



TRUE SUCCESS FOR ALL

# So, How Did I Get *Here?*

Becoming Aware of The Beliefs That Influence Your Life



A True Success eBook

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## Chapter 1

### The Narrator of Me

*A person is three things:  
what he thinks he is,  
what others think he is,  
and what he really is.*

*-Anonymous*

We all have *the story of me*. Narrated by the “voice in our head,” we hear the comments as we go through our day. We may hear it say, “Good job!” “You’re amazing!” or, “Yes! I nailed it!” But just as often, the voice throws out negative, fearful taglines. For instance, we might hear, *It has to be perfect! You can’t do that! Don’t be so stupid!* or, *I can’t believe you said that!* Sometimes, the voice gives dire warnings, predicting scary, painful outcomes for our actions (even if they don’t happen). Or, it critiques our “enoughness,” our “worthiness,” or tells us we don’t “deserve” the success or the joy we’ve worked so hard to achieve. And if we ever make a mistake, we might hear it say we’re a “failure” or a “loser.” Try something new, and don’t be surprised if it threatens that *we won’t succeed; horrible things are going to happen if we do that; or we’re selfish*. And when it’s not focused on us, it’s often commenting on everyone else.

The comments and critiques of the “voice” create a mindset in us – a psychological terrain that determines much in our life. *For the voice in our head scripts what’s possible and not possible for us*. It tells us who is acceptable for us to marry, what job or career we’re allowed to have, and what lifestyle we can be comfortable with. Or, to say it another way, the “voice” reflects of our conditioning, our beliefs and our *psychology*.

**The voice in our head scripts what’s possible and not possible for us.**

What is psychology? To make it clear, let's use a simple example. *Cognitively*, we may know a table is "rectangular" and "cherry wood." That's objective information describing the features of the table. But our opinion of it (an "ugly" or "beautiful" table) reflects our *subjective* experience, revealing our psychology. *Our Psychology is the personal meaning we attribute to experiences and objects in the world.* What one person finds beautiful, another finds ugly, and these opinions say more about our mind and our conditioning than they do about the objects.

The meanings we make about the world come out of our personal experiences. If you've been bitten by a dog, you may think dogs are "scary." If you've enjoyed skiing with your family growing up, you probably think the outdoors are "amazing." If you struggled with math as a child, you may think math is "stupid" or "I'm stupid." These meanings reflect our *experience at the time of the event*, and in powerful moments, we tend to hold onto our experiences as "fact." Our interpretation becomes a "script" of *how things are*. If we're scared of dogs, they're "terrible," and no one's going to change our mind.

Our experiences and the meanings we make out of them come to define all areas of our life:

*If I get A's in school, I must be "smart."*

*If I cry easily, I must be a "crybaby."*

*If everyone likes the way I dress, I must be "cool."*

Over time, the meanings we make become descriptors of "me." Instead of, *this is what happened to me* (I got a good grade; I cried; people liked my "look"), we start to believe *this is who I am* (I'm smart; a crybaby; cool). And yet, this is totally illogical. Imagine for a moment that you've tripped on a sidewalk; does that make you a "tripper?" Yet across the world, people are creating identities out of their experience: *I am a breast cancer survivor; I am a veteran; I am a student; I am a loser.* When we identify with a moment in time, we limit our awareness of who we truly are.

## Chapter 2

### The Origins of the “Voice”

If you take time to track the contents of the “voice” in your head, you’ll see that it follows a few distinct patterns: a *fear response* masked as a small child voice (our “inner child” wailing, “I can’t! I can’t!”); a *vigilant voice* trying to prevent pain or rejection, masked as an admonishing, pissed-off parent, (“How could you do that?! Now, they’ll think you’re stupid!); and occasionally, when we’re really overwhelmed, we hear a kind, soothing voice that sounds like a loving parent (“You’re okay. Calm down...”).

As we go through our day encountering various scenarios, we hear the “talking” of a hysterical small child, an irritated parent, or a kind, loving adult. This is not really “me” talking, but old memories replaying from our past; for stressors in our present life open old stress responses. For example, if you’re asked to give a presentation at work, your stress reaction may come up as a young voice saying, “I can’t... I can’t do this” – a memory of what you said to yourself when you had to do a presentation in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. And right after you hear, “I can’t do this!” You may hear, “You’re okay. Calm down.” In the soothing tones of a parent.

Look at the language and syntax of these sentences, and you’ll see they’re pretty primitive. Why? Because they’re the “emotional memory” of a young child; *for most of these responses were laid down during charged moments in our early childhood*. The tape is made up of grownups calming us when we skinned our knee, or getting yelled at when we ran through the house with mud on our shoes. Consequently, our early conditioning and socializing reflects the language of our childhood (or, a young child’s interpretation of Mommy and Daddy). For instance, you’ll never hear the voice in your head say, “*Thus, I find myself in a quandary.*” The “program” just isn’t that sophisticated.

**The “voice” is the emotional memory of a young child.**

## Chapter 3

### The Voice Becomes “Me”

As we play these memories over and over, we take them to be our *Personal Identity*; a depiction of who I am, who I’m allowed to be, and what I like and dislike. We begin to think of ourselves as “stupid,” a “hero,” “I have to...,” “I can’t...” or, “I’m a Republican,” “a Democrat,” or any other label. Not only do we believe “This is who I am,” but, “this is ALL I am.” And when this happens, all other viewpoints different from our own “script” threaten our sense of self. This is why we fight so vehemently for our viewpoint when it comes to politics, religion, and even sports teams. But when we cling to rigid, old frozen narratives, we unknowingly compromise our functioning – for we can’t “flow,” “change” or “adapt” to shifting life circumstances or new information.

*And yet, these are just stories.* Have you ever been surprised when a “truth” from your past turned out to not be true? (As in, “I used to hate broccoli, but now I love it!”) Our stories and scripts don’t have to define us. With a bit of mindful attention, we can learn to spot a “story” when it’s playing. How? One way is to track the *energy* behind it. When we find ourselves being reactive (having a strong judgments or opinions about ourselves or others), we can catch a story. Right there, you might ask, *When did you learn about this? When did you decide this? Who taught you about this?* These questions will unlock the memory that laid down the story.

You can also ask yourself, *Who am I without this story?* Go ahead, put the story down. How do you feel now? Chances are, the charge lessens, you feel a bit more “empty,” and you can think clearly now. Now, maybe a new story can be written – one where you’re in the *present moment* and you’re a grownup. Take a breath and pause. There’s a deeper response waiting inside you.

## About Mark and Maureen...



Mark and Maureen have been together for 30 years, working in mental health with people of all ages and consulting to various schools and organizations. Adding to their life experience, they've raised two kids and numerous pets: dogs, cats, horses, ferrets, lizards... you get the picture. When they're not working, they enjoy hiking and camping in the deserts and mountains of their hometown and meditating at the end of the day.

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