

Make **2017** the Best Year of Your Life

GET  
OUT  
OF  
YOUR  
WAY

Cory Katuna

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH iPEC

# Contents

**Intro** | 1

**2017: The Year Blame Dies** | 4

**Where Your Best Self Lives – In Alignment** | 7

**Ditch Your Mask: How To Drop The Pretense** | 10

**Fear Leads To The Future You Want** | 14

**The Shortcut: Open Up To Everything** | 17

**Compassion: Not So Nice** | 19

**How To Change Someone Else** | 22

**Lighten Up. If It's Heavy, You're Full Of Shit** | 25

**10 Reminders To Get You Out of Your Way for an Epic 2017** | 27

**Outro** | 30



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## Intro

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I was with three of my closest friends on the porch a few years ago. We were going around, each saying what our greatest fear was.

Melissa was scared of being judged. Chelsea was scared of selling out. Noah was scared of being guilty.

I couldn't think of mine until my turn came. Then it hit me: I'm scared of not reaching my potential.

I'm acutely aware of how good I could be. I know how much of an impact I could make on the world. I know how fulfilled I could be on my deathbed one day.

And the thought of not reaching that potential is excruciating. The possibility that one day I could look back on my life with dissatisfaction and regret horrifies me.

Thanks to this fear I've spent my life figuring out how to get the most out of myself—

how to overcome my self-imposed limits and live as fully as possible. I've turned my life into a case study for reaching potential.

But reaching potential is a tricky concept.

For most people it means something specific. Becoming the best at your job. Getting rich. Being super productive. Having an idyllic relationship. Making a difference for a million people. Whatever.

What if you never reach that specific destination? Did you not reach your potential? Did you blow your shot at life?

Not according to every article I've ever seen about what dying people say they regret about the life they lived.

They say things like:

**“I wish I was courageous enough to live true to myself instead of true to the expectations of others.”**

Or

**“I wish I had been more honest.”**

Or

**“I wish I had forgiven more.”**

Or

**“I wish I had stopped chasing the wrong things.”**

**I've never heard of a dying person who regrets not getting rich. I've never heard of a dying person who regrets not being as productive as they could have been. What they regret is not living true to themselves. They regret their unnecessary grudges and misaligned priorities. They regret bullshitting in order to look good. They regret living their lives based on stuff that doesn't matter instead of getting real and living their lives in alignment with who they really are.**

In other words, what dying people most regret is being someone they're not.

And the only way to be someone you're not is to put on a front; to fake it; to get in your way.

That's what's so exciting—and that's the reason I wrote this book:

Reaching your potential has almost nothing to do with getting somewhere or being something and almost everything to do with getting out of your way.

**“Enlightenment is a destructive process. It has nothing to do with becoming better or being happier. Enlightenment is the crumbling away of untruth. It is seeing through the facade of pretense.”  
— Adyashanti**

Living a life that has you on your deathbed grinning and grateful is accessible right now. It’s not a destination. It’s a choice. And there are opportunities every day to make this choice.

The best way to reach your potential is to reach this moment’s potential. And the way to reach this moment’s potential is to get out of your way.

This book is a compilation of some of the best things I know about getting out of your way.

If you integrate most of what you read here, 2017 will be the best year of your life.



## Shout Out to iPEC

A few months after starting my blog, [corykatuna.com](http://corykatuna.com), I wrote an article called Why I Feel Good About The Election. It

was based on a model from the book Energy Leadership by Bruce D Schneider. Turns out he founded [iPEC](http://iPEC), a huge, forward-thinking coaching organization on a mission to empower the planet. The team at iPEC read my article, reached out to me, and asked me to partner with them by writing this book. Working with them has been energizing. They gave me complete creative freedom, supported me behind the scenes, and made this process effortless and fun. Later this year I’ll be attending their (apparently mindblowing) training program.

I feel lucky to be working with such a generous company. And I’m grateful to be able to write about what matters to me knowing it’s aligned with their vision.

Thank you, iPEC.



## About the Photos

The photos in each chapter are of (and in most cases taken by) my friends—people I love. I wanted the underlying feeling of each chapter to be visceral in each shot. But more importantly I think my friends are special. They’re talented and real and beautiful. In different ways the models and photographers in this book have helped me get out of my way. I’m proud to include them in this project.





Photo of **Kwame Apraku** • Instagram @kwame\_a | Taken by **Cory Katuna** • Instagram @corykatuna

## 2017: The Year Blame Dies

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Blame. It's like jealousy and guilt and regret. We all know it's worthless and counterproductive and feels terrible but we still indulge.

