

Chapter 1 - Embracing Light

- Do not fear awakening the painful parts of your narrative. Some of the greatest life lessons come from the deepest hurts.
- What do you fear most in life? Discovering and understanding the answer to this question can unlock a lot about those day-to-day surface struggles you may deal with.
- Words create worlds. The words you speak within yourself tend to create or influence the world you exist in. The good news: If your words support an environment of pain and chaos, then you can work to master a narrative that supports joy and peace.
- Listen to your narrative for any negative inner “I am” statements. They almost always point to the work you need to embrace to better value yourself and support a healthy belief system.
- Do not fear your fears. They are most often pointing to areas of unresolved trauma or pain. One of our greatest fears is the unknown, so confronting (making known) your fear narrative is your best first step in defeating it.

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- Hate is not something you can hold on to without some level of pain or damage. It will invade every area of your life. If you deal with hate from past trauma, seek help with processing it through.
- If you struggle with anxiety or other mental health issues, be brave and look behind the curtain. You may find destructive internal narratives from your past creating or exacerbating those struggles. Getting to the root of the issue could help free you in ways you never thought possible.
- Self-care is imperative to have the strength to master a healthy internal narrative. Get an accountability partner to help keep you moving forward.
- Shame and destructive negative self-evaluation may mean you are stuck in survival mode, especially if you have past unresolved trauma. Get professional help from a counselor or life coach who has been trained in trauma recovery.
- Knowing something rarely sparks positive action and growth. It takes belief to create the movement necessary to live a life of balance, peace, and joy.

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- Do not be like the frog in the pool. Be aware of your surroundings. Things you avoid or give little thought to may be there to provide you with forward movement on the path you desire.
- Sometimes, our safe spaces are not the best spaces for us. Listen for statements in your internal narrative that are negative, lacking in hope, and keeping you in a box. You may be supporting your own bondage.
- Do not be too quick to avoid or medicate away your pain. It is often trying to tell you that something needs your attention. You may not like it. It may be uncomfortable at first. But listening to your pain may lead you out of a place of bondage and into freedom.
- Acceptance is not saying that everything is okay the way it is. It is also not saying that what happened in the past is okay. The act of acceptance is the conscious act of acknowledging the reality of where you are in the present moment. It is an imperative step for the start of any successful journey.
- You have value because you are you. The phrase “You are enough” is not just some catchy phrase for a meme or a coffee cup. It is the truth. Be careful not to look to the outside world to fulfill your intrinsic needs such as joy, peace, and self-worth.

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- Embrace the power of “It is what it is.” Let it help focus only on the things you can control. Let it help you embrace the moment you are in, even if it is painful. This moment is the only one you can control.
- Speak your truth. It may hurt at first, but remember, it is a healing pain. The pain and bondage in our story only have power in the darkness. Bring them to light and you begin to regain power over your story.
- Words create worlds. I may repeat that mantra one hundred times before we finish this journey. Much of what we struggle with has its power in hacked narratives inside us. Remember: if words can create painful and scary worlds, then they can be used to dismantle those worlds and create new ones full of freedom, joy, and peace.
- Perfection is a myth. Stop spending all your energy on trying to be perfect, or worse yet, staying stuck because you are waiting for perfection. Instead, use all that energy to embrace your next best step and become better than you were yesterday.
- Embrace the truth of the monsters, triggers, and facades that are holding you in bondage. You created them with your internal narrative about the painful experiences you had. Smile at the monster, take ownership of the narrative that feeds your triggers, stop polishing the facade you think the world wants to see, and just be you.
- If belief in yourself has been a battle, then work to believe in yourself for this moment and then repeat ad infinitum. Embrace vulnerability as the most courageous thing you can do to move into the life of freedom and peace you desire and deserve.

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- Embrace the wonder in your journey of healing. Be amazed by the new and mysterious things you can learn in the moment.
- Stop living as if your past is still happening to you. Yes, healing can be painful and scary, but remember, some of your greatest growth comes from those things you feared and avoided.
- Is it true? Is it happening now? Is there value in accepting or wrestling with this? Make sure what you allow in does two things: teaches you something and moves you forward.
- Allow your healing to be the legacy that redeems your past.
- The only way better will come is to believe in it even when, in that moment, things are not great.
- Be aware of your vision. You will always find those things you seek for the hardest. Be sure they are things that help you become a better version of yourself.

