

**Don't Gamble on Life
Improvement...
Until You Shift the Odds!**



Kevin E. Eastman

Don't Gamble on Life Improvement... Until You Shift the Odds!
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THE LAYOUT

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1. “Why Should I Pay Attention to This Guy?”

“Thank you” is the only sentiment that begins to express my appreciation to you for opening this book. With literally thousands of choices for reading material available, I’m grateful this time you picked this one. It makes no difference whether you bought it, borrowed it, found it, or had it gifted to you, I’m overjoyed that you’re taking the time to read the thoughts of a man out of Oakland, California who believes he has beneficial information to share.

Why I chose writing a book as my sharing method is simple. This was written for the person who feels like their dreams of success and happiness have been dashed, because of the obstacles they’ve encountered. I’ve seen people fail in ways they shouldn’t be failing, and believe some of the lessons I’ve learned can help remedy that. Too often, these people can’t see the forest because they’re blinded by the trees. From my vantage point, there hasn’t been a lot of “common sense” assistance available for them... until *now!*

Like most people, my life has been full of peaks and valleys. I’ve been beaten up, beaten down, and at times, completely *broken!* At my lowest, life had beaten me so badly, I felt like I was nothing. Low self-esteem, depression, failed relationships, dismal finances, etc. I was convinced the world had turned against me, and I was my only line of defense.

Thankfully, in addition to those horrible beat-downs, I was provided a surplus of information from some great sources. I've been able to uncover a number of methods that have helped me decode some of my life's most challenging situations. The goal is to explain a few of them so you'll be able to use them, if you've grown tired of the direction your life has gone. Through a lot of adversity I've learned, "*A hand up is better than a handout,*" and the effects last longer!

At the beginning of just about every non-fiction book, the author strives to establish themselves as a competent authority, aiming to create a bond of trust with the reader and get them excited about the rest of the book. I'll continue this practice, hoping some great advice I received helps me: "*You never know from whom, or where inspiration is going to come from.*"

A degree of skepticism often arises when introduced to a book written by a first time author. It doesn't help matters when the author makes a claim like, "*This book may be able to assist you in improving your life.*" Don't worry if you're skeptical right now. I'd be as well, and take no offense with anyone who may be. In fact, two questions probably came to mind: "*Who is this guy?*" and "*Why should I pay attention to him?*"

Both these questions are valid, and my answer to the first question will be displayed throughout this book. I'm an *extremely* calculated thinker. There is always a method to my madness. I'm simplistic in my thought process, logical and methodical in my approach to resolving issues. In my mind, there is no value in unnecessarily complicating things.

However, my answer to the second question may shock

some people: “*You don’t!*” There’s no law that says you have to listen to a word I say. You have the freedom to choose who you pay attention to and who you ignore, but I believe you should consider what I’ve written for a few reasons.

I’ll begin by asking a rhetorical, yet thought-provoking question: If you’re not satisfied with your life, and someone told you they might be able to help you turn it 180 degrees from where it currently is, wouldn’t you owe it to yourself to at least listen to what they have to say? If you’d listen, you’re on the right track. If you listen, but ultimately didn’t follow their suggestions, the only thing you’ve lost (albeit valuable) is time. What if the information they provided made things start making sense for you? Would you still consider the time lost? Of course not, and that’s my point! You have everything to gain if the information helps you.

Conversely, if you’re not satisfied with your life, and you say you *wouldn’t* listen, then *why not?! What’s the alternative? Stay where you’re not satisfied? Here’s some tough truth and good luck trying to choke this down: “Your plan thus far hasn’t worked!”* Any alternative to *your* plan should at least be entertained. Decide later if the alternative was stupid. *“When the possible ain’t working, you must take a shot at the impossible!”* Only then, can you say you’ve tried everything!

A basic fundamental in communicating effectively is relatability. A communicator must be able to reach people with language they’re familiar with. I believe I can relate to most people, thanks to being awarded the privileges of growing up in the so-called “hood” in Oakland, and serving

over 20 years in the U.S. Air Force. These experiences have allowed me to interact with people from all walks of life, ethnicities, orientations, and economic and social statuses.

I've learned if you carry yourself with confidence and act like you have some sense, your appearance, education, or economic status isn't much of a factor; your communication skills will make the difference. I have no problem conversing with *anybody*, about any *subject*, at any time. I'm as comfortable talking with a homeless person as I am with a company CEO, and have successfully done both. Maybe *these* reasons are good enough for you to consider paying attention to me.

