

HOW TO SUCCEED IN WORK AND LIFE

An inside out guide for young
professionals

By

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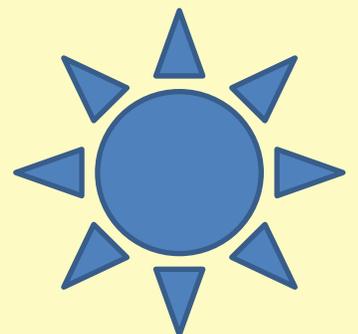


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Introduction: How to Trust That You Already Know

Welcome to “How to Succeed in Work and Life, An Inside Out Guide for Young Professionals.” It wasn’t the easiest journey for me, and I am pleased, proud, and honored to share some of the truths of life and work that I have learned along the way in the hope that you can discover these truths earlier than I did and find contentment and amazement in this adventure of life and work that we find ourselves on.

There is a lot of content to share. Some of these articles will speak to you and others won’t. So, I find myself asking, as I sit writing this introduction, what was the best first thing. What might have made all the difference for me? How can I send you off interested in coming back and how will you know?

And my answer? You already have everything you need to be successful. Let me repeat that... You already have everything you need to be successful. It is built into your system and everyone’s system. It can get covered with thoughts trying to fool you into thinking otherwise but don’t be fooled. You are wisdom itself and that wisdom will carry you through every stage and every challenge. Just hold tight and give it a chance.

How do I know? I know because the wisdom that created everything in the universe created you. It is inside of you; it is of you, and you are already using it every day. It lives in the mundane knowing that it is time to eat and time to go to sleep. It lives in the magic that allows your heart to beat without you needing to think about it. And, it lives in every new idea you have ever had, every knowing thought that has brought you to where you are today and, in every approach, you have taken that simply felt like common sense in the moment.

I know you might not believe me right away and that you will continue to have moments of doubt. That is ok too, that is the nature of being human.

I also know that others will tell you differently. That they will tell you that you need to develop the right communication skills, the right planning processes, and the right image. Be kind to them, they are doing what is right for them in their own moment. And then find your own inner voice. The one that lives under (or before) insecurity and the thought-created experience that someone knows better than you. Listen to their advice and then decide for yourself whether what is right for them is also right for you.

Be authentic to your own truth for that is the greatest beauty of you. It will all work out in the end. For under any fear, frustration or discouragement lives pure resilience and wisdom. It is with you all the time and will guide you through life if you let it.

This is lesson number one. Learn with discernment. Learn from love and not judgment. Learn to see your thinking for what it is and then let it go to find the wisdom underneath.

You already have everything you need. I promise. Sink into that, feel the truth of it and then live from that space of contentment. For it is from that calm that everything good is born.

The Number 1 Benefit of Being a Good Listener

“First you must learn to listen, and this will take courage.” — Sydney Banks, Second Chance

I used to have a job that required me to attend a lot of meetings. I would joke that I averaged 27 meetings per week, but it wasn't a joke. Occasionally, I would count, just to see if it was still the same, and yep, 27 meetings on average, every week. That is an average of 5.4 per day — every day. And at 60–90 minutes per meeting that is about 34 hours per week out of a 50 or so hour workweek.

I was being paid to listen and talk. Talking has never been a problem for me, the question is, was I listening? And when I was talking, what was I responding to?

I'll be honest with you. I had a hard time listening in those meetings. As part of senior management, I was very well versed in almost every topic that was being discussed. Most of the time I had already received or created the information being shared and the intent of the meeting was to share information with others and get their input.

My mind would drift when I perceived that there was nothing new for me to hear so I faked my interest/engagement. Did anyone notice? I doubt it. We are used to engaging with others who aren't fully listening.

But I was bored! So, I entertained myself by being in my head. And when we are living in our thoughts, living in our thinking, we are no longer present.

The content of our thinking is generally in the past or the future — right? I suppose that I could have been present to the clothing or the colors or the expressions around the table (and sometimes I was just that), but often not present to the conversation.

I have since learned to listen with nothing on my mind. No agreement, no disagreement, no response. And, while I am human enough to notice my imperfectness in this arena, I now also notice the *symptoms* of not being fully present (there is really only one — read below) and I keep getting better at bringing myself back — to the conversation, to the listening, to the empty feeling that is pure in its ability to receive.

When I listen with nothing on my mind, I become present to wisdom, to the wisdom that lives within me before the presence of thought, to the wisdom that is so far inside that it is no longer simply inside of me, more like coming through me from a space much bigger and wiser than my brain. To the space where my brain was born, where creativity is hatched, to something smarter than me.

We are raised and taught to rely on our smarts, our learning, and our intellect and while these are certainly useful tools, in the learning to use them we have forgotten that there is something wiser. An innate wisdom that is always there whether we are aware of it or not.

I don't need to use my intellect to beat my heart or expand my lungs. This wisdom is built-in, part of the system. Neither did I need to use my intellect to learn to walk as a small child. This wisdom is just as strong and present in me as the wisdom that allows the trees to change color every fall. And when I get out of my own way, when I get out of the thinking in my head that can be rather loud, I once again have access to that wisdom.

It is a wisdom of the present, that comes through when I am truly in the here and now, listening to words of a room or an individual without the analysis of my intellect. I have learned to trust it and even when it shows up as silence, I know that that is wisdom at work and that there is nothing for me to do.

As I sit here writing this, allowing the words to show up as they do, if I search for the words in my head, I miss the sound of the ceiling fan clicking and it is that clicking that I must be able to hear before wisdom touches my fingers to the keyboard or formulates the next perfect curiosity with a client or the next question or idea in a meeting.