That's because we have a spectrum that ranges from blame to responsibility. Let's call it the Responsibility Spectrum.

At the far left you've got stuff you're certain you're not responsible for. Your kid punched your other kid in the mouth. There's a war going on and innocent people are dying. Your uncle verbally abused

you and now you have anxiety. Your boss gave you another project after you told her you were swamped.

On the far right there's stuff *only* you are responsible for. You went and got yourself a haircut. You intentionally got pregnant. You worked hard, saved up, and bought yourself a Tesla.

Then the entire middle chunk of the spectrum is this subjective mix of blame and responsibility:

You drank too much last night. But your friends were pressuring you. Let's say 60% your responsibility, 40% theirs.

You're financially irresponsible. Yeah it's mostly your responsibility, but your parents were too lenient with you growing up so you never had the chance to learn to be good with your money. We'll go with 80% your responsibility, 20% theirs.

Your partner isn't as kind or loving with you as they used to be. This one is messy and hard to figure out who's responsible for what. So we'll say 50% 50%.

**Then here's where you get stuck: how do you solve the problem if you're only partially responsible for it?** That means in order to solve it you require something you have no control over.

How do you overcome your anxiety NOW when the only way for the trauma to go away is if your uncle never verbally abused you in the first place?

How do you become financially responsible NOW when the only way for you to become financially responsible is if you had a different upbringing?

How do you become a more balanced drinker NOW when peer pressure, a variable you can't control, accounts for 40% of whether or not you drink?

How do you even begin to solve a mas-

sive issue like a war killing innocent people if you're sitting up in the nosebleeds pointing fingers at the bad guys?

## How can you grow if you're holding something you can't control accountable for something only you can control?

How can you become your best self when you believe that your experience is someone else's fault?

It's important to know that it's also not your fault. It's not your *fault* that a war is happening. It's not your *fault* that you drank too much. It's not your *fault* that you have anxiety as a result of verbal abuse growing up. **But it is absolutely your responsibility, starting right now, to create the future you want.** And blaming it on anyone, including yourself, goes in the exact opposite direction of that future.

**The fastest way to create the future you want is to take 100% responsibility for everything you experience.**

In his book *Energy Leadership*, Bruce D Schneider outlines The 7 Levels of Energy. Think of these levels like paradigms or perspectives or attitudes. Level 1 is the lowest (or worst-feeling) attitude, and level 7 is the highest (or best-feeling) attitude. The higher your level of energy the

more aligned and free and creative you are. **At higher levels of energy you are more equipped to deal with tough situations.** At lower levels of energy, the more self-conscious and depressed and manipulative you are. **The lower your level of energy the less equipped you are to deal with tough situations.**

To simplify: the better you feel the more able you are to solve problems and contribute to the world. The worse you feel the more you perpetuate problems, manipulate others, and limit your own growth.

Victimization and anger are the lowest and second lowest levels of energy, respectively. **This is where blame lives.** These low levels are characterized by the belief that the world is happening to you. You are a victim of your circumstances. Bad stuff happened (or is happening) to you and as a result you are worse off than you should be.

**In other words if your current negative experience is anything except 100% your responsibility you can expect to keep suffering and perpetuating whatever problem you think caused your suffering in the first place.**

If you're serious about feeling better, getting more out of yourself and transcending the problem, you'll convert your blame to responsibility and start improving your attitude. Being responsible and in control of your attitude feels good.

The more you train yourself to automatically take 100% responsibility—especially for the circumstances that are “definitely not your fault”—the more you'll expedite the process of moving up the levels of energy to perspectives of service and opportunity and creativity and genius. The more often you take 100% responsibility for everything you experience the more part of the solution you'll be.

So for 2017 ditch blame and make this your new mantra:

**“I am 100% responsible for everything I experience.”**







Photo of **Ayla Sarnoff** • Instagram @aylasarnoff | Taken by **Syvonne Kozuch** • Syvonnek.com

## Where Your Best Self Lives — In Alignment

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When I was 15 I drew a chart. Along the horizontal axis were situations I thought I handled poorly. Along the vertical axis were people I thought handled situations impressively well. These included Albus Dumbledore, Coach Johnson (my high school math teacher), and my dad to name a few. In each of the intersecting boxes I wrote how I thought each of those people would have handled each situation if they had been in my shoes.