Before we get too far along, I want to ensure a few things are clear. This way you have a good understanding of what to expect, and can't say you weren't warned. You're about to embark on a journey unlike any you've ever been on. I'm taking you inside of my head (Lord help you!), and exposing you to my thoughts and opinions on a series of topics I believe contribute most to the chaos in our lives. Some of them may sound strange if you've never experienced them, but each has been included with the intent of depicting fairly common situations from a very *uncommon* perspective.

If you opened this book with the expectation of it being the stereotypical self-development book, filled with a bunch of terminology that belongs in an Ivy League lecture hall, I have bad news for you: "*This ain't that book!*" You won't find any \$500 words in here and that is by design. My feeling is even the best information is useless if the person on the receiving end doesn't understand it. I did my best to make

sure the majority of this information is easily understandable.

Whether you *agree* with the information is a different matter. I'm intelligent enough to realize every reader isn't going to agree with everything in this book. Then again, getting every reader to agree with everything was not my intent when I began writing it. I had a more reasonable goal in mind: get each reader to agree with at least *one* thing in the book. An old adage says, "*Rome wasn't built in a day.*"

You should prepare yourself, because some of the book's sections and descriptions are quite lengthy. I sincerely hope you weren't expecting a book of CliffsNotes®. I promise I'm not trying to lull you to sleep with long sections and descriptions. I simply *despise* being misinterpreted. Having to go back and clarify something I felt was initially clear has taught me how profound effective communication really is.

I won't be doing you any favors if you're an impatient reader, either! Many of life's lessons cannot be summed up with one-liners, *despite* society's inherent desire for instant gratification, or to "*get to the point.*" Speed doesn't always translate to effectiveness. If I can provide facts, logic, reason, and rationale, I'll accomplish a couple of things. I'll minimize misinterpretations, regardless of the length of the explanation, which maximizes its effectiveness. Second, you won't be able to argue with it for long, because my parents taught me, "*It's impossible to argue with facts without looking stupid!*"

You may have already noticed, but many words, phrases, and ideas will be emphasized through the use of exclamation, italics, underlining, and repeating. This is also by

design. I may not be physically reading the book, where you can hear the voice inflections. Therefore, I must rely on other methods of getting the messages across effectively.

At first glance, the repeated things will look like a mistake, but it was *intentional*. I wholeheartedly believe in the law of repetition. The more you see or hear something, there's a greater chance you'll remember it. The more you practice something, the better you should become at it. That's how our brains work. At least, that's how mine works.

This book isn't a one size fits all. I'm not crazy enough to believe every topic will apply to every reader. At times, you may feel the information in a chapter doesn't apply. You're free to skip it, but I recommend reading each chapter entirely. What you *need* may be in the segment you decide to skip.

A word of caution: *Buckle your seat belt, because you're in for a wild ride!* I'm about to challenge your thinking on a variety of topics, with some very *unconventional* methods! If you have what's considered "thin skin," it may be a good idea to keep a helmet and some armor nearby. Your world is about to be upended and your emotions put through the wringer! I know, because my emotions went through the wringer while writing it. Humor, sadness, anger, and surprise; it's all in here.

A lot of this content is example-based, so it may be tempting to wonder, "*Is he talking about me?*" I'll put your mind at ease, right away – I'm *not!* What you'll be reading is a fusion of many lives (including mine), but none... I repeat *none* of it is intended as a personal attack. I don't operate that way, so you can *relax*. Besides... that question would only be

asked if you have an idea that you may *do* what's being described!

"Nothing is offensive until it hits a nerve." Words and gestures are harmless until a conscience assigns *meaning* to them. The last thing I want to be is offensive, but there's a lot of content crammed into this book, and *"it ain't all nice!"* There may be times when the content punches you in the mouth, real hard! Sadly, getting punched in the mouth real hard is the only way some people will pay attention.

Some nerves are going to be hit – I guarantee it! However, one thing you won't say when you're finished with this book is, *"He's lying!"* I'm confident in saying this because you know, or have seen someone who fits every description included. If you can't find anyone who fits a description... it's probably because *you* fit it! I was taught to never apologize for telling the truth and I'm not about to *start*.

My challenge to you: if you come across something that gets you riled up, keep reading! I'm hoping my explanation quells any initial anger, but in case it doesn't, remember the intent is to get your mind working, not ruffle your feathers.

