

A Life of Peak Performance and Flow

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Mission: To Deliver Life Transforming Ideas



Part I

The 9 Steps of Moving “I Want” to Happiness and Purpose

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Introduction

We often spend a lifetime searching for Happiness and Purpose.

Some people are amazingly successful at finding one or the other or both. For those of us who have struggled, the first obstacle is that we often start in the wrong direction with the wrong set of assumptions.

Everyone wants the good life. Our global culture has defined that generally as having nice things and not struggling. The standards for defining that happiness usually include a nice residence, a nice car, nice clothes, and the opportunity to enjoy fine dining, culture, and vacations.

As so many have achieved the dream, we find society confronting other obstacles. One profundity is that we spend our health getting wealth and then our wealth getting back our health.

Many of the social ills say that our values may need retrofitting. With the recent financial meltdown, the economic dreams may have deserted those that worked hard to acquire and those who would still like to build a better life.

It may be best for everyone if we start to consult some greater natural principals that would serve us in any economic environment. Having money, we have learned is no guarantor of happiness.

The laws of Quantum Physics, Universal Consciousness, The Laws of Attraction, and Chaos Theory may be teaching us that being self reliant, creating positive thoughts, and recognizing we are part of a larger reality may hold more truth in the pursuit of happiness and purpose.

The new sciences are supplanting the old ones because they are more relevant to what we see, feel, and experience now.

Chapter 1 Universal Consciousness

The work of Amit Goswami, a Quantum Physicist, may be the most exemplary of the Universal Consciousness theorists. In a documentary called “The Quantum Activist”, he leads the viewers on the path of how he refutes the beliefs of the Classic Physicists and Materialists. They hold that matter is the basic ingredient of the Universe and that all we know is created by our brain.

He has written the Quantum Physics text book used by many Universities and has the opportunity to speak at as many forums as his time will allow. He promulgates the theories endorsed by scores of books, many of which are listed in the “Resources” section of my websites

Several respected sources and great thinkers have the belief that there is a reality larger than what we perceive with our senses. The Kabbala started in 1900 B.C. by the teachings of Abraham and corroborated by modern “String Theory” said there was energy before the Big Bang and then the energy expanded.

Believes in this Science and Philosophy hold that this energy still exists and we might call it Universal Energy, Nature, the Creator, or God. Out of the energy was created all matter. Matter is 99.9% empty space, but in that space exists all knowledge and all consciousness. Consciousness never ceases just as energy cannot be created or destroyed.

When we are born, consciousness enters our body and leaves at death. During our lives we can tap into the Universal Consciousness and even the past and future of our

own existence. We are our consciousness. The consciousness that is part of us can access the total consciousness. The more we allow and believe in it, the more it will serve and deliver.

Our body carries on automatic functions through the reptilian brain. Our brains perceive stimulus through our senses and translate the stimulus into messages for us. After a while we start categorizing those stimuli into the same messages and try to place each new stimulus into a category we have already created.

Chaos Theory holds that we over simplify what we perceive and fail to see the complexity or creativeness of our experiences. For example when we see a tree, we classify it as “treeness”. But could we identify that tree if mixed among a 100 similar ones? Each is unique and in this way we fail to see the creativeness in nature and the complexity of our own experiences.

We fail to observe the difference in our perceptions, in our days, in nationalities, in political issues, in other humans, in our own uniqueness.

Our brain works much as a computer, TV, or Cell phone. There are waves of information being communicated and it translates the information into a form we recognize. We pull from this energy source when we have epiphanies or revelations.

Some people can pull bigger revelations than others. Einstein said the Theory of Relativity came as a revelation. Dmitri Mendeleev said the Periodic Table came to him in a revelation. Samuel Coolidge said the “Kubla Khan” came as a revelation. Mozart said all his symphonies appeared in his mind before he put pen to paper.

Then there are the psychic experiences most of us have had and discounted. The CIA invested in Stanford Research for 20 years where there was remote viewing of Russian installations by people stateside.

