

WORK IN PROGRESS

By Eugene Yiga

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Foreword

"Life is infinitely stranger than anything which the mind of man could invent."

– Sherlock Holmes

I wrote "Work in Progress" during July 2006. At first, all I wanted was to jot down some ideas I'd been mulling over for a while. But it soon became clear there was a lot more to talk about (and deal with) than I originally thought. After several weeks of writing and editing, I was finally done.

Unfortunately, I couldn't help but feel as though something was still missing. That's why I added "Before I Forget". This appendix to "Work in Progress" is filled with practical advice on how to actually implement the things I talk about as well as some of my favourite books on the relevant topics. It's right to the point; just the way I like it!

Rock Bottom

"Indecision is often worse than wrong action." – Henry Ford

A voice came over the intercom. "Try not to move," it said, "Or the scan won't come out clearly." All I could do was lie there in silence. I closed my eyes and took a deep breath, hoping it would make me stop trembling. But it didn't. I was scared and I was alone. The only comfort I had was a button I could push if I wanted it all to stop. It just wasn't enough.

I couldn't help but wonder how this happened. How did I wind up here? How could I not have seen this coming? All this time I thought I was in control. All this time I thought things were just fine. All this time I thought there was no problem at all. Everyone kept telling me I was being way too serious. I simply needed to loosen up and stop worrying about it. I simply needed to relax because everything was okay.

As much as I tried, I couldn't shake that sense of concern. Everything wasn't okay and a part of me had known that all along. The little voice in my head kept telling me there was a problem. But more and more, it was being smothered by the louder voice crying out for acceptance. More and more, I kept pretending things weren't that bad. I took comfort in the fact that everyone else was going through the same thing. In fact, a lot of them were far worse and they were doing just fine. Weren't they?

Still, that didn't help much. I tried to keep it together but my life continued to fall apart. Things were getting out of control. Not a day went by that I didn't feel incredibly frustrated and incredibly confused. I was constantly plagued by headaches, one of which was so severe I had to be taken to the emergency room. And that's how I wound up here, having an MRI to rule out "structural damage".

It was at that point when things finally clicked. I had a problem and it was a lot more serious than I'd thought. I hated my life. I hated who I was. Most of all, I hated what I was turning into. I was becoming a person I didn't want to be simply for approval from people I didn't even care about. I hated the fact that I constantly found myself in the same situations over and over again. No matter how many times I promised to stop, it kept happening. No matter how many times I tried to change, I simply couldn't.

By the time I got home, I was completely exhausted. All I could do was lie on my bed and stare mindlessly at the ceiling. Never before had I felt so empty. I wanted to scream, but nothing came out. I wanted to laugh, but this just wasn't funny. I wanted to cry, but I was fresh out of tears. All I could do was lie there, hoping this was all another messed up dream.

Enough was enough. It was time to make a decision. How things turned out would ultimately depend on what I chose to do. There were only two choices. The first would be to do nothing. I'd take the easy route and simply let my life continue to rot away right in front of me. The second would be to do something. Anything. I'd surrender or I'd fight.

My head told me I had to fight but my heart begged to differ. All this time, I knew things had to change but was afraid to take those first few steps in case they didn't work out. Life was comfortable and it was easier to convince myself that I'd be fine. But as much as I was afraid of failing, there was something far worse that scared me more. I knew there was a better life out there, begging me to live it. Choosing not to act would simply leave me miserable and alone, just like I was now.

And that's why things had to change. I was tired of being one of those people who sat around expecting my problems to somehow fix themselves. I was tired of hoping everything I ever wanted would simply fall from the sky. There was no choice. I had to fight. And I had to do it now.

Time Out

"The greatest mistake a man can make is to sacrifice health for any other advantage" – Arthur Schopenhauer

The call came a few days later. It was my neurologist with the results of my scan. "Your MRI was clear," he said. "It looks like just a case of stress. My advice would be for you to slow things down a bit. You need to pace yourself. Maybe a holiday would do you some good. Anything to help you relax."

I hung up the phone and stood there in disbelief. You'd think the news would come as a relief, but it didn't. I couldn't help but feel angry. What did he mean the MRI was clear? A part of me had been hoping something was wrong, simply because that would explain what I was going through. Now I was right back where I started, desperately searching for answers.

