CAN ALWAYS get passed the present. It may seem dark at the time, but it just means the light is going to shine a lot brighter on you when you come out of it all.

"I will rise up  
I will not be defeated  
I will rise up  
Even when my energy is depleted  
There's no stopping me now  
I'm on my way  
Yesterday has passed  
I can only focus on today

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Failure is a mindset  
It's only temporary  
Success comes from wisdom  
No one progresses from being stationary”

On my side, I have the following words tattooed by the great artist, Tito Zambrano, as a reminder of where I've been and where I plan to go. I wrote it before I went to see him and he did his magic to make it come to life and be something I could be proud of:

“Failure leads to wisdom  
Wisdom leads to prosperity  
We only live once”

Even though I have always had this wisdom, I did not always use it. You have the wisdom. It's now YOUR turn to use it.