If you choose to ignore or discount this data it helps you feel more comfortable about believing only what you can sense. Because you are not paranoid does not mean someone is not trying to get you. We have to accept at our own pace.

Many people have proven that they can access information not attainable by most of us. Quantum Physicists and those adept at paranormal experiences would say the information exists in the space surrounding us and everyone has access to it.

These special people have the sensitivities or have developed the practice of listening to their intuition and their subconscious as they connect to the larger reality. Creative people have a process of accessing the subconscious for new ideas.

More people than want to admit have experiences of telepathy, premonitions, remote travel, past life regressions, and premonitions to name a few. Many doctors and researchers have studied the ideas of Consciousness and admit they started with great resistance and eventually had to surrender to the evidence.

At our level, we experience creativity and breakthroughs when we are in relaxed, meditative, or sleep modes. These ideas come from a subconscious in connection with a source of greater knowledge. EEG tests have shown that those capable of remote viewing or telepathy are capable of shutting down the posterior superior parietal brain section of the neo cortex to move into a feeling of oneness with Consciousness.

Monks and others experienced with meditation can quiet their active brains or suspend left brain thinking as they drop into the lower theta and delta hertz waves of the brain.

Because we often refuse to believe on a conscious level, our information or messages often comes in our sleep in the form of dreams in the delta wave state. I often wake with creative ideas as my brain moves from sleep to wakefulness.

It may start as a leap of faith, but after we get used to accessing our greater creative power, we start to rely on it and even create the conditions for it. Anyone that is consistently creative will tell you how they prepare themselves to receive.

Recent teachers such as Charles Haanel, Napoleon Hill, Wallace Waddles who have written “The Master System”, “The Secret of Getting Rich” and “The Science of Getting Rich” say that there is a Universal Energy that we can tap with our minds and turn energy into form.

Before these recent believers in the power of Consciousness, were the Kabbala, Plato, Newton, Kepler, Kant, and Einstein to name a few. Each believed in the larger reality and our ability to source it for information and creativity.

Authors such as Shawn Achor in “The Happiness Advantage” and Allan Fine in “You Already Know How to Be Great” state that we should start with positive and happy thinking to build our dreams. Like cooking with the sour dough starter, we build momentum by starting at the right spot.

Accepting that we can be happy, were meant to be happy, and can start with happiness before we begin our journey is a real divergence from past thinking. As Robert Frost once said, the path you choose makes all the difference.

Neuroscientists will declare that happiness is a process. Daniel Goleman in his often quoted work “Emotional Intelligence” said that “flow” is the process of engaging in activities that challenge us and yet are not beyond our capabilities. This practice creates dopamine, often considered the happiness brain chemical.

If we engage in core competencies that contribute to the larger good, we get double the dopamine. Stephen Covey has said in “The 8th Habit” that it is his purpose and our higher purpose to find our voice and then help others find their voice

The belief that we are entitled to abundance and then the pursuit of our higher purpose creates positive feelings and should crowd out negative feelings about how life works and our place in it.

If you believe in these basic tenets, the activities in the following chapters will make sense and come naturally. If you don't believe in these basic tenets, then following the practices in the ensuing chapters will create the mind set to arrive at the same place.

It is my belief that the further you get into the practices out lined in the ensuing chapters, the easier it is to grasp and believe in the Universal Consciousness.

Chapter 2 Healthy Eating

Healthy eating can serve many purposes. I started as a means to lose weight. As an avid exerciser, I was not losing any pounds. A lady in my gym seemed to have lost a third of her body weight doing what I was doing. She credited her diet.

It began my journey into healthy eating that led to me losing over 40 pounds in 5 years. I never starved. I kept adding good foods and subtracting the bad ones. It also connected me to the potential of feeling great and building immunity. Although always healthy, I have not been sick for years.

Eating the basics of fruit, vegetables, nuts, seeds, good fats, beans, and clean protein connected me to nature. I have realized that when we stick to what comes out of the ground, our body, mind and spirit reach new levels.

