

Passages for...  
Whatever is Needed  
Isaiah McGee, C.Ht.



# CONFESSIONS of a Therapist



**CONFESSIONS OF A THERAPIST** is your reference manual for life. Simultaneously inspiring and pragmatic, this exciting new handbook for living lays out how to successfully navigate a range of issues, including relationships, financial challenges, self-esteem dynamics, empowering confidence, sustaining focus, and more. Distilling years of a successful therapeutic practice into an insightful, supportive, and occasionally humorous compilation of how-to steps, introspective meditations, and real-life accounts of empowerment in action, Isaiah McGee will jump-start your resolve to live a life of increasing satisfaction and purpose. There is a victor residing within the essence of your true identity, and **CONFESSIONS OF A THERAPIST** is here to help you tap into it, starting now.

“Whether you are looking to have a shift in your relationship with yourself or another, transition into a new career, or attain a health/fitness goal, you can reclaim your Truth. *Confessions of a Therapist* can help you do so, replacing despair with hope, blame with responsibility, and resignation with passion.”

– DR. NANCY IRWIN, AUTHOR OF *YOU-TURN: CHANGING DIRECTION IN MIDLIFE*

“In *Confessions of a Therapist* Isaiah explains the emotional, mental and physical responses that keep us stuck in small and limited ways of thinking and deftly guides us to seeing more expansively. This book teaches us how to live free and be happy.”

– LIZ PHILOPOSE, ALSP, PH.D., PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

“Isaiah presents opportunities for our true self to shine throughout his *Confessions of a Therapist*. This is highly recommended reading. Wherever you are in your life this book can inspire and provides concrete steps leading to greater insights. While everyone will find a favorite metaphor or chapter, I look forward to finding more favorites as I revisit this wonderful book.”

– VINCENT M. BRYSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LOS ANGELES RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE

“Long ago I recognized Isaiah’s depth of commitment to his therapy practice and genuine dedication to assisting others in their journey to wholeness in body, mind and spirit. Those who find their way to this potent, life-enhancing work are indeed fortunate.”

– MICHAEL BECKWITH, AUTHOR OF *THE ANSWER IS YOU*



ISIAH MCGEE, C.Ht., Isaiah McGee, C.Ht., is a hypnotherapist with an active practice in Southern California. In his capacity as founder of A Conscious Life Enterprise, Isaiah provides global outreach through empowerment webinars, lectures and workshops. A sought-after contributor to various online publications and blogs, he is also published in numerous national and international publications, including *Awareness Magazine*, *Science of the Mind*, and *Body Mind Spirit Magazine*. Isaiah is committed to non-profit volunteerism and regularly contributes his skills to the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center as well as the Reading to Kids program. Finding both inspiration and rejuvenation in nature, he spends much of his free time running and hiking. Isaiah can be reached directly at [consciouslifeiam@yahoo.com](mailto:consciouslifeiam@yahoo.com) or through his website [www.aconsciouslifeflow.com](http://www.aconsciouslifeflow.com).



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# CONFESSIONS

## OF A THERAPIST

**Passages for . . .  
Whatever's Needed**

Isaiah McGee, C.Ht.



A Conscious Life Publishing  
Los Angeles, California

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Needed by Isaiah McGee, C.Ht.

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# FOREWORD

When I first met Isaiah McGee years ago when he came to me as a patient, I knew I had found a kindred spirit. It was abundantly clear, and immediately so, that he should be a therapist! He has the gift. I was impressed by his intelligence, his insightfulness, and articulate manner. You will see all of that, and more (like humor), in these pages. His voice is strong, yet gentle... ideal for effecting positive change in one's mindset.

My personal belief is that we are all born to win; we learn to self-criticize, abuse, sabotage, etc. And whatever we've learned, we can un-learn. Think about it: every precious baby knows he/she is cute enough, smart enough, lovable enough, good enough. And that is the Truth. Yet at some point the world steps in with judgment and says "You shouldn't....you can't....you'll never....you're not...." and we believe it. These limiting beliefs can feel like reality, and indeed can become self-fulfilling prophecies. Yet they are not the Truth.

Whether you are looking to have a shift in your relationship with yourself or another, transition into a new career, or attain a health/fitness goal, you can reclaim your Truth. Confessions can help you do so, replacing despair with hope, blame with responsibility, and resignation with passion.

“People are disturbed not by the events that happen to them, but by their view of these events.” This was written by the great Greek Stoic philosopher Epictetus more than 2,000 years ago. You’d think we’d get it by now, wouldn’t you? The vignettes in this book are pieces of evidence to support that belief, giving readers a formula to set themselves free, stand in their Truth, and become a “Conscious Opportunist.”