My mentor, Linda Pransky, describes listening without the intellect as "letting the words wash past your ears." She can see in my face when the intellect starts to kick in, when I go looking in my head to understand something I can hear her voice say, "stop thinking." She has learned to recognize the false lure of the intellect trying to take over in the search for understanding and she is reminding me, helping to guide me back.

Do you know the feeling of getting a joke that a second before you didn't understand? A clicked-in feeling, the feeling of aha! It might feel like your subconscious has taken over your active thinking and given you the feeling beneath the punchline. It is unlikely that your intellect created the "oh yeah" feeling of going from "I don't get it," to

“ohhh, ha ha ha.” That is the same feeling we get when wisdom shows up in a quiet mind, when our intellect hasn’t gotten in the way.

When I was a student at Supercoach Academy, our teacher, Michael Neill, had us do an exercise designed to illustrate the difference between listening to agree, listening to disagree, and listening as an empty vessel.

When I listen to agree I get excited. It feels good in my body. Here is a person who is like me, they see the world the way I do. I feel connection and it is exciting. I nod my head – yes, yes, yes. Me too!

When I listen with disagreement it goes something like this: “Are you kidding me? Are you nuts? That is not the way I see the world, or this conversation, or the topic at hand... Oy, what is wrong with you? Can’t you see the truth?”

And then, when I really want to tell someone what I think, and they are still talking... I hold it in my brain, waiting for a pause, listening to respond, no longer focused on what they have to say, only what I would like to say back.

Whenever there are words in my head instead of silence, whenever I can hear my thinking and not just their words, I know that my listening is gone.

And yet there is one more clue...I feel it in my body.

For me, and I can only really speak for myself, you’ll have to decide whether this is true for you, the feeling of listening with nothing on my mind comes with a sense of calm and a relaxed comfortable energy in my body. In contrast, other attempts at listening, when there is something else on my mind concurrently, come with tension. When I agree, the excitement carries a physical feeling, when I disagree, the frustration carries its own physical feeling, and when I am working to hold a thought, in order to share it out loud, another feeling of tightness and anticipation.

Listening with nothing on my mind, without an opinion or a response is loose, and gentle, and patient. Absent of need and open to possibility and potential. It is the space of openness, the empty vessel experiencing the possibility of being filled by wisdom. It is air and it is light, it is joy, and it is love.

Give it a try. Listen with nothing on your mind. With no opinion, no judgment, and no desire to respond, and then wait to see what shows up in that space.

The Stress Myth

“Your thoughts are like the artist’s brush. They create a personal picture of the reality you live in.” — Sydney Banks

Yes, I know, me too. I used to think that my stress was helpful. Got me motivated, up off my butt, moving a little faster. That’s what “they” tell us, right? But I was wrong, and this is what I have learned.

Let me assure you that I still experience stress. This isn’t an article about how I have left the experience of stress behind. I just don’t lean into it anymore under the mistaken impression that it is motivating me. I use the feeling to remind myself that there is another way. Another way that is more effective, more productive, more creative, and ultimately just more.

Illusion #1: Stress comes from our environment

Experiencing less stress and ultimately more productivity first required that I see through a few illusions. Where, I ask you does stress come from? Again, me too. It seems like it comes from the outside. Like the job or the game or the environment is stressful. You’ve heard it said, as have I, “that is a stressful job.” But here is the thing. A job can’t be stressful. In fact, the only thing that can create the feeling of stress is our thinking.

Now, don’t get me wrong, we can have stressful thinking about a job, but it is never the job that creates our stress, only our thinking about the job that creates stress. Inside-out, not outside-in.

In the house where I grew up, having company for dinner always felt like stress to me. The dinner had to be ready on time, the house needed to be in shipshape, and all the dishes in the sink needed to be washed before our guests arrived. This involved what felt to me like a lot of yelling and pressure to get it done a certain way in a certain time. It never occurred to me that there was another way.

When I began visiting my sister-in-law for holidays I experienced the opposite. Cooking was a leisurely experience in her house. Seeming miraculous it always got

finished on time with no rushing and the dishes were often left to be cleaned up after dinner or even, G-d forbid, the next morning.

Huh... I supposed that cooking dinner for guests was not an inherently stressful event. This was my first view into seeing that thinking creates emotion rather than the event or the circumstances creating the emotion. So interesting.

Illusion #2: Stress keeps us sharp and motivated

I was having a busy morning a few weeks ago. I had to take my dog to the vet first thing and then I wanted to get a quick workout in before my first appointment. Jumping out of the shower I was rushing to get ready for said appointment — feeling the stress of rushing.

We keep a stack of dixie cups on our bathroom counter and in my rushing around I knocked over the entire stack, all over the bathroom floor. Luckily, I have come to laugh at myself in these moments. Knowing that if I had just slowed down a little bit that my state of mind would have been one of greater clarity and I would have been much less likely to knock over the cups. A simple reminder that the stress of rushing isn't likely to get me there faster, it is only more likely to trip me up and thus slow me down.

Illusion #3: Stress gets you to stop procrastinating

In my experience, when we are procrastinating, we know that we want to do something, and then we have thinking that counteracts that inspired or knowing thought. The inspiration or maybe even just the commitment or the promise shows up first. When we make this commitment, either to ourselves or someone else we have every intention of delivering. And then more thinking shows up — either in the form of overwhelm, insecurity, or even just an opinion about how much we will not enjoy the activity. Minus this thinking, we could show up and do what we intended. Yet we pay attention to the thinking that is distracting us from the task rather than ignoring that thinking and just getting to work.