Chapter 6 - Embracing Light

- Embrace your inside voice, pain, and all. It is your ticket to freedom and healing.
- Remember: Complaining is like trying to dip a bucket of water with a fishnet. You will look silly, put in a lot of effort, and have little to show for it.
- Feelings are not facts. They are not truth. They are feelings. Listen to them, learn from them, or choose to let them go, but never take them as the gospel truth about who you are.
- Trauma demands to be heard and will continue to be a prominent part of your narrative until you face it down. Your story longs for resolution. You are more powerful than you can imagine. Face it down, learn from it, and let it go.
- If you do not like where you are in life, stop and listen. Your internal dialogue determines your external direction.
- Be intentional with your thought life. Be present with it. Journal, talk to a friend, and/or seek out a professional. Whatever you do, be in control of it. Remember, we write our stories, or they write us.

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- Look before you leap. Be sure the next lily pad you are jumping onto is leading you toward your goals (i.e., your best self and not further into bondage).
- Always and never are never always true. Let go of terminal language.
- Avoid would've, could've, should've, and what-if. Let go of time-travel language. You will find freedom, healing, and growth in your present, in your right now.
- You cannot go back and change your past, but you can bring it into your present and learn from it so that you can change yourself now.
- Be still. Be here. Be well. Make these daily habits.

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- Be brave. Courage and being afraid can coexist. Believe in yourself for this moment and then keep repeating. That is bravery. Courage is not being fearless; it is never giving up.
- Do the thing you fear, and fear will die. Step into the painful narrative. You wrote it and believed in it. That is powerful. Now, just reclaim that power for good.
- Ask yourself, does my internal belief system move me forward or hold me in bondage? Challenge every belief that does not teach you, grow you, and move you forward.
- Be real with yourself. Embrace vulnerability.
- Love yourself. Do not wait for you to feel like things are perfect to show yourself some love. Are those you love always perfect? No. But you still love them. Do the same for you.
- Embrace your story. Embrace your moments. Work today to be a better version of yourself than you were yesterday. Plan and take your best next step, then repeat.

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- Hunger or craving is more than just your body's need for food and water. Be aware of the cravings of your heart, soul, and mind as well.
- Make conscious and intentional efforts to master your desires, or they will master you.
- What brings you passion? What sets your soul on fire? Do not fear pursuing the answer to those questions. Instead, fear living a life where you never feel the passion.
- Do your choices sustain you in the pursuit of your focus and passion, or do they hinder you?
- Be sure you manage your expectations well. They are meant to be your guides, not your god.
- Pursue flow in all your choices: an energized focus (or clarity), full involvement (or presence), and enjoyment in your moment (or joy).

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- Wherever you are, be all there. Be fully present with your moments and strive to find contentment in each moment you experience. It will make all the difference in your life.
- Chaos cannot coexist with contentment. Choose to be thankful. Bathing your heart in contentment can help give you the mental and emotional strength to rid your life of any chaos that exists.
- Every day, identify three things you are thankful for. Think about them. Name them out loud. Journal about them. Start with a goal of doing this for thirty days. Building intentional thankfulness into your everyday life can completely change the way you think, act, and feel.
- Believe in the power of contentment in every area of your life. Actively sowing seeds of thankfulness help to nourish the heart, mind, and soul with the power of positivity. Negativity is a habit shared by many who have experienced trauma. The good news is that positivity can be equally habit-forming, and it starts with a thankful heart.
- Can you identify things to be thankful for, even in the darkest parts of your trauma narrative or painful past experiences? Being able to do this gave me a fresh perspective on the bondage I was in and gave me the strength to challenge my monsters and defeat my limiting beliefs.