To your Greatness,  
Dr. Nancy B. Irwin

Author of *YOU-TURN: CHANGING DIRECTION IN  
MIDLIFE*

# PREFACE

The book before you has been many years in the making, although I didn't know it. As a dedicated C.Ht. (Certified Hypnotherapist) with an active practice, I'd been contemplating my desire to write a book for a number of years based on the ever-increasing insights that experience and dedication to my therapeutic practice has afforded me.

However, as many an aspiring and published author will attest, there simply never seemed to be the opportunity (or, more to the point, the focus) to commit the time required to render musings into book form. I have at least a dozen titles on my laptop captured from deep yet fleeting impulses to finally hammer out that much-considered tome of support and empowerment. I have even written a paragraph or two for a few of those titles, and I continue to regard all of them as potentially useful to readers.

This is not to say that I have lacked discipline and motivation, or that my penchant for the written word, while somewhat restricted, has been suffocated. I've had the pleasure and honor of being a published writer for over two decades, sharing many articles on self-empowerment in popular local, national, and international publications.

In the burgeoning years of my practice, I began producing a hard-copy empowerment newsletter that I'd send to the many readers gained through my published writing efforts and growing private practice. (Those hard-copy newsletters are now collectors' items). In recent years those bi-monthly missives of empowerment reach my client base and readership via an online newsletter and blog.

The fall of 2011 became the tipping point for committing to fulfilling the promise of a book when yet another client during a session wondered aloud to me when would I have a book available of the potent insights revealed during private sessions and via my blog and newsletter communications. This client's request triggered a sudden epiphany in my consciousness: the book was essentially already written! The idea to cull newsletter and blog articles into a compilation resource of empowerment and support came into focus. I named this book idea *Confessions of a Therapist* and I am enthused and humbled to share this work with you.

The mission that informs my work as a hypnotherapist and, by extension, this book, is to bring what is considered esoteric concepts and ideas out of the philosophic closet and into a pragmatic context of thought and action enabling personal growth to be anchored in actionable means and an understanding that shifts the paradigm of self-help to true self-empowerment.

To that end, some of the passages in this book may bring up as many questions for you as they answer. In the scheme of my intentions, this is a good thing because it means entrenched ways of perceiving situations are being challenged in a way that promotes reevaluation of rote, subconsciously programmed ideas and ways of thinking. Broadly, my inten-

tion is for Confessions to become your consistent source of motivating empowerment that you turn to, as well as return to, in moments of reflection, triumph or crisis.

Ultimately, this book is about dominion; your sovereign and appropriate control over your mind, your physical body, and the body of your affairs. Authentic dominion begins with the realization that you have always been, and will always be, more than the sum total of your experience. Experience, circumstances, and conditions can shape the mind's perception but they cannot compromise the spirit's desire or capacity to soar above and beyond any imposed limitations.

As I readied *Confessions of a Therapist* for publication, I found myself unexpectedly inspired and supported by writings I hadn't visited in some time. I trust that you find inspiration as well.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

**C***onfessions of a Therapist* is intended to be a resource manual for living. The book covers a wide range of the human experience from self-esteem dynamics to relationship matters to insightful takes on success and failure to methods for maintaining motivation and commitment to living life with purpose and zeal. The passages in *Confessions* reflect an array of narrative formats from “how to” steps of practical application to empowering passages of motivating inspiration to first-person slices of personal experience to actual “Q&A” letters from clients and blog readers.

Each passage stands alone in its treatment of the topic it illumines, yet there is a continuity of informed insight throughout the book as it serves as emancipating leverage for gaining dominion in one’s life and affairs.

Read passages of *Confessions* over and over. Keep it near your night stand, in your car, at the office, in your purse, briefcase, mobile device, or book-bag and you will find it renews itself with each reading. Its meaning and personal relevance becomes richer and truer as the mind continues to mine the inexhaustible reality of your magnificent identity which it endeavors to illumine.

It is expected that certain passages will have particular resonance for you as they become your “go to” passage references, continually revealing subtler insights with each reading

or serving as a reset for perception that tends to stray away from optimum alignment for well-being.

Essentially, use this book in the most intuitive manner that resonates with your particular station in life, mood or experience. I look forward to receiving pictures of worn, dog-eared copies of *Confessions* as it supports your desire to be authentically yourself!

# INTRODUCTION

A client I've known for over a decade once dubbed me the "Forensic Scientist of Self-Empowerment" as the singular intent of my therapy and writings is to reveal the unseen evidence informing perceptions and behavior so that one can masterfully gain the insightful upper hand in managing life and affairs.