Have you ever heard the advice to start a task for 5 minutes or 10 minutes before deciding whether to continue or stop? Why would this work? Because often it is simply the thinking about the project that is stopping us. The reality can be vastly different and

when we start, we find ourselves falling into the flow and doing what we set out to do with ease and quite possibly even enjoyment.

The question I ask myself when I am procrastinating? Am I going to listen to my thinking or ignore it and get to work? What would I be doing minus my thinking?

Illusion #4: Stress improves performance

I watched the movie “King Richard” last night. For those of you who aren’t familiar, it is the story of Venus and Serena Williams and the role that their father played in nurturing the genius of these two famous sisters.

We saw in the film how Richard repeatedly encouraged his girls to “have fun out there” while other tennis parents were berating their children’s performance. Richard knew how important state of mind is to the game and he knew that supporting the path to success was not the path of stress. He did his best to help his girls see that truth and experience their best self for performance.

It is commonly accepted that in sports we do our best when we are “in the zone” and out of our heads. Yet in the world of work, we somehow forget and look to the opposite experience. Believing that our insecurities will somehow carry the day.

It just so happens that we have an amazing, built-in alarm system that tells us when we are caught up in unhelpful thinking and we can use that system to point us back in a different direction. The other direction is that of wisdom, of doing what makes the most sense in the moment, of common sense and often inspiration.

Stress shows up in our body and when we feel it, we can use that feeling as a reminder to slow down and relax. For me, discomfort in my body reminds me to let my thinking settle, and then I find myself in the more productive space of no thinking at all.

And then freedom shows up. The freedom to use the wisdom that is innate within me, letting go of the intellectual mind that gets all revved up. I relax and I get back into the zone, like an athlete in top performance, allowing my muscle memory to take over so to speak, going with the flow and being in the moment, simply responding and doing what I know to do, always, every time. Finding the space of my own top performance.

When you see how it works, when you realize that your innate wisdom can carry the day, that your thinking mind is getting in the way, you begin to trust the system to work as designed. Then the stress gets a chance to diminish, your body relaxes, and you are back to doing your best and being your best self.

Confidence 101

Wisdom brings common sense to those who find it. — Sydney Banks, The Missing Link

Have you ever watched a baby learn to walk? They pull themselves up and fall back down. Pull themselves up and fall back down. Take a step and fall on their bum, crawl a few steps and then try again. Pure confidence. Never once saying “Mom, I give up, I am never going to get this...” never once saying that they don’t deserve to walk or that it’s just not in the cards for them.

Do you know where that confidence comes from? They were born with it. And, you too. All of us. Born with perfect confidence. Where did our confidence go? We started thinking. That’s all. We started thinking otherwise. Maybe we got something wrong once or someone laughed at us in kindergarten, and we felt the feeling of embarrassment for the first time, and we didn’t like it. We started to hide, deciding so innocently that if we don’t try, we can protect ourselves from being laughed at or stared at, not liking that feeling of being caught doing something less than perfect. Then we started taking that uncomfortable feeling as something to be paid attention to rather than ignored, something to avoid rather than experience before moving on.

And the more we work at avoiding the potential feeling of embarrassment the better we get at avoiding falling on our bum. Until each effort, each possibility starts to come with the safety net of not doing it at all. And then one day we look in the mirror and ask ourselves, “where did my confidence go and how can I get it back”? And the crazy thing is that we forget that we were born with it. Forget that it lives inside of us, and we go looking for it on the outside. Through practices or mantras through power poses or power suits. Forgetting that it lives in us and that the only thing blocking our confidence is our innocent misunderstanding of who we are, how we were made, and where our experience comes from.

Spiritual Magic

Take a look around you. It is mid-October as I am writing this and the leaves on the trees are just starting to change color, the tree outside of my office window changing

from green to yellow. How do trees know how to do that? Science you may say, and yes, of course, science explains the process but not the nature behind the science. It is pure mystery, the wisdom in trees.

The same goes for the magic of gravity and the fact that our earth revolves around the sun, bringing us day and night and seasons. Watch a bird build a nest, lay eggs, and know exactly what to do to bring a nest full of baby birds into the world. Pure magic.

This magic lives all around us and in us. We possess this same wisdom, and we are this same magic. It is this magic that gives us the wisdom to teach ourselves how to walk, to have a new idea, and to be inspired to do something new that we have never done before. You are this magic, you are made of this magic, and seeing it holds a universe of confidence. Pure confidence.

The unknowable wisdom that created everything around us is in you and ready to create in every moment. Failures and all. For there is no such thing as failure, only an attempt that did not result as you expected, simply a judgment.

So let yourself rest in knowing this incredible space of wisdom. It is the beauty and mystery from which you were made and from which you will create. Your only job is to listen to the quiet voice within from which this wisdom comes. It will speak to you and then you will know. One step at a time, one foot in front of the other. Know that this is your true essence. You are pure confidence before judgment.

An opinion

Where does our experience come from? Why do we ever feel less than confident? Where does this lack of confidence come from?

Here is the thing. Thought is a principle. Meaning that it is true for every human being on the planet. We all experience thought. It is a spiritual gift that we have been given and it allows us to experience every experience we have in this life.

But here is the tricky part. It comes from inside of us. We make up our thoughts about everything. Absolutely everything! And then we experience life through the lens of whether we believe our own thoughts or not.

So, when you don't feel confident. It is a trick of your thinking. And you get to believe it or ignore it. Totally up to you.