The idea of improvement can be frightening to many people, due to what may prompt the improvement need. A person may uncover things they were unaware of. Or they may be forced to acknowledge things about themselves they'd been ignoring, with the latter being the worst of the two.

People can become uneasy and possibly overwhelmed when they discover what may be required of them to correct

a deficiency. One of the lowest feelings I've experienced was listening to someone tell me about myself, then, having to look in the mirror and begrudgingly *admit* they were spot-on!

Being forced to eat a big ol' slice of humble pie did wonders for me, so a person getting angry may not be a bad thing. An angry person takes action, which is essential to success. You'll never reach a goal by standing in one spot, talking about how good things would be "*if only...*" It takes action. You can't begin the improvement process if you're unable, or remain *unwilling* to admit a problem exists.

"Improvement always starts with an idea, but is advanced or defeated by an attitude." This book will provide plenty of ideas. You will provide the decisions to whether you want to use any of them to create and execute a plan to adjust anything in your life (the attitude).

Some extremely ugly truths need to be, and *will be* exposed. Many may be tough to read, especially if you unexpectedly discover you're the culprit of one of them! I feel they need to be uncovered, no matter how ugly they are, because denial has never made an issue disappear... *ever!* The issue only festers, and with continued ignoring can boil over. Then, you're trying to resolve it with extreme action fueled by panic, which isn't, nor has ever *been* an effective combination.

There are a handful of colorful words sprinkled throughout the book. I'm mentioning this now, so you aren't shocked when you come across them. I've limited them as much as possible, because I believe excessive use would undermine the messages, but they *are* there. I decided to

include them because for some people, the colorful word may be what makes the message stick. Call me crazy, but I believe the message is more important than the method of delivery.

I want another thought firmly planted in your head: nothing in this book should be viewed as a substitute for professional medical assistance. This isn't a medical journal, and isn't *intended* to be. If something isn't right, and you can't fix it yourself, find a licensed medical professional... period!

By the same token, I don't believe you should go running to a medical professional every time you feel you can't handle a situation. That's taking nothing away from professional medical assistance, because quite frankly, some people need it. In my opinion, many issues can be resolved, and dare I say prevented, if you first looked within yourself. You'd save yourself time and likely, some embarrassment. It certainly beats paying someone *your* money to lie on their couch and have them listen to you talk about your feelings.

If you're satisfied with your life, reading beyond this chapter will be of little benefit. You can, however pay it forward by giving the book to someone you believe *would* benefit from it, and encourage them to read it. I'd prefer it if *you* read it before giving it away.

On the other hand, if you feel like I felt at my lowest, that your life is an endless cycle of disappointments, you have the right book in your hands. I do suggest approaching these topics with an open mind. You must also be willing to adjust your thinking if you discover it's flawed, because what you find blocking the path to success *may shock the hell out of you!*

As stated earlier, improvement can be painful due to what you uncover is necessary to achieve it. What may be necessary is taking action you don't necessarily *like*, or even *want* to do, but unless you *do* it, your situation won't change!

Should you pay attention to me? I sincerely hope you do. I've provided reasons why I think you should, but it's a decision you'll have to make. If the information helps you, then it's a win-win. However, remember: if you decide to take the ride, you might want to strap in because it's going to get bumpy! You may discover you're not the person you *thought* you were.

You'll need to get comfortable with the possibility of being made *uncomfortable*, because what you read in this book may make you feel that way at times. However, that *isn't* necessarily a bad thing because from discomfort, growth emerges! This book may lead you to places you weren't intending to go. There's also a possibility that my suggestions may sound unfamiliar to you, or conflict with your sense of normalcy. The anticipation of that can be unnerving to some people. For them, the risk seems high, but the reward on the *flip side* of that risk is an improved life!

So, if the possibility of the reward is intriguing to you, put on some thick skin, pull up your big boy or big girl pants, and try to hang on! I wonder if that was enough to convince you to keep reading?!

2. Finding You, and Why Things Are the Way They Are

Well, that's a relief! You decided to keep reading. I can't tell you how encouraging that is. It means the first chapter didn't bore you to death, there's a chance you see potential value in the upcoming pages, and you didn't flip out when I told you what to be prepared for. Your curiosity was piqued enough to make you wonder how I'm going to frame the chosen topics. Initial objective: complete.

