

Chapter 1

The Secrets Are Inside You

“All that a man achieves and all that he fails to achieve is the direct result of his thoughts.” – James Allen

I have long been convinced that an individual's self-talk determines the actions they will take (or fail to take) to achieve success in all areas of their life. Regardless of whether a person defines success as money, prestige, stopping a bad habit, finding a life partner, or graduating from high school, self-talk drives their actions (or inaction) and ultimately their success in that area.

Success is within reach of all of us if we channel our thoughts—our “inner conversations” with ourselves—and our subsequent actions toward the results we want to see in any given area.

When we truly believe in our ability to create a positive outcome in a particular area, we tend to follow through and take actions that will result in a positive outcome. On the other hand, when we do not believe, deep down, that good things will happen to us, we unintentionally find ways to sabotage ourselves. We often tend to blame others for our lack of positive results. But in actuality, our need to be right is a powerful need—so powerful that we unconsciously pursue the outcome we expect to get, whether it's to our advantage or not to do so, so that we achieve exactly that.

One of my cousins is not particularly athletic—and everyone knows it. Even as a young teen, she was rather unsure of herself on a two-wheeled bike. One day, while she and her family were on their annual weeklong vacation at a seaside resort, she set her sights on riding her bicycle. Though unsteady and shaky, she set out down a side street near our hotel. Before long, she noticed there was a vehicle along the street—just one vehicle, mind you—a pickup truck parked in her path about halfway up the block.

Instead of focusing on her goal—to navigate the street successfully—she started mumbling to herself, “Don't hit the truck, don't hit the truck, whatever you do, don't hit the truck...” Well, I'm sure you can guess what happened. Even with the entire width of the street to navigate and with no other traffic to negotiate around, she nailed that truck smack dab in the middle of the rear bumper!

This story has become somewhat of a joke in our family over the years, but most of us do the same thing my cousin did in other areas of our lives on a daily basis. We think about what we *don't* want rather than focusing on what we *do* want. If something troublesome or scary looms ahead, we worry relentlessly, lose sleep at night, or engage in pointless activities trying to relieve our tension. The problem is—these activities actually nurture our negative thoughts—and negative thoughts generate negative action or no action at all. When we allow a potential undesirable outcome to dominate our focus, we unintentionally act to make it happen.

This is a natural principle—the thoughts that are foremost in your mind bring forth actions, which in turn create results. If you plant corn seeds in your field, corn will grow there—you will not harvest tomatoes. If you sow wheat seeds, wheat will grow.

But even if you sow the seeds of what you want to harvest, without the help of sun and rain and fertile soil and regular weeding, you cannot achieve your maximum yield.

If you think about the ideas in this book, work through the exercises, and then use them to take positive actions in your daily life, you will see positive results that far exceed your expectations. The principles of positive self-talk and goal-directed action will work to your advantage at home, in your personal life, and in your career. You will begin an upward journey to success in all areas of your life.

Why Don't We Naturally Help Ourselves Succeed?

We developed most of our habits of thought and our attitudes when we were young—and we learned most of them from our parents. Intent on exploring our world as young children, we were enthralled with the magic of discovery and unaware of the potential hazards out there in the world. In order to keep us safe, our moms and dads set limits for us, but in doing so, they filled our heads with don'ts like these:

- ◆ Don't touch the stove;
- ◆ Don't talk to strangers;
- ◆ Don't speak until spoken to; and
- ◆ Don't cross the street without holding my hand.

Most of us can think of countless “don't” messages we received as small children, all intended to protect us from the world.

The habits of thinking those messages developed in you early in life led to certain habits of doing you probably still use today—they didn't expire just because you reached a particular age. You still look both ways (I hope) before crossing the street. You still use caution around the stove and other hot things. Your early conditioning created patterns of thought and action you still use regularly even though you don't consciously think about them.