The key is to see that your thinking is coming from you. Maybe not consciously, but still from you. And it isn't necessarily telling you anything useful about the world. Your confidence is the natural state into which you were born and the only thing covering it up is your own personal thinking to the contrary. Interesting to ponder, isn't it?

So, if my thinking is being made up from inside of me, and it isn't necessarily telling me anything about the world. Why would I listen to it?

Do you wish the insecure thinking wasn't there? Me too sometimes. Not much we can do about that. Thinking shows up and then we get to decide. Do I believe it or not? My choice. Free will. I love that. I get to pick, and I can ignore it or not.

I walked into the Drs. Office the other day and a gentleman in the waiting room looked up at me with a bit of a start. "I thought you were my ex-girlfriend for a second", he said. "Nope, not me", I said, as a breeze past him to the restroom. When I came out, he said "you have a very confident presence about you," "thank you," I said, and then felt the need to temper the compliment by saying, "I just needed to get to the bathroom quickly."

But that wasn't the truth. I was sitting on the metaphorical cloud nine that day. I was enjoying the day, enjoying life, and not having any thinking to the contrary. This gentleman saw that and felt it. I had no thinking to the contrary.

That is not always the case for me. I feel insecurity too. But I know what we are made of, and I understand where our experiences come from. When the insecure thoughts show up, I know that they aren't telling me anything important and that I can ignore them if I choose. And, when I choose to ignore the insecurity, it eventually goes, leaving me with my natural-born access to the same wisdom that created the universe. The wisdom possessed by the tree outside my window turning a vibrant shade of yellow and the wisdom that showed me how to walk as a baby.

I will follow that wisdom as it shows up, knowing that that is the purest form of confidence and I will be kind to any thinking to the contrary, knowing that it is temporary and just a shadow covering the perfection and beauty of the true me, of the true you.

Are You Anxious About Starting a New Chapter in Your Life?

“Wisdom cleans the channels of your mind and brings sanity into your life.” — Sydney Banks, [The Missing Link](#)

I have a special place in my heart for young adults and pre-adults who are starting new chapters. For some it is a new job, for others, it is that first step out of the house and into the independence of the college dorm, and for others, it is that first step out of college life and into the world of work, a new city, and proving themselves as an adult for the first time.

You are nervous, of course, you are. Any time we step from the familiar to the unfamiliar we will likely experience a range of possible responses. Anything from butterflies in our belly to nervous sweat and for some even a full-blown anxiety attack. And you know what? All of this is normal. Nothing wrong with you, nothing at all. I have learned a few things along the way that might help in this transition. Kick up your feet and have a listen (or a read), and, if nothing else, taking a few minutes to slow down is never a bad idea.

First, I have a little secret to share with you. You might not believe me at first but seeing this secret (it’s not such a secret actually) has changed my life and brought a whole new level of clarity and calm. If that sounds appealing, stick with me. Nudge at the truth of this secret and experiment with it. It really is life changing, I promise.

Here goes: We create our experiences through the power of our thinking. Our experiences come from the inside out, not the outside in. This is true for every experience, every single one of them, no exceptions!

Now, before you get all bent out of shape, please know that I am not saying “it is all in your head” or that your experience is a “figment of your imagination.” I mean, it does come from your magical, G-d given ability to create, but that does not mean that you can or should be able to do anything about what you are feeling. The point here is to relax and notice, not try to change anything. The power is in the noticing, not in the doing. This is not [CBT](#) or positive psychology.

In the noticing, the whole world can change — maybe over time, maybe in a moment but don't worry about that. Just notice. Because living in truth, living in reality, gives us a whole new perspective and we stop looking in the wrong direction for answers.

So, let's go back. Our thinking creates our experiences. Our experiences do not create our thinking.

What does this mean for starting that new job or starting that new chapter in our life? It means that whatever we think creates emotions. It means that the new job is not creating anxiety or nervous feelings. It means that the solution to unwanted feelings does not come from changing our circumstances.

A few examples might help here. Have you ever stood high up on a bridge with another person and one of you feels afraid of the heights and the other one of you is fine? Can't be the height, it must be your different thinking.

Have you ever had a teacher that you loved and someone else in the class didn't like them? Or the other way around? Again, can't be the teacher, must be your different thinking about the teacher.

Have you ever found yourself feeling one way about the weather while another person feels differently about the same weather? Too cold, too hot, too wet, too dry? Doesn't matter. It can't be the weather, only your thinking about the weather.

Crazy when you start to realize this, isn't it? Every experience we have is experienced through the lens of our separate thinking and so, while we all, every person on the planet has this incredible ability to think, we all end up living in separate realities that come from our own unique ability to create our own separate thoughts. The only shared truth, ever, is that we all have the ability to think and the creative capacity to think up our own reality.

So, what does this mean for you who is starting a new job or that new chapter? First, it means that you are whole and perfect and operating just as you are meant to, just as we all are meant to. Thoughts are occurring to you, and it is those thoughts that are creating your emotions. Second, it means that your thoughts are not telling you anything about circumstances. They are coming from you and not the circumstance. And third, you get to decide whether to pay attention to your thoughts or ignore them. That is your free will at work and the thoughts we pay more attention to tend to grow while the thoughts that we don't worry about, have more of a tendency to pass on by.

There is a catch here though. One that I get caught in myself, I fully admit. When I see that a thought is created by me, sometimes I think that I should be able to will it away and willing it away is different than letting it pass. Willing it away requires the use of more thought. It is effortful and usually ends up with me trying to distract myself with a new thought. Sometimes it works for a little while, but it is never a long-term solution.