Alright, the preliminaries have been completed. It's now time to go to work on a plan for an improved you. I've found one of the best ways to right a ship headed in the wrong direction, is to gain a thorough understanding of whom and where you are. This provides you with a starting point or foundation to build from.

The challenge: obtaining this understanding will require *emphatic* self-honesty. For many people, this isn't always the easiest task. For them, telling whopping lies when things aren't going right is their preferred method of operation. The lies sound and make them feel better, so they keep telling them. I've heard people say: "*Sometimes, it's easier just to live the lie.*" Don't get fooled by this for a second – it's nonsense!

One of the most notorious lies I've heard used when things don't go right is, "*I don't care!*" This is such a juvenile response! I almost have to laugh every time I hear someone

use it. How can you *not* care if things aren't going right for you? Ideally, you don't want things to go *wrong*. So, regardless of what you try to convince yourself... yes, you *do* care!

The most dangerous lie you can tell is a lie to yourself. The lie goes from dangerous to destructive if you *believe* it! If you can't be honest with yourself, you create an unnecessary obstacle at the start of a possible turnaround and impede your own progress! Go ahead and let that marinate a second.

While you're digesting that, here's another one for you: Where you are is exactly where you're supposed to be. I'd make a note of this because you're going to see it again. When you do, you should have a better understanding but it'll require the open mind I mentioned. Sadly, many people have something called an ego that interferes with them *having* the open mind. Perhaps the information I'm providing can help chop some of those large egos down to a manageable size.

As a whole, society needs a behavioral upgrade. Several critical interactive aspects have been damaged, and conflicts have been the result. Many of the conflicts can be attributed to miscommunication or misinterpretation. For example, a person reacts to something they've heard. The problem is... what they heard is not what they thought they heard, because what they thought they heard is not what was *said!* Read that sentence again, if you need to.

Open communication and some possibly unsettling conversations are needed to resolve the issues. Judging by the way many situations have unfolded, people aren't too keen on having these conversations with *each other* to resolve them.

They'd rather avoid or ignore them and hope they resolve themselves, but this rarely, if ever happens. If having these conversations with another person makes you uncomfortable, try having them with yourself. You'll at least build confidence by talking with someone you're familiar with.

For communication to happen between people, it must first happen within each person. Contrary to many opinions, change *does* occur one person at a time, but before outward change occurs, a person's mindset must be transformed. This poses another challenge because along with ego are powerful ideals that have been in your head a while. Your upbringing, morals, and beliefs are part of your makeup. They impact your self-view and can generate major obstacles to conquer.

I'm not implying these things should be disregarded. You are 100% right to have and stick to your beliefs... until you try to *force* those beliefs on another person and *condemn* them if they don't freely accept *your* beliefs! If this ever occurs, what you become is judgmental, which is 100% *wrong!*

Who says what *you* believe is correct? More importantly, why do you insist on intruding on another person's freedom to think for themselves? Has it ever occurred to you that you could be *wrong*? It isn't far-fetched, contrary to what you've been led to believe. This is why I suggest approaching these topics with an open mind. You may find an idea or belief you've held onto is actually flawed. If you do, you'll be faced with a dilemma. The more inflexible you are with your beliefs, the narrower your mindset is. Depending on *how* narrow, the already difficult task of improving becomes *more* difficult.

While conducting my research for this book, I was stunned to learn how intertwined these success-depriving subjects are. Sometimes they're connected so seamlessly, people don't notice the intersection. I hope your mind is blown as much as mine was when you discover how many hindrances have been hampering your success, functioning and *misleading* you, under the guise of appearing as a few.

You certainly don't have to, but it may help if you jot some notes down as you're reading. The notes will save you from searching through the entire book for something you want to recall. Here's a suggestion to get you started.

Write the word *balance* on a piece of paper. You'll need to become acquainted with this word because it's a vital part of the journey to success and happiness. I discuss it in-depth in a later chapter, but for now, you only need an introduction. You'll read more about its relevance later, and it'll make a world of difference if my explanation makes sense to you.

If each person made necessary individual adjustments, society would collectively be affected, and naturally get better, without us constantly trying to force square pegs into round holes. For this to occur, you must determine if an aspect of your life needs an adjustment, because you may not know it does. This requires recognizing the person you truly are.

What are your likes and dislikes? What makes you behave the way you do? Why do you react the way you do in certain situations? Why do some things bother you a lot, and other things not bother you at all? Would you recognize if your plan wasn't working and it was time to change it?

