**(for Homepage or Course Landing Page):**

What Just Happened

Unresolved emotions are stories left unfinished.

This course helps you trace the roots of grief, anger, shame, fear, and more—

not to relive the pain, but to understand it.

Because healing begins when we stop asking, “What’s wrong with me?”

and start asking, “What happened to me?”

**(for Inside the Course Portal):**

Welcome to What Just Happened—a course about what we carry and why it matters.

Unresolved emotions aren’t just feelings we forget—they’re stories that were never finished. When something overwhelms us, ends too soon, or leaves us confused, the emotions tied to it often stay buried.

Grief, anger, guilt, fear, shame—these aren’t just moods. They’re signals. Clues that something inside us hasn’t been seen, heard, or healed.

Maybe it was a loss you never got to grieve.

A conflict that was swept under the rug.

A feeling you weren’t allowed to express.

Or a moment that shifted everything—without warning or explanation.

This course will help you trace those invisible threads—back to the roots of what shaped you. Not to dwell. Not to blame.

But to understand. To reclaim.

And maybe, for the first time, to finish the sentence:

“What just happened… to me?”

**Homepage / Course Landing Page Version**

Section Title: Uncover the Story Beneath the Feeling

Headline:

What Just Happened

A course about tracing your emotions back to their roots.

Text:

Unresolved emotions are stories left unfinished.

This course helps you explore the roots of grief, anger, shame, fear, and more—

not to relive the pain, but to understand it.

Because healing begins when we stop asking, “What’s wrong with me?”

and start asking, “What happened to me?”

Call to Action (CTA):

Start Your Journey Now or Enter the Course

Image Suggestion:

A single open journal on a table, with soft light coming in through a window—symbolizing reflection, clarity, and warmth.

**Full Portal Version (Course Welcome Page)**

Section Title: Before We Begin

Headline:

Welcome to What Just Happened

A course about what we carry—and why it matters.

Text:

Unresolved emotions aren’t just feelings we forget—they’re stories we never got to finish.

Sometimes, life overwhelms us. Ends too soon. Leaves us confused.

And the emotions that come with it—grief, anger, guilt, fear, shame—don’t always leave.

They linger. They live in our thoughts, our choices, our relationships…

often without us realizing.

Maybe it was a loss you never got to grieve.

A conflict that was swept under the rug.

A feeling you weren’t allowed to express.

Or a moment that shifted everything—without warning or explanation.

This course will help you trace the invisible threads that shaped your emotional world.

Not to dwell. Not to blame.

But to understand. To reclaim.

And maybe for the first time, to finish the sentence:

“What just happened… to me?”

CTA:

Begin Module 1

Image Suggestion:

A quiet path leading into a forest or misty sunrise—symbolizing inner journey, healing, and clarity ahead.

**WHAT JUST HAPPENED**

*The Emotional Menu Formula*

You weren’t born with your beliefs.  
You were handed them—  
In whispers, in silence, in the moments no one thought you noticed.  
  
This is a guide back to those moments.  
Not to stay there—  
But to understand, unravel, and begin again.  
  
Inside, you’ll meet Leo and Lilian—two lives shaped by early echoes.  
You’ll watch them trace the invisible threads between childhood and adulthood,  
reaction and belief, survival and identity.  
  
And through their stories, you’ll be invited to trace your own.  
Not to blame.  
Not to fix.  
  
But to remember who you were  
before the world told you who to be.

**The Emotional Menu Formula**

The Emotional Menu Formula— **“WHAT JUST HAPPENED?”**

The “Emotional Menu” formula structured around Leo’s story to guide readers through understanding the origins of deeply rooted emotions and beliefs.   
  
“The Invisible Child” story:

1. Initial Emotional State

• Joyful Connection: Begin by identifying the initial emotional state, which in Leo’s case was joy, love, and a sense of worthiness. He basked in his parents’ undivided attention, feeling valued and noticed.

2. Triggering Event

• The Unseen Shift: Leo’s emotional landscape changed with the arrival of his sister, Mia. The shift in his parents’ attention triggered a feeling of invisibility. This is the “what just happened” moment that introduces an unexpected emotional reaction—confusion, disappointment, and a sense of loss.

3. Reinforcing Moments

• Seeking and Failing to Be Seen: Highlight the small moments that deepened the emotional wound. Leo’s attempts to regain attention were met with responses like “Not now, Leo.” These instances gradually reinforced the belief that he was unimportant, a subtle build-up of emotional scars that would shape his worldview.

4. Constructing a Belief

• Inventing a Story: Leo began to form a painful story in his mind—“I’m invisible, unworthy of love.” Here, the formula pinpoints how beliefs are often formed from repeated, unprocessed emotions. Leo’s understanding of the situation was shaped by his young mind trying to interpret the changes around him.

5. Living in the Shadow of the Belief

• Growing in the Shadows: As Leo grew, this belief of invisibility became a self-fulfilling prophecy. He shrank back in social settings, stopped seeking attention, and allowed his fear of being overlooked to dictate his actions, reinforcing the belief each time it appeared in new situations.

6. Confrontation of the Belief

• A Moment of Healing: A turning point occurs when Leo opens up to his father, expressing his pain. This moment of vulnerability allows his dad to address the misunderstanding, revealing that Leo’s belief was based on a child’s interpretation, not the truth. This step shows how confronting and examining beliefs opens the door for healing.

7. Rewriting the Story

• Reclaiming His Place: Finally, Leo begins to rewrite his internal narrative. By accepting his parents’ love and understanding that he was never truly invisible, he dismantles the belief that had controlled him for so long. This stage of the emotional menu is about integrating a new understanding—transforming the old belief and restoring a sense of worth and visibility.

**Conclusion**

The “Emotional Menu” formula takes readers from an initial emotional state, through triggering events and reinforcing moments, to the formation and impact of a belief, and finally, to healing and rewriting the story. This approach helps clarify reactions to formative events and fosters emotional growth.