Confessions pulls away the curtain from the behavioral conditioning that, subjectively interpreted, forms the constricting narrative of one's life. At the heart of Confessions is an objective view of the mechanics of experiential associations that limit one's unconditioned sentient nature and how to free that conditioned nature in one's living.

The consequences of releasing increasing constriction from one's worldly and personal subjective narrative is a greater license to accommodate the potential of one's fundamental capacity for love, creativity, abundance, health, and overall well-being.

Whether you start Confessions from the beginning, select a passage that strikes you, or intuitively open the book to a passage (seemingly) "randomly" you are sure to find yourself reading exactly what serves your "moment of now."

Here are my confessions...

# SECTION I

## POWER OF PERCEPTION

“We tend to be doubtful of our capability,  
and resolute in our perceived shortcomings.  
Your capabilities will not become valuable  
to your situation until they become  
valuable to you.”



## NOTHING TO UNDO

**A**n interesting thing happened on my way to the technological “dark side” of mobile communication when I recently switched from a Blackberry to an iPhone. In my bumpy transition to reprogram my brain to now process a different means of mobile communication, I’ve been periodically receiving what appear to me to be spontaneous screen messages from my new tech apparatus indicating that there is “nothing to undo.”

Of course, as I become more familiar with the logic of my new tech mistress, I will come to understand what prompts this periodic emission. During this maiden voyage into the iPhone universe, these frequent notifications that there is “nothing to undo” have been interpreted as a profound reminder to let go. To let go of any desire to “course correct” any unsatisfying experiences from the past.

This profound reminder has been particularly poignant during my present visit to my home town of Detroit, Michigan. Yes, I am presently writing this inspired missive in the hallowed halls of the Detroit Metro Airport. I am awaiting

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my departure from what, in fairer economic times, used to be known as the Motor City as I continue another leg of a recharging and long-overdue vacation.

As anyone might typically experience when visiting the environs of their formative years, I am flooded with memories, both good and not so good, of my past that have impacted the winding road of a life in progress. The letting go reminder, courtesy of my tech mistress, has anchored my awareness in the profound realization that the past only serves to bring you to the present. “Nothing to undo” reminds me that holding onto any past grievances, resentments, judgments, blame or regrets, however justified, is futile.

As the admonition, “there is nothing to undo,” is deeply heeded, it releases the cement-like attachment that past infractions to one’s well-being can sustain. As you remember that there is nothing you can undo, you increase your capacity for releasing the pain, guilt, remorse, judgment, and regret that collectively paralyze growth, progression, and your capacity for living in the Now. You may indeed make amends for past acts informed by lesser wisdom. However, to lament chronically any past decisions, mistakes, or infringements on your well-being, drains you of the precious energy, drive, and focus needed to make the best of how your past has shaped you for the Now.

As you remind yourself there is nothing to undo, allow the freedom of that kind of letting go to serve to fuel engagement in the Now. There is nothing that fretting over the past does that your full availability to the present cannot better resolve. After all, it is the Now that is alive and active and, therefore, needs all of you as present as possible for its use.

“There is nothing to undo.”



## 4 SOLUTIONS TO SOLVE ANY PROBLEM

**W**hen challenges confront us, we often ask, “How am I going to manage this?” Or perhaps we avoid a challenge because we do not want to ask that very question. This typical approach to matters solidifies circumstances whereby growth does not occur and status quo becomes chronic. However, there is a different question you should ask yourself when faced with challenge, and it can lead to greater resolution.

The question you want to ask yourself when confronted with intimidating matters is, “How can I see myself as more?” Matters are intimidating to you largely because your perception of yourself is less than the matter you are confronting. You see your problem as bigger than your capacity. You never realize that there is one dynamic which, when understood, enables you to resolve almost any challenge you confront: your problem is finite, your self-perception is not.

For example, if you need a certain amount of money, that is simply the amount of money needed – period. How-

ever, your perception of how capable you are to generate said amount is entirely subjective. No outside entity or force can control your self-perception, and the degree to which you allow outside circumstances to influence your self-perception is entirely up to you.

Of course, you cannot snap your fingers and resolve a problem. However, your self-perception of your capability does, indeed, promote or hinder a resolution. Here are four direct means of successfully approaching a problem that, collectively, leave you empowered in the process:

## **Solution #1 – Realize That Circumstance Does Not Trap; Perception Does**

If you feel trapped by a situation, realize that feelings follow perception. Feelings are not abstract; they need a perception to induce them. When conventional wisdom reflects limited options to a challenge, inform yourself that there is a viable option. Do not say to yourself, “There is a viable option” as an idle affirmation, however. Rather, you are intentionally adjusting your perception so that you promote a feeling of opportunity rather than a feeling of constriction. If circumstances influence you to feel (believe) that you are trapped, then the subsequent worry acts as metaphorical blinders blocking your perception to opportunity, motivation and solutions. On the other hand, if you mentally align with the idea that a viable solution exists, then you increase your mental availability to suitable opportunity.