Alternatively, when I accept that an uncomfortable thought has entered my consciousness and when I remember that that thought has come from inside of me and not my circumstance, I am more accepting of the fact that it has taken up temporary residence in my brain. It might feel uncomfortable, but I know that there is nothing to be done. And if I simply put up with the uncomfortable feeling that my thinking is creating, it leaves a whole lot sooner.

Simply put, I may not like how I feel but I know that I am fundamentally ok and that the uncomfortable feeling will leave on its own. I just need to wait. And then it does, every time.

The bottom line: You are starting a new chapter of your life and you have thinking about that. Of course, you have. This is the human condition; this is how we work. The feelings you are feeling are coming from your thinking, not from the circumstance, not from the new job or the new school or the newness in your life.

If you let it, don't fight it, just let it, your thinking will settle down. And when you settle down, your natural state of clarity will filter back through and you will once again find your natural resilience, the peace in you that lives on the inside before the turbulent thoughts got in the way.

Seeing how it works is the ultimate tool for living your best life. You've got this. You always did. Take a step, let yourself feel and think and know that each step will lead you to the next. Life is a rollercoaster of adventures and a game that we get the privilege to play. Each drop will take you to the next ascent and knowing *that* is the love that will hold you along the way. It is all working as it should. And seeing that is the crack that will let in all the light that you will ever need.

Learning to Love Your Cranky Boss

*“Everyone is doing the best they can given their thinking in the moment.” — unknown,
maybe Michael Neill*

My boss is cranky. She has no patience. I can do no right and I feel like an idiot. Sometimes it is worse and sometimes better but I can't often say that she is a nice person. I don't want to take it personally, but...How do we manage on the receiving end of that?

Luckily, I have learned a few things about human nature. I knew she was unhappy and trying to feel better. She was living in the most common misunderstanding of all — the innocent thinking that “if I could just fix something outside of myself, I would feel better”. In her bad mood, she was seeing fewer possibilities.

The complaining and the criticism were a defense mechanism to try to protect herself from her unwanted feelings. Her patience was gone, and she was simply doing the best that she could, minute to minute second by second. I knew that eventually; she would settle down. That she might not turn into a nice person, but the immediate ranting would end and the quiet would resume, at least temporarily, until it would begin again in the next hour or next day or next week.

On the receiving end, we too find ourselves in the innocent misunderstanding. That something or someone, in this case, the boss, is creating our experience. And our ability to see possibilities goes down too. We get lost; we find ourselves lost in our own insecurity. Wondering why we cannot keep this boss happy. Assuming that if the boss was happy, we would be happy. That our contentment comes from the reflection of another. And so, it goes... Is it really an illusion?

Wouldn't it be better if we could just all be nicer to each other? She too knows that she performs better when her boss shows patience and kindness and yet, who knows, perhaps she is being treated poorly and is emulating her boss, perhaps she does not know another way.

We live in an innocent illusion and seeing that illusion might just might, lead us down the path of a different experience.

The illusion:

We live in the experience of our thinking. Our minds are projectors, not cameras. Our experiences are created from the inside-out, not the outside-in. Whatever we think, that is what we experience. And so, a different experience is always possible. Maybe not always easy, but always possible. And when we recognize that truth, our reality changes in an instant.

I know that this might not make sense at first but stick with me. Because when you start to see it, it is life changing.

I used to think that I needed a whole lot of things to be a certain way for me to have a good experience. I thought that I needed to be treated with kindness, to be nurtured at work, to be taught in a way that respected me. I also thought that the admiration of my boss would lead to happiness, contentment, and success. That these things would allow me to climb the metaphorical ladder and that climbing said ladder would bring me joy. I had it all backward.

I have a friend who used to drive my co-workers crazy. They complained about him consistently. Nothing he ever did bothered me. Why is that? My thinking — different from their thinking. An inside-out experience.

I have a former coworker who is dearly loved by most. She drives me nuts. I can't stand being around her. Why is that? My thinking — different from their thinking. Another inside-out experience. Same person, different experience.

And it is the same with your boss. If you didn't have thinking about what they do, what they say, how they respond to you, you would not be bothered by them and you would not consider them a cranky boss.

Easier said than done, you say. I say so what. You don't have to change your thinking, especially if you don't want to. But don't blame your thinking on them because that isn't fair either.

Owning up to Reality

Knowing that your thinking is creating your experience, might not make you like the experience more, but it takes away some of the add-on emotions — the victim attitude, the helplessness, the frustration. You can become accountable to you. The

cranky boss is not creating your experience. They are who they are, and you have created your opinion.

When you begin to see reality more clearly your viewfinder to the world will widen. Your thinking will begin to settle as your story gets smaller. And then, from a place of clarity, you will have a decision to make. In seeing that it is your thinking that is creating the cranky boss you will find your inner wisdom. The wisdom to guide you on what to do next, the wisdom that we find more easily from a quiet mind. Whether to stay and learn to love the cranky boss, discover a coping mechanism, or leave.

A story about learning to accept and appreciate (at least some of the time)

I need to start by telling you that I am not perfect. I have learned a ton, there is no doubt about that, and yet, I remain, as we all do, on a learning curve. Little by little my experience changes. I have become more accountable though, in a big way. No longer blaming the others in my life for my own feelings or my reactions. I see it with full clarity that it is all up to me and for that, I am eternally grateful.