I started my venture weighing 220 pounds. After a few years of reducing my diet to salads, soups, chicken and including nuts, seeds, good fats, and fewer desserts, I was nearing 200 pounds. I never believed or believe now in going hungry. The body and the mind start assisting the drive for leanness by craving better foods and enjoying substitutes for the bad ones.

When I moved to the beach in May of 2010, I added to my exercise program and started eating even cleaner. Within four months I had dropped another 20 pounds. I had evolved into eating raw. The only meat protein I had was canned tuna.

Now at my almost high school weight of 180 pounds I am happy with my size, how I feel, and with my diet. I have started cooking again and added chicken back into my routine.

I saw the wisdom in eating what comes out of the ground and not what comes out of a box. I connected spiritually in appreciating that everything we ever needed has always been here.

I have the comfort of knowing I have a strong immunity system, am not likely to contract any diseases, and have less need for any national health care. Being self reliant in the form of health creates self esteem and pride that I don't need doctors, medicines , or government to live a long healthy life.

Chapter 3 Fitness

Fitness and health creates the strong foundation on which to build mind and spirit.

Our concept of fitness supports our biologic need to exercise our bodies and muscles as a defense from the incursion of our sedentary life style. It's like taking Vitamin D for people who do not get in the sun or Vitamin C for people who don't eat citrus fruits.

A car can run on low grade oil and lower than specified octane gas, but there is a price that is paid and eventually it could be fatal. The human body has minimum requirements to exist, but higher standards to run at optimum.

We do have choice.

I don't see fitness as a way to maintain weight, which is the majority's purpose for engaging in exercise. We know the formula for gaining weight is more calories in than burned. The problem for most people is that if they do not eat a real natural diet, they cannot burn nearly enough calories through exercise.

The real value to life gained by exercise and fitness is like what a turbo does for an engine. It creates more energy, more relaxation, better circulation, more good feeling, self esteem, confidence, ability to control the mind and cravings, and hopefully becomes addictive.

Cherishing life on earth has to include appreciating the vessel in which our spirit lives and maximizing the performance of this vessel enhances our appreciation of everything else.

Fitness for me has always included a life of running. I can't think of many things that have given me more pleasure than the time with my thoughts as I ran a few to marathon miles. When I was running 60 miles a week, my body was so efficient that there was pure joy in knocking off a 15 mile run on a Saturday morning.

Running often included trails through the hills or up a mountain. After I had left the extreme running days, I jumped on a mountain bike and got the same returns and the added joy of visiting nature. My favorite runs were at Mammoth Mountain weaving through forests with just me the trees, wild life and the fresh air.

Not only is fitness a connection with your body, it is a connection with how humans and animals were supposed feel. Sometimes the mind throws up a challenge telling us we don't really want to exercise. It then becomes a triumph of the spirit as we push the body to new heights and realize it is all in our power.

The mind of a person not used to exercise forms a wall of resistance. It will create rationalizations that begin with you are too tired and this is not good for you to wouldn't it be better to stop right now.

Over coming the mind's resistance is an important venture into self reliance, confidence, self esteem, connection, spirituality, and happiness. To the extent we are slaves to the mind's messages of resistance is the extent we will have difficulties fulfilling our purpose.

Each time we move beyond the mind's belief in what we can accomplish, we turn it into more of an advocate and sponsor. After eating and exercising to a higher level of health and fitness, the mind starts helping us set new and loftier goals,

I have always found this important in tackling any endeavor. When I knew I was going to be facing a challenge, I would wind up my exercise program to sharpen my will. If I could stretch my body and mind's belief in what I could accomplish physically, I could transfer it into having faith in what I could accomplish with my next real world challenge.

Eating healthy and feeling fit connected me to a higher level of human potential. If I could control my habits, develop discipline, and increase focus and concentration, I could expand what I could accomplish in any one day or life time.