What on earth was wrong with me? Could it really be a simple case of stress? As far as I was concerned, there was nothing to be stressed about. I was young and living what I thought was a pretty balanced life. Besides, I'd tried all the pills and remedies, none of which had worked. No matter how much I tried to gain a sense of peace in my life, I never seemed to get a break.

Several days passed and I still couldn't come up with an answer. I knew it wasn't where I lived. Over the past few years I'd moved three times, always

hoping things would get better. But they never did. Old problems would simply be replaced by new ones. And I knew it wasn't the people in my life either, because no matter how many times I changed friends, things never got better. If anything, they kept getting worse.

Maybe it's you, I scoffed to myself. The thought caught me off guard. Was it really me? Were all my problems because of me? No, that couldn't be it. I didn't want to believe that was the case. I didn't want to admit that I'd been wrong all along. But it soon became clear that my realisation was correct. It was me. It had always been me.

My life was no accident. Things were the way they were because of me and the choices I'd made. How could I have missed something so fundamentally simple? Everything I'd been doing up to now was a complete mistake. All this time I'd been trying to rearrange the outside world in an attempt to make myself feel better. But of course that didn't work. It never would. The only way I'd ever make things better was by rearranging my inner world first.

In that moment I found my power. Admitting I was the problem finally helped me realise I was also the solution. It finally helped realise the only way things would ever get better was if I stopped blaming everyone else and start blaming me. Change would have to start from the inside. Instead of trying to fix everyone else, I would take the time to fix me.

Flying Solo

"What man wants is simply independent choice, whatever that independence may cost and wherever it may lead." – Fyodor Dostoyevsky

It felt good to finally feel as though I was on the right track. My plan was to work on me. The only problem was figuring out what was wrong with me in the first place. Up to now, I thought everything was fine. I'd structured my life in such a way that I had more than enough time to do all the things I needed to do. Theoretically, I shouldn't be feeling this way at all. Theoretically, I should be happy.

And yet there was still a constant sense of urgency. I'd wake up every morning feeling anxious. There was no time to waste. I had to get up and get going. There was always something or other that needed to be done. And it had to be done now. There was never a break. It was always a case of work, work, and then some. I was rundown and absolutely exhausted.

That frantic pace also left me feeling increasingly irritable. I found myself getting more and more impatient at anyone or anything that dared to get in my way. The smallest things would send me into a complete rage. Every remark and every gesture was a personal attack and something I wouldn't stand for. Sometimes I didn't even need to be provoked. As far as I was

concerned, relationships were a waste of time so I might as well not even bother.

It was clear that my anger was just a façade. All it did was cover up my fear. Lashing out was my way of dealing with a world I didn't understand. It was my way of dealing with a life I hated living. I'd look at myself in the mirror and hate the person I saw staring back at me. Why couldn't I have the things other people had? Why couldn't I live the lives they did? I wasn't special. I was worthless. I was nothing.

The more I thought about it, the more it began to make so much sense. All my actions were driven by my lack of self-worth. I was so afraid the people in my life would discover me to be insignificant. It's the reason I constantly felt the need to prove myself. It's the reason I was so feverishly obsessed with work and accomplishments. Achieving a certain level of success was the only way other people would admire me. It was the only way I'd be able to admire myself.

My life had turned into a never-ending quest for love and I was prepared to do just about anything to get it. There were so many times I sacrificed what little values I had left just so I could be "one of the guys". There were so many times I chose to change who I was just so I would fit in. It was all a desperate attempt to make them love me because the last thing I wanted was to be alone.

But none of it worked. No matter how much I tried to make people love me, they never did. I felt as though nothing I did was ever good enough. It didn't take me long to realise how true that was. *Nothing* I ever did would be good enough. It didn't matter how "successful" I was or how much I tried to fit in; there would always be someone somewhere who wanted more.

That was something I needed to make peace with. I needed to realise that external stamps of approval meant nothing. What other people thought of me meant nothing. All that mattered was what I thought of myself. They weren't the benchmark. I was. They weren't going to make me happy. I was. And the only way I'd be able to do that was by learning to love myself first.

Think Again

"There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." – William Shakespeare

It was all making so much sense. I knew I had to become secure in who I was. I knew I had to understand that being flawed didn't make me worthless. Then came the question of how. How exactly was I supposed to get that into my head? How exactly was I supposed to get rid of years and years of faulty thinking?

