

# Where's My Mustard?



**How to Let Go,  
Attract and Achieve**

**A Quest to Self-Empowerment**

**Amy Lee Miller**

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Here's to your success!

~Amy

<https://coaching.beingamyleemiller.com>

To all of my soul tribe members:

*Thank you for everything I've learned from you so far. I'm excited to meet the rest of you.*

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# Introduction

Do similar challenges keep showing up, leaving you feeling stuck in a certain area of your life? Perhaps you excel in your career but struggle to connect in meaningful relationships. Or maybe you're happy in your relationships but feel unfulfilled in your job.

Is there a nagging voice in the back of your mind whispering there's something bigger or different meant for you?

Are you constantly reminded of a stubborn curiosity that persists, despite your efforts to ignore it?

The challenges you face are not what determines your future. It's your actions, your choices, that lead you to where you end up. Have you considered your problems might be showing up for an important reason? What if once you overcome them, you become equipped to make your greatest impact, otherwise left unexplored? The fulfillment and connection you find when realizing your true place is waiting for you on the other side of your problems. Yet many of us choose to ignore the very catalyst set in place to get our attention.

While each of our challenges and goals will be different, the steps to overcoming and achieving are the same. When you learn how to pay attention to your emotions and better trust your instincts, you can navigate life with greater confidence and less resistance, becoming a magnet for your dreams that before seemed out of reach.



If you have something you want to accomplish and are searching for motivation, inspiration, and a newfound confidence that *yes, you can*, then this book is for you. If you're trying to let go of an uncomfortable emotion you've been carrying around, uncertain of where it's coming from and how to work through it, then read on.

Growing up unhappy and uncertain of why I couldn't shake the uncomfortable feeling I carried, I began my quest for self-improvement at a very young age. However, one thing I always had was the stringent belief in myself that I could achieve anything I set my mind to. For me, no goal has ever been too big, no challenge impossible to overcome. I allow myself the freedom to get and stay curious, trusting that whatever idea pops into my head is for a very good reason. I embrace each challenge with confidence, not knowing *how* I will surpass my next goal but knowing with unwavering certainty that I will. See it. Believe it. Achieve it.

But no matter how much I accomplished, my feeling of emptiness lingered. Whether I was by myself or with others, I felt alone and disconnected. I was determined to overcome this feeling of sadness. For the first half of my life, I awoke each morning to a feeling of dread. After learning and employing simple yet impactful practices over the years, I now wake each day with peace and with vigor, excited to get my day started. I'm now very happy almost all day, nearly every day. The purpose of this book is to help others get there faster. Whether your goal is to feel better or achieve more, it does not have to take decades or even years.

In this book, I share the concepts and mindset practices that allow me to achieve with more confidence and less effort. I share the tools and methods I learned to keep myself feeling good and

attracting greater things. Along my path toward greater success and fulfillment, I also discovered perhaps the most profound awakening of all: the very cloud I so wanted to rid myself of, I was creating.

You are more powerful than you know. Through these pages, I will take you on the journey with me, the journey that led me to who I came to be, which is who I was always meant to be. You can change your life drastically by stepping out onto a new path that, while unfamiliar, you inherently know is calling you. Change can be scary. But sticking with what you know when you know you don't like it, in my opinion, is even scarier. Why let that be an option?

Since I was a very little girl, I knew I had a purpose, and living out this purpose, although I couldn't quite picture it just yet, remained my dominant focus. I have come to learn the things you want most in life often stay just out of reach until you do the deep inner work. Overcoming and becoming is just as painful as it is rewarding. But there is a reward on the other side.

From as far back as I can remember, maybe age six, and up until recent years, I felt uncomfortable. The place I felt most comfortable was when I was alone. Contradictory to how I felt on the inside, I was popular with the kids in school growing up. I always had a boyfriend of my choosing. It went like this:

On the first day of school, I would look around the classroom; I was on the hunt. I was also quite bossy, and some things don't change. I'd spot the boy I wanted to be my boyfriend, then tell him about it, and he would happily comply. If only life were that simple as you get older.

Despite my popularity and confidence in achieving what I set out to, on the inside, I was depressed. The strategies I learned and implemented helped me achieve goals while becoming a little happier and more fulfilled each year. Having such a strong belief in myself, I naturally have the same belief in others. My purpose became apparent—to help others believe in themselves with the same volition that I believe in myself. From a young age, I have always passionately encouraged others.

But to carry out my purpose on a greater scale, I first had to overcome some big emotional challenges myself. Your pain, I believe, is the catalyst that prepares you to show up as your best when the opportunity presents. Your opportunity will come, the chance to be and give your best, to make your most significant impact, but first, you have to build yourself up so that you have something to offer.

Life is hard. But would you believe me if I told you that it's only as hard as you make it on yourself? You do have choices, even when you're young. You can choose your thoughts, your attitude, whether or not to see your first step when it shows up and whether to be brave enough to take it. When you teach yourself that you can overcome a challenge, or achieve a goal, tackling obstacles the next time gets easier. What is familiar to you is easy, but there is always a first time. There is a first time to adopt a new mindset, push fear aside and step into who you are meant to be.

There have been many teachers along my path, some of whom may never know the significant impact they made. And through what I have learned, I've become strong and happy. I taught myself how to heal—anxiety, depression, and the false beliefs you tend to form about yourself when you're young that, until healed, can hold you back in your adult life. I've also taught myself how to achieve,

be successful, and know *with certainty* that I will accomplish whatever I set my mind to.

My experiences, good and bad, my childhood (which was not the worst or the best by far), and my successes have all contributed to the contents of this book.

You are capable of uncovering your best self, feeling happy each day, letting go of your pain, making positive choices, and elevating your state of mind to a happy state most of every day.

In this book, I show you how you can feel better faster and adopt a winning mindset that instills greater self-confidence leading to success. I show you how to view your problems as tools instead of impossible obstacles and turn your frustration into momentum and focus.