Then I highlighted the responses I most

admired and decided to handle future situations that way.

What I didn't realize at the time was that this exercise was not about being like those people. **It was about uncovering my truest self: the me I wanted to be, the me I knew I could be.**

My best self has always been elusive. Sometimes I'm confident and clear and make excellent decisions and feel joy and optimism and the people around me think

I'm hilarious. Other times I get tense and self-conscious and petty and accomplish nothing and the people around me think I'm out of touch.

### What's the difference?

Sometimes when I felt incredible I was able to pin it on the fact that I got good sleep or liked my outfit or finished my project early. But other times I would get good sleep, like my outfit, and finish my project early and still feel insecure and anxious. What was responsible for me being my best self sometimes and feeling lost and tense other times?

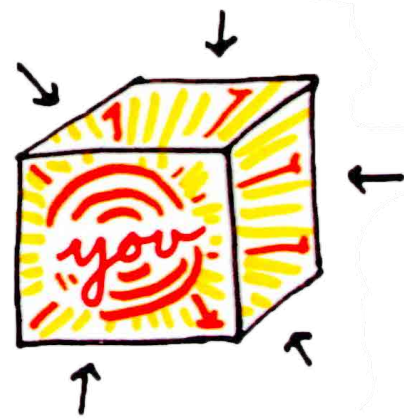
### Where is my best self hiding most of the time?

I've gotten closer with her in the last few years and I've learned a thing or two about how to find her. Here's what I know that will help you find yours:

Think of your best self as this ball of energy, radiating outward like the sun:



As adults, this ball of energy gets boxed in by what other people think of you and “shoulds” and expectations and habits. **When we talk about getting out of our way, the box is what's in the way.**



The more you play by the box's rules (by caring about what others think of you, doing what you “should” do, enduring your habits and addictions, and keeping up with expectations), the more power the box has over you, the more you experience yourself as the victim of your circumstances, and the worse you feel.

**This is when you are least yourself.**

When people talk about the best moments of their lives they describe feeling in the zone, expansive, proud, confident, clear, optimistic about things, unfazed by their physical needs and undistracted by how they might look to others. In these moments you are not limited by the box. You are free to be yourself. This is because you are generating your experience from the inside out—not receiving it from the outside in. This is what it means to be in alignment.

**The more you source your experience from that glowing core of your being the less the box can contain you.** This is why when you're in alignment you feel expansive and big. And when you're out of alignment (sourcing your experience from your circumstances), you feel contracted and small.

Here's the exciting part: you can access your best self right now. It's easier than you think.

**Your best self is actually your most authentic self. It's the truest, purest version of yourself. It's your essence. It's who you are without all the gunk you've accumulated along the way. It's you without the box. So don't stress about becoming yourself. Think of it more like releasing what's not you; get out of your way.**

Since your best self is your truest self at the core, there's nothing you need to do besides stop giving mental and emotional bandwidth to whatever's not you. **Hint: if it feels bad, it's not you.**

Get out of your way by retracting your awareness from your circumstances and

generating an experience for yourself from scratch.

A good way to practice this is by prompting yourself with questions like these. I recommend identifying how you feel before you start answering these questions and tracking your energy as you make your way through them:

**What inspires me?**

**What excites me?**

**What do I love?**

**When have I felt the best in my life?**

**Why?**

**Who do I look up to?**

**What's the hardest I remember laughing?**

**What's special about me?**

**What am I grateful for?**

**What am I great at?**

**What opportunity would I quit my job for in a second?**





Photo of **Anna Skuba** • Instagram @annaskuba | Taken by **Baldwin Cunningham** • Instagram @baldwinner

## Ditch The Mask: How To Drop The Pretense

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In certain situations I felt myself being painfully fake. Asking questions I didn't care to hear the answers to. Smiling and nodding when I wasn't interested. Fake

laughter. Fake curiosity. And consistently this behavior got me social results I didn't want. People I was drawn to would change the subject or ignore me or end

the conversation. People I was bored with took my feigned interest to heart and planned future hangouts or went for the kiss. The cycle perpetuated itself and I felt trapped. I knew what I was doing—I could identify it the second it came over me. And I couldn't figure out how to delete it from my life. I asked some of my closest friends for advice but didn't learn as much as I hoped to—most of them didn't recognize this behavior in me. They weren't the people I was acting fake around. Anyway, I figured it out. I discovered how to drop the pretense. I've tested it in tricky situations that would have wrecked me in the past—like a week-long gathering at a mansion in Aspen with intimidatingly inspiring strangers, or at Thanksgiving in California with my extended family. The pretense problem is gone.