Well, a good place to start would be to figure out how that thinking got there in the first place. Why did I feel this way? What was it about me that made me think I was so worthless? I thought about that question for a while and came up with a startling answer. I didn't think I was worthless because I *was* worthless; I was worthless because I *thought* I was. My thoughts weren't based on my condition; my condition was based on my thoughts.

It became clear that the only way for me to change how I felt was by changing my thoughts first. The more I thought I was worthless, the more worthless I became. It didn't matter that those thoughts weren't true; thinking they were is what made them that way. Thinking I was worthless is what made me worthless, and so thinking I *wasn't* worthless would solve the

problem. I had to silence the constant self-degradation and finally start proving myself wrong.

Life began to take a new direction. More and more, I began to take pride in the things I did. Everyday would start with a practice session at the piano, not because I loved waking up at 05:00 on rainy winter mornings but because it felt great doing something I was passionate about. Everyday would also end off with a workout at the gym, not because I loved listening to never-ending remixes of songs I used to like but because it felt good to know I was actively taking steps to making my life better.

It wasn't long before the results began to speak for themselves. I was constantly complimented on how talented I was and on how good I looked. More importantly, I began to regain a sense of value in myself. It felt good to realise I wasn't a complete failure. It felt good to know I was once again in control of my life. It felt good to finally feel good.

Missing Pieces

"The supreme happiness in life is the conviction that we are loved." – Victor Hugo

As time went on, my spark began to fade. Life became routine. Everyday was simply a case of going out and crossing items off my list of things to do. At the end of it all I couldn't help but feel unsatisfied. Something was still missing. And as much as I knew I could make it on my own, I didn't want to. The time had come to confront my greatest challenge yet.

I'd always struggled with my relationships. The people in my life I wanted to be closest to were the ones who lived farthest away. They were also the ones I wouldn't hear from for weeks and sometimes months at a time. And the people that *did* make effort were the ones I wish didn't. At first it felt good to have people calling me up in the first place but it soon became clear I was better off alone.

Every time the phone rang I would cringe, hoping like mad it wasn't them. The conversations were always the same. After spending all of two seconds asking how I was, they'd launch into non-stop monologues about themselves. All I heard was moaning and droning about their problems, from their overpaid corporate careers to their oh-so-demanding photo shoots.

And then there were the times we got together. On the rare occasion they didn't cancel at the last minute or show up half an hour late, those were even worse. Without the option of multitasking with speakerphone, I was forced to grin and bear it. With no escape, all I could do was smile and nod. Again, all I got was empty blabbering about things nobody even cared about. It was horrible.

What upset me most was the fact that my so-called "best friends" were treading a very dangerous path. Usually, I don't mind what other people do with their lives. As far as I was concerned, they were more than capable of making their own decisions. But this time was different. What bothered me now was the fact that they were bent on having me come along for the ride.

Things had to stop. I was sick of having friends who thought they were better than everyone else. I was sick of having friends who liked to think of me as their emotional dumping site. I was sick of having friends who did nothing but make me miserable. Getting them to change wasn't an option, so I figured I'd find myself some new friends. If only it had been that simple.

No matter how many times I tried to meet better people, I couldn't. They were all the same. What on earth was going on? Were there no good people left in the world? I knew that couldn't be it. It had to be something else. It didn't take long for me to figure it out. Once again the answer came as no surprise. Once again I knew it was me.

Blurred Vision

"To love, or to have loved,—this suffices. Demand nothing more. There is no other pearl to be found in the shadowy folds of life. To love is a fulfilment." – Victor Hugo

My relationship woes all boiled down to something even deeper than my thinking. It was all about the way I saw the world. It was all about my beliefs. They'd become so entrenched in my mind that I barely knew they were there. But they were. The perceptions I had of other people were skewed at best. They'd gone unquestioned for years and now was the time to finally sort them out.

At some point in my life I'd come to believe that there were no decent people left in the world. Everyone everywhere was lazy, irresponsible, and simply out to satisfy their own selfish desires. And the more I believed that, the more I found it to be true. My view that everyone was innately corrupt was causing me to attract more and more innately corrupt people into my life, just to prove myself right.

Intellectually, I knew this wasn't the case. There were plenty of good people in the world. I'd seen time and time again just how amazing many of my other friends were. And yet I wasn't spending time with them. It didn't make any sense. Why was I constantly neglecting them and choosing to spend

time with the ones who treated me like dirt? What was it that made me keep coming back?