## **Solution #2 – List Deductions**

We all love listing deductions for tax purposes because that means more is remaining. More money in our pocket, as it were. Use this same tactic for self-inventory. Begin a list deducting ten ways in which you underestimate yourself. This may sound a bit strange, but remember the goal is like a tax deduction: you want for there to be more of your capability remaining! When you recognize that you are more capable than you realized, you become, in your own perception, equal to or even greater than the size of your challenge.

## **Solution #3 – Own It!**

We tend to be doubtful of our capability, and resolute in our perceived shortcomings. Begin owning whatever capabilities you recognize about yourself. Your capabilities will not become valuable to your situation until they become valuable to you. Begin an inventory of your assets in any and every context you can think of (internal, external, circumstantially), and then intentionally and dutifully continue to focus on those assets until you begin to deprogram from the mental propaganda inferred from present constriction.

## **Solution #4 – Allow But Do Not Wallow**

Permit yourself to be daunted by seemingly overwhelming challenges, but do not wallow in those feelings. Allowing yourself to be daunted by a problem permits time for the psyche to acclimate to an adequate solution. To wallow in feelings of

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intimidation, however, creates a “set-point” in the psyche. This normalizes the feelings of intimidation, which then convince you of inadequacy within yourself. Circumstances that are limiting become chronic because you unconsciously lull yourself into thinking that the limiting circumstances are permanent and, erroneously, that they reflect personal inadequacy.

These four solutions are not about having a positive attitude. They are truly about the power of perception, self-perception to be exact. After all, you can have merely a positive attitude while still underestimating your capacity, and thereby you will achieve merely minimal results. Collectively, these four solutions amount to increasing your self-perception, which decreases your perception of the problem confronting you. Your single advantage over any challenge before you is to know that the challenge is finite and your perception is not.

Never forget that you are more than what has happened to you.



## OF AGREEMENTS AND CONSEQUENCES

Approximately 70 countries participate in Day Light Saving Time. This semi-annual time change the world enacts each year always elicits a knowing chuckle from me as I witness the most explicit example of an arbitrary “agreement.” We have collectively agreed to “move time” backward or forward at a particular moment every single year. There are enormous global consequences that ensue from this simple, intentional moving of a clock hand. When not taken for granted, there is a profound life-altering realization that can be gleaned from this arbitrary agreement.

The start of the business day, as well as the timed routines of daily life, are adjusted according to this backward and forward time agreement. Yet, frankly, we do not actually “move time,” but rather, we adjust our collective representation of what a particular time of “now” means. Today this hour means one time and, voilà, tomorrow this same moment of the day

## *Power of Perception*

means a different time. Speaking of time, the subject of this little treatise might cause you to think I have a lot of it on my hands, but stay with me and you will understand the enormous impact this occurrence can have on changing your life.

Consider the fact that this arbitrary time agreement impacts every activity of your life, yet the reality of existence itself has not been altered one bit. Of course, we know that the impetus for changing the clock is to align with the daylight adjustment of a revolving planet. However, the fact cannot be denied that everything in daily life adjusts to this arbitrary agreement. Everything. Think about that. Everything adjusts, accommodates, and is impacted upon an agreement.

As with the daylight saving time agreement, we make unconscious “agreements” throughout life. The consequences of these unconscious agreements require our lives to adjust and accommodate. When you consciously or unconsciously “agree” that your personal economy is dictated by the general economy, your life adjusts to accommodate that “agreement.”

When past or present relationship struggles prompt an unconscious agreement with the belief or idea that a harmonious relationship is tragically elusive, your life adjusts to accommodate that agreement. When you agree that there is a precipitous decline in health as you age, the body adjusts and accommodates that agreement.

Still think a passage on daylight saving is akin to navel gazing?

And here’s the kicker: just as it is our behavior, and not time itself, that is manipulated when we “fall back,” all these unconscious agreements are not real or true either! And while they alter behavior, attitudes, receptivity and possibilities, they do not alter the potential of life itself.

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Begin right now to sever those unconscious agreements! Sever the mental agreement to struggle financially because the economists say so! Sever the agreement to participate in the “substantial decline” of health and vitality as you age! Sever the agreement that love is hard to find! Sever the agreement that it is too late for your life to soar! Sever the agreement that says your past determines your future! Sever the agreement that says your business must struggle during these times!