**PART ONE**

1. Initial Emotional State

• *Joyful Connection: Begin by identifying the initial emotional state, which in Leo’s case was joy, love, and a sense of worthiness. He basked in his parents’ undivided attention, feeling valued and noticed.*

**Leo’s Life Before**

Leo’s life was filled with laughter and love, a bright world where every day felt like a new adventure. He never doubted for a moment that he was deeply loved. Each morning, Leo would bounce out of bed, knowing his parents were waiting with warm smiles and open arms.

Breakfast was a lively ritual, where his parents listened eagerly to his stories, their eyes sparkling as he described his imaginary worlds of dragons, castles, and heroic knights. His mom would clap her hands at his stories, and his dad would lean in, asking questions as if Leo’s make-believe kingdom was the most fascinating place on earth. “And what did the brave knight do next?” his dad would ask, feigning suspense. Leo would giggle, delighted to have his parents’ undivided attention, feeling like the most interesting storyteller in the world.

Afternoons were filled with even more joy. Leo would drag his mom outside to see his latest creation, whether it was a block tower reaching toward the sky or a chalk-drawn masterpiece on the sidewalk. “Wow, Leo! This is amazing!” his mom would exclaim, her pride shining bright. Her encouragement made him feel like an artist, capable of painting the world in vibrant colors.

And when his dad returned home in the evening, Leo would race to greet him, jumping into his arms with pure excitement. His dad always had time to play—building castles out of pillows or staging pretend battles with toy knights. The living room would become Leo’s kingdom, and his dad would play the part of the “silly dragon” who pretended to roar, sending Leo into fits of laughter. Those moments felt magical, as if the world was made for him alone.

At bedtime, after his mom tucked him in, she would sit by his bed, listening intently to his latest tales. She’d nod, wide-eyed, as if Leo’s words held secret wisdom. Her listening made him feel seen, important, and cherished. As she kissed his forehead goodnight, she would whisper, “You’re my little star.” And in that whisper, Leo felt the warmth of love wrapping around him, making his heart feel full and bright.

Life for Leo was like living inside a warm, glowing bubble—a place where he was the center of his parents’ world, where his voice was heard, and his stories mattered. He felt joy in knowing he was cherished, never doubting his worth or the love that surrounded him. For Leo, life was perfect, painted in shades of love and laughter, where he was free to be himself, basking in the warmth of his family’s undivided attention.

2. Constructing a Belief

• *The Unseen Shift: Leo’s emotional landscape changed with the arrival of his sister, Mia. The shift in his parents’ attention triggered a feeling of invisibility. This is the “what just happened” moment that introduces an unexpected emotional reaction—confusion, disappointment, and a sense of loss.*

**Leo’s Life After**

Leo was a bright and joyful little boy, used to basking in his parents’ attention. They laughed at his jokes, clapped for his songs, and listened to his endless stories about dragons and castles. For Leo, life was filled with warmth and love.

But then, something started to feel different. It was subtle at first, just small changes here and there. One evening, as he rushed into the living room, eager to show his parents his newest drawing, they barely looked up. His mom, who usually smiled and asked him all about his art, only gave him a quick glance before looking away. “Not now, Leo,” she murmured, her voice softer, almost distracted. Confused, he stood there a moment, holding his drawing, wondering if maybe she just hadn’t seen it well enough.

The next day, Leo built his tallest tower yet, carefully stacking each block to make sure it wouldn’t tumble. He called out to his dad, waiting for the usual cheer and the eager look that told Leo his efforts were noticed. But this time, his dad only gave him a tired smile. “That’s great, buddy,” he said with a sigh. “But maybe later, okay?” Leo nodded slowly, but he couldn’t help the strange, prickling feeling of disappointment settling in.

Over the next few days, the changes grew more noticeable. Mealtimes that used to be filled with laughter and questions about his day were suddenly quieter, with his parents’ attention seeming to drift somewhere else. Bedtime, once a ritual of stories and cuddles, now felt rushed. “We’ll talk tomorrow, Leo,” his mom would say, her voice kind but distant, as she left his room quickly, without even waiting to hear his stories about dragons or castles.

Leo didn’t understand why things were different, but he started to feel that something was missing. At first, he tried harder to capture his parents’ attention. He drew more pictures, built even taller towers, and practiced his jokes, hoping they’d notice him the way they used to. But each time, their attention was brief and distracted. His mom would smile absently, his dad would pat him on the head, and they’d move on, leaving Leo standing there, feeling like he was slowly fading into the background.

One day, he overheard his parents talking softly, their voices filled with a tenderness he hadn’t heard in a while. Curiosity sparked in him, and he peeked around the corner. That’s when he saw them leaning over his baby sister, Mia, cooing and smiling at her in a way he recognized—one that used to be for him. A heavy feeling settled in his chest as he watched them, feeling like he was suddenly on the outside looking in.

It was then that a quiet thought began to take shape, something he couldn’t quite explain but that seemed to fit with the way things had been changing. He didn’t know why his parents seemed so distant, or why everything felt so different. But slowly, he started to **form a reason for it**, **a story** that made sense of the hurt he felt. He didn’t know how to say it out loud, but the thought stayed with him, coloring the way he saw himself, as he tried to make sense of this new, uncertain world.

**NOTE:** *A child in trying to make sense of something that throws them off or a shift or change in their environment they make up stories, with fake reasons, and false assumptions and opinions.*

Leo felt the weight of confusion and sadness each time his parents’ attention drifted away from him, each time they focused on Mia when he needed them. At first, he tried to brush it off, hoping that maybe it was just a phase. But as the moments added up, as he watched their smiles, their laughter, and their gentle attention all centered on his sister, he couldn’t help but start forming an idea—one that settled into his heart like a quiet whisper.

***Maybe I’m just not as important anymore,*** he thought. ***Maybe I’ve become invisible.*** The idea felt painful and strange, but it somehow seemed to fit, making sense of the ache he felt each time he went unnoticed.