Finally, are you willing to do what's necessary to change it? You need answers to these and other questions.

One of the most poignant lessons I've learned is: *a person's reputation or legacy (how they're viewed or remembered) isn't defined by their actions, but by their actions that have the biggest impact on the people they interact with.* The impact may be positive or negative, but isn't controlled by the person performing the action. It's controlled by the perception of the person on the *receiving* end of the action.

When a label is attached to your behavior, the scales get tipped and everything is off-balance. This may not necessarily be to your advantage. For example, if you're a loud-mouthed jerk the majority of the time, how, and *why* would someone see you as anything *other* than a loud-mouthed jerk?!

Of course, this is all for naught if you don't *mind* being viewed as a loud-mouthed jerk, but my guess is most people wouldn't feel comfortable being perceived in that manner, if emphatic self-honesty was in place. So, if a person branding you as a jerk (which is an extreme) makes you uneasy, the behavior you exhibit to counter their branding of you must be just as extreme. Balance is the key. By the way, there are a number of references to balance behind this one!

I mentioned perception because everyone is unique. A single occurrence witnessed by several people can have a variety of effects. It will depend on how the person processes the occurrence in their head.

Under the umbrella of uniqueness is a series of reasons

why situations spur their respective reactions. Your character traits govern your perception. Once you understand how they work, you should begin not only to see who and where you are, but why things that have gone wrong, *have* gone wrong.

As far back as I can remember, I've been willing to go against the grain. I prefer marching to the beat of my own drum. I refuse to allow a person's prejudice, perception, stereotype, or even popular opinion define who I am, or dictate my behavior. If a person has a problem with me... *they* have the problem! I don't have a problem with me! I have no choice but to accept who I am, and for that reason alone, I've learned to perform actions that make *me* comfortable.

For example, many people lean to Mickey or Minnie Mouse as a favorite Disney character. I prefer Goofy. Most of the time, I'll eat my vegetables *before* diving into my steak and potatoes, and my French fries *before* my hamburger. This method of thinking has forced me to have to push through a number of barriers to get where I am. I refuse to let adversity or widely-accepted practices deter me from my goal, but I didn't always have this philosophy. It took a lot of work.

Now while I'm on my journey, I want to assist as many people as I can with making sense of the chaos wreaking havoc in their lives. I know first-hand what living this way feels like, and will be the first person to tell you it isn't a good place to reside. The only person who can tell you what it feels like to get back up is somebody who's been knocked down!

Figuring out if your life needs an adjustment is a tall order. It'll depend on whether you've developed two traits:

flexibility and *diversity*. You need the ability to adapt to the situation and come out better than you were before you encountered it. You must learn to overcome obstacles without letting them consume you into oblivion. In the Air Force, I had to adapt my behavior to many situations in which I found myself in. A mission needed to be accomplished, regardless of the size or number of obstacles.

Flexibility means being able to go with the flow. You're prepared for the unexpected, but you don't have a meltdown if things don't go as you planned. For the tightly-wound person who hasn't learned how to relax, this is difficult to do. Perhaps the way they were raised, or a traumatic life event made them the way they are, but the impulses to instantly react in a situation must be effectively controlled.

Obstacles will be encountered on the journey to success and happiness, so you may as well accept them as part of the process. The best thing for you in combatting them is preparedness. Unexpected obstacles should be respected, but not feared. They can be overcome as easily as the obstacles you see coming.

In this book, I'm defining diversity as the ability to extract knowledge and experience from a variety of sources. This is an important skill because you're exposed to a lot more than you realize. For example, if you've learned one way to accomplish a task, your scope is extremely limited. You may know how to accomplish the task, but may *not* how to accomplish the task *efficiently*. There are times when there is

only one correct way of completing a task, but there may be several methods of completing that task that “correct” way.

I’ve had the fortune of interacting with many different types of people; everyone from the stuffed-shirted conservative who doesn’t say much to the free-spirited, obnoxious loudmouth who says *too* much! A trait I’ve been blessed with (or cursed with, depending on your outlook) is the ability to observe a lot and process it quickly. It doesn’t take me long to draw a conclusion and decide on a course of action. I don’t like agonizing over decisions.