Just as time is not truly manipulated when we turn the clock back, life, in and of itself, is not subject to the limitations of our agreements either – only our behavior is. From this profound inner reset, you will find that you no longer fall back from obstacles to your desires, but instead, spring forward with greater freedom of possibility! (Sorry, I could not resist pun.)

What agreements are you unconsciously maintaining right now?

What specific “agreements” will you now sever?



## THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL CHANGE

**Y***ou have a mind; you are not a mind. You have a body; you are not a body. You have emotions; you are not emotions.*

The deeper your understanding is of the above three statements, the greater your capacity to direct your life. Most individuals identify as their body faculties, thinking of themselves as the composite of the mental, physical and emotional state of their being. This leads to being wholly subjective with whatever state those faculties happen to reflect. In other words, one tends to believe that the mindset, physical condition, or emotional state that one is experiencing is a definitive statement of who one is.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

The reality is that any state the faculties of your being display at any given time is simply the state that you are witnessing, not the state you are. It is the subtlety of this distinction that causes most people to be stooped into thinking that they ARE what they witness about themselves. There is no

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actual condition of existence that is reflected through the subjective filter of the mental/emotional faculties, and any such perceived condition is simply an idea (albeit unconsciously maintained), not a fact. As one begins to disengage from the superimposed idea, one begins to USE the body/mind/emotional self rather than BE USED by it. You do this by awareness that you are the witness-er of your faculties, you are not the faculties themselves.

This is the key to lasting, permanent change.

It is impossible to change something if you think you are the thing that needs changing. An automobile tire cannot change itself. Even when our technology advances to the point at which a tire appears to change itself, there will still be some kind of independent mechanism in the automobile instructing the tire to change. Herein is the key to successful change in your life: recognize that your sentient nature always remains independent from your body's state of being.

To realize that you are witnessing what the mind is thinking, what the body is sensing, and what the emotions are feeling is to realign the locus of your identity from what is witnessed to what witnesses. It is absolutely the means to successfully alter any state or unsatisfactory condition of mind, body and emotions – the causative factors of personal experience.

Really consider this for a moment. If you relegate this information to mere philosophical musing, you render its practical efficacy impotent. To appreciate the practical reality of recognizing your independence from all subjective states of being enables you to regain dominion over your body, mind, and emotions.

Consequently, you regain control over your affairs. Frankly, the reason we dig ourselves into holes of depres-

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sion, financial lack, relationship troubles, self-defeating habits and the like is that we are constantly reacting to our subjective states of being rather than objectively recognizing the capacity in us that is not in reaction to anything. The more you identify with the capacity in you that is independent from your relative mind, emotions and physical states, the more enabled you are to alter, change or improve the states witnessed.

## SECTION II

### CHALLENGE AS OPPORTUNITY

“Let go of the fallacy that we must  
become something to be worthy.”



## SIMPLE SOLUTION TO BEING OVERWHELMED

**T**o-do lists pile up in your home life and in your work life. Cable news saturation is just that – at a saturation point. Every new movie and TV show is touted as a Must-See Event. With texting, cell calls, smartphones, the internet, animated billboards, cable connections, satellite dishes, and the increasing rate at which we are bombarded with information, overwhelm can occur easily– and none of this overload shows any signs of abating. It is understandable to wonder how you can actually change your life when dealing with the stress of it all is so overwhelming. The solution, like most good solutions, is simple: begin to see yourself as more.

Begin to release the “old snapshot” of yourself that’s lodged in your brain. You are attached to this snapshot because of the 24-hour, seven-day-a-week familiarity you have with your perception of yourself. This continuous association with self breeds an attachment in your psyche to the

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self-perception that has been forged from your experience. In essence, the frozen-in-time snapshot of who you think you are and what you know yourself to be capable of is based on prior experience. This unconscious static perception of oneself leaves little room for the constant, and natural, growth and change that is the essence of life. In short, overwhelm occurs because life – behaving naturally – is constantly changing, yet we attempt to address change from a changeless, static self-perception.

Dealing with stress, and overcoming the frustration or even the depression of feeling overwhelmed is not about telling yourself you can *do* more but that you *are* more. It is about fundamentally releasing that “old snapshot” that you have of your identity as a person and of your capability. Changing your personality is not necessarily necessary but letting go of the familiar, old perception of yourself is.

By nature, life grows and changes. You witness this in foliage, in babies, in the very passing of time. Why would you maintain a static perception of yourself when it is not natural to do so? Again, it’s important to note that this is not about reminding yourself that you can do more, but rather that you are more. The distinction makes all the difference in the world when it comes to accomplishing more with less stress. And yes, it is indeed possible!