3. Reinforcing Moments

• *Seeking and Failing to Be Seen: Highlight the small moments that deepened the emotional wound. Leo’s attempts to regain attention were met with responses like “Not now, Leo.” These instances gradually reinforced the belief that he was unimportant, a subtle build-up of emotional scars that would shape his worldview.*

**Months later**

As the months passed, this thought only grew. Every time he looked to his parents and saw them wrapped up in Mia, the belief crept in, whispering louder. One day, he came home from school holding a certificate he’d been awarded for his reading skills. His teacher had smiled, calling him “the star reader,” and Leo felt proud, excited to share his accomplishment. He held the certificate tightly as he walked through the door, hoping to see that same pride on his parents’ faces.

But before he could say a word, Mia came running toward them, her hands full of finger-painting creations she’d made at preschool. His parents immediately knelt down, smiling wide, asking her all about the colors and shapes she’d painted. Leo waited, the certificate still clutched in his hand, but they didn’t look up, their attention fully on Mia’s artwork.

After a few moments, he lowered his hand, letting the certificate slip into his backpack. His heart felt heavy, and the thought returned, settling deeper than ever: I’m not important. They only see her.

He went to his room, laying the certificate on his desk, and sat quietly, letting the disappointment wash over him. That quiet, painful belief now seemed more like a certainty, something he couldn’t escape.

**Years Later**

Years later, Leo was in fourth grade, and his teacher announced that the class would be putting on a school play. Leo had always loved performing, so he eagerly auditioned for one of the lead roles, practicing his lines and imagining his parents’ faces when they saw him up on stage. After weeks of rehearsals, he was ready, filled with excitement and nervous energy.

On the night of the performance, as he looked out into the audience, his eyes searched for his parents. Finally, he spotted them, seated near the back with Mia on his mom’s lap. They gave him a quick wave, but Mia was squirming, tugging on his mom’s sleeve, asking to go home.

As the play went on, Leo poured his heart into his performance, hoping to see his parents’ proud smiles. But each time he glanced their way, they seemed preoccupied with Mia, shushing her or trying to keep her entertained. By the time the curtain fell, Leo felt deflated, his excitement dampened by the familiar ache of being unseen.

Later, when he asked how they liked the show, his dad gave him a pat on the back and said, “Great job, Leo. But Mia got a little tired, so we couldn’t see everything.” Leo nodded, trying to hide his disappointment, but inside, that old belief took on a new shape: I’m not just invisible. I’m not worth their time.

As he lay in bed that night, he replayed the scene in his mind, letting this new thought take root, adding to the belief he’d carried since he was little. Each disappointment seemed to reinforce it, and the story he told himself grew stronger, casting a shadow over everything he once felt so certain of.

4. Triggering Event.

• *Inventing a Story: Leo began to form a painful story in his mind— “I’m invisible, unworthy of love.” Here, the formula pinpoints how beliefs are often triggered from repeated, unprocessed emotions. Leo’s understanding of the situation was shaped by his young mind trying to interpret the changes around him.*

What follows is a series of small incidents that remind Leo of his belief that he’s invisible and unworthy of love. Each incident serves as a subtle reinforcement, triggered by his environment or memories that echo those earlier moments of feeling unseen and unimportant.

1. Forgotten School Lunch

One day, Leo arrives at school and realizes he’s forgotten his lunch. His teacher notices and calls Leo’s mom, asking if she can bring it. Leo waits eagerly, feeling hopeful that his mom will show up and make him feel cared for. An hour later, a lunch bag is dropped off at the office with his name scribbled on it. He finds it at the end of his break, already a little warm and squished, with no note or acknowledgment. The lack of a personal touch or a reassuring smile from his mom stirs up a familiar feeling of being an afterthought, subtly reinforcing his belief of not being as important.

2. Parent-Teacher Conference

During a parent-teacher conference, Leo is praised for his good behavior and improvement in math. His teacher shares with his parents how he often helps other kids and tries his best in class. His parents nod politely, but their focus quickly shifts to the teacher’s mention of Mia’s upcoming kindergarten performance. Leo watches as they smile and exchange stories about her talents, leaving him with a lingering sense of invisibility.

3. Picture Day Disappointment

On picture day, Leo is excited to wear his new shirt, a bright blue one he picked out himself. When he comes downstairs, his mom is rushing around, looking for Mia’s matching hair accessories for her school photo. She glances at Leo and says, “You look nice,” before darting back to her task. The lack of real attention or excitement for his outfit leaves Leo feeling unseen, triggering that familiar belief that he isn’t important enough to notice.

4. Class Recognition Event

One month, Leo’s teacher holds a “Student of the Month” ceremony. Leo is awarded for kindness, and his teacher invites his parents to the small classroom celebration. However, on the day of the event, his parents are late, apologizing afterward that they’d been busy taking Mia to her piano class. Though they congratulate him quickly, the disappointment lingers, reminding him again of how easily he fades into the background.

5. Overheard Conversations

One evening, Leo overhears his parents talking about how well Mia is doing in school and how “talented she’s become.” They sound so proud, their voices full of warmth. Leo sits quietly, listening, feeling like he doesn’t measure up. The words are simple, but to Leo, it’s yet another reminder of his painful story—that he’s somehow less valuable, less worthy of their attention.

6. Report Card Comparison

When report cards come home, Leo nervously shows his parents his grades, hoping for some acknowledgment of his hard work. His mom glances at it quickly, nodding before turning her attention to Mia, who proudly announces she got a “perfect score” on her spelling test. Their focus shifts to celebrating Mia’s achievements, leaving Leo’s heart heavy with the same, familiar feeling of invisibility.

7. Family Photo Overlook

During a family outing, Leo’s dad suggests taking a photo of Mia in front of a fountain. Leo stands by, waiting to be included, but his parents are preoccupied with getting the “perfect shot” of Mia. Once the photo is taken, they move on without asking him to join. The moment is brief, but for Leo, it’s yet another quiet reminder of his place—on the sidelines, unseen and unimportant.