Again, it was all tied to my beliefs. I'd come to believe that all the good people in my life were simply going to let me down. They'd done it before and would do it again. So why bother? I might as well just be happy with what I was given because I couldn't do better. And the reason I couldn't do better was because I believed I didn't deserve better. It all came down to self-worth once again.

It was clear that the only way I'd be able to start filling my life with the right people was by changing my beliefs. I had to realise that just because I'd come across a few bad cases, didn't mean everyone else was that way too. I had to believe that the world was full of good people and that they wanted to spend time with me. I had to believe that I deserved to be with them in the first place because I had plenty to offer.

I knew that changing my beliefs wouldn't be an overnight thing with everything suddenly clicking into place. This was going to be a process. It was going to be something I'd have to continuously be aware of for the rest of my life. It would be tough, but I was more than up for the challenge. In the end, it had to be done.

The happiest times in my life had always been when I was in the company of good people. As a child, I loved being social. I loved making people laugh. It's the reason I grew up wanting to be a movie director. There was a burning desire in me to uplift, inspire, and ultimately have a positive impact on the world.

As I grew older, those feelings didn't change. People would turn to me with their problems and I'd always do my best to help them with whatever it was they were going through. It felt good to be their soft place to fall. It felt good knowing I was somehow able to contribute to those around me and make a difference in their lives.

That's why I had to change. I couldn't go on distancing myself from the people that mattered most. I had to get over these issues once and for all so I could finally move on with my life. I had to forgive the people that had hurt me in the past and forgive myself for the people I'd hurt too. I had to get over the things I'd said, the things I hadn't said, the things I'd done, and the things I hadn't done. I had to get in touch with the passion I used to have. It was the only way.

People Person

"Delivering one's brothers from the yoke is a goal worthy of both death and life." – Leo Tolstoy

It was clear that the only way I'd be able to regain my passion for people was by filling my life with the right ones. Up to now, the people I spent my time with were doing nothing but damage. They were ultimately ruining it for everyone else and it was high time I let them go. Fortunately for me, that proved to be quite easy. After a few months of silence, they'd more than moved on. It was time for me to do the same.

Now that my life was free of all fluffy friends, it was time to bring in the new crew. But then came the question of how. How exactly was I supposed to fill my life with the right people? Well, I knew they wouldn't exactly be barging down my door. That's why I had to be the one barging down theirs. I had to actively start reaching out and making contact. The only way I'd ever have the fun friends I wanted was by showing them I existed and that I was a fun friend too.

Attracting people into my life was the easy part. The hard part came in getting them to stay. Even with the right people in my life, the connections often felt empty. I couldn't help but feel frustrated as I watched more and more good people slip right through my fingers.

I soon realised the only way I'd be able to keep them around was by making sure they had no reason to leave. I had to figure out what they wanted and make sure I was the person they'd always get it from. Fortunately, that didn't take long. As different as they all were, it turned out they all wanted the same things.

Everyone wanted to feel safe. Everyone wanted to be with someone they could trust and confide in. So that's what I became. I made sure I was a constant force in their lives. I made sure I kept all the promises made and didn't make any promises I couldn't keep, even for something as seemingly insignificant as being on time. Whether it was celebrating with them in success or supporting them in failure, I'd always be there.

Everyone wanted to feel important. Everyone wanted to feel as though they were special in some way. So that's what I made them feel. I made a point of congratulating them on whatever it was they'd accomplished. I made a point of turning to them for advice, even when it wasn't entirely necessary. I made sure that when we were together, nothing else mattered.

Everyone wanted to be loved. More than anything, they wanted to be loved. So that's what I did. I took an interest in their lives and encouraged them to talk about all the things they were going through, no matter how small. My job wasn't to interrupt with my own babble or challenge their opinions. My job wasn't even to agree with everything they had to say. All I had to do was listen with an open mind and make a real effort to understand where they were coming from. That's all they wanted and it's all I had to do.

It wasn't long before my relationships began to totally transform. Who knew that little things like a friendly smile or occasional text to ask how their weekends were would make such a huge difference? Life was blossoming and I loved it. I became so grateful for the spice they were adding to my life and made a point of making it known. I also made a point of constantly returning that value. The more I received, the more I gave. And the more I gave, the more I received. It was everything I ever wanted.