But some of the messages we received in our childhood that are still retained deep in your memory bank today no longer serve you well. These same messages that protected you as a child now cause problems for you as an adult. Today you are old enough to assess your own risks and make your own decisions. But your parents' “don't” messages are still in there influencing your actions and decisions even when the information is no longer relevant.

You probably never heard your mother say, “OK, now you're old enough to talk to strangers, so go right ahead and talk with them,” did you? You've probably never actually been given permission to talk with strangers even though the kind of danger that

was present to you as a child talking to a stranger is no longer relevant to your life in the same way now that you are an adult.

What did you do with that habit of thought—the perception that strangers are somehow dangerous or you shouldn’t talk to them—now that you are an adult? How does it play out in your life today?

If you are like many of the salespeople and customer service reps I’ve worked with during the past 12 years, you still avoid talking to people you don’t already know. The phone feels heavy when you have to make those prospecting calls. If you are single and searching for Mr. or Ms. Right, the “don’t talk to strangers” message may still cause you to avoid the very situations that could enable you to meet that special someone.

The problem with those early “programmed” messages is that they stay in our subconscious mind, evolving from childhood “don’t’s” into adult “can’t’s.” That’s why I like to call them “secret messages.” These messages are generally below our level of conscious awareness, but they’re still sending us signals and influencing our behavior. We probably don’t even fully recognize those internal influences that are pulling us away from growth-oriented actions and limiting us. Those secret messages have been so internalized from our early conditioning that we are often unaware of the things we’re doing to stand in our own way. We see only the current results—whether good or bad—that our thoughts and actions are generating. But we can’t see how we can change those thoughts and actions and thus change the corresponding results.

Some experts in early childhood conditioning estimate 77 percent of the early messages we received were negative. It’s no wonder we get used to thinking, talking, and acting from an “I can’t” perspective rather than “I can.”

Right now you’re probably thinking, “So what? I have baggage—we all have baggage. I just deal with it.”

Well, let me ask you this: Why compromise? Why settle for less than the life you really want? Why don’t you achieve the success you deserve? Why not live up to your full potential?

Becoming aware of your internal programming, those “secret messages” we still harbor from our past and our own “self talk” that generates the results you see in your life, is the first step in improving your life.

The challenge, of course, is that your early programming—your predominant habits of thought as they are today, based on what you learned years ago—won’t change unless you *decide* to change them. Changing your thoughts and thought patterns requires an intentional effort. You’ve got to change those secret messages—disable those that no longer fit the life you want to have and reprogram some new ones into your subconscious

to help you achieve the life you want. But just deciding to change a limiting attitude isn't enough. If you truly want to remodel your mind, you must also take action. You need to work to replace obsolete habits of thought with ones that are more compatible with the person you want to become.

Shouldn't I Just Work On Being Happy With Who I Am?

My answer to this question is yes...and no. Before you can begin your journey to greater success, ask yourself these two big questions:

- ◆ Who am I now, and how can I feel more comfortable in my own skin?
- ◆ Who do I want to be, and where do I want to go?

You can be happy with who you are right now because each of us has a unique combination of natural gifts and assets—some physical, some mental, some social, and some spiritual. Each and every one of those gifts and assets have value.

Never judge your natural gifts and unique assets by someone else's standard in considering those that have value. Have confidence that *your* gifts and talents are already valuable in their own right. Developing a sense of confidence and grounding in your own identity is key to your success.

At the same time, don't shortchange yourself by settling for the status quo. Much of your potential for success will go untapped until you actively do something to unleash it. It's estimated that the *most* fully developed people only use about 25 percent of their potential. Some of us are only using 3-10 percent of what's inside us, ready and waiting to go to work for us. You might have the capabilities of a budding athlete, a musician, a scholar, or a community visionary hidden inside you just waiting to emerge if only you will let them be discovered.