The difference between an attitude of *I can do more* and *I am more* determines whether you approach your plate of activities from the same mental thought process that served the “smaller personal world” that you inhabited years ago, or if you allow a greater perception of yourself to cause you to think and process differently. From the *I am more* vantage point, you become receptive to smarter, wiser and more

## *Challenge as Opportunity*

creative thinking. From the *I am more* recognition, you see yourself as bigger than what faces you. Overwhelm is not reduced because your list of activities is reduced, but because you view yourself as greater than what is before you. It is the most effective, direct, and enriching approach to living in an increasingly busy world.

Evidence that indicates you are beginning to see yourself as more is when you find yourself becoming more at ease with altering rote approaches to your life. Something as simple as noticing that you increasingly take different, perhaps more efficient, routes to familiar destinations can be a sign that you see yourself differently. More significantly, you will find yourself becoming increasingly receptive rather than resistant to learning new ideas and approaches to situations in your life. These are all subtle indicators that you see yourself differently.

As you consciously decide to use the feelings of overwhelm as an indication that you've outgrown your current worldview, overwhelm becomes opportunity rather than obstacle.

Your constant mantra when faced with seemingly overwhelming circumstances should be, "I am more than this." You are always more than any situation in which you find yourself, and reminding yourself of this will help you to become increasingly aware of this fact. You will notice that as you invoke this attitude, challenges are lessened and the moments of feeling overwhelmed diminish in the face of just how much more you are.



## DE-STRESSING THE HOLIDAY FAMILY VISIT

**A**s the holidays fast approach, I often am confronted with clients experiencing stress and anxiety at the annual prospect of connecting with family members and in-laws. The liberating expanse of lives lived independently is suddenly compacted, emotionally and psychologically, into restrictive quarters forged by the memories of familiar but outdated perceptions, judgments and long-standing conflicts.

Every year, you tell yourself, “I’m not going to let [Dad, Mom, sis, etc.] get to me this time” only to have that resolve last about as long as a holiday greeting hug. Your stress is then compounded by disappointment in yourself for allowing “them” to “get to you.” How do you make it through the seemingly inevitable thrust back into the time vortex of your 15 year-old-self when even the thought of the impending visit makes adolescent acne start appearing again?

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You begin by replacing the behavior modification effort with true understanding of the familial relationship paradigm. Understanding the nature of the beast can profoundly help you to enjoy a surprisingly peaceful holiday season without exiling yourself to a family-free zone in Northern Siberia to wait out the season. Through insightful and objective understanding of human behavior, you can successfully traverse the emotional IED's of family gatherings with your self-esteem and peace of mind intact. I repeat: successful family holiday experiences are not realized through attempts at controlling your reactions, but through genuine understanding of what is in play during these temporary excursions of the family kind.

Here are Four Insights – think of them as your Four I's,– that not only will carry you through that traditional week or two of hell, but also hold the potential to permit genuine healing to occur:

### **Insight #1: HUMAN BEINGS CRAVE SAFETY AND COMFORT**

To understand the primordial need for comfort and safety through familiarity is to understand, finally, why familial relations appear to be frozen in time. For Dad to relate to son Joe as the “butterfingers” of the family in reference to Joe's tendency in his youth to drop or knock over everything within proximity of his hands, is akin to a fox scrambling for cover to its familiar foxhole. These “familiar foxholes” breed comfort, no matter how uncomfortable they seem to make one. If you think about it, you are the same way. The familiarity of your present, independent life has become your foxhole – your primordial cover of safety by virtue of its familiarity.

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This explains why conflicts are inevitably triggered during visits: everyone is subconsciously insisting on the cover (safety) of their respective psychological reference points. Your family's "cover" is the historical perception of you; your "cover" is the present-day independent identity you've forged. Recognizing and, more importantly, appreciating this primordial template can become the offence that no longer requires a defense. Understanding is always the leverage that takes you out of victimhood. This is a simple yet powerful fact that actually applies to everything.

### **Insight #2: ACCEPTING THE DISADVANTAGE BECOMES YOUR ADVANTAGE**

Understanding Insight #1 is one thing. Accepting its reality enables you to disengage authentically from being victimized. You find yourself able to deftly handle frustration by recognizing what is occurring when your sister "goes there" after she has been liberated from decorum by holiday libations. You understand that she is looking for her familiar cover through her behavior. From this insightful recognition, you can mitigate the impact of emotional buttons being pressed.