### **Ready? Here's how:**

### **Identify the Pretense.**

I assume you've already identified when you're putting up a front. If you haven't, this might be the hardest part. Here are some tips that might help you catch it in action:

- You get drained or socially overstimulated
- You feel insecure and inadequate
- You have a hidden agenda — you'll have to look closely for this
- You're trying harder than usual
- You feel like you could mess it up

- People don't hear you, they disregard you, they don't get your jokes, etc.
- You overanalyze social situations afterward

Identifying your inauthenticities and bringing awareness to them is what sets you up to work with them. You can't fix something you don't know is broken.

### **Have a genuine desire to overcome your facade.**

You need to want to free yourself of fake-ness MORE than you want to look good (or not look bad) to others. So check your priorities. Is there something else you want more than to be your true authentic self? This is actually pretty likely — most people have a vested interest in appeasing the boss, charming a partner or looking good for the family. No judgment here—but check yourself and be honest.

### **What do you want most? Freedom or facade?**

### **You chose facade? This way:**

Bravo for your honesty. That's badass. Come back and read the freedom route when you change your mind. Meanwhile, one question: You sure?

Often when people choose this route, they think they have more information than their intuition. **They don't trust their authentic self because it might**

**be incompatible with the life they've carefully designed.** What if their authentic self wants a promotion or a different job or a breakup or a hard conversation? That's risky! It's threatening to their life as they know it.

So it's possible you're putting all your eggs in the person-with-attachments-and-fears basket and none in the empowered-risk-taking-soul-on-a-mission basket. One of these trajectories leads you to a future you can probably predict right now. A comfortable future that might be pleasant enough.

The other trajectory leads you to the future that has you on your deathbed grinning, grateful and proud of the life you lived and the impact you made. Check in to see if that feels relevant for you.

## **You chose freedom? This way:**

Your intention alone is powerful. Nice. This means even if you don't follow the next two steps, you'll be quietly tracking your development in this area. Sometimes that's all it takes to have a breakthrough.

If you want to expedite the process, here are the two most important insights I have for you:

**Give yourself permission to suck.**

I got to see Kyle Cease live last year. He does transformational comedy at an event called Evolving Out Loud. He starts the show with this message: "I hope I screw this up." This gives him the freedom that comes with knowing he will be a-ok if everything goes wrong.

Same goes with a teaching strategy Jason Hardy talks about: If you tell a kid to get up there and give a presentation, she'll often be nervous, paranoid, and hyper self-aware. Her presentation will feel tense. If you tell her to get up there and give a bad presentation, she'll often be comfortable, lighthearted, and eager. She'll have access to more of herself. Her presentation will be way more fun to watch for her audience.

**Pretense comes from the pressure we put on ourselves to look good and not suck. Get out of your own way by giving yourself permission (and maybe even the intention) to totally blow it.**

## **Start with your face.**

Your face is your first line of pretense. It's the easiest, fastest thing you manipulate in social situations. When you're faking it, you can feel it. Think about smiling for a photo. After the first 2 seconds of genuine grin, you're twitching and forcing a smile so the picture turns out good.

There is always a most authentic face for right now. **Always.** When you buckle

over laughing you're not expending any effort to make a laugh-face. When you're amped up and excited your face immediately and naturally lights up and intensifies. Right now my face is bland as hell. Just neutral. Looking at the laptop screen. To do anything else would feel weird and noticeable.

Now, notice your face in interaction with others. Do you furrow your brow to make it look like you're concentrating on what they're saying? Do you smile to make them think you feel good about what they're saying? Catch yourself making faces that aren't true to the moment and transition them to whatever feels effortless. Sometimes it will feel like frowning at an inappropriate time, but your peers get used to (and begin to appreciate) your authentic responses. The more authentic your facial expression the more the rest of your behavior will follow suit.

Once you notice yourself dropping the pretense and letting your true self out in a situation you otherwise might not have, you'll be surprised at the amount of effort you spent monitoring how good you looked to people and manipulating your face to come across a certain way.

You might also notice how much easier social situations become. You're comfortable to say nothing when you have nothing to say— and to crack a joke when it crosses your mind. Your self expression won't be filtered through trying, and sur-

prisingly, without the trying, you will have realer, richer experiences with those around you.