I share the experiences that stimulated my seemingly endless quest to feel better, to keep overcoming so that I could ultimately *become*. I share the tough lessons I learned, key takeaways, and actionable steps I implemented to carry myself further; steps you can also take to propel yourself further and faster down your path toward success and greater happiness.

I share what I did to overcome the debilitating anxiety attacks that plagued me for more than twenty years. I share how, without medication, I beat my 30-plus-year struggle with depression. One thing about me is that I'm determined. Whatever I set my mind to, unless I learn along the way that it's not for me, I will achieve it. And so, that's what I have done, over and over throughout the twists and turns of my life. But my greatest achievement is that I'm happy.

The inherent belief I have in myself, that I can and will, is the same belief I have in others. The purpose of this book is to help you learn this about yourself. The things you desire are meant for you. And if there is a challenge in your way, that challenge is a catalyst to help you get the very thing you want, or perhaps you never knew you always wanted.

I believe the true definition of success is happiness. While others might admire your accomplishments, you likely won't feel successful if you're not happy doing what you do.

The things I've wanted most since I was very young are still what I desire most today—freedom, self-expression, and helping others through my self-expression. In addition to helping me overcome anxiety and depression, these drivers also led me to get into increasingly better shape, grow my income from each year to the next, become an entrepreneur, an author, a *Success and Leadership* coach, and to understand myself and those around me better. But most importantly, to feel happy and fulfilled.

Now I want to share the most important thing I've learned with you:

Yes, you can.

Can what? Whatever you wish.

And you can do it faster than you think. I'm sharing my secrets and vulnerability with you to help you get happier because a world of happy people is a better world.

As you read this book, I promise you will get to know yourself better. As a result, you will better understand those around you, creating an easier life and attracting better things.

Your most important investment will always be yourself because the better you are and feel, the more you have to offer others. Why wait another minute to start being and feeling a little better today than you were yesterday?

I will probably make you laugh, and I will likely make you cry. In some parts, I may lose you, and that's okay; just push on and take in what resonates for now. I'll make you think. I will also tell you there's nothing in this book that you don't already know, at least somewhere deep down. Maybe it's just time for a reminder of the power you already have within you and that the answers you might be searching for could not be closer.

I'm cheering for you!

*~Amy*

# Chapter One

*The Pull*

## As You Overcome, You Become

“Turn your wounds into wisdom.”

~Oprah Winfrey

**D**o you believe there is a deeper meaning in life, a greater purpose for your existence? Not sure? Here’s an easier question. Do you ever *feel* like doing something?

If you could do anything and money were not an issue and failure were not possible, what would you do?

I like asking people this question and watching their eyes stop looking and instead begin wandering off to a place they perhaps haven’t visited for a while. Curiosity is where creation starts.

If you’ve never ventured to ask yourself this question, “*If I could do anything, what would I do?*” then I challenge you to take a moment and ask yourself now. Second to your intuition, I believe curiosity can be your greatest strength when you employ it. If you could do anything, what would your *anything* look like? What would it feel like? If this question makes you uncomfortable, it’s okay. The problem is not the question. The problem is your perspective, which you have the power to change. When you change your perspective, you change your life.



I have always believed that if a thought or an idea pops into your head, it's there for a reason. It's a clue. It's like when you're watching a movie, and you catch a moment early on that you somehow know is significant. It could be as innocent as a look or someone walking away. To the movie-watcher who's distracted, the moment seems like nothing. Yet when you're paying close attention, you know it's something.

I recently caught a moment like this when watching a drama movie about a team of CIA agents. The stakes were raised as they strategized their plan of action around a plane under siege by terrorists. The seemingly insignificant moment came in a lingering glance that I instinctively knew meant something. One character followed another character with his gaze as she got up to leave for a risky yet routine meeting. The significance of this short scene and the risky meeting that followed did not unfold until the end of the movie. Yet, while the moment had seemed like nothing, I later learned it was everything.

In the movies, they call this foreshadowing, a warning or indication of a future event. How much better are movies when you're paying attention? When you catch the little details, you feel like you're solving a mystery. You're curious and present. You're interested and invested. When you're engaged, you feel connected, following your observations as they later manifest into something bigger.

Real life is like the movies, or maybe, the other way around. Life gets better when you're paying attention. When you get an idea, seemingly out of nowhere, that manifests as curiosity; that idea has a purpose. And when you pay attention, you are easily led down the right path. You do have a path that is meant for you. How can you tell when you're on yours? By paying attention to how you

feel. When you are in your element, you feel great. And when you're not, you feel disconnected and unaligned. This feeling of disconnect is showing up to let you know you're in the wrong place. There is something better meant for you.

What do you love? What is something you're really good at that you feel your best when immersed in? That's it. That's your *Pull*. Whatever you feel called to do is the direction that is meant for you. It's that simple. *However, why the pull is there* is more complex, and we'll discuss this later. If your pull is so simple, why is it so hard to follow?

Human nature. It's human nature to instinctively protect yourself. This can sometimes show up as not being your true self or not being true *to* yourself. When you are in your most pronounced protective state, you are afraid. However, unless you are in danger, if you are basing your decision on fear, it will always be the wrong decision. What if you could shift your perspective and become *superhuman*? What if you could override the inherent tendency that sometimes holds you back?

**Fear:** *an unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain, or a threat.*

If fear is an emotion, and emotion is a state of mind, doesn't that mean you have the power to shift it? A shift in perspective can awaken dormant powers you already have within you. While it is human nature to feel human emotions, each of them from time to time, you can learn to have control over your mind and where it leads you.

It takes focus. You have the ability to focus and to choose what you focus on. Wherever you focus is where you will go. Good or

bad, you succeed at what you focus on. If you're not convinced of this, think back to something you achieved that you're proud of. How did you do it? You focused on it. First, the goal occupied your mind. You thought about it increasingly. You then invested time, effort, and energy.