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- Be awed, with great focus and frequency. Look at the world in ways that stir wonder and occasionally blow your mind. It is good for your heart, mind, soul, and body.
- Listen, most often with no agenda. Invite the world around you to enter your consciousness. Be present and in touch with your surroundings. That will help hone your listening skills and give you strength when you are attacking those negative internal narratives and limiting beliefs.
- Breathe. Realize the power of focused and intentional mindful breathing. One to two times a day will relax you, help you focus better, and help to keep you in that flow.
- Slow down. No matter how fast you move through life, you have 168 hours in a week. Stop working for the weekend, and instead put your energy into embracing your moments, every single one of them.
- Use mindfulness to better embrace your right now, this present moment. That is the only place you can find yourself, pursue freedom and healing, and experience peace and calm. Let go of was and not yet, or they will rob you of your now.

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- An unbroken shovel digs a hole better than a broken one. The same goes for you. You deserve to embrace life whole and full of joy and peace. Until you have that freedom, there is nothing more important to wrestle with.
- Avoidance of your own needs will bring chaos where you need clarity. It bears repeating: Self-care is not selfish.
- The only dumb question is the one not asked. Embrace the process of QEDLG.
- Be brave enough to ask yourself deep, probing questions, and be vulnerable enough to never accept easy, surface-level answers.
- Busyness and being involved in everything that crosses your path do not equal success. Conversely, it can slowly tear down your world.
- Do not live from the mindset of the worrier. Fear will get you nothing you deserve and everything you don't need. When you decide to face your fears, they immediately begin to lose power.
- Wrestle with those things you can control and influence. Let everything else go. Make sure the conquests you strive for help you be a better version of yourself.
- When charging the hills in life, ask yourself, "Is this a hill I am willing to die on?"

Chapter 13 - Embracing Light

- Authentic compassion requires being in flow. We must have clarity and focus, be fully present in the moment, and experience joy to engage one another at the point of need. We all hunger for it. We all need it.
- Accept people for who they are—people. There is no need for labels to keep you safely separated from others. That does not mean you have to accept or agree with all they believe or stand for. It means you acknowledge you are both flawed, imperfect, and in need of being heard, valued, and understood.
- Hate and fear will always block your ability to truly know intimacy or compassion for others and yourself. If you think you lack intimacy in life, look at what fear might keep you from being free to experience it.
- Redemption, renewal, and restoration bring freedom to our souls. You deserve it, regardless of whether you feel that way. If you do not feel that presence in your life, connect with someone who will help you on that journey.
- This kind of HELL is not a bad place. Be sure all your days include a good hug, eye contact with another human, a good belly laugh, and the experience of truly being present and listening to those engaging you.

Chapter 14 - Embracing Light

- Find your place in life's symphony and embrace your part like that triangle player.
- View your life like the whistling trash collector. If you look for the bad around you, you will find it. If you look for the good, you will find it too. It is all about perspective.
- Authentic community is about the heart of the people, not that everyone looks, thinks, and acts as you do. The greatest expressions of a community are made up of a diverse mix of people committed to compassion and seeking common ground.
- Too many people in today's culture are all about building walls and retreating in fear. Be bold and courageous and, instead, build longer tables. Nurture the community around you.
- Be secure in communing with yourself so that you do not look to your community to fulfill things that are your responsibility. No other person can "complete" another.
- Whether you are introverted or extroverted, your soul is wired for belonging, to know acceptance. Knowing you have acceptance improves your mental and physical health.
- Love really is what it's all about. Sure, it can hurt sometimes. But never experiencing love hurts much worse. You were wired for it. Love others the way you deserve to be loved. Oh, and don't forget to strive to love yourself as well. What is something you love about yourself?
- You have a God-given purpose that you were wired for. What are your talents? What is your giftedness? What hill would you charge up and be willing to die for? Think about that thing that sets your soul on fire. Living in your purpose nurtures flow in all areas of your life.

Chapter 15 - Embracing Light

- You have a better day when you add in a few minutes of dancing.
- Your life rhythm is only found in one place, your present moments. Do not let your past or your future rob you of the beautiful experience of your present.
- We live in a world where many people are barely treading water. Be sure your presence is like a life vest and not a cement block.
- Burn the boxes of limitations you place on yourself and others. Embrace the life around you anew each day. Be careful to not let stereotypes and assumptions rob you of amazing connections with others.
- Embrace a little whimsy in your life. There is no need to be serious twenty-four hours a day.
- Look for opportunities to connect to others through circumstances, common ground, and in the community where you live.
- Intimate connections with others are like oxygen to your soul.
- Above all else, work hard to know yourself.