Chapter 4 Gratitude

It is difficult to imagine having the important feelings of optimism, happiness, and love without having gratitude. Gratitude on the small scale means thank you but on a larger scale means I am happy to be alive.

A person that is optimistic, happy, or in love would probably not say they are not happy about being alive. So is there a chicken and egg scenario? Do we have gratitude first and then have love or do we have love first, or do they both happen together?

The English dictionary says gratitude is a feeling of thankfulness or appreciation. At what point in our lives would we first recognize the feelings of thankfulness or appreciation?

In the earliest days of man, he had ceremonies, festivals, and even sacrifices expressing his appreciation for good hunting or a good harvest. Man has always sensed something bigger than him self was controlling the environment and his fortune.

The concept of deity or life force that brought fortune or misfortune has been with man since his earliest days. Do we only develop this need for thanking or asking for good fortune when we suddenly have the responsibility for our own survival?

Is it a materialism based feeling? Can one have religion or spirituality without the feeling of gratitude? My experience of religion is that we may say things or be told we should be gratified without the feelings being personal or heartfelt. My experience of spirituality is that gratitude is at the core.

Spirituality would be declared by many to have its essence separate from religion. Although religious people might classify themselves as spiritual, many a spiritual person does not classify themselves as religious.

Why are spirituality and gratitude on the same plain? Spirituality is a feeling that something greater than us is the creator of a universe that we hold to be benevolent. That is almost the definition of gratitude.

In either case, if we are spiritual we are submitting that our existence is the result of a higher force and we normally acknowledge that our existence is a blessing. We are happy that we are here to enjoy and appreciate.

Chapter 5 Optimism

Optimism is a test to see if you are on the right track. It seems to come in the mix of other ingredients. It is hard to be optimistic as an isolated feeling. It is usually accompanied by a system of beliefs or by a cornucopia of supporting cast members.

Nonetheless, it is crucial juxtaposed to its opposite. Pessimism and optimism are usually the glass is half full or half empty for everything you do. A person is rarely optimistic about one major aspect of their life and pessimistic about others

This is because optimism is a perspective, a belief, and an approach. Given a challenge, an optimistic person will have faith that they can understand the difficulty of the challenge and create a good strategy to win.

The pessimistic person will sink into what their brain recalls as their negative past experiences or world view and decide that regardless of what they do, the result will not be favorable.

Optimism is part of the pack of positive thinking, optimismism, happiness, love, confidence, self esteem, and creativity. People who pursue activities that are a challenge, but for which they have the capabilities can enter what is often called “Flow”. In this brain state, we produce dopamine, the neurotransmitter associated with happiness.

In “flow” we operate at our peak performance. If we are able to engage in activities with a relaxed focus where everything moves in slow motion as we combat what others would think are fast moving obstacles, we can usually succeed.

Knowing that we can incorporate our core competencies and function at our peak gives us confidence that we can work through any issues. In surfing, I started by having fear that waves were going to batter me and they did because I did not know how to protect myself.

Now I can go out on most days without fear knowing that I can avoid getting hurt. I know how to spot waves that should be ducked or avoid riding waves that are going to close out and slam hapless victims. Having knowledge and confidence that I can protect myself gives me confidence that I can engage and learn more.

Having confidence that we can keep learning makes us optimistic that we can advance in our pursuit of goals. If I think I can, I probably can. If I think I can't, I will probably sabotage my efforts.

If I think I can accomplish what I set my mind to, I then have to pick the targets being careful not to put more on my plate than I can digest. If I think I cannot accomplish my goals, I am more likely to retreat and take what I think is the best I can get.

Whereas optimism is not a stand alone feature, it is important to ask ourselves if we are generally optimistic as a litmus test of our general beliefs, behavior, and world view.

Chapter 6 Love

Our vocabulary is generally inadequate to describe some of the occurrences in nature or some of the feelings we experience. In “The Wave” by Susan Casey she describes what it looks like to ride huge waves up to and exceeding 100 feet.