Equally, think of something that didn't work out. Maybe a relationship or a promotion you got passed over on. What was your process leading up to the result? Even if you invested time and prepared for and hoped for a positive outcome, try and remember back. What was your emotional state around the goal? Were you scared? Did you hope for the best while fearing or expecting the worst? Rather than acknowledging and facing the emotions that came up, did you try and distract yourself? There is your proof once again. You succeeded at what you focused on. Your focus was on the fear, or it was outside of your relationship, or it was not addressing an underlying issue. Maybe the promotion was ultimately not going to resolve a deeper issue that was trying to get your attention through your emotions. If you failed at your goal, you failed to uncover and resolve the real issue because your focus was not *on* the real issue.

Sound confusing? We will discuss this more, and by the end of the chapter, the concept will become clearer. If there is something you want to improve or change, your work is to change your perspective. It will take some training and practice, as does everything new to you. Let's get started.

You can become superhuman just by observing your emotions. When you feel the fear creeping in and attempting to take over, you can switch it by asking yourself these questions:

*“What if ... it does work out? What if I can do it? What might that be like?”*

Curiosity is a powerful secret weapon that only you can take from yourself.

When you feel *the pull*, maybe you ignore it—for fear that it won’t work out, for fear that if you invest your time and energy into something when the result is not guaranteed, you might lose. What’s the worst thing that can happen when you admit you want something and then later you don’t get it? You risk being vulnerable. You risk letting others see that you are vulnerable. Is there any way to be certain, to know for sure that things will work out? There is certainty, and there is doubt. Aren’t both states of mind?

Perhaps a successful outcome is a choice, a state of mind you can choose to adopt. You can choose to believe with certainty that it will work out. You can then decide to focus on this feeling, this belief. You can also choose to lead with doubt, fearing things won’t work out. Your future *is* guaranteed. Doubt guarantees failure because your mindset influences your actions or inaction. If you’re adopting doubt as your dominant mindset around what you want, consider shifting your perspective.

When I feel anxious and like I’m not succeeding at something, I ask myself this question: *“Have you been focusing on it?”*

If the answer is “no” then I tell myself: *“Okay, start focusing on it.”* I instantly feel better, having readopted my positive mindset and having redirected my focus which then influences my actions. Wherever you focus is where you’re going. Where do you want to go?

## The Best Things Happen When You Have No Idea What's Happening Next

I don't like surprises. I like my routine. In fact, I love my routine. I relish my morning ritual, which usually starts well before the sun comes up. Three a.m. is my favorite hour, my time to create. I feel focused and peaceful, as if I'm the first one awake in the whole world. I feel possibility in the quiet hum of undisturbed energy.

After my morning meditation and some writing, I usually get in a workout, then it's back to work, and later on, a walk or some errands to get moving again. Then later, if I don't have any social engagements, I'm back to more of whatever I'm working on. I feel my best during full productivity days like this. A surprise vacation invokes anxiety for me. *Who's going to take care of my cat? Will I get my yoga in?* But surprises in life? That's a different thing.

I have always believed the best things happen when you have no idea what's next. When you shift your perspective from worry to curiosity and allow yourself to follow what's calling you, you can expect to be surprised. Alternatively, when you choose to stay focused down a path that doesn't feel right, yet you know what to expect, you guarantee where you will be tomorrow. One day you look up, and a decade has gone by. I believe you live many lifetimes. Whether you agree with me or not, I imagine you agree that this is your life, right now, today. What do you want to do with it?

That's it. Right there. Before going any further, give yourself a moment to focus on the first thought that just came to your mind before your second thought crept in. The first thought is likely in the direction that feels right, and fear was likely your second

thought. You can choose which thought you focus on. What if, instead of choosing fear, you choose curiosity? Keep reading, and I will show you how. But first, I'll tell you a story about how I overcame fear.

## Overcoming Anxiety

As far back as I can remember, I was scared. Apparently, before I was even old enough to tell my mother what was wrong, I was scared. My grandfather, who is now 95 in 2022, as I write this, loves to tell me this story. I must have been two or three years old, he says. My mother had extended family over. I'm not sure what the occasion was. And my grandfather, with whom I've always had a special connection, says I wouldn't stop crying. No one knew what was wrong, and no one could get me to stop crying. Finally, my grandfather asked my mother if he could take me for a ride. I cried in the car, tears streaming down my cheeks, as he tried to get me to tell him what was bothering me.

He suggested we go to a bakery. I cried as we stood in line, fresh deli cookies and cakes behind the glass. Our turn came, and we stepped up. My grandfather said to me, "Now you can have anything that you want, but you have to stop crying and tell the nice lady what you want." He said I straightened myself right up, stopped crying, and told her what I wanted. This is the part of the story where my grandpa gives a hearty laugh, slaps his knees, throws his head back, and says, "The power of cookies!"

My grandpa shared this story with me for the first time only a few years back, many years after I had overcome two decades of chronic panic attacks. Panic is defined as "*sudden uncontrollable fear or anxiety.*" When the attacks would escalate, I would find

myself drenched in a cold sweat. Sometimes I would throw up or even appear to be having a seizure before I would ultimately lose consciousness. I have probably fainted a hundred times in my life. My grandfather later assessed I likely had a panic attack that day when the cookies came to my rescue. The attacks would follow me well into adulthood.

If you've never had a panic attack, I'll describe what it felt like for me. You know that ping of nervousness that pricks you when you're startled? It feels like a bad butterfly just before it drops into your stomach and begins its sinking decent. Imagine a hundred bad butterflies that never sink but instead fire every nerve in your body like little bolts of electricity. Imagine your heart pounding faster and faster, and then slowing down to big audible thuds. Imagine you're no longer inside yourself but just outside yourself, listening to the thuds.

Then the dizziness starts, the thuds fading as your blood pressure drops. You feel weak. You lie down, flailing your limbs in panic, grasping for some sense of control. A wave of nausea comes over you. You're getting hot. A moment later, you're lying in a pool of sweat. Becoming weaker, you lose the battle. You've lost control. The next thing you remember is waking up, hot and cold at the same time, weak yet now alert, and with several frantic people standing over you talking in loud voices. The smell of alcohol wafts under your nose as a nurse attempts to wake you back to consciousness, a little trick they use.