8. Unopened Art Portfolio

After weeks of working on an art project at school, Leo proudly brings home his portfolio. He sets it on the kitchen table, hoping his parents will be as excited to see it as he is. Hours pass, and his parents barely notice it. His mom glances over and says, “We’ll look at it later, Leo,” but never does. The portfolio remains unopened, another quiet reinforcement of the belief that what he creates, and who he is, doesn’t matter enough to be seen.

9. Lost Toy Incident

One day, Leo loses his favorite toy—a small dinosaur he’d carried everywhere. When he tells his parents, hoping they’ll help him look for it, they nod but say, “We’ll find it later; we’re busy now.” Hours pass, and the toy is forgotten by everyone but him. The lack of urgency or concern for something meaningful to him quietly deepens his feeling of unimportance.

These incidents, though small, subtly reinforce Leo’s belief that he’s invisible and unworthy of love. Each one triggers a memory or feeling from past moments where he felt overlooked, shaping his understanding of himself through these repeated, unprocessed emotions. Together, they create a pattern that fuels his painful story, building a lens through which he interprets every interaction.

5. Living in the Shadow of the Belief

• *Growing in the Shadows: As Leo grew, this belief of invisibility became a self-fulfilling prophecy. He shrank back in social settings, stopped seeking attention, and allowed his fear of being overlooked to dictate his actions, reinforcing the belief each time it appeared in new situations.*

By the time Leo is an adult, he has developed a belief system—a network of deep-rooted assumptions and understandings about himself, others, and the world around him. This belief system is like a tree that has grown over the years, shaped by his childhood experiences and the emotions he never fully processed.

At its roots lies the main belief that took hold when he was little: I am invisible, unworthy of love. This belief, the foundation of his system, anchors everything else. From it grows the sturdy trunk—a pattern of reinforcing beliefs that tell him he’s not important, that he doesn’t deserve attention or praise. Over time, smaller beliefs branch out like limbs, intertwining and spreading through his mind: I’m not enough, I don’t measure up, my efforts won’t be noticed. Each branch represents a different shade of the same painful story, each one sprouting from his early experiences of feeling unseen.

This belief system now acts like an invisible filter through which he interprets his world. When he interacts with others, it holds him back, whispering that he might be overlooked or dismissed. When people show him genuine care, the branches of his belief system cast shadows of doubt, telling him it might not be real. This tree of beliefs, rooted in his earliest memories, has become a quiet, unseen barrier that shapes his decisions, his relationships, and his sense of self, preventing him from fully embracing life and the connections he longs for.

6. Confrontation of the Belief

• *A Moment of shifting(turning point****:*** *A turning point occurs when Leo opens up to his father, expressing his pain. This moment of vulnerability allows his dad to address the misunderstanding, revealing that Leo’s belief was based on a child’s interpretation, not the truth. This step shows how confronting and examining beliefs opens the door for healing.*

One evening, after years of carrying the quiet weight of his belief system, Leo found himself sitting alone with his father. They hadn’t planned to talk about anything deep or personal, but the silence in the room felt different that night, heavier. His father glanced over, noticing Leo’s distant look, and asked gently, “You okay, Leo?”

At first, Leo hesitated. He’d grown so used to keeping his feelings tucked away, buried beneath layers of careful silence. But something in his father’s voice or the familiarity of the room nudged him to speak. He looked down, his voice barely a whisper. “Dad, sometimes I feel like… I was never really seen.”

The words felt strange coming out, like an old wound he hadn’t realized was still tender. He took a shaky breath and continued, “Growing up, I always felt like I was… invisible. Like Mia was the center of everything, and I was just… there.”

His father’s face softened, a mixture of surprise and sadness. He shifted closer, listening intently as Leo continued, his words spilling out with years of hidden hurt.

“I tried so hard to get your attention, to do things that would make you proud. But it always felt like I was in the background, like I wasn’t enough. I kept thinking that maybe, if I was better or quieter or more helpful, maybe then… you’d notice me.”

The silence that followed felt fragile. Leo’s father let out a slow breath, his expression deeply thoughtful. “Leo,” he began softly, “we never meant for you to feel that way. When Mia was born, things changed so quickly. We were overwhelmed with a new baby, and I see now that we let you down. But it wasn’t because you were less important. We were just… tired and trying to figure everything out. We didn’t mean for you to feel invisible.”

Leo felt a lump rise in his throat, a mixture of relief and pain. He’d held onto this belief for so long that he didn’t quite know how to let it go. “But it felt so real,” he whispered, “like there was something wrong with me.”

His father reached over, placing a hand on his shoulder. “Leo, there was never anything wrong with you. You’ve always been enough. It was us who fell short in showing you that. And I’m so sorry you felt like you had to carry this all by yourself.”

Leo felt his father’s words sink in, touching a place that had been closed off for years. For the first time, he saw his belief from a different angle—a child’s attempt to make sense of something he didn’t understand, a story he had created to fill the gaps in his parents’ behavior. Slowly, he realized that this belief had been based on a misunderstanding, a child’s interpretation, not the truth.

As he sat there, feeling his father’s hand on his shoulder and the warmth in his words, Leo felt something inside him loosen, like the roots of that old belief were finally being lifted, letting in light. This moment of honesty, of opening up and confronting what he had carried for so long, was the beginning of something he hadn’t known he needed: a shift in his thinking.

7. Rewriting the Story

• *Reclaiming His Place: Finally, Leo begins to rewrite his internal narrative. By accepting his parents’ love and understanding that he was never truly invisible, he dismantles the belief that had controlled him for so long. This stage of the emotional menu is about integrating a new understanding—transforming the old belief and restoring a sense of worth and visibility.*

As he sat there, feeling his father’s hand on his shoulder and the warmth in his words, Leo felt something shifting deep inside, as if his roots were being gently lifted from old, hardened soil and replanted into something softer, something that could nurture him in a new way.