I am endlessly amazed at the broad spectrum of people who undertake the task of defining and achieving success for themselves. Watching people and helping people develop themselves into "more of who they are" is one of my biggest passions. The people I work with aren't celebrities—they are just regular people like you and me. It amazes me to watch them grow and see how far they've come.

Here are a few examples of people I've worked with who have very different gifts. Each has developed her or his own idea of what it means to live a successful life and each is working daily to that end.

“Nell”

Nell is a high school geography teacher. She is bright and speaks two languages fluently, but her most immediately noticeable gift is her serenity. Her face has a glow and a gentle smile, and I’ve never heard her say anything unkind about anyone. Her family says they rely on her to be the level headed, stabilizing force in their household. Nell is focused on living a simple and spiritually based life.

I asked Nell one day where she gets her serenity. With a slow smile and a faraway look in her eyes, she told me about her memories of her grandmother baking bread. When Nell was just a girl, her grandmother told her how the long, rhythmic process of kneading the bread dough created time for prayer and meditation. When she was finished baking, Nell’s grandmother gave the fresh golden, warm loaves of bread away to other people.

She taught Nell her secret recipes and bread making techniques, and she used to take Nell along when she delivered her homemade bread to a sick neighbor or to a friend who needed a listening ear. Her grandmother’s customs became the model for Nell’s adult life.

Nell said her grandmother gave her a belief in every person’s unique contribution to the world. She said that almost every school year a few students approach her with the same question I asked her. They want to know how she got to be so peaceful. She tells them about the Bible and kneading bread.

“Jorje”

Jorje has the gifts of vision, persistence, and physical endurance. A record-setting salesman and an Inc. 500 business owner and father, Jorje has run several marathons, including the trek to the top of Pike’s Peak. All of his gifts worked together for him during the time-consuming, energy burning startup and growth phase of his company. They also sustained him through the grueling training sessions in preparation for his 26-mile races.

Jorje has the ability to “see” the results he wants to achieve and to get other people excited about achieving those goals, too. He selects key employees and surrounds himself with people who have one thing in common—a “blue flame” of motivation and a burning commitment. After some questioning, Jorje admits that he works constantly to develop his leadership skills so he can help their blue flames burn even hotter.

Jorje has passed along his “blue flame” and drive to achieve to his children. His daughter is a business owner in her own right, and his son is in college with one published music CD already to his credit. Jorje recently reached a long-term goal to sell

his successful business, and now he's focused on training for his next goal—to participate in the Iron Man (a marathon run *plus* a bike ride and distance swimming event).

“Maxine”

Maxine is gifted with an artistic sense, a love of animals (especially cats), and a green thumb. She has been a retail merchandiser for 20 years, but also has several consuming outside interests. She's always had a soft spot for homeless cats, and she can't stand by without at least putting food and water on her porch when she notices one in the vicinity. Her current household cat inventory is five, but she has often provided temporary housing (and paid large vet bills) for one or two strays until homes were found for them, as well. Active in her local animal rescue, Maxie rides three miles on her bike four days a week to go feed feral cats in the shelter. As part of her volunteer efforts, she also telephones pet food manufacturers to solicit donated food for the animals.

Artistically, Maxine specializes in making old things new again. She has created and sold bracelets and picture frames produced with antique buttons and recycled vintage handkerchiefs into decorator pillows and architectural elements into garden and home décor. A 1960's-era mannequin stands in the hallway of her home modeling an ever-changing wardrobe of vintage clothing.

Maxine's love of plants and natural things led her to create custom topiaries from unique dried plant materials and decorative pots. She commuted 1 ½ hours to attend the several courses she needed to earn her master gardener designation. Maxine says her next pursuit will be to start a garden design business using her artistic sense and knowledge of plants to create beauty for other people.

“Nell, Jorje, and Maxine”

The thing that impresses me most about Nell, Jorje, and Maxine is that each of them is intentionally active and working to become more of who they are and more of who they want to become. They are satisfied with their lives because they are celebrating their God-given gifts and developing them more fully. But they're also striving for more.