While to this day, I still get very nervous about things like medical procedures, including a routine blood draw, I no longer faint. I taught my mind to overcome the matter. The attacks used to be stimulated when I found myself in an environment that I could not get out of, where I felt trapped, like on a plane, for

example. They also happened when I felt my boundaries were being crossed, like a doctor sticking a needle in my arm. The reason these attacks came on in the first place, I think, was due to my home environment growing up, where I had a lack of control. Even little ones need a sense of freedom, self-exploration, and the opportunity to begin understanding and establishing who they are. However, identifying the reason behind the attacks is not what ultimately cured them. Instead, I cured my panic attacks by changing my perspective, by choosing a different focus.

Often, you don't make a change until you see no other way, until you become uncomfortable enough. Discomfort, just like curiosity, can also be one of your greatest tools because when you're comfortable, you stay right where you are. But what if there is something better that is meant for you? This doesn't mean you can't ever be happy or content. But it does mean that you can let yourself get excited about greater things coming. You don't have to wait until you sink to your lowest low to begin lifting yourself up and getting curious about how things could be.

I did hit my lowest point before I began to heal my panic attacks. One day during my senior year in college, I became too scared to leave my apartment for fear that I might have a panic attack: agoraphobia. My big problem had gotten bigger. While the problem had been plaguing me my entire life, the thought didn't cross my mind that I might actually be able to change it until it became too big to continue dealing with. The time had come for me to choose a new mindset. I wanted to feel better. I chose to try. My new attitude quickly became a habit, which became a trait: perseverance. Not only would I try, but I would keep trying. I would admit to myself what it was I wanted, tell myself it was possible, and then inevitably, I would make it happen. I did it then,



and have done it every day since with everything important enough for me to set my mind to. It's focus. I succeed at what I focus on. Now my focus is to help others do the same.

My attacks were getting progressively worse. While they were once stimulated by uncomfortable environments and situations, suddenly, they were happening in places I had once felt at ease, like my college classroom. When I felt my heart rate speeding up and that first little ping, I would escape to the bathroom. I learned that my biggest fear was not the thought of having a panic attack; it was having one *in front of people*, and a lecture hall filled with 70 of my classmates was certainly not ideal.

Once I was safely within the confines of the bathroom stall, I knew I would be okay because then, if it happened, no one would see. I would lay down on the cold tile floor and put my legs up, resting my feet on the door so the blood could flow back to my brain more easily. I don't think I ever once fainted in the bathroom stall. The fear had disappeared. I prevented the panic attacks by eliminating the fear. Fear is a state of mind, a perspective, which you have the power to shift. The end result of the panic attacks, fainting, *was* very real. But with a simple shift in my perspective, I changed my reality and ultimately I changed my life.

Fear can be debilitating. It doesn't get much more debilitating than falling unconscious. But I changed this pattern. I had anxiety attacks leading to fainting from when I was a little girl and into my twenties, and I changed the pattern. I shifted my perspective once I realized the attacks were being stimulated by fear. When I eliminated the fear, I was okay. I observed that when I was alone, the attacks would subside, and the worst of them didn't occur. I didn't faint. As I could get the attacks to subside when I was alone,

I began to think maybe I could do the same in public. I started to test my new theory.

When I felt the first sign of nervousness and my heart rate speeding up, I chose to shift my focus. I focused on breathing and the people around me. If I was talking with someone, I tried to focus completely on them, what they were saying, and how they looked. I focused outside of myself and on my external environment. I looked around and gave my full attention to whatever I was looking at. This new way of thinking took effort, concentration, and persistence, and ultimately it worked. I stopped fainting. I cured the attacks, and eventually, the fear that one might come on also went away.

Consider a perspective that might just change your life from this moment forward. If fear is an emotion based solely on what might or might not happen, wouldn't it be safe to say that fear is not real? How can it be real if it's based on "what if?" If fear can be so powerful that it can drive someone to lose consciousness, while no external physical harm is being done to their body, is it possible that a positive emotion can have the same degree of effect but in a positive way? I think it is, and I, along with countless others, have proven this theory.

Throughout the book, I will provide real-life stories and examples of proof, what I like to call my "science experiments." I'm not a scientist, and I'm not even good at science. But it's interesting and exciting that the theories I've learned and implemented throughout my life on my own, I now hear others speak on—professionals, including psychologists, psychiatrists, PhDs, and neuroscientists.

What if, when you begin thinking about the thing that you want, instead of focusing on the emotion of fear—fear that it might not work, fear that you can't—you instead conjure up the emotions of bliss, excitement, momentum, and certainty—certainty that it will work out? If fear can drive you to defeat, then couldn't belief in yourself drive you to success?

## **Overcoming is Becoming**

Another theory I have is that your pain can actually be your catalyst when you choose to let it. It is often through your most painful experiences that you are driven to your calling. When you do the work to overcome your deeper challenges, you become equipped to live out your life's purpose in a way you otherwise would not have been prepared for. If you didn't endure whatever you went through, you likely would not feel compelled to do what was meant for you all along. An oyster only creates a pearl when its flesh is agitated. Diamonds are formed only under force and pressure. Through intense disruption, something happens. Discomfort stimulates growth, pushing you to new limits.

When you get uncomfortable enough, you make a change. You quit your job to pursue what you really want. You move into a new apartment, a space where you feel happier and freer. You stop talking to the friend who's negative and discouraging. You stand up for yourself. Often you don't acknowledge the problem until it has grown big enough. Only then do you create change. Problems are surface-level symptoms of the deeper underlying issue. Without problems, you would never address what's trying to get your attention. Wouldn't it make sense that the bigger the problem, the greater the impact of overcoming it?

Your pain can be the very tool in helping you become your best, or it can drag you down and keep you down. It's a choice. It's where you choose to focus your attention. It's from which view you angle your perspective. It's from which vantage you choose to perceive the world. The life you create for yourself is dictated by the choices you make each day. To uncover and live out the greatness within you, you must pay attention and listen to the pull, to what you feel drawn to. You must also listen and pay attention to what is bringing you pain so that you can overcome it and heal. Following the pull and being brave enough to listen to yourself is key in showing up as your best self, both for you and those around you.