Photo of **Meg Johnson** • Instagram @margaret.does | Taken by **Christian O'Rourke** • Instagram @orourke\_photo

## Fear Leads To The Future You Want

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Follow your resonance. Trust what fills you with life and enthusiasm and joy.

Go in the direction of the best case scenario. Just start. Go for it.



And inevitably, this path will bring you up against something that scares the living daylights out of you.

This is usually where folks stop.

**“I knew I shouldn’t have taken that risk.”**

**“I was stupid to do this. I knew better.”**

**“I’m in over my head. Why did I do this to myself?”**

**This moment, right here, is pivotal. It’s historic. It’s where either you break your existing self-imposed limits and bust through to an entirely new version of yourself... or you restart the cycle.**

If you restart the cycle, no biggie, but you didn’t dodge the fear. You’ll face it again in another form.

If you recognize fear for what it is: evidence that you’re moments away from the next phase you’ve been looking forward to—you’ll take it on. You’ll welcome it. You’ll seek it out and cherish it. You’ll experience it passionately and completely because you’ll know it’s fleeting. It’ll be gone in no time.

You’ll smile when you feel the first twinge of it and you’ll nod because you know now exactly where to go. You’ll learn to relate to it like a signpost lighting the way on the path toward accomplishing your goals and living your dreams. You’ll thank it for being the guidance mechanism it is.

Once you know that fear leads to the future you want, you’ll fall in love with it.