This boss was cranky and critical. Nothing was ever good enough for them, no one was ever doing anything right enough. They were a master of inconsiderate comments, criticizing not just my work but my life. And they didn't just criticize me. Everyone seemed to be a problem and they would complain about others to me. Deadlines and goals were faced with threats of withholding promotions and competition between coworkers was encouraged under the idea that it would make everyone work harder. I was rarely happy. Stressed with stomach aches and treating my direct reports in a sometimes-similar manner. Emulating the person that I most wanted to impress. The situation wasn't working for any of us.

And then, when I learned that my experience was being created from my thinking and not from this person, that my mind is a projector, not a camera, that whatever I am thinking about anything is coming from me — Inside-out, I began to wonder...I may not like the way this person acts — and that comes from me. I may not like the things this person says — and that comes from me. That does not mean that I can or even want to change what I am thinking but...

But...

But...

How can I blame them for something that is coming from me? And in that wonder, in that curiosity, I started to feel compassion. Just a little bit at first, but compassion, nonetheless. For the thinking going on inside of her head. For the thinking that was creating her reality and she didn't even know. And that given that thinking that she was having, that she too was doing the best she could to handle the thoughts and feelings of the experience inside of her. I began to see her fear and my compassion grew.

Now, like I said in the beginning, I am not a being of perfect consciousness, nor do I have the ability to change all of my thoughts just because I can see them in action. I did end up leaving that job. And I'd like to think that I was listening to my own inner wisdom in that decision. I have no regrets and I also have no sense of blame or resentment. It wasn't the right place for me to stay at that time. And yet, I am fully accountable to my thoughts and emotions, and I don't blame anyone but myself.

Look in the direction of truth. That we all live in a world of thought and that this incredible gift that is possessed by every individual on this planet creates the separate realities that each of us experience. Seeing truth settles us down. Settling down helps us hear the wisdom inside. It settles dissatisfaction and allows us to sink into the space of what is — without judgment and to make decisions from a place of clarity and accountability.

Understanding Ego and Humility; Essential Building Blocks for Leadership

*“Ego creates self-importance and is strictly related to the personal self and the personal intellect.” — Sydney Banks, *The Missing Link**

The ego is self-centered and lives in fear. Fear is a very natural and important emotion - designed to keep us safe. But, as I heard Elizabeth Gilbert say in an interview the other day, our fear response easily goes into overdrive; trying to keep us safe from danger that does not exist. Fear can lead us into a mindset of scarcity, the misunderstanding that we can only succeed at the expense of another. Fear can lead us away from our truly wise self, leading us to believe that our authenticity is not enough. Fear can create stress, pointing us away from our natural, most productive state of “flow.”

What is ego? And what does it mean to stay humble?

The dictionary defines ego as “a person’s sense of self-esteem or self-importance.” We take from this definition that if we think highly of our self, we have a big ego. And yet, I believe that it is possible to see our miraculous nature with very little ego while at other times to think very little of ourselves with a large amount of ego, a large degree of self-importance.

When we let go of our ego we gain access to our brilliance, and we are humbled by the wisdom that we find in the spiritual nothingness; in the space before creation where creativity and limitless possibility are born.

*“Here is where what you call the ego comes in. The image of self-importance is the ego and that’s what destroys all the spiritual knowledge that lies within. It won’t let it out. It’s a cosmic joke. We’re all put on this world to find ourselves and we look everywhere for it. Some people go up the Himalayans, some people go to India some people go to China some people go all different places looking for it. They’ll never never never find it until they look in the mirror. — Syd Banks, *The Long Beach Lectures**

I heard someone say recently that our self-deprecating self keeps us humble. I don’t see it that way. I used to. I used to think that to be humble I needed to diminish

myself. And then I caught a glimpse of the brilliance, the brilliance in every single person on the planet. And in that seeing, I stepped into my own brilliance. Sometimes with ego, I admit, but so often with very little. And in those moments, the little me begins to slip away and I make room for the source of all possibility, the source of all hope, the source of all creativity and I know that that space is my true self before any misunderstandings to the contrary.

The question, for me, is not *what* do I think of myself but how much of my attention is focused on me? If I am focused solely on my insecurities, my fears, the voice in my head telling me that I am not worthy or that the world is not tipped in my favor, that is a very different feeling than the feeling of living in the world.

The first is ego, the second is presence. The first comes with fear, in the second I find flow.

Am I living in the thoughts in my head or am I present to the moment and the space that I am in? If I am spending my time in my head, in my thoughts, then my world is all about me. Ego. Positive or negative, it does not matter. I have made my world all about me. When I get present to the world around me and let the thinking settle into dust at the bottom of my consciousness, then I am present to the world. The world is no longer about me, instead, I am about the world.

Is the world all about me or am I all about the world? My choice...

And it is from this space, this space of a quiet mind that our truest, best, most incredible self, emerges. It is from this space that we find self-esteem because we have let go of self-importance. We can let go of our self-focused self, our ego-self and allow the magnificent energy of creation itself to seep in.

It is from that space that we become brilliant, finding our true self and our confidence to trust a wisdom that is bigger than our ego-mind. And, it is from this space of little or no ego, when we lose ourselves and are able to get out of our own way that we find the courage that was always ours for the taking, to be the leader that we were always meant to be.

What Biting a Lemon Can Teach Us About Success, Happiness, and Life

“We live in the feeling of our thinking.” — Elsie Spittle

The minute I think about biting a lemon my mouth starts to salivate in the back on both sides of my tongue; in the part of the mouth that responds to tasting sour. I don't have a lemon anywhere in sight, and it doesn't matter. Just thinking about it creates a physical response.