In the next chapter, you will learn how to use your painful and uncomfortable experiences not only as tools to excavate the core challenges holding you back in one or more areas of your life, but also to funnel your frustration into the momentum-driven focus that is naturally within you, like a fossil fuel that has yet to be discovered. Are you ready to tap into yours?

Before moving on to the next chapter, take a moment to consider your *pull* with the chapter exercise below. You will be ready to move on to Chapter Two only once you've completed this exercise. This book is not just my story of what has worked for me; it is to be an interactive experience to help you uncover and overcome as well. Take the journey with me.

## Chapter 1 Exercise: Identify Your *Pull*

Find a quiet space and give yourself fifteen or twenty minutes to sit and breathe. Yes, I am asking you to meditate. I'll share with you how I do it here, and once you begin to settle in and get more

comfortable with practicing meditation, you will naturally create your own. There are also many resources online you can research to find a process that most resonates with you. Maybe at first, you begin with five minutes, and it later grows to 45 minutes. I now meditate each morning for 45 minutes to an hour. For this exercise, as you will be searching for something specific, I recommend aiming for 15 minutes.

With your eyes closed and taking in slow deep breaths, let yourself feel what it feels like to get present. Focus on what you hear. Birds chirping? A car horn in the distance? The hum of the air conditioner? Keep breathing as you take in the sounds. When your mind wanders off creating a narrative around the sounds you hear or bringing you back to your agenda for the day, take control back over your mind by focusing your attention back to your breath. No judgment.

As your mind drifts, just observe your focus and bring it back. Once your mind is calm, and you find yourself in the moment and not thinking back to something you could have done differently or what you need to do later, ask yourself a question:

“If I could do anything, anything in the world, and money was not an issue, and failure were not possible, what would I do?”

Before the second thought comes in, what would you do if you could do anything? Because that second thought will likely be fueled by fear:

*“What if ... it doesn't work out? What if I can't?”*

Well, what if it does, and what if you can? What if you could? Just think about that for this exercise, and we'll tackle the fear in the next chapter. You're here because somewhere inside of you,

you know you can. Or because you're curious. Curiosity leads to creation. Good job.

## Master Your Mindset

1. Begin to take notice when you get a new idea. What is your emotion around the idea? Excitement?
2. If fear later creeps in, observe it and choose to focus back on the feeling of excitement.
3. Adopt the mantra: *What if it does work out?*

## Some Extra Encouragement ...

If you don't yet know that you can, *I* know you can. Do you think I am capable of doing whatever I set my mind to? If you answered yes, and I already told you that I believe in you, and you just admitted that you believe in me, doesn't that mean that you believe in you? That was not meant to be a riddle, just the truth.

Now that you've discovered your pull, you're going to explore how to use your most painful experiences to gain wisdom instead of stress.

# Chapter Two

## *The Catalyst*

## Your Deepest Pain Fuels Your Greatest Purpose

“Stress is an opportunity to show what you can do.”

~Noel Medina

If you look for them, you will find stories of diamonds formed from pressure are not only within you; they are all around you.

One of the many things Oprah Winfrey is famous for is getting people to open up and talk about the abuse they suffered. In her documentary, *The Me You Can't See*, she opens up about the abuse she endured growing up. She talks about how her painful experiences have been a catalyst driving her to become who she now is.

“My life gets better when I think I can help other people in any way,” she says. “I’ve sort of spent a career, a lifetime, a purpose doing that,” she said. Oprah says she’s grateful for her experiences, all of them. “It is because I was sexually abused, raped, that I have such empathy for people who’ve experienced that,” she said. In another interview, she said, “You can use all of these things—experiences, good and bad in your life—to allow you to have post-traumatic wisdom instead of stress about it.”



Her perspective is her choice. Oprah is reported to be worth \$3.5 billion.<sup>1</sup> You can choose to focus on what you've learned, your wisdom that perhaps came from a negative or even unspeakable experience. Or you can keep your focus on the uncomfortable emotion stimulated by your painful experiences. You can't change your past, but you can choose to create a more desirable future.

Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson, arguably one of the manliest men on the planet, is open about his former battle with depression. While now worth \$800 million, he grew up in poverty and talked about watching his mother attempt suicide.<sup>2, 3</sup> He says, “I’ve learned over time to accept that vulnerability is a universal part of the human experience.” Personally, I believe your greatest strength lies in vulnerability, and it looks like this strong man agrees.

Nelson Mandela served a 27-year prison sentence in his fight against apartheid, South Africa’s racial class system of white supremacy.<sup>4</sup> While he was always a leader and a fighter, after

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<sup>1</sup> “Oprah Winfrey Net Worth,” Celebrity Net Worth, August 2, 2021, <https://www.celebritynetworth.com/richest-celebrities/actors/oprah-net-worth/>.

<sup>2</sup> “The Rock Dwayne Johnson Net Worth,” Celebrity Net Worth, May 2, 2022, <https://www.celebritynetworth.com/richest-athletes/wrestlers/the-rock-net-worth/>.

<sup>3</sup> Philip Ellis, “The Rock Opened up about the First Time He Sought Help for Depression,” Men's Health (Men's Health, November 2, 2021), <https://www.menshealth.com/entertainment/a36853412/the-rock-depression-getting-help>.

<sup>4</sup> “Nelson Mandela Released from Prison,” History.com (A&E Television Networks, February 9, 2010), <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/nelson-mandela-released-from-prison>.

enduring this sentence, he later became an even more impactful leader—the first democratically elected president of South Africa.