In that moment, a new foundation began to take shape within him—one of love and acceptance. His father’s words, the sincerity of his apology, and the truth behind his explanation gave Leo a glimpse of what he had been missing, a warmth that felt steady and certain. This foundation, unlike the old one, wasn’t built from feelings of invisibility or unworthiness but from a sense of being seen, valued, and deeply understood.

From this new foundation, a strong trunk began to grow—kindness and compassion. It was as though all the years of wanting to be noticed had been redirected into a gentleness toward himself and others, the realization that he was, and always had been, deserving of love and understanding. This kindness, once reserved for others, became something he could extend to himself, and he felt compassion taking root, both for the child he had been and for the people in his life.

Branching from this trunk were new beliefs, smaller but steady, growing outward into the open. These branches held ideas like *I am enough,* *I am worthy of attention,* and *my voice matters.* Each branch reached further into the world, catching light where before there had only been shadows. And as these branches stretched, tiny leaves began to sprout, filled with the joy of self-worth and the freedom to connect with others without fear of fading away.

For the first time, Leo felt himself growing in a way that wasn’t limited by old doubts or hidden pain. He could sense the beginnings of a fuller, richer self—one rooted in love, kindness, and acceptance, ready to embrace the world with confidence and a renewed sense of belonging.

**CONCLUSION**

In essence, the “Emotional Menu” formula draws readers through a journey from an initial emotional state to a triggered event, the buildup of reinforcing moments, the formation of a belief, the pain of living with it, and finally, the healing and rewriting of the story. This structured approach helps decode our reactions to formative events and offers a path toward emotional clarity and growth.

**QUIZ TIME—Based on Leo’s journey**

**Quiz: Exploring and Dismantling Your Belief System**

This quiz will guide you through understanding the formation of belief systems using Leo’s story as an example. After each section, you’ll have a chance to reflect on your own experiences and beliefs.

**1. Identifying the Foundation of Your Belief System**

**Leo’s Story:**

Leo’s belief system was rooted in a painful foundation created during his childhood: “I am invisible and unworthy of love.” This initial belief grew from moments when he felt overlooked and unimportant.

**Reflection for You:**

Take a moment to think about any foundational belief you may hold about yourself. This could be a belief you’ve carried since childhood, formed from repeated feelings or experiences.

• **What is one core belief about yourself that might have started early in your life?**

*Write it here:* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

• **Where do you think this belief originated? Are there specific memories that come to mind?**

*Write it here:* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**2. Examining the Trunk: Reinforcing Beliefs**

**Leo’s Story:**

From this foundation, Leo’s belief system grew a sturdy “trunk” of reinforcing beliefs. He began to see himself as less important, leading him to expect disappointment. These reinforcing beliefs gave structure to his initial assumption, making it feel even more real.

**Reflection for You:**

Now, consider how your foundational belief might have grown over time. Think about reinforcing beliefs that may have developed as a result.

• **What are some reinforcing beliefs that support your original belief?**

*Write them here:* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

• **In what ways have these beliefs shaped how you view yourself and others?**

*Write it here:* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**3. Branches of Belief: Smaller, Related Beliefs**

**Leo’s Story:**

Over time, Leo’s belief system developed “branches”—smaller, connected beliefs that influenced his everyday thoughts and actions. These branches might have looked like “I’m not enough,” “I don’t measure up,” or “My efforts won’t be noticed.” Each branch grew out from the trunk, spreading into different areas of his life.

**Reflection for You:**

Take a closer look at the smaller beliefs that may have branched out from your main belief. These might be more specific thoughts or assumptions that affect you in different ways.

• **What are some smaller beliefs or assumptions you hold that branch out from your original belief?**

*Write them here:* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

• **How have these branches affected the way you approach situations or interact with others?**

*Write it here:* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**4. Shifting the Foundation: Creating a New Core Belief**

**Leo’s Story:**

When Leo opened up to his father, he began to shift his belief system. He replaced his old foundation with a new one, rooted in love and acceptance. With this new foundation, Leo could start to build a healthier, more positive belief system.

**Reflection for You:**

Consider how you might begin to replace your old belief with a new, positive foundation. This could be a belief that supports your worth, value, and strength.

• **What new belief could serve as a healthier foundation for you?**

*Write it here:* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

• **How can this new belief provide a different perspective on past experiences?**

*Write it here:* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Growing a Strong Trunk: Reinforcing Positive Beliefs**

**Leo’s Story:**

With his new foundation, Leo could build a “trunk” of positive, reinforcing beliefs. Kindness and compassion became his guiding principles, both toward himself and others.

**Reflection for You:**

Think about how your new foundation can grow stronger with reinforcing beliefs. These might be ideas that support self-kindness, resilience, and self-acceptance.

• **What reinforcing beliefs would support your new foundation?**

*Write them here:* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

• **How can you remind yourself of these beliefs in everyday situations?**

*Write it here:* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**6. Nurturing New Branches: Developing Specific Positive Beliefs**

**Leo’s Story:**

As Leo’s new belief system grew, it developed branches—small beliefs like “I am enough,” “I am worthy of attention,” and “My voice matters.” Each branch represented a positive view of himself, reaching out into the world.

**Reflection for You:**

Imagine positive beliefs that could branch out from your new foundation and support you in different areas of life.

• **What specific positive beliefs could you nurture as branches of your new foundation?**

*Write them here:* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

• **How might these new beliefs help you approach life with confidence and openness?**

*Write it here:* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This process of identifying, examining, and reshaping beliefs allows you to explore your own foundation, trunk, and branches, moving toward a belief system rooted in self-worth, love, and acceptance. With each step, you’re opening the door to a new way of thinking, one that supports growth and a healthier self-view.

**PART TWO**

Lilian is preparing to meet a key client whose decision could make or break her career. In the days leading up to the meeting, she pays attention to every detail—her nails, hair, and outfit are flawless. Confidently prepared, she waits for the client, Matt, at a Starbucks. He arrives, thanks her for her work, and, unexpectedly, apologizes before quickly leaving. She’s left wondering: What just happened?