She tries to get the surfers like Laird Hamilton to describe what it is like when they are on that kind of wave. The surfer and the author cannot put into words the experience to

make you and I know what it is. Yet when I read her colorful descriptions of the scenarios, I can feel myself start to tremble.

Leading Quantum Physicists say the universe is energy and consciousness and maybe even love. How do we imagine the energy required to explode and create a universe? How do we explain the knowledge necessary to create life that lasts millions of years? How do we explain how we can know what someone is thinking thousands of miles away?

If love were the answer to each of these questions, how would we explain it in our words? Chances are that like Plato said in the Republic, we see just a shadow of the larger reality. We probably feel just a glimmer of what really exists when we try to explain love.

Love, hate, anger, joy, despair, and sorrow are all strong emotions. They can all have power. They can all motivate action. They can all inspire some type of expression or description of what we are feeling.

We often don't give the need for love enough breadth. We just assume there is love from parents, mates, siblings, and friends. We understand that. We often think that exhausts the parameters of love.

We hopefully love ourselves, but being as self critical as we are we probably don't get expansive enough with it. We know we should love who we and give ourselves both permission and acceptance of all our drives and negative thoughts. Learning to embrace the total "I" is usually an incomplete process.

Learning to see love as the basis for all that exists, takes it to a different level. At this juncture it becomes unlimited. It exceeds what we know. It comes before energy. It is the source and surrounds energy. It is in each of our several trillion cells that operate our body. As each of those cells are replaced on a continuing basis, the love remains.

If we see love as energy, consciousness, the source of our existence and the reason for our existence we start exploring the larger concept of Plato's reality; that reality beyond words.

Chapter 7 Happiness

I think happiness is easier to describe and explain than love. Happiness is something we can truly feel. There are many degrees, but we are sensitive to the beginning degrees and can recognize when we feel happy.

There are also the degrees of joy and ecstasy. These feelings may not be permanent, but the more we have the happier we are. Happiness is clearly produced by certain brain chemicals. Dopamine and serotonin are most responsible and can be released with certain feelings and exercises.

In “After the Ecstasy, the Laundry”, Jack Kornfield explores our happiness syndrome. He says that so many people that have a first enlightenment experience then spend their next years trying to fulfill those same heightened feelings. It is not easy.

I love his comment:

“Of so many great teachers I’ve met in India and Asia, if you were to bring them to America, get them a house, two cars, a spouse, three kids, a job, insurance, and taxes...they would all have a hard time.”

More important is that we realize we are entitled to be happy. We don’t have to earn it. We don’t have to achieve to get it. We often get confused with having desires that we think will bring us a happiness that we don’t feel at the moment.

Understanding the difference between the happiness to which we are entitled and the happiness that comes from material acquisitions are quite different. I classify material acquisitions as achievement, money, fame, power, and things purchased with money.

Happiness in its purest God given sense is gratitude. We are gratified and therefore happy that we are alive, that we can experience our lives, that we have health, that we can pursue our passions, that we can express ourselves, that we can help others.

None of these require a great deal of material possessions in their purest form. They are all expressions of who we are. Happiness becomes the acceptance of our place in a larger macrocosm. We probably sense our individuality but also our connection to the whole.

In the Cheeful Monk.com, the editors says “In fact, the [Dalai Lama](#) believes that the *purpose* of human life is to be happy, and that we can achieve that by being loving and compassionate to one another. Certainly love and compassion are important parts of my own happiness, but for me they’re not quite enough. I also need a certain amount of challenge in my life, and I need to be using my talents and contributing in ways that engage my deepest passions.”

We can choose what makes us happy, but we can also realize that it can begin before we choose. Happiness gives us more freedom to choose pursuits. We already have what we want and now we can add to it. It is always fun to have more happiness.

Chapter 8 Self Expression

Many researchers, scientists, doctors, psychologists to name a few involved in the field of human performance have said that self expression is one of our higher purposes.

It is the embodiment of who we are and what we want to contribute.