Dr. Joe Dispenza, researcher, lecturer, and author, took a very big and very uncomfortable turn in his life that led to helping probably millions of people, including myself. He was living what sounds like a great life in Southern California. Running a successful chiropractic practice, he was also an avid athlete—practicing yoga, martial arts, and competing in triathlons. During one triathlon, he was hit by a truck and thrown from his bike, severely damaging his spine. He was deemed by four surgeons unlikely to walk again.<sup>5</sup>

He lay face down in a hospital bed for eight weeks, his doctors adamantly recommending surgery and even a full-body cast. Knowing that if he had the spine surgery, his range of motion would be severely limited, he began to think about healing his body in another way—through his mind. His thoughts ultimately led to his complete recovery. Eight weeks later, he was up walking around, and only ten weeks after his accident, he was back at work. This horrendous setback changed his life and later led him to change the lives of countless others.

Dr. Dispenza sold his chiropractic practice and began his quest for knowledge around other occurrences of spontaneous remission. He began researching and studying the common denominator among people who had healed their stage four cancer, blindness, MS, and other diseases. The common factor he discovered was in

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<sup>5</sup> Dr. Joe Dispenza, “How I Healed Myself after Breaking 6 Vertebrae,” *The Placebo Effect - How I Healed Myself After Breaking 6 Vertebrae* - Dr. Joe Dispenza (Heal Your Life, May 23, 2014), <https://www.healyourlife.com/how-i-healed-myself-after-breaking-6-vertebrae>.

their minds, within the brain. He now devotes his life to this research and teaching others how to heal themselves. I would wager the accident was Dr. Joe's most painful and challenging life experience. But, it is also the catalyst that led him to live out the greatness he might not have discovered otherwise.

## Your Actions Under Pressure Dictate Your Life

My pull has always been toward freedom, self-expression, and helping others through my self-expression. Growing up, I endured the opposite. I'm a middle child, and I'd say I fit the mold, at least the part of *middle-child syndrome* that encompasses a strong desire for fairness, not just for oneself but everyone.<sup>6</sup> From the time I was very young, if I felt something wasn't right, I would speak up. I was the one in the family who challenged and pushed the limits, and my role in the family dynamic became "the problem."

It's easier to go along with things that don't feel right than it is to stand up and say, "No. This isn't right," especially when you're standing on your own. It's even harder when you get reprimanded for it. I have learned that sometimes when you feel disturbed by qualities in another, it's because you would like to possess that quality yourself. You try to minimize it because looking at it forces you to look in the mirror. There is something you could do better. Admitting you actually admire this other person's quality you put down, is admitting you have some work to do within yourself.

Although she has never said so, I believe this is my mother's issue with me. I think something about seeing her tiny little

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<sup>6</sup> "Middle-Child Syndrome: The Effects of Birth Order on Character Traits," WebMD (WebMD, October 25, 2021), <https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/what-to-know-middle-child-syndrome>.

daughter boldly, and sometimes defiantly, standing up for herself and others since kindergarten age somehow made her feel small. Her apparent coping mechanism was to try and make *me* feel small.

As a kid, I was constantly in trouble, even though I was adamant (and still am) that I did nothing wrong. I got into trouble for speaking up, talking back, and expressing myself and was often trapped in my room as a result. When punished, I was ostracized from the family, only allowed out of my room to go to school and clean the house. So while my mom, stepdad, brother, and sister were downstairs watching a favorite TV show after dinner, I was in my room by myself. When I would venture down the hall to talk with my little brother, whom I adored, my stepdad's voice bellowed at me from downstairs to get back in my room.

I felt unaccepted by the people who were supposed to love and accept me no matter what. During the impressionable years when I was trying to understand and assert myself and shape how I felt about myself, I learned that I was unlovable and should be ignored. I learned that expressing myself would have consequences and that if I didn't ask for love and often, even beg for it, I would not get it.

I was developing a detrimental pattern that would hold me back in important areas of my life for decades to come. But I made a choice, even though, at the time, I was too young to understand the positive mindset I was choosing. I chose to focus on what I *did* have control over and to control what I could. I could not control that my mother often ignored me unless she was yelling at me. I could not control that my stepfather rolled his eyes at me and grounded me when I stood up for myself. Each time I uttered, "But ..." one week in my room became two.

While it's a sad story, my story is also part of what made me who I am. Had I not been stifled and confined, I would not have the strong push I do toward freedom. Had I not been punished for speaking up, I probably would not feel the strong pull to express myself.

## **Mindset Influences Choices. Choices Dictate your Future.**

You can choose to let your negative circumstances frame your state of mind. Or you can choose to get curious about how you can get yourself feeling better. Writing was the first positive choice I made for myself out of a negative circumstance. I was about 11 years old.

The more my parents tried to keep me from expressing myself, the stronger my drive became. How could I express myself while alone in my room, staring out the window at my friends playing across the street? What *did* I have control over? I could write. I had a journal, and so I began writing. Inside my room and unable to talk with anyone, I found a way to express myself for weeks and sometimes months at a time. Not only did I keep my self-expression in this way, I expanded it.

I started with poetry. I liked words, and I liked making them rhyme. I wrote tons of poems when I was little. Occasionally I'll write one now but not very often because, for me, poetry was just for when I was feeling sad. While I was sad for many years, even into my thirties, I'm not sad much of the time anymore. I have ups and downs like everyone, but the overall state of mind I come back to each day is happy, inspired, and excited.

Speaking up, talking back, and pushing the limits are things kids naturally do when becoming who they are. They are learning

to assert themselves, so they later know how to as adults. Not being allowed this as a child only increased my desire. Even as a very young girl, I knew I had something to say. It may have taken me many years to get where I was going, but I was on the path. And with each positive choice I made for myself, I took another step in the right direction, the one that was meant for me all along.

What I went through as a child fueled my drive to help others feel better faster. I became an author, a speaker, and a very assertive woman in general, despite my stifled upbringing, or maybe because of it. I still found a way to become myself. No one can make you not who you are. You are who you are. The quicker you learn to be 100% yourself, the happier you become and the better experiences you attract.