Using the emotional menu formula help Lilian regress to her childhood to find the roots, trunks and branches of her belief system that lead her to lose a client: Lilian is preparing to meet a key client whose decision could make or break her career. In the days leading up to the meeting, she pays attention to every detail—her nails, hair, and outfit are flawless. Confidently prepared, she waits for the client, Matt, at a Starbucks. He arrives, thanks her for her work, and, unexpectedly, apologizes before quickly leaving. She’s left wondering: **What just happened?**

As Lilian sits in shock, replaying the brief interaction in her mind, she recalls a lesson from a recent workshop on growth and development: “For the most part, we are responsible for what happens to us. Our thoughts, actions, and energy often attract the situations and people in our lives.” This notion lingers, unsettling yet compelling.

She thinks back over the past few days, searching for any sign she might have missed, any hint that this meeting would take such an odd turn. She remembers a moment of self-doubt while preparing, a small, nagging voice she brushed off. Could that have somehow influenced the outcome? As she replays each detail, she feels a mix of frustration and curiosity, like she’s on the edge of an answer, yet it’s just out of reach.

Then, a memory surfaces—an email from Matt the previous week, where he hinted at “internal changes” within the company. She hadn’t paid it much mind, thinking it was just routine business talk. But now, with Matt’s sudden apology and exit, she wonders if there’s more to it. She opens her phone, ready to dig for clues, when an unexpected notification pops up—an email from an anonymous sender, with the subject line: “What You Need to Know.”

Lilian stares at the email, a strange combination of dread and intrigue filling her. She clicks it open, half expecting spam, but instead finds a short message:

*“Sometimes, the real answers lie within. The outcome wasn’t just about your work. Look deeper.”*

As she reads, her mind flashes back to the workshop on personal growth, where they had discussed the roots of belief systems. The instructor had talked about how early experiences and beliefs shape reactions in adulthood, creating a “tree” of interconnected thoughts and behaviors. This moment, it seems, is asking her to revisit her own tree of beliefs.

**Roots: The Core Belief**

Lilian closes her eyes and lets her mind drift back to her younger years. A memory surfaces: she’s sitting at the dinner table, proudly holding up a report card with high marks. Her father glances at it briefly and says, “Not bad, but you could have done better.” The words feel like a punch, deflating her excitement and pride. In that moment, a belief takes root: *I’m only valuable if I meet the highest standards—perfection.*

This belief became her foundation, her root. *I must be perfect to be worthy of approval and success.* Over time, it shaped how she approached every aspect of her life, especially her career.

However, there was a time when Lilian lived without the weight of perfection. Let’s look back at who she was before this belief took root.

**Lilian’s Life Before**

**1. Initial Emotional State**

***Joyful Connection:*** Young Lilian thrived on making her parents proud. Every time she received praise for her achievements, she felt loved, valued, and appreciated. These moments built a strong sense of worth and belonging, filling her world with joy and connection.

For instance, one evening, Lilian came home with a drawing she’d spent hours perfecting at school. She proudly held it up for her parents, excitement shining in her eyes. Her mother gasped in delight, immediately hanging it on the refrigerator, while her father pulled her in for a warm hug, saying, “We’re so proud of you, Lilian.” Their smiles and kind words filled her with happiness, making her feel seen, loved, and valuable. Moments like these reinforced her sense of belonging and built her confidence, showing her that she was cherished just as she was.

**Lilian’s Life After**

**2. Constructing a Belief: “I’m Only Worthy If I’m Perfect”**

***The Unseen Shift:*** This is the “what just happened?” moment that introduces an unexpected emotional reaction—confusion, disappointment, and a sense of loss.

In Lilian’s case, one day, she brought home a report card with high marks, eager to show her parents. But instead of the excitement she expected, her father barely looked at it and said, “Not bad, but you could have done better.” His words hit hard, leaving Lilian confused and disappointed. This seemingly small shift—her father’s lack of enthusiasm—became a “what just happened?” moment. She didn’t understand why he wasn’t proud, and an unfamiliar sense of loss crept in, planting a feeling of doubt: *Was she only good enough when she was perfect?*

**3. Reinforcing Moments**

*Striving and falling short:* Over time, Lilian encountered more moments that reinforced this feeling. Each time she showed her parents a project or achievement, they would acknowledge it but quickly point out areas for improvement. Her mother would say, “It’s good, but next time try harder,” and her father would nod with a distracted smile. Every time, she tried harder. With each reinforcement, the idea grew stronger: ‘*I am only valuable when I am exceptional.*’ The pattern of perfectionism started to take hold as she sought their approval through flawless performance.

At school, Lilian observed how teachers responded to students who achieved perfect scores or excelled in front of the class. She remembers one specific day in math class when her teacher held up a test paper and praised a classmate, saying, “Emily, you did an amazing job—100%! Keep up the great work.” The teacher’s face lit up, and the entire class applauded as Emily blushed with pride. Lilian couldn’t help but notice how much attention Emily received, and a small voice in her mind whispered, only perfect work is truly valued. Moments like these deepened her belief that she needed to excel flawlessly to earn praise and approval.

**Months Later**

Months later, an experience reinforced Lilian’s belief. Her school held an art competition, and she poured her heart into her painting, spending hours perfecting every detail. When the winners were announced, she received a “Most Creative” award, but the top prize went to another student whose painting was technically flawless. Her teacher congratulated her briefly, saying, “Great job, but maybe next time focus on precision—it makes a difference.”

Though Lilian was initially proud of her work, her teacher’s words stung, reinforcing the idea that her efforts were only valuable if they were perfect. She began to believe that close to perfect was simply not enough, and that to truly earn respect and admiration, she needed to aim for flawless results. This moment deepened her belief that her worth was conditional, tied directly to perfection and high achievement.

**Years Later**

Two or three years later, another experience reinforced Lilian’s belief even further. In her sophomore year of high school, she submitted a project for the science fair, spending hours perfecting every detail. Her project received a “High Achievement” ribbon, while the top prize went to a project recognized for its “exceptional precision.”