What If “Who I Am” Isn't Enough to Reach My Goals?

Most successful people have one thing in common: they are constantly working, learning, and trying to make themselves better at what they do and who they are. Truly

successful people are humble, because they never truly feel they've arrived—they think of their life as a process of continuous improvement. The successful people I know are rarely content with their gifts “as is.” They consider their natural talents a starting place from which to begin the process of becoming all that they want to be. Success at one level merely inspires them to raise the bar to a higher level. They climb one mountain and then see three taller ones in the distance—and they set out to climb them, too. Successful people progress toward the next mountain the same way they progress down a smooth sidewalk—one step at a time.

You may need to shift some of your thinking to achieve your goals. It can be tempting to focus on who you are today and to worry about all of your perceived shortcomings. To grow toward your goals, you need to consciously shift your focus to where you want to be tomorrow or next year. Based on your vision of tomorrow, figure out what kind of person you will need to be and what knowledge, what skills, and what habits you'll need to become that person. Your next step will be logical—to work, bit by bit, to acquire all that is necessary to get you from here to there.

But I Don't Know What I Want!

What if you don't know what you want? Many people have different reasons for not knowing what they want—or saying they don't know what they want. Some people simply haven't stopped long enough to think about it. They are so caught up in the momentum of daily life—pursuing whatever finds its way in front of them—that they've never considered what life might be like if they could create the life of their dreams. In some respects, this has served those people well—it has certainly kept them busy and in constant motion. What is less certain is whether that motion is also considered progress. Are you moving faster than ever before, but seeing little progress? Are you so busy with current day living that you've never considered anything else?

Some people can't define what they want, because they are forever focused on what *other* people want. They put their own wants and needs on the back burner to help parents, spouses, children, bosses, and countless others—and they've done it for so long that they've never really thought about what they could become. I'm not talking about situations where giving selflessly is the natural gift people are choosing to use. Those individuals seek and receive enjoyment from seeing others grow. I'm talking about the situations where someone *surrenders* his or her inner vision. When someone continually gives up their own dreams and goals to help others achieve theirs, they become very discontented with their life. Months and years pass, and it never seems to be the right time for them to take care of themselves or follow their heart—and resentment gradually builds beneath the surface.

You can only live your life according to someone else's agenda for so long—and the length of that time will vary from situation to situation. But at some point, your own wants and needs and your aspirations will start bubbling to the surface.

If you do things today that cause you stress, or if you're having a hard time feeling motivated, think about why. Is it simply because what you're doing isn't your idea? Are you following an agenda someone else created? Could it be that your life—and what you're doing with your life—is out of alignment with your assets and gifts? Do they conflict with your values? In Chapter 3, we're going to explore your assets, gifts, and values more in depth.

In the meantime, you can start to determine where you want to be by answering these questions:

- ◆ How do you define success? I'm not asking how society defines success, but how do YOU define it?
- ◆ If you were to describe the characteristics of a successful person, what would your list include?

The law of physics says that a body in motion seeks to stay in motion. The same is true of personal growth. When you set your first mini goals and achieve them, your confidence will propel you forward into more action and more success—on *your* terms.

I Have More Than Myself to Consider...

A president of a client company once told me that he believes in “evolution, not revolution.” No one is suggesting that you change your entire life or try to become a totally different person.

I am a strong believer in the concept of commitment. I believe your commitment to marriage, parenthood, and other key relationships should not be taken lightly, no matter what your individual aspirations. If you make a promise, large or small, do your darnedest to keep it. It's one of my own secret messages from childhood, but it's still one that I want to live by and cultivate. Am I successful in doing this 100 percent of the time? No, but because it is important to me, I work hard to live by that guiding philosophy more often than not. For instance, I avoid making casual promises—I prefer to surprise someone with something that pleases them.