In keeping with my increasing pull toward freedom, the second positive choice I made for myself was to take up running. I started running at twelve years old. I wasn't allowed to do much, but I was allowed to go running. I remember my first run. I was in the yard with my family; I guess I was not in trouble that day. I looked down the street and, feeling a sudden burst of energy, I wanted to run down to the neighborhood entrance and back. I asked my parents if I could, and they said, "Yes." I took off. It was 800 yards of freedom, and I liked it. When I got back, I asked if I could go again.

I had found a way to create some freedom for myself. That 800 yards would later become one mile and then two, up to five, six, and sometimes even 10 miles or more. Still, today when I am running, I feel happy and free. Had I not felt the strong desire for freedom, or to escape, I may not be a runner today. Back then, it was an escape, and today it's a place to feel good, celebrate myself

and my freedom, think about my goals, and keep pushing myself. It still feels amazing.

My inherent push for freedom also manifested as a path to my independence. As a kid, I couldn't wait to start working. Work was an outlet where I could begin to exhaust some of my endless energy. I poured everything into my work. I did a good job, and I didn't get into trouble. That felt really good, and I developed a strong work ethic from a young age—another positive choice out of negative circumstances. And with each job I chose, I continued moving toward greater freedom. Today I work for myself. The pull for me is still all about freedom and self-expression. And in continuing to surrender to and follow the pull, stimulated by pain, I am aligning with what is meant for me.

I'm grateful for the experiences I recognize as catalysts toward the life I created. I bet the same is true for you, that your painful experiences pushed you onto and further down the path meant for you. You have the power to make healthy choices for yourself despite your painful experiences. You'll know which choices are right by listening to the pull, to what you are being drawn to.

## **Discomfort Is a Great Thing**

It's easy to stay uncomfortable because at least you know what to expect. But what happens when you get squeezed tighter, and the pressure becomes too much? You begin to get curious about how things *could* be. You begin to wonder, "*What if?*" This curiosity, often stimulated by discomfort, shows up to help you follow your pull.

Looking back throughout my life, each impactful change began with discomfort. While sometimes you may be

uncomfortable for years, you often don't make a change until things get worse. *Tower moments*—very uncomfortable events that force change—can occur when we're not making the change we need to. Your problems get bigger so you pay them some attention and change course. When you still don't, the Universe steps in and does it for you. Tower moments are often quite painful, however necessary, to get you on track, the track that is meant for you. Dr. Joe's accident was likely a tower moment. Although it sounds like he was leading a happy and fulfilling life, one in which he was helping his chiropractic patients, there was a greater impact for him to make.

Take a moment now to look back over your life and consider the times when you made an impactful change. How did you feel just before you made the change? Likely, you felt frustrated; you felt uncomfortable. Now look back further. How long had you actually been feeling uncomfortable before you decided to do something about it? When the problem became too big to ignore, suddenly it had your attention. But you don't have to wait until you are extremely uncomfortable before making a change. Instead, you can learn to pay attention to how you're feeling, choose a different perspective, and ultimately improve your life faster. We will discuss this more later in the book.

Before I decided to go into business for myself, I was uncomfortable. Looking back, I had been unhappy for a long time. That unhappiness was trying to get my attention, but it didn't until it grew bigger. I was so busy with work that I just kept my head down, often working ten and sometimes twelve-hour days. My mood was negative, which affected my demeanor, which affected my interactions with people, which surely limited opportunities. I just thought being short-tempered was my personality. It was



becoming my personality, but it's not who I am. Finally, something got my attention—a triggering event. I became so frustrated during a conversation with my boss that I wanted to quit that instant. Instead, I paused. I gave myself a moment to sit with the discomfort and let myself observe it.

When you take a step outside yourself and objectively observe your emotions and reactions, you're able to see something you didn't before. This shift in perspective can quickly bring a solution to your problem – a problem you perhaps didn't notice before. An answer you didn't know you were looking for is suddenly staring you in the face. Your new path becomes clear, and you instantly trust it.

When you try to ignore your emotions, you're not present. Getting present sometimes means sitting with how you're feeling and letting your emotions exist. When you take the pressure off of trying to ignore your discomfort, you can uncover the real problem. You only discover the solution once you see the problem. I had been going on in a state of discomfort for a few years by this time. But I wasn't uncomfortable *enough*. The Universe made my problems even bigger until I realized I had to move.

While the discomfort took years to build before I was finally ready to do something about it, the answer showed up in seconds, but only once I observed my emotions and allowed myself to get curious about “*What if?*” There would be more brainstorming, researching, risk assessing, and planning. But three weeks later, I had transitioned to working for myself.

Another time I got a big nudge from the Universe was just before I moved to New York. While this tower moment was not a painful one for me, the experiences leading up to it were. Still, I

had not made the necessary changes. It was time for the Universe to step in and force its hand. I was 31 years old and had wanted to move to New York since I was eight. Getting a job, an apartment, and enough money to move to New York is not the easiest thing in the world, but it's certainly not impossible, although many people told me it was. At this time in my life, I was feeling disconnected and unfulfilled. I'd started my sales career, and a few years in, I was doing fine, but I felt no real connection to my work or to the people I spent time with. I needed a new environment, one where I felt stimulated and more like myself.

My entire life, since I was little, I had carried this emotion of frustration around with me. It was unspent energy. Living in Manhattan requires a lot of energy. While I had always inherently known New York was the place for me, there I was, in my thirties and making no strides to get here. The tower moment that happened was I lost my job. The company sold, and everyone was laid off.

I actually felt happy. There was my sign. It was time. I began applying for jobs in New York, and two months later, I landed one and moved here. I'd had it in me all along. But it wasn't until I got uncomfortable enough, and then lost my job, that I decided to create change. Moving to New York was the best decision I've ever made for myself. I have made some other great decisions since, but getting to New York put me on my path. I was unhappy, and I picked myself up and put myself in a place where I felt at home. I still had a ways to go. However, I became ten times happier overnight, but not until I got uncomfortable enough to make a change.