Her teacher congratulated her with a smile but added, “Great job, Lilian. Just a bit more polish, and you could’ve won first place.” Though she was proud of her work, the teacher’s comment stung, feeding the idea that only perfection truly earned recognition and respect. This moment deepened her belief that close to perfect was simply not enough, tying her worth even more tightly to flawless performance.

**4. Triggering Event**

*Inventing a story:* These repeated experiences led Lilian to construct a belief that took root deeply in her mind: *I am only worthy when I am perfect.* This belief became her guiding principle, subtly influencing how she approached school, friendships, and her goals. Every time she received feedback, she interpreted it as a reflection of her worth, which kept her in a cycle of seeking perfection to feel secure.

For Lilian, the story that began to take shape in her mind was something like, *“I am only worthy if I’m perfect.”* With each moment of near-success and each piece of feedback that focused on improvement over accomplishment, she began to believe that her value was conditional, tied to flawless performance.

In her mind, the story echoed quietly but persistently: “Good isn’t enough. Only perfect matters.” This belief became a lens through which she viewed herself and her efforts. She started to feel that if she wasn’t exceptional, she was somehow falling short—not just in her work, but in her worth as a person. This story grew, guiding her actions and interactions, always pushing her to strive for perfection as a way to feel valuable and accepted.

What follows is a series of small incidents that remind Lilian of her belief that “good isn’t enough; only perfect matters.” Each serves as a reinforcement, triggered by her environment, deepening her belief that *“I am only worthy if I’m perfect.”*

1. ***Receiving Constructive Feedback:***

After completing a major project at work, Lilian receives feedback from her boss. He praises her effort but points out a few areas for improvement. “Overall, it’s great work,” he says, “but there are some details we’ll need to refine.” Though the feedback is positive, Lilian only hears the critique. She leaves the meeting feeling deflated, as if her hard work was inadequate, reinforcing her belief that anything less than flawless isn’t enough.

1. ***Making Small Mistakes in Public:***

During a team presentation, Lilian stumbles over a few words and accidentally skips a slide. Though she recovers quickly, she notices a colleague raising an eyebrow and a few people whispering. The small missteps echo in her mind long after the presentation ends, triggering her belief that small mistakes make her look incompetent and unworthy of respect.

1. ***Comparing Her Work to Others:***

Lilian submits a report that she spent hours perfecting. The following day, she sees a colleague’s report praised by management as “exceptional and polished.” Though her own work wasn’t criticized, Lilian feels a pang of inadequacy. She begins comparing her report to her colleague’s, convinced she didn’t measure up, and the feeling of being “almost there but not enough” deepens her belief that only exceptional work has value.

1. ***Observing Others Receiving Praise for Excellence:***

At a team meeting, her boss commends another coworker for consistently “going

above and beyond.” As the room fills with applause, Lilian feels a wave of envy and self-doubt,

thinking, If I don’t stand out like that, I’m not truly valued. The praise given to others triggers

her belief that she needs to be exceptional in every way to be seen as worthy.

1. ***Failing to Achieve a Recognition or Award:***

Lilian applies for a competitive scholarship she’s been working toward all year. When she finds out she didn’t receive it, she feels crushed. The rejection makes her question her abilities and self-worth, leading her to believe that she must have fallen short. She tells herself, If I were truly capable and valuable, I would have won. The loss intensifies her story that only flawless achievement is enough to feel worthy.

Each of these scenarios subtly reinforces Lilian’s belief, making her feel that

anything less than perfection equates to falling short, shaping her self-worth around

her accomplishments.

**5.** **Living in the Shadow of the Belief:**

Growing in the shadows: As Lilian grew older, her core belief— “I am only valuable if I’m perfect”—took over her life, forming a strong “trunk” of reinforcing beliefs that guided her every action. She pushed herself relentlessly in school and her career, working tirelessly to avoid any mistakes. Each small disappointment—a project error or a less-than-satisfied client—reinforced her belief that only flawless performance made her worthy.

**Branches: Small Beliefs and Behaviors**

From the trunk of her reinforcing beliefs, branches grew—smaller beliefs that influenced her everyday behaviors and thoughts. She remembers the tiny voice that crept up as she prepared for the meeting, whispering, What if you’re not good enough? What if you missed something? These branches, like I’m never fully prepared or Others can easily replace me, had spread into various aspects of her life, fueling a cycle of self-doubt. This relentless focus on perfection had deeper consequences.

The “branches” shaped her interactions and perceptions, leading her to overlook Matt’s hints about changes in the company. Focused on appearing perfect, she missed the subtle, relational cues that might have helped her connect with him on a deeper level. Instead, she had been so intent on her image that she lost sight of the bigger picture.

This belief system, rooted and branching out in all directions, functioned like an invisible filter, shaping how Lilian interpreted her world. When others offered her praise, the branches of her belief tree cast shadows of doubt, whispering that she had to keep proving herself. If she made a mistake, the belief system reminded her that she risked losing others’ respect and admiration. Like an unseen barrier, this tree of beliefs shaped her decisions, relationships, and sense of self, preventing her from feeling content or truly connected.

So, when Matt, her key client, left unexpectedly, it hit her hard. *“I’m not perfect, and I lost his admiration,”* echoed in her mind, striking her like a hailstone and deepening her conviction that her worth depended on being flawless.