Now I understand, in a deeper way, how my thinking creates my experience, that we feel our thinking in our body and I am amazed.

I was driving with my family last week feeling all kinds of anxious. I felt it in my body. Nervous energy. The anxiety equivalent of sour lemon thinking making my mouth water.

Are you wondering what I felt anxious about? My answer is nothing. Absolutely nothing. Oh, I am sure that I could find a cause to which I could attribute my anxiety, but I know that I would be looking in the wrong direction.

If I attributed my anxiety to driving in Chicago traffic, then I would be looking to stay out of traffic to avoid the anxious feeling and I know that wouldn't help.

If I attributed my anxiety to feeling rushed then I would give myself more time, leave earlier with time to kill. But I happen to know that wouldn't help either. How do I know? I know because when I see the true cause of my anxiety I just stop worrying about the anxiety and I get on with my life.

Mind you, knowing what is really causing the anxiety does not make it go away. But I do know that the emotion can't hurt me. That even if it feels uncomfortable in the moment that the moment will pass. And sometimes, when my consciousness is higher, I can even enjoy the feeling of anxious energy running through me. It is a life force and that is cool on a spiritual level.

What is the true source of my anxiety? It is my thinking. I am having anxious thinking and it is coming from inside of me, not from anything in my world. My thoughts

are not conscious, yet I know the truth of where emotions come from, that they come from me.

How does that help? It helps to know that my system is normal. That it works like this for everyone and that there is nothing for me to worry about and nothing in my world that I need to change. I am fundamentally ok, living in the experience of my thinking. Feeling like an anxious passenger riding through city traffic in a bit of a hurry for no reason at all. That I might be able to take a deep breath and begin to settle — or maybe not. That all is fundamentally ok and that there is nothing I need to do.

We live in the feeling of our thinking. With lemons, and traffic, and jobs and relationships and stress and just about anything else. We live from the inside out, not the outside in.

The Recipe for Fulfillment

Like learning to bake a cake?

“There is an enormous difference between finding your own inner wisdom and adopting someone else’s beliefs.” – Sydney Banks

I don’t understand the chemistry behind baking, and yet, I can still bake a decent cake. I simply follow the recipe that was made up by someone else and it comes out pretty good. Better than good sometimes depending on the recipe. And the degree to which I enjoy the cake, or any recipe really, depends, to some extent on my ability to imagine the recipe in advance. To look at the ingredients and the proportion of each ingredient and imagine what it will taste like in the end. Sometimes I am better at that than at other times and sometimes I end up liking the cake more and sometimes less.

I don’t, however, understand the chemistry behind baking. I know it is there but since I don’t understand it, making up my own cake recipe is likely to end up with cake soup.

I don’t understand how much baking soda or eggs it takes to get a certain result and I don’t understand how the heat interacts with the ingredients to get something soft yet solid, fluffy yet structured. I can’t make up my own cake.

I could learn the science, but I haven’t so I am stuck with other people’s recipes. I am fine with that when it comes to cake. Not so much when it comes to life. And in life, I have been lucky enough to learn the science, at least a little. Enough to get me started and on the path of experimentation and continual learning.

You can learn the science too. You can learn to bake your own cake of life, with your own recipe, perfect for you.

The Recipe

It is common knowledge (I think) that the self-help section is the largest in any bookstore. That as a society we, so many of us, maybe all of us? Are looking for that perfect recipe for life. The path that, if taken, will lead to the perfect balance of joy,

happiness, and love and allow us to leave behind the burnt bits of cake, like anxiety, depression, stress, and resignation.

And honestly, I don't think that there is anything wrong with following the advice of others from time to time. If we can look at ourselves in the mirror and feel fully good with the path and the direction in which we are headed. If we don't end up eating lemon meringue pie when what we really wanted was angel food cake.

But here is the thing. If I really wanted to create my own cakes, I would need to know the principles behind baking, I would need to know what is true about every cake in order to create cakes that were uniquely fulfilling to me, uniquely mine. And while I don't feel pulled to learn this in the world of baking, I have found incredible freedom, assurance, and confidence in learning the principles behind how life's experiences are created and what is true and the same for every human on this planet.

The Principles

Sydney Banks discovered the three underlying Principles that create our experience of life. Just three. No more no less. These Principles are the chemistry in the recipe, the prime elements that, when combined create everything that we experience. They allow us to create the recipe of our lives whether we are living in angel food, layer cake, or chocolate eclairs. And knowing this, seeing it at work, gives us the ability to create with our own flavors. To be the best me, the best you, that we will ever be. Three Principles: Mind, Consciousness, and Thought

“MIND is the universal intelligence behind life, CONSCIOUSNESS creates an awareness of what we call reality, and THOUGHT is the power to create our moment to moment existence.” — Sydney Banks

Sydney Banks said that to use these principles properly leads to a happy and fulfilled life and that to misuse these principles leads to unhappiness and discontentment. I have not figured out yet, how to always put these principles to best use, but I am beginning to see them at work all around me and that seems like a good start.

It is the same when baking a cake. Use the principles of baking properly and you end up with a beautiful cake. Misuse them and you end up with cake soup. The principles don't tell you what kind of cake to bake, what kind of life to create, just the basics that you need to understand before you get started.

For baking, I am more than comfortable using the recipe of the master bakers that came before me. For building my own life experience, I am ever so grateful to know the science, to see how it works even if ever a novice.