In My Hands

"Love is the only sane and satisfactory answer to the problem of human existence." – Eric Fromm

So here I am; not quite there but definitely on the right track. I feel good. And this time I know it's sustainable. It's the type of good I know won't be here today and gone tomorrow. It's the type of good I know won't end up in more misery and pain. It's the type of good I know I can make last.

The only reason I can say that is because of a powerful lesson I finally learned. It's all about control. The number one reason my life used to be such a mess was because I constantly tried to control what wasn't mine to control. I wasted so much time and energy trying to change things that couldn't be changed. I wasted so much time and energy trying to fix things nobody asked me to fix or solve problems nobody asked me to solve. It never worked and it never would.

That's why I needed to let go of the things I couldn't control and start focusing on the things I could. Fortunately, that list was pretty short. There was only one thing in this world I could control. It was me. It had always been me. I couldn't control the things that happened to me but I could control the way I responded. I couldn't control the things people said or did, but I could control how much I let them affect me.

It was clear that the best way to control myself was by living my life according to principles. The only way I'd be able to remain grounded in times of chaos was by anchoring myself in something eternal. Of all the people in this world, I had to count on myself most. I needed to make sure the man by my side was one I could trust and ultimately respect.

And of all the values I wanted to live by, one stood out. More than anything, I wanted to be an independent thinker. I didn't want to be one of those people who believed certain beliefs just because I always had or lived a certain life just because everyone else did. I didn't want to be one of those people who hopped on whatever bandwagon happened to be pulling into town without ever taking the time to think for myself.

I needed to be my own person. I needed to stand up for myself and the things I believed in most, even if it meant being unpopular. I needed to stop accepting things at face value and start question the status quo, even if it meant being criticised. I needed to become comfortable with who I was. It was the only way I'd be able to set my own standards, make my own mistakes, and live my own life. It was the only way my life would be worth living in the first place. It was the only way I'd be able to make a real difference.

Enough Said

"The future will be better tomorrow." – Dan Quayle

Another important lesson I learned in life is all about priorities. I've found that the best way to manage my time (and my stress) has been to focus on things that really matter. It's about knowing what I absolutely have to do and what can either be postponed, delegated, or done away with altogether. It's about knowing what to take seriously and what to let slide. It's about taking care of the big things so the little ones take care of themselves and the really little ones don't bother me at all.

Why do anything else? Why be one of those people who knows more about Hollywood's hottest couple than they do about their own family and friends? Why be one of those people who spends hours and hours watching the latest reality show but never has time to take a walk or read a book? Those things aren't important, so why not spend time focusing on the things that are?

Knowing what's important has also allowed me to set goals I know are important. Instead of sitting around and expecting things to change, I take the initiative to make them change. Yes, it's scary, but that's what courage is for. Yes, it's tough, but that's where the discipline comes in. And yes, it takes time, but that's the beauty of patience. We all need to make sacrifices because there really is no other way.

Of course things won't always work out. Life isn't perfect and neither are we. There'll be days when nothing will go the way we want it to and there'll be times when we fail miserably. But instead of moping around when bad things happen, all we have to do is get back up and try a new approach. All we have to do is learn from our mistakes and move on.

And then there'll be the times when things do work out. There'll be times when all the hard work finally pays off and we get exactly what we wanted. Those times are meant for real celebration. Those times are meant for savouring the success and rewarding ourselves, no matter how small the victory. It's what makes the process worth it.

So what does the future hold? Well, I don't know. And for once in my life that doesn't bother me. The way I see it, there's no point in letting it stress me out. Most of the things that used to worry me never happened at all. And the few that did happen either didn't last very long or were nowhere near as bad as I thought they would be.

My approach is simply to take life one day at a time. I've been through enough to know that whatever happens, I'll be okay. As long as I surround myself with good people, keep faith that things will work out, and have fun along the way, I'll be just fine. More than that, I cannot say.

BEFORE I FORGET

By Eugene Yiga

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Introduction

"You make the world a better place by making yourself a better person." –

Scott Sorrell

Mind, body, heart, and soul: These four elements make us who we are. In order to fully explore our potential we need to constantly nurture all aspects of our lives. It's not just about being "well-rounded" or balanced; it's about being anchored in what really matters. And with the world currently going through some interesting times (to put it lightly), making the change has never been more important.