**6. A Moment of Transformation: Confronting the Belief**

***A Moment of shifting****: A turning point for Lilian came when she sat alone after losing a key client, wondering, what did I do wrong? Reflecting on a recent workshop, she decided to dig deeper into her beliefs. She began to see how one belief, in particular, had taken root in a childhood misunderstanding. She realized that her father’s words back then had come from a desire to help her grow, not a lack of love. This insight allowed her to see that her belief, “I’m only valuable if I’m perfect,” was based on a child’s perspective, not the truth.*

Lilian took a deep breath and decided to challenge this belief, realizing that it had been formed through a child’s misunderstanding. She began to see that her worth didn’t depend on being perfect but on being authentic and connected to others. This moment of self-awareness and honesty allowed her to begin replacing her old belief with a new foundation: *I am worthy as I am.*

With this shift, Lilian felt a sense of relief and clarity. She started building a healthier belief system, where kindness and self-acceptance became her new “trunk” beliefs. From there, she could grow smaller, supportive branches—*It’s okay to make mistakes,* *I can connect with others without being perfect,* and *My worth is not defined by my achievements.*

Through this journey, Lilian began to transform her belief system, leaving behind the need for perfection and embracing a more compassionate, authentic view of herself and her worth.

**7. Rewriting the Story**

***Reclaiming Her Worth****:* With this new understanding, Lilian began to rewrite her story, accepting that her value wasn’t defined by achievements or perfection but by her true self. She developed beliefs rooted in self-acceptance, kindness, and compassion—embracing ideas like “I am enough as I am” and “My worth is not tied to perfection.” This shift allowed her to let go of the need to be flawless, focusing instead on building genuine connections and living more authentically.

**Root Belief:**

**I am worthy as I am**

This is the foundational belief Lilian embraces, rooted in the realization that her worth does not depend on perfection. It serves as the core of her new belief system, giving her a strong, positive base to grow from.

**Trunk Beliefs:**

**Kindness and self-acceptance**

From her root belief, Lilian nurtures a trunk of kindness and self-acceptance. These

beliefs encourage her to approach herself with compassion and to value her

authentic self. They help her understand that she doesn’t have to be flawless to be

valued.

**Branch Beliefs:**

**It’s okay to make mistakes**

This branch allows Lilian to accept that errors are part of growth and don’t diminish

her worth. Mistakes are now seen as learning opportunities rather than proof of

inadequacy.

**I can connect with others without being perfect**

This branch belief helps Lilian feel secure in her relationships, allowing her to

engage meaningfully with others without needing to prove her value. It shifts her

focus from her image to genuine connections.

**My worth is not defined by my achievements**

This branch supports her in understanding that her value isn’t tied to what she

accomplishes but to who she is. Achievements add to her life but do not define her

self-worth.

With these new beliefs, Lilian’s transformed belief system supports a compassionate and authentic view of herself, freeing her from the need for perfection and guiding her toward a healthier sense of self.

**CONCLUSION**

The *Emotional Menu Formula* guides readers from an initial emotional state, through triggering events and reinforcing moments, to the formation and impact of a belief, ultimately leading to healing and rewriting the story. Through Lilian’s journey, we see how understanding and transforming beliefs can bring clarity, growth, and a deeper sense of self-worth.

**QUIZ TIME—Based on Lilian’s journey**

Use these questions to reflect on your own experiences and explore the roots of your beliefs. After each section, take a moment to apply these questions to yourself, examining how similar patterns might show up in your life.

**Quiz: Exploring Your Belief System**

**1. Initial Emotional State**

• Describe a time when you felt truly valued and appreciated for who you were, without the need to be perfect. What emotions did you feel, and how did they shape your sense of self-worth?

• Lilian felt loved and connected when her parents praised her artwork. Is there a memory from your childhood where you felt this way? How did it influence your confidence and happiness?

**2. Constructing a Core Belief**

• Have you experienced a moment when praise or validation turned into criticism, creating feelings of doubt or confusion? How did that impact you?

• Lilian’s belief, *“I am only worthy if I’m perfect,”* formed when her father gave her constructive criticism. Do you recall a moment in your life when a similar belief began to take shape? What was it, and how did it affect you?

**3. Reinforcing Moments**

• Think of situations in your life that reinforced an underlying belief. What specific feedback or comparison moments made you feel like you weren’t enough?

• Like Lilian, do you remember a time when you compared your accomplishments to others, deepening a belief that you had to excel to be valued? How did this affect your behavior?

**4. Triggering Event**

• Can you identify a recurring thought or “story” you tell yourself about your worth? For example, “I am only valuable if I succeed” or “I am only lovable if I please others.” What life experiences contributed to this story?

• Lilian’s story became, *“Good isn’t enough; only perfect matters.”* Do you have a similar inner story? Reflect on how this story affects your daily interactions and sense of self-worth.

**5. Living in the Shadow of the Belief**

• How do these beliefs show up in your life now? Are there areas where you avoid risks, fearing failure or judgment?

• Lilian’s pursuit of perfection shaped her choices and interactions. How does your belief system impact your relationships, decisions, or work?

**6. Confronting and Shifting the Belief**

• Reflect on a recent moment that led you to question your core belief. Was there a realization that helped you see it differently?

• For Lilian, losing a key client led her to re-evaluate her belief. Has there been a moment in your life where you began to see a core belief as limiting? What did you learn from this experience?

**7. Rewriting Your Story**

• What new beliefs could you adopt to support a healthier, more compassionate view of yourself? Examples might include, *“I am enough as I am,”* *“Mistakes are learning opportunities,”* or *“My worth is not tied to my achievements.”*

• Lilian rewrote her story with beliefs rooted in self-acceptance and compassion. What small steps could you take to begin rewriting your story and embracing a more authentic view of your worth?

**Self-Reflection**

After answering each section, take a few minutes to consider how your beliefs have formed and how they might have influenced your life choices. Reflect on the root belief that anchors your system, the trunk beliefs that reinforce it, and the branches that show up in your daily actions.

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**BLURB**

The book, "What Just Happened," is not merely a collection of words bound by paper; it is a sacred invitation to embark on a journey of self-discovery and empathy. Within these pages, you'll find reflections of your own joys and sorrows, mirrored in the lives of fellow travelers.

What Just Happened is more than a book—it’s a mirror. Through powerful storytelling and emotional insight, it invites you to trace your reactions back to their roots and rewrite the beliefs that quietly shape your life. Because healing starts when we stop asking what’s wrong with us… and start asking what happened to us.