### **Insight #3: BECOME OKAY WITH YOUR FORMER SELF**

Let's face it, no matter how fortunate we may have been in our upbringing, we spend considerable effort in adulthood trying to recover from, heal from, or escape from aspects of our past. We seek to overcome the mental programming and

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feelings that tend to undermine our efforts to reinvent ourselves on our own terms. This can easily cause sensitivity to people, places and environments that trigger our connections to our former selves. To accept that it is natural and normal to feel as though nothing about you has changed when confronted with past stimulus is to appreciate that, although you have become your own person, you did not get a lobotomy along the way.

It is not necessary to fight or resist those feelings and perceptions of your former self as they arise. Recognize that, in effect, what is happening is this: exposure to familiar stimulus is instinctively causing you to tap into this holographic identity of sorts that you used to inhabit. It is nothing more than that. In other words, do not fight the feelings, understand them.

### **Insight #4: USE THE OCCASION**

It is a good idea to keep a journal with you during holiday visitations. At the end of every day, jot down the insecurities you witnessed that were triggered by the day's encounters. Reflect on whether you simply tapped into the hologram of your former self or if anything triggered reflects an un-reconciled issue. If so, it may be better to address any un-reconciled issues later, with your therapist or an independent sounding board, rather than with the object of the trigger in the heat of being triggered. Every moment of our lives is rife with opportunities for personal growth. We can take advantage of these many opportunities if we are willing. In this manner, you use the occasion rather than allowing the occasion to use you.

## *Challenge as Opportunity*

If you follow The Four Insights, you are sure to come away from an encounter of the family kind none the worse for it. You might even allow a truer appreciation of those individuals you formerly only related to as relations. Rather than decking the halls with one another, you can deck them with authentic peace and love.

## SECTION III

### IDENTITY CRISIS

“There is nothing that fretting over the past does that your full availability to the present cannot better resolve.”



## THE PHANTOM MENACE

Anyone familiar with the Star Wars movie franchise knows that one installment from the second trilogy of films bears the title, *The Phantom Menace*. That could also aptly describe the culprit largely at play when you witness seemingly intractable dynamics getting in the way of changing your life.

You sincerely desire to shift your financial situation, yet year after year, the same financial constraints are in play. You desperately want to experience a satisfying love life, and yet it seems to remain as elusive as capturing dust in the air. You've repeatedly attempted to lose extra pounds and maintain the weight that resonances and is healthy for you, yet it has become a never-ending battle. Issues with confidence, esteem and insecurity can seem like "running buddies" – your posse, as it were, hanging around chronically.

Unfortunately, we erroneously blame ourselves for not being able to experience the strides in progress that we desire. This creates an emotional cauldron of guilt, regret, judgment, and anxiety. The toxic emotional and mental duress only com-

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pounds the inertia of static states of being. What is not realized is that there is an unconscious culprit, unintentionally, but none the less, undermining your valiant attempts to experience fulfillment. This unintentional culprit is called homeostasis.

Homeostasis is an organism's intention to maintain normalcy in its environment. When you are cold and begin to shiver, that action generates heat warming the body. This is homeostasis in action. When you are hot and the body begins to sweat, again, you are witnessing homeostasis at work as the body attempts to cool itself through sweating. These are just a few common, beneficial ways in which the body enacts homeostasis to regulate normalcy.

However, there is another kind of homeostasis that your being enacts, and it is far from beneficial. There is an "identity homeostasis" that your psychological self-identification attempts to maintain, just as your physical body tries to maintain normal metabolism. The experiences with which you have become familiar – including experiences of lack, relationship dysfunction, low self-esteem, limited success, etc. – have become normalized as your subjective identity.

This becomes your "relative homeostasis." Your subjective identity sees the composite of your experiences as the "who I am" of your identity. Then, being the dutiful organism that you are, you subconsciously attempt to maintain this state of normalcy by undermining or rejecting desires and attempts at actions toward significant progress. All of this is in an effort to maintain the homeostasis of your conditioning.

Note that your subjective intention to maintain normalcy is not based on what is beneficial or desirable, but rather, it is based on what is normal. If a harmonious relationship, a

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certain income level, a particular physical weight, or greater confidence is not a normal reality for you, then the subjective identity within you see those wonderful ideals as a threat. That's right – a threat to normalcy.

So, “what’s a mother to do?” (That’s a line from an old TV commercial, so I think I just dated myself a bit!) All is far from lost. Through recognizing this homeostasis dynamic, you begin working towards changing the subjective homeostasis, as opposed to making an attempt to change the circumstances alone. Relative homeostasis is altered the same way it is created: through wiring the brain towards a different subjective identity.

As a hypnotherapist, I am in the rewiring business. Availing yourself to such therapeutic support is a most direct means of rewiring your subjective homeostasis. Below are three fundamental ways you can begin rewiring the brain’s relative homeostasis so that desires are no longer seen as foreign to your subjective identity.