The Mind

"All that we are is the result of what we have thought. The mind is everything. What we think we become." – Buddha

Everything begins in the mind. Every skyscraper, every painting, and every custom-made Italian suit were once ideas in someone's head. Without these ideas, nothing would exist. And without *new* ideas, nothing will ever change. The problem is that most people stifle new ideas without ever giving them a chance to flourish. One of the biggest things that held me back in life was my limiting belief about what was possible. I was always talking about how I couldn't do this or how I couldn't be that. Is it really surprising to see that what I believed actually came true?

We all need to start seeing the world from a different perspective. That comes from going out everyday and keeping our eyes open to all the possibilities. It comes from learning new and exciting things that force us to stretch our minds and move outside our comfort zones. Put practically, there are a lot of ways to do that. Turning off the TV would be a good start.

Pick up a book, a newspaper, or a magazine that doesn't have yet another celebrity's relationship woes on the cover. Go to a museum, a gallery, an exhibit, a film festival, a theatrical production, a classical concert, or a jazz concert. Take a dance class, a cooking class, or even an investment class. Do a crossword puzzle. Do a jigsaw puzzle. Learn a language, learn an instrument, or plan an exotic holiday just for fun. Phew! I'm sure you get the idea.

"One's first step in wisdom is to question everything – and one's last is to come to terms with everything." – Georg Christoph Lichtenberg

Recommended Reading

- [As a Man Thinketh by John Allen](#)
- [Thinking for a Change by John Maxwell](#)
- [Mind Power into the 21st Century by John Kehoe](#)
- [The Road Less Traveled by M. Scott Peck](#)

The Body

"If I'd known I was going to live so long, I'd have taken better care of myself." – Leon Eldred

Healthy living has become increasingly popular recently. And that's definitely a good thing. Regular exercise and a balanced diet leave us feeling (and looking) good. But not many people follow this advice. What's up with that? Why would anyone not want to invest in something they know will pay dividends a thousand times over? I guess it's because most people simply have no reason. They think of all the hard work and sacrifice it takes and then simply give up in advance. That's why it's important to have a good reason in the first place. Why comes first; how comes second.

My reasons for living a healthy lifestyle are simple. I want to look as good on the outside as I feel on the inside. Keeping that in mind is the reason I'm able to exercise regularly, even on days I'd much rather stay cuddled up in bed. It's also the reason I'm able to avoid all those tempting chocolate bars at the supermarket checkout, as much as is humanly possible!

Another aspect of taking care of my health has to do with stress management. There are three approaches I have as far as that goes. Firstly, I make a constant effort to become aware of my emotions. I do that by keeping a journal, which has become the perfect outlet for everything on my mind. Secondly, I make sure I'm well-rested. I do that by meditating twice a day and getting enough sleep at night. (Afternoon naps are the best!)

But the best way I've found to deal with stress is to manage my time. To do that, I ask three questions to decide whether or not to do anything: 1. Does it have to be done at all? If it's not really important, I don't do it! 2. Does it have to be done by me? If someone else can do it instead, let them help! 3. Does it have to be done right this second? If I can put it off until later, I do. (Of course this assumes it won't be put off forever!)

Ultimately, it's about working on what matters, focusing on one thing at a time, and remembering that life is not meant to be taken too seriously.

Recommended Reading

- [Emotional Intelligence by Daniel Goleman](#)
- [Heart of the Soul by Gary Sukav and Linda Francis](#)
- [Destructive Emotions by Daniel Goleman](#)
- [Self Matters by Phil McGraw](#)
- [How to Stop Worrying and Start Living by Dale Carnegie](#)
- [The Everything Stress Management Book by Eve Adamson](#)

The Heart

"Start every day off with a smile and get it over with." – W. C. Fields

This aspect is all about relationships. It's impossible to go through life without interacting with other people on a regular basis. And it's also impossible to ever feel completely fulfilled without strong relationships. You can be the smartest, sexiest, and richest person in the history of the world. But without others to share that with, none of it will matter.

The people we spend our time with have a powerful effect on us. They change us, whether we'd like to admit it or not. More specifically, they tend to make us more like they already are. Whiney people create more whiney people. Interesting people create more interesting people. That's why it's important to spend time with the right people and not the wrong ones.