For most people, the decision to be more “on purpose” in the pursuit of personal excellence does not require a total departure from their current life and connections. It doesn't mean that you turn to your family one day, suitcase in hand, and say, “Well, it's been real but not very,” then walk off alone into the sunset.

Becoming more of who you are more often involves a series of tweaks and small steps, all focused toward a defined vision. It doesn't mean you have to do a total overhaul overnight. The people currently in your life can help stabilize you and give you continuity, support, and structure while you grow.

My clients tell me their relationships with spouses, parents and children, and friends improved when they started living "on purpose." Their personal self-confidence helped them become more open, more understanding, and more accepting of the imperfections in others.

A few people may choose to take more dramatic action to begin living a life that feels more consistent with who they are—it all depends on where you are now and how far you want to travel.

I Know Where I Want to Be—What Should I Do Next?

In order to create different results in your life, you have to do different things. Did you ever try to enter a store or other public establishment and push and push on the door to no avail? No matter how hard you pushed, the door wouldn't budge. Then you looked down and saw the word "pull" painted in bold lettering about six inches from your nose! You changed your action; a light-handed pull on the handle opened the door, and you were in!

The same thing happens when you are working toward your goals. You are where you are today because of the actions you took up until now. If you're not achieving what you desire, take a look at what you're doing. Are you pushing against a door that just won't open? Unless you stop what you're doing and try something different, you will never get inside the building. There's a lesson to be learned here, and until you learn it, you are only wasting time and precious energy.

So how do you start developing new, effective actions and keep going until you reach your destination? I've been involved in many discussions about whether people get better results in self-improvement when they:

- ◆ *Think* themselves into new ways of *behaving*, or when they
- ◆ *Behave* themselves into new ways of *thinking*.

The two concepts are actually very much interrelated. Your thoughts drive your behavior, yet sometimes experimenting and testing the waters with your actions is what convinces you that a new way might work after all.

Your learned habits of thought—your secret messages—influence your actions. You react in certain ways to certain cues automatically, without consciously thinking

about them, because of the way you were conditioned. Imagine you are in a movie theater watching a suspense film. The heroine is alone in her house, it's nighttime, and a thunderstorm is brewing. The lighting is dim, and you can see the silhouettes of trees blowing violently outside the windows. The background violin music transitions from smooth and mellow to jagged and screechy—and it gets faster and louder. Then as the heroine walks down the hall toward a concealed doorway, you spontaneously shout, “Don't go in there!”

The actress can't hear you. You know it's only a movie, and that it's not real. In the plot, nothing has actually happened yet—but your pulse is racing, your tension is growing, and you call out to her anyway. The effects in the film work on your emotions and your behavior, because at some point, you learned what they are supposed to mean. You know that dark and stormy means threat and evil in the movies. Even though the villain can't pop out of the screen and get you, you react with jumps or shrieks of fear just the same.

To think your way into new actions, you must interfere with your automatic pattern of stimulus and response by *consciously choosing* a different, more effective action to use the next time a similar situation arises.

This concept reminds me of when I got my CPR certification in college so I could aid heart attack victims at my job if the need arose. Prior to taking this course, my conditioned reaction to health incidents of *any* severity was to run from the room and hide. Seriously. (I hope you don't think less of me for that!)

To change my actions—to become helpful in a crisis situation rather than running to hide—I had to consciously choose and learn a different, more effective action to use in this circumstance. So I took the class, and I practiced the chest compressions and rescue breathing in CPR training until I had it down perfectly. I have since forgotten some of the details of the training because it was so long ago, but to this day, I am better in crisis situations because I know what to do and can consciously choose to do it.

Acting your way into new habits of thinking reminds me of the motto for the State of Missouri: “Show me.” When you first begin a new venture or try something new, it's hard to feel confident. You can tell yourself, “Self, be confident!” but your self replies, “Yeah, right. I'm freaking out here!” right back at you.