The world may not always see our contribution as interesting or worthwhile for investment, if that is what we are asking. They may not even want to listen, read, or participate in what we are producing.

To me, that is secondary to the value of self expression.

It takes a lot of courage for an individual to express their passion. There are many stages most rise through before they have the confidence to express themselves and not let the fear of judgment stifle them. The person has to recognize their passion. They have to practice or engage in this activity. They have to have confidence that what they are doing is worthwhile. Then it is their opportunity to see what others think.

We don't always reach the right audience. What we prepare is not always on target at the beginning. The balancing of what is meaningful to us and what might be meaningful to others requires tuning.

In the long run we do want others to enjoy or benefit from what we produce. We don't want to compromise our process to the degree that it is no longer us and we no longer feel the passion to engage in the activity.

It is a dance. Can we create something for others and ourselves that has meaning? Sometimes finding the sweet spot that results in acceptance is necessary if we need financial support to continue the activity or engage full time.

Van Gogh painted for a lifetime and never sold a painting until the end. His brother was a successful art dealer and supported his meager existence. Van Gogh, maybe luckily for his brother, wanted to live in poverty so that he could understand the people whom he wanted to portray.

At the end he entered a period of high productivity and gave over 80 paintings to his brother to repay all the support he had received. And then he died

Was it a life wasted? Was the fact he never sold his paintings the point for him? Would it be for you? Do we become frustrated and abandon our passions and self expression if other people do not appreciate our talents?

Carlos Burle a well known Brazilian surfer wanted to surf all the time. He entered contests and earned sponsorship to support his desire to travel to distant beaches. When he lost his sponsors he worked odd jobs to earn the necessary money. Eventually he helped found the International Big Wave World Tournament.

Everyday there are stories from people opening bakeries and restaurants to starting high tech corporations, to playing quarterback, to starting a band, to making clothing or crafts. The connecting thread is the passion to express oneself by doing what you feel you were meant to accomplish. An even higher form is contributing to the greater good.

Finding your passion and having the courage to subject it to judgment is a necessary step in full expression. You only have so much time on earth and the life wasted would not be the one that never received money, but the life that never found expression.

Chapter Nine Community

The word community has a common connotation of being the group with which you could interact and to which you could contribute. The size of the group could be your neighborhood or it could be the global community.

I want to stretch the concept and include everything in the universe. I feel to the extent you appreciate your individuality but see yourself as one with everything that exists, you will appreciate how your every action and even thought influences the whole.

In chaos theory there is the theory of the butterfly affect. Could the flapping of a butterfly's wings in Argentina cause a tornado in Texas? Everything in nature and climate, specifically, works in feedback loops.

Temperatures, pressures, wind, water currents, and millions of other affects can cause global change. Small things fed into the larger picture can create non-linear affects. A non-linear affect would be a freak 120 foot wave that appears in 45 foot seas.

A non-linear affect would be a 9.0 earthquake and tsunami that rocks Japan in an otherwise very tranquil setting. A non-linear affect would be a seemingly innocuous comment ending a relationship or causing the resignation of a politician because they did not for see a special context.

Those who believe consciousness is the basic element of existence and those who believe in the non-linear affects of each human's thoughts, words, and actions, place a power of influence on you that you might not appreciate.

Our thoughts can create realities. Quantum Physicists believe that energy is the basic unit of the universe and that energy is consciousness. Therefore consciousness or energy create matter. Your thoughts therefore could create what you focus on.

This is one reason we are told not to have negative thoughts and expressions. Create a positive attitude and have positive expressions. The butterfly can have major influence. In suppressed societies, the universal consciousness sometimes hits a boiling point where riots are the only viable way of expressing discontent.

In our bodies, abusive habits can result in cancer which is the body's only means of expression to get our attention. Living a harmonious life in mind, body, and spirit is important to realizing the fulfillment we seek. Any one segment out of place can have the butterfly affect.

We are each a butterfly in the universal community and should never underestimate our influence or power.