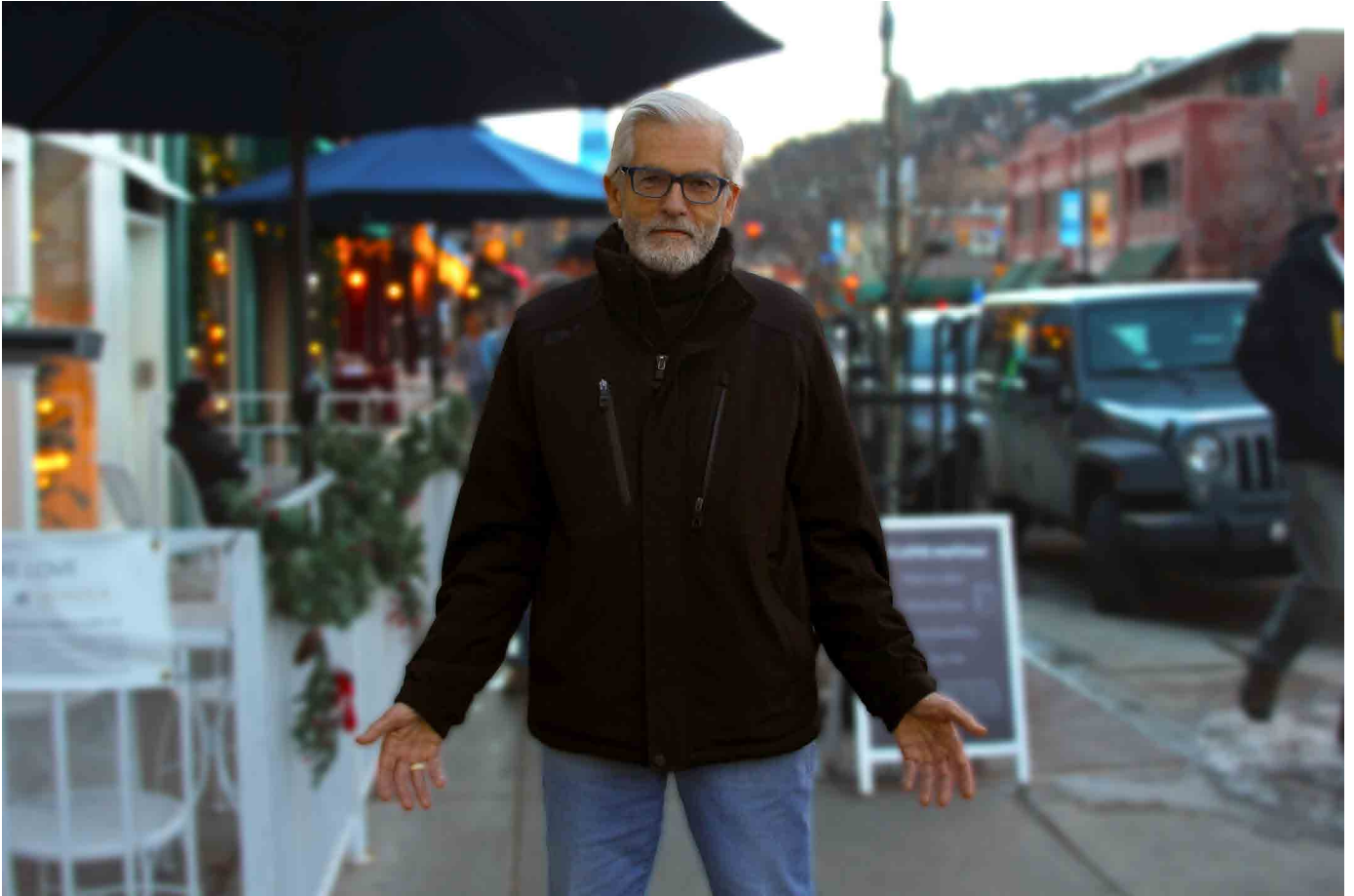


Photo of **James Kline** | Taken by **Cory Katuna** • Instagram @corykatuna

## The Shortcut: Open Up To Everything

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If you're reading this you've probably done a fair amount of self-reflection and introspection. You've overcome some deep personal stuff and you've freed yourself of limiting beliefs and insecurities.

But there's still that thing right? That one tricky little trigger that you almost don't even want to acknowledge? That certain trauma or long-held doubt that has been there for a long time, and it's probably not going anywhere soon...

For instance:

*"I have this thing about being left out, and no matter how much I work to try to overcome it, it stays. Whenever I think I'm being left out I get reactive and self-conscious. I think it's too deeply rooted to resolve."*

*"Unworthiness. All it takes is someone correcting my work or talking over me or declining my invitation and I'll be out of commission for a few hours while I try to get my mind right."*

*"I've always had this guard up around*

*men. It's not you, I just have trust issues."*

*"I'm a perfectionist. I always have been. I'm the kind of person who freaks out if everything isn't going as planned."*

Do you recognize this thought pattern in yourself? Conscious awareness of some limiting aspect of your personality and yet no active intention to resolve it? (Or perhaps no belief that you can?) You've become jaded about something that drains your energy. You're tolerating something that reliably yanks you out of alignment.

On one hand it's relatively advanced—you've brought awareness to a shadow lurking somewhere deep in yourself. You're aware of your own limitation. That's an important step. Most people haven't made it that far. This is a legitimate prerequisite to transcending it.

And on the other hand it's a cop-out. And it's debilitating. Not only have you admitted defeat to something that disempowers you, but you've also integrated it into your personality. You justify it and defend it. You identify as the *kind of person* who deals with that characteristic. You've built it a comfy little home with a garden and a privacy fence.

You haven't figured out how to transcend your fear, so you tolerate it.

As Tony Robbins says, "You get what you tolerate."

**The reason so many people tolerate (and therefore continue to experience) limiting aspects of their personality is because they're not dealing with the source of the issue. They've found sporadic, temporary ways to relieve some of their tension, but to eliminate a weed you've got to uproot it. What too many people are doing is cutting it back or covering it up with rocks.**

For most of us, transforming our limitations and freeing ourselves from deep conditioning is a crapshoot. We try going to our therapist or meditating or working out or calling a friend or reading an inspiring book. All of which help sometimes—none of which help reliably.

But when something does work, what happens? What's the criteria for something working? When your jog or meditation or therapy session brings you new clarity, and suddenly what used to trouble you can't touch you, what changed?

**You opened up to it.**

You stopped resisting it.

You experienced the thing that has been

a source of fear and anxiety and guilt and doubt at the same time as you experienced openness.

This works because the belief in separation—that stuff out there is separate from us and is the source of our pain—is itself a source of major suffering. Our tendency is to push away, ignore, or resist what causes us pain.

### **But what you resist persists.**

This means that—paradoxically—when you open up to something that has historically caused you pain, you are transcending your separation from it, thereby freeing yourself from its grasp on you.

### **By opening up to your fear and letting it in you are integrating it, allowing it, and flooding it with okayness and relief.**

Try it. Just feel open. When I do my eyes widen, my ribs release, my breath deepens and I become curious and calm. Now see if you can maintain that feeling while you think about something that upsets you. It's tough isn't it? The body contracts a little bit, your mood changes, and you have to think about something else to feel open again.

This is the practice. This is what therapy and meditation and inspiring books can do for us: they can make us feel open

where we used to feel closed.

The better you get at this, the more getting left out will feel interesting and neutral and okay. If you've been a perfectionist