### **1. STOP TALKING ABOUT IT!**

“Talking about what?” you ask? Your plight. When you complain, or vent, or discuss, or even concur with others identifying with the limitation you experience, you unwittingly “stabilize” and continue to solidify the relative homeostasis state from which you desire to be free. (One client in my practice even tells her woes to the UPS guy making deliveries to her place of business. We’re working on that.). Instead, select one or two individuals whom you trust. Seek conversation with these individuals to be not your anxiety-riddled dumping ground, but your source to express your state of

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being as you consciously rewire the relative homeostasis of limited conditioning. Although it is tempting to vent and commensurate with others about what is wrong, in the world or in your personal life, you've got to decide what is more important: the venting or the healing.

### **2. BECOME FAMILIAR**

Become familiar with the states of expression you desire to be elements of your reality. I recently gave a client an assignment to go “browsing” in retail stores (not irresponsibly buying, literally just browsing), not from the vantage point of “looking at what I cannot afford” but from the vantage point of rewiring. Get your body acclimated to buying new clothes, shopping for a home, purchasing an automobile, etc. Want your love life to pick up and offer more opportunities for dating? Start going out more even if it is by yourself, the outings serving as a means of acclimating your subjective reality to being available and ready. Remember, context is everything. If you maintain a negative commentary during this intentional engagement, you defeat the purpose. You are looking to rewire at every opportunity.

### **3. START EMPLOYING THE “YES FACTOR”**

Begin saying inwardly, and aloud when alone, ‘yes!’ to every authentic desire triggered by your everyday life. Unconsciously, as a way of staying in alignment with your present subjective homeostasis, you constantly say “no” to everything you witness that reflects a greater life. You are not saying ‘no’

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as a conscious rejection, but rather, as an expression of what you feel you cannot accommodate. It's unconscious because anything you authentically desire that has not been a part of your experience automatically causes a subjective "no" reaction simply because your present reality cannot adjudicate it based on current circumstances. Employing what I call the "Yes Factor" is not about trying to make something happen or appear in your life. Rather, it is about reconditioning your mind (e.g., your perception) to accommodate realistically greater possibility.

Changing your subconscious homeostasis is an entirely doable thing because your subconscious is designed for programming – and reprogramming. The challenge occurs because we forget our mind exists to serve us, not control us. Ask yourself, *What do I want to reprogram?*



## ARE YOU DATING YOUR PAST?

*“Uh, sorry single, gorgeous, generous, kind person – I’m not available because I am presently dating my past.”*

I recently had a session with a client who was confused over whether he was pushing potential dates away because they were not “right for him” or because he was afraid to re-enter a relationship following a painful breakup two years ago. My client found himself agonizing over the confusion.

My first question to this client was in reference to his reservations about relationships. What bad aftertaste remained from his last relationship? After he provided a list of issues that he was afraid of revisiting, it became clear that there was unconscious resistance to moving forward with his dating life.

What I submitted to this client was to consider that people either go through a relationship, or grow through a relationship. To go through a relationship means that one tends

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to accumulate the fears of what they want to avoid in the future. On the other hand, to grow through a relationship means that one is able to compassionately realize what, in oneself, contributed to attracting undesirable relationship experiences.

This self-reflection spurs resolution of unresolved internal dynamics, enabling one to actually grow through the experience of relationship. When this kind of growth is the consequence of a relationship, one is not the same person – in a positive sense – that one was prior to the relationship.

This was certainly the case with my client. He had grown in his self-worth and his self-confidence, and he had even released the “rescuer complex” that caused him to attract needy companions. Together, through conversation and discussion, we took stock of who he was after his last relationship.

I reflected back to him that there was no need to hamper his desire for a fulfilling relationship with memories of the past because he literally was not the same person who entered the previous experience. “Quit dating your past,” was my recommendation to him, “it’s not nearly as attractive as your present.”

**CONFESSIONS OF A THERAPIST** is your reference manual for life. Simultaneously inspiring and pragmatic, this exciting new handbook for living lays out how to successfully navigate a range of issues, including relationships, financial challenges, self-esteem dynamics, empowering confidence, sustaining focus, and more. Distilling years of a successful therapeutic practice into an insightful, supportive, and occasionally humorous compilation of how-to steps, introspective meditations, and real-life accounts of empowerment in action, Isaiah McGee will jump-start your resolve to live a life of increasing satisfaction and purpose. There is a victor residing within the essence of your true identity, and **CONFESSIONS OF A THERAPIST** is here to help you tap into it, starting now.

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– MICHAEL BECKWITH, AUTHOR OF *THE ANSWER IS YOU*



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