You can use action to “shake up” your habits of thought by setting small, manageable action goals. With each small action goal you achieve, you prove to yourself that the bigger goal is also within reach. Each time you take it a little farther, stretching your capabilities inch by inch until the skeptic inside you becomes confident and self-assured.

Using both methods to develop yourself will increase your chances for good results—especially at the beginning when this is all new to you and you really need to see some positive growth and development to motivate you further along your path.

Daily positive self-talk will remind you of the actions you must take to achieve your goal. Self-talk can spur you on to take the *first* action, often the hardest step in the process.

On the other hand, when you start with “baby” action steps, you begin to accumulate small victories early on—and those victories will build your confidence.

As you progress further and reach some of the bigger milestones toward your goal, the positive results prove that you *are* capable of more than you previously thought possible. Your mind will begin creating new, energizing habits of thinking, and your progress will come progressively faster and easier.

The key to success is to make your thoughts and actions conscious—to take yourself off autopilot and *decide*. In personal growth, there is no such thing as trying. There is only deciding. There is a crucial difference between the two.

Have you or a loved one ever embarked on a “food intake management” program? What were the results? If *trying* to lose weight and *deciding* to lose weight were the same thing, I doubt there would be so many companies making billions of dollars selling diet programs and special foods!

How Can I Make Sure I’m Deciding, Not Just Trying?

There is a big difference between deciding and just trying.

In order to succeed, you must understand *why* you are working toward a particular goal. Your willingness to adapt your actions and try new things is far greater when you have a lot at stake. What is the benefit you seek by achieving this particular goal? Your reason for wanting to achieve a particular goal may be more money, time, toys, improved relationships, recognition, spiritual growth, better health, or any of countless other motivations. What’s in this for you? What will be the positive outcome for you if you achieve your goal? Determine what your true motivation is and you’re well on your way to making a conscious decision.

Some people are more motivated to change because they want to avoid negatives. Perhaps they feel at risk in a particular area—financially, physically, or emotionally. Sometimes people feel a greater sense of urgency and a commitment to change if something they value is in jeopardy. For instance, a person might not be very motivated to change their eating habits just to lose 20 pounds, but if a health condition dictated a change in eating habits to prevent premature death, most of us would comply!

Changing our lives—through changing our actions and changing our secret messages—isn't as easy as waving a magic wand and poof—your dream has come true! There are obviously some obstacles you will need to overcome to achieve your vision. If there were no such obstacles, you would already be enjoying the rewards of success you dream of.

Everyone—even abundantly gifted people—has obstacles to overcome. This is why it's so important to be very clear on what you want and why you want it. How badly do you want it?

If you allow obstacles to stop you, you're just trying. You have not yet *decided* to pursue your goal. When you consciously *decide* to pursue your goal, you will move forward *despite* the obstacles—and you'll figure out how to deal with them along the way.

Remember the three successful people earlier in this chapter? Each one has obstacles that stand in their way—but they don't let those obstacles *stop* them from moving forward.

- ◆ Nell has a 15-year-old stepson overseas who keeps getting into scrapes with the law. Nell's household often receives middle-of-the night phone calls—her stepson pleading to be bailed out of jail. She has to work at staying centered, and sometimes she bakes a LOT of bread!
- ◆ Jorje dealt with numerous business obstacles on his way to the Inc. 500. He overcame a lack of capital, slow sales cycles, new competitors, and poorly producing sales reps. He rarely mentions his ongoing struggle with dyslexia, which makes it difficult for him to read the business books he loves to devour, and his long work hours make it difficult for him to make time to train for his marathons.
- ◆ Maxine, the master gardener, just recently celebrated five continuous years of sobriety. She has to choose every day not to drink, and she gets up at 5 a.m. to fit a daily Alcoholics Anonymous meeting into her busy schedule.