Now I'm not talking about right and wrong in the way only a comic book could do justice to. I'm talking about what's right for you. That's something we all need to figure out. By knowing what qualities you want to develop in yourself, you realise whether the people in your life are keeping you on track towards fulfilment or dragging you off course.

Personally, I look for three qualities. The first is vision. This is about being ambitious, living life based on some sort of direction, and having the discipline to go out and make things happen everyday. The second is passion. This is about being outgoing, showing a spontaneous side every now and then, and always knowing how to have fun.

The third (and definitely most important) is integrity. That means living a principled life. It's about being tolerant of other people, honest in your actions, and always an independent thinker. It's about developing complete security in who you are and what you have to offer the world. It's about living your own life instead of letting other people live it for you.

So, what do you do once you've found the right people? You hang onto them, is what! I've lost a few too many great relationships just because I got too busy with stuff that didn't even matter. That's why I now keep a list of all my contacts in plain sight so that I'm forced to look at it everyday. There really is no excuse. What are you waiting for?

Recommended Reading

- [The Everything Self-Esteem Book by Robert Sherfield](#)
- [Social Intelligence by Daniel Goleman](#)
- [Influence by Robert Cialdini](#)
- [How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie](#)
- [The Quick and Easy Way to Effective Speaking by Dale Carnegie](#)

The Soul

"Happiness is not achieved by the conscious pursuit of happiness; it is generally the by-product of other activities." – Aldous Huxley

Many people seem to think their mission in life needs to be a spectacular quest to "save the world". That's not true. It doesn't have to be huge; it just has to be something. And it has to be what's right for you. This is what really matters. It's about finding your purpose and then living it everyday.

Life really becomes a whole new experience once you figure out what you were born to do. Getting up in the morning isn't quite as difficult as it used to be. All those little things that used to drive you crazy don't seem as annoying anymore. Everything becomes so much clearer and life definitely becomes a whole lot more enjoyable too.

So how do you figure out what you are meant to do? A good place to start would be at the beginning. After looking at all the things I wanted to be when I was growing up, I noticed a pattern. All of them, from movie director to human rights lawyer, had to do with other people. I always loved being an entertainer. I loved using my offbeat sense of humour to cheer people up and ultimately make their lives a little better. That's how I came to realise my mission in life is to uplift, inspire, and ultimately change the world.

I also realised that the only way I can bring about this change is through my own efforts. I need to live a life of integrity and passion. I need to live life at such a high level that those around me are inspired to do the same. That basically means I go out everyday and spend my time doing things that add value to my life and the lives of other people. And there are tons of those. Every time I read a book, spend time at the gym, or do a favour for a friend, I like to believe I make a small difference in the world. Silly as it may sound, I believe those things add value to my life and I believe that value gets passed on to everyone around me.

This is very similar to the approach Anthony Robbins takes. It's about deciding on your own personal purpose, having a few consistent rules about how to be happy, and rewarding yourself for following those rules. It's also about understanding that everyone else plays by different rules and consequently not taking things too seriously. Try to find happiness in the little things because they really are everywhere if you're prepared to look.

Well, that's my key to happiness. It's just a case of living one day at a time and making sure every day counts. It's about doing little things that have a huge impact. A smile here and a compliment there really go a long way! In the end you realise Robert Anthony was right when he said, "Most people would rather be certain they're miserable than risk being happy." Happiness is a choice and you might as well be happy because 99% of the time there's no reason not to.

Recommended Reading

- [Life Strategies by Phil McGraw](#)
- [The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey](#)
- [The Eighth Habit by Stephen Covey](#)
- [Success Built to Last by Jerry Porras, Stewart Emery, and Mark Thompson](#)

Conclusion

Well, that's all I have to say about the mind, body, heart and soul. I hope I've given you some ideas you can apply in your own life. And I really hope you'll take the initiative to make whatever changes you feel the need to. All the knowledge in the world means nothing unless it's applied.

If you'd like to learn a bit more about the things I've talked about, I highly suggest "Get the Edge" by Anthony Robbins. It is without a doubt the best thing that ever happened to me. It completely changed my life and I know it can do the same for you. [Click here to get yours!](#)

Contact

Thanks for taking the time to read my book. I'd love to hear what you thought. Please send your feedback to hello@eugeneyiga.com.