However, my experience doesn’t lead me to believe I’m better than anyone. I don’t consider myself superior. I never have, and never will accept that adjective about myself. Superior people usually don’t communicate well with others. I enjoy talking with people, so being categorized as superior doesn’t work for me. At times, I’ve been told I talk *too* much (which I emphatically dispute), but I wouldn’t be the person I am if I were any other way.

Speaking of superior, there’s a group of people who actually believe they are. I’m referring to arrogant people who think no one is on their level. In my opinion, they miss out on knowing some incredible people because of their attitude. I almost feel sorry for them... *almost!*

I’ve come to a realization that arrogant people choose to live in a world created entirely in their head. I’d make a note of the “*in their head*” concept because you’ll see it again, once or twice. Well... you’ll see it *way* more than that!

To me, arrogance is nothing more than smoke and mirrors. It's a mask for insecurity. In fact, I believe the more arrogant a person is, the more *insecure* they probably are. In my observations, several characteristics are displayed by the majority of, if not all, arrogant people.

Most notably, arrogant people usually do more talking than listening; they're usually louder talkers, too. They'll crudely talk over people in an attempt to keep the focus on their preferred topic. Lastly, arrogant people love talking about themselves. Why wouldn't they? It's the topic they believe they know best. I'm wondering if in fact, they *do* know themselves best?! The content contained in this book may provide a different perspective on their theory.

Generally, these characteristics are displayed because the arrogant person doesn't want other people to have an opportunity to challenge or question their way of thinking. Well, why not? They may be forced to realize they're not as good as they thought they were, or worse, that their thinking may be flawed. Arrogant people normally don't handle being proven wrong very well, so drastic preventative measures are taken on their part to combat this.

In efforts to stay on their preferred course, they build figurative walls around themselves and assemble their inner circle with people who don't, or refuse to challenge them. This protects the ego, which is extremely fragile in most arrogant people. They're comfortable living this way because it feels safe. Metaphorically, it's a self-imposed exile. The issue is they don't realize they're doing it; or, maybe they do.

Here's a statement few people will argue with: "*If it looks, walks, and sounds like a duck, you can call it a chicken until you're blue in the face! It's a damned duck!*" Arrogant people are prone to think if they keep repeating things, people (themselves included) will eventually believe it. The problem is what people believe and what's actually true, can, and often *does* differ. What's worse is, the more you continue to *call* it a chicken, the *dumber* you sound to those who know it's a duck!

Repeating incorrect information using long, drawn-out statements won't make it correct. This also applies to repeating it loudly. If you're wrong, speaking long and loudly doesn't make you *right*. It makes you wrong, long, and *loud!* Consequently, if you're wrong, long, and loud enough times and do nothing to adjust your behavior, people eventually add "stupid" to that description. Then... you're wrong, long, loud, and *stupid!* How many people do you think will want you around once *those* adjectives are attached? I could be wrong, but I'm guessing there won't be many.

My point is there are some surprising reasons a person doesn't achieve success or happiness. I'll be outlining a particular behavioral pattern, but I'm intentionally concealing the punchline for now. My hope is by providing different examples, you'll be able to figure it out well before I reveal it.

What I *will* say, is the person you are and how you react to the presented circumstances are the reasons you're in the position you're in. They correspond to the thoughts in your head. Only you know the true answers to whom and where you are. As you're reading, you may develop a different sense

of both. You may realize you haven't been doing things you *should* have been doing, or you *have* been doing things you *shouldn't* have. This is likely why you're not in your so-called "ideal" position, and why things are the way they are.

Need further assistance in finding out who you are? Start a conversation with a person you trust and ask them to describe you, as *they* see you! That sounds easy enough, right? Well, here's the hard part: *do not interrupt them!*

If you're going to ask this question, you'd better be prepared for any and all responses! It's not easy listening to someone tell you about *you*, because you might not like what you hear. This will make it tough to accept, and even tougher to agree with. Truthfully, whether you like it or not, agree or disagree, is irrelevant. The question is "*Can you accept it and make adjustments to your behavior, if what they're telling you is accurate?*"

It doesn't matter what you *meant*. What matters is how what you meant was *perceived*. This applies to your actions as well as your personality. You may see yourself in one way, but others perceive you in quite a different way. Your actions and behavior send a distinct message, and that message's meaning is determined, once again, by the perception of the person on the *receiving* end. What could they be saying to the person?

Here's another valuable lesson I've learned: "*Knowledge always comes from an outside entity, but behavior always originates in your head. The key is figuring out which one is pulling the train!*"