When you are focused on a positive future outcome and committed to moving forward, you can weather whatever challenges come your way. Roadblocks that would have stopped you before become merely small detours or delays in your journey. People, whose petty annoying habits used to ruin your day, will no longer take you off track, because your eyes are trained on something bigger and more important.

You *can* do this. You *can* invent your future. You *can* create new results in your life. You *can* change your habits of thought and remodel your habits of action—if the future you envision is important enough to you.

Now is the time to draw upon your inner resources. Now is the time to draw upon the support system of people who love you. Now is the time to draw upon your faith—a faith that God promised to provide you in abundance—and all you have to do is ask.

Your thoughts today are creating your actions tomorrow, and your actions are carrying you closer and closer to your goal. Unlock the potential that's waiting inside you!

How Can I Become More of Who I Am?

By picking up this book, you're already headed in the right direction—toward changing and improving your life in some way—toward creating the life you want to live. Obviously, you're looking to make some changes in your life—whether that change is continuing personal growth and development to become the best you that you can be or whether that change is more specific and dramatic, like a change in career or lifestyle.

Congratulations on sticking with me this far. So far we've focused on developing an awareness about how your habits of thought are created and developed, explored your dreams for your future, and identified your desire to make some changes in your life to create that future of your dreams. You're already well on your way to seeing positive results because awareness, intent, and desire are the first steps to improving your life.

But while awareness, intent, and desire are critical to your success, they are not strong enough to overcome your secret messages on their own. We've already discussed how some of your early conditioning maintains the ability to influence your actions today—20, 40, or more years later—even without conscious thought.

In order to change those preprogrammed thinking habits, you will need to undergo a process of self-discovery, decision making, refocusing, planning, and disciplined action—to exchange automatic patterns of thinking and behaviors you have used up until now for new and conscious patterns of thinking.

This book will become your guide as you embark on a process to define a clear purpose and a destination for your life. As you become more focused and discover more about yourself, you will clarify this purpose and it will take shape in your mind—in a very detailed and real way. You will learn more about yourself—including why you selected this particular destination. This is likely to be a rather long trip—getting from where you are now to the destination of your choosing. Your high level of motivation now will help you sustain your energy for a trip that might contain roadblocks and detours. Once you decide on your destination, you will plot a route toward it—a route that might be somewhat similar to, or may be very different from, the road you are on today.

Ultimately, your ability to reach your destination and create the kind of life you want will directly correlate to whether or not your daily actions are consistent with the outcome you desire. Attaining the big dream will become a matter of completing the goal-focused items on your “To Do” list. It may take a while before you see results—not all actions result in an immediate payoff. And it will take time for you to think, decide, and learn along the way. You won’t get there overnight, but you *can* get there.

This book contains proven concepts to help you learn to develop and live the life you want. It will help you understand your own secret messages more fully and show you how they are impacting your life today. It will provide you the opportunity to uncover your natural gifts and assets. It will teach you how to build upon your strengths to create a foundation for your future success. It will help you consciously acknowledge the value of what you already have going for you so that you will feel more confident and able to take new actions into uncharted territory.

I’ve developed a simple acronym to help you remember the keys to unleashing your potential and creating the life you desire. I call it my SECRETS—and I want to share those secrets with you so that you can begin today—to embark on your journey toward the destination of your choosing.

S – Secret messages are inside you, influencing your actions.
E – Each of your gifts and assets is waiting to work for you.
C – Create your future by visualizing it in detail.
R – Rewards and consequences are what motivate you to act.
E – Each obstacle has a solution when you use your creativity.
T – Talk to yourself to shape your habits.
S – Step-by-step action is what makes your dreams come true.

Together we will begin that journey—a journey of self-discovery and learning that begins with and inside of you—for that is where the SECRETS really lie. This book will help you travel your own unique path, develop the thought processes necessary to create the future you want, design a step-by-step action plan to advance you on your journey, and take the actions that will make your fondest dreams come true!

Let us begin together—with you. Because the SECRETS are inside you.