Another positive decision I made for myself out of discomfort was when I was fifteen years old. I had been growing increasingly miserable in my homelife, and I likely could have asked to move into my dad's house in the midwest years before, but I didn't—not until I found myself sinking into a deeper depression. I had been an honor roll student, and with things at home getting worse, I was now getting D's. My self-esteem sunk so low that at field hockey practice, I sat on the bench with my head in my hands rather than asking to get in the game. Even then, I knew that if I didn't do something about my situation, I'd be heading off to college with zero self-confidence.

Finally, I called my dad. I still remember sitting on my bed, enduring another two-week-long sentence of being confined to my room. I picked up the phone. A couple of rings later, my dad answered.

“Can I come live with you?” I said.

He said, “Yes.”

I moved there after two weeks. And just like that, I changed my life. Of course, it wasn't all roses after that, but it was a start and a much better environment for me to begin rebuilding my self-confidence before starting college.

Creating change begins with paying attention to your emotions and then letting yourself sit with them and seeing what comes up. It is uncomfortable to sit with your discomfort, but you're already uncomfortable. And if you're uncomfortable enough to notice, chances are you've been uncomfortable for a long time. Feeling your feelings, exploring them more deeply, and getting curious about them, takes some pressure off. It's okay to feel the way you

do. And more importantly, acknowledging and accepting your feelings brings you present. The present moment is the only place where something can happen, including change. The present moment is where the ideas come.

Looking back throughout your life, I'm confident you will notice that you have already implemented this tactic, creating change when you're uncomfortable, thousands of times. How many meals have you had? When you got uncomfortable enough, you got up and made yourself something to eat. When your bladder got full enough, you excused yourself to the bathroom. You didn't get up and go when you first noticed the urge, when it was a mild discomfort. You dismissed it and kept doing what you were focused on. Although the urge was there, you didn't choose to do something about it until the discomfort grew bigger. Then you made a change, and then you felt relief. You felt better. You can do this with anything you set your mind to. The difference is that you've made yourself a meal and used the bathroom enough times to know what to expect. Because you're not afraid of the outcome, you just do it, now mechanically.

Ever changed jobs or moved into a new apartment? Something made you uncomfortable enough to make a change. Once you create change and have a positive outcome, you become more comfortable leaning into the discomfort instead of avoiding it. You begin to trust yourself and your instincts. You can adopt a new habit of listening to yourself, feeling your emotions and getting curious about them, letting them guide you in the right direction, and following your pull.

The best thing you can do when you're feeling uncomfortable is to allow yourself to feel your feelings. Rather than try and avoid

them with a distraction to feel better, sit with the discomfort and see what comes up. It is your pain that pushes you. If you're uncomfortable, there's a reason. Change is needed. And if you're brave enough, change is coming, which means you have something to get excited about.

The impact of this last step, getting excited, is life-changing. In the next chapter, we'll go deeper into simple steps you can take every day to become a mega-manifester, raising your state of general happiness. Once you do this, while you will have ups and downs and some days will be better than others, your overall state of mind and state of being will never drop below the level you have raised it to. And if it does, you just implement one or more of the tools we'll continue discussing to quickly pick yourself back up. Creating change is just like learning anything new; it takes telling yourself you can and then trying and continuing to try. Tell yourself you can because you can. Then try, and keep trying.

## **Chapter 2 Exercise: Identify Your Outcome Choices**

Before moving on to the next chapter, complete the chapter exercise to instill your confidence by establishing proof in the process.

Consider a time when you set a goal and accomplished it. What was the goal? How did you first get the idea? Were you frustrated with the current state of things? What was your process in reaching your goal, and what was the outcome? What was the emotion fueling your path to success? Write down your answers.

Now think of something you're unsatisfied with in your life, something you feel unhappy thinking about. Have you tried working on this issue in the past? If so, what was your goal, your

process, and the emotion you carried behind it? Write down your answers.

## **Master Your Mindset**

1. When dealing with uncomfortable circumstances, make a choice to invest in yourself. What activity can you do to better yourself or to make yourself feel a little better?
2. When feeling frustrated, sit with the discomfort and observe it to ultimately uncover and address the real problem.

## **Some Extra Encouragement ...**

After completing the chapter exercise, you will likely see that your outcomes are choices. Choose to keep reading, and the process of creating change will get easier, later becoming second nature.

Now that you've identified your outcome choices, it's time to let go of some control. I'll show you how and tell you why this is useful in Chapter Three.

# Resources to Explore:

I highly recommend seeking out content from these additional authors, speakers, and professionals whose insights have been instrumental in my growth. Judging by their following, they have helped countless others as well. Become a seeker by beginning to research what interests you and what you're curious about. When you find someone or something that speaks to you, keep going. Read more books, listen to more videos, and research new interests as they come. You will end up stumbling upon answers you never knew you were searching for.

~Amy

Eckhart Tolle

Don Miguel Ruiz

Deepak Chopra

Dr. Joe Dispenza

Dr. Jordan Peterson

Dr. Jeffrey Schwartz

*Emotional Intelligence 2.0* by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves

*Soul Contracts* by Danielle MacKinnon

*Eat Right for Your Type* by Dr. Peter J. D'Adamo

*The F-Factor Diet* by Tanya Zuckerbrot, M.S., R.D.

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Jillz Guerin (for the ladies!)

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~Amy



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## About the Author



Amy Lee Miller is an entrepreneur, author, and *Success and Leadership* coach. She is passionate about self-development and helping others empower themselves.

While Amy has been writing all her life, *Ready Set Recruit—The Hiring Manager’s Guide to Recruiting with Confidence* was her first book, published in 2021, and inspired by her recruiting experience. She looks forward to publishing additional reference and motivational self-development books.

When not working or writing, you can find Amy running in Central Park or striking a pose in hot yoga. In her downtime, she enjoys stimulating conversation, being active, and snuggling with her adoring cat, Gilligan.

While Amy is fearless in pursuing her goals, you won’t catch her ice skating or riding a bike. She likes her feet planted firmly on the ground while keeping her head in the clouds. She lives in Manhattan.

**Subscribe with the link below to connect and stay updated on her future books.**

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