When you bake your own cake of life you touch the wonder, the beauty, and majesty as it unfolds each day. When you can see these Principles at work fulfillment is yours for the taking, in the perfection before judgment, in the perfection of truth, in the perfection in knowing that you are once again home, exactly from where you came.

Supporting Materials:

What Are the 3 Principles?

The understanding that is changing everyday lives every day

In the silence of our minds lies creative incubation, bringing the wisdom and the joy we all seek. — Sydney Banks, The Missing Link

In the summer of 2017, my life changed in a way I could have never imagined. I came across an understanding that would bring me a whole new lens through which to see and understand how life is experienced, created, and lived. This understanding is changing the lives of people all over the world as more people discover this understanding every day. The community is still small but growing by thousands every year and it can change your life too.

When I speak to groups about this understanding, I always start by filling them in on my experience with “newbies”. “I always get one of four reactions when I explain these principles”, I tell them. So don’t be surprised if you fall into one of these categories. And if you fall into the last, all I ask is that you try to keep an open mind...

4 Reactions:

- “Wow, I never thought about life like this before. I am blown away. “
- “I don’t quite understand what you are talking about, but I am curious so keep talking.”
- “Yes, of course, I already knew everything you are telling me. “
- “No, you are wrong. What you are saying is not true about me.”

The author of these principles was a man named Sydney Banks. This is my retelling of his story as I have heard it from many practitioners. I am speaking from memory so my apologies to any reader who has a more accurate telling.

Syd was a Scottish immigrant to Canada. He had a ninth-grade education and he worked as a welder in a pulp mill on Vancouver Island. It was the 70’s and he and his wife were having some challenges in their marriage. So, as was the fad during that time,

they went off on a weekend retreat where they were meant to learn how to yell at each other in order to improve their relationship.

As the story goes, Syd didn't like the classes and he was skipping class on one of the days and having coffee with a psychologist who was also attending with his wife. They were arguing over which one of them was "more insecure." The psychologist turned to Syd at one point in the conversation and said, "Syd, you aren't insecure, you just think you are." Syd had an amazing realization from that simple statement. His reply to the psychologist was "do you know what you just said?"

From that simple statement, Syd began to see the role that THOUGHT plays in creating our experiences. He realized that his insecurity was coming from his own self-created thinking, not from anything outside of him. He could no longer blame the world or anyone around him. His life began to change dramatically.

The story goes on to describe Syd staying awake for three days as he contemplated this realization. This then led to a second realization of our spiritual nature, of how experiences in life are created. The fact that there is an energy and a wisdom behind life. That it is observable and that we experience it in every moment. And that it is this energy, this wisdom that creates life itself.

Syd was certain that this discovery of these principles would change the field of psychology overnight. In the same way that germ theory has changed the field of medicine and that the discovery of a round earth changed the fields of navigation and science.

As George Pransky says in his forward to Syd's book *The Missing Link*:
This book, The Missing Link, connects the spiritual nature and the psychological nature of humanity. It shows the reader that these facets of life are, and always have been, one — just as seven days and one week are two different terms denoting the same unit of time.

What happened to Syd was an enlightenment experience. But it was also more. Syd not only saw the nature of our formless to form experience on earth but also the way our psychology is born, how it is formed, and a path to freedom for those who are willing to really look and as he liked to say really *SEE*.

At first, he called this understanding *Health Realization* and later turned to call it the 3 principles. So, what are these principles?

“MIND is the universal intelligence behind life, CONSCIOUSNESS creates an awareness of what we call reality, and THOUGHT is the power to create our moment to moment existence.” — Sydney Banks. And, with a little more elaboration from me:

MIND — is the spiritual intelligence and creative nature of the universe. It is the space within us from which new possibility arises, where love resides. This principle points to our most inner core where we are all, always, ok. It is the space before thought. It is your spirit; your soul and it is Spirit or Source.

CONSCIOUSNESS — gives us awareness, the ability to experience, and a lens through which we see the world. Our level of consciousness is ever-changing as we sometimes see more and sometimes see less about what is real and what is fiction. We sometimes have greater access to our deepest wisdom and at other times, not so much.

THOUGHT — is the creative form that provides every experience in our lives. Our thoughts are born from MIND, experienced through CONSCIOUSNESS, and create that which we ultimately experience as “reality”. THOUGHT is the ticker tape that runs through your brain all day long. It is impossible to experience anything but through the principle of thought.

How does seeing this create change? I wish I could tell you for sure as sometimes it feels almost magical in nature.

What I have experienced is a greater sense of clarity. That seeing how experience is made takes the mystery away and leaves the enjoyment. Takes the pain away and leaves the purity. Seeing that all of my thoughts come from me and not from my experiences gives me the freedom to believe the ones I like and ignore the ones I don't. Knowing that Universal MIND is always there to hold me. That I don't have to hold myself. That I can let go and be good with what is. That I have a source of unlimited creativity.

Knowing that another good idea will always be there. That everything has always been ok, and that I can trust that it always will, even if it seems otherwise. That I have within me everything that I need in order to know what to do in any moment. Incredible.

Being comfortable in the humanness of ever-changing levels of consciousness. Knowing that I will sometimes be caught up in unhelpful thinking and that all I need to do is let it pass and that clarity will show up once again.

Knowing that when my thinking settles, as it always does, that consciousness will rise and that it is always changing. Up and down and up again. The cyclical nature of life itself. That all is just as it is meant to be in every moment. Beauty.

So, my friends, I invite you to join this journey. To learn just a little bit and then learn just a little bit more. To see how this understanding brings ease and possibility. To join the thousands of us who are learning together on a journey of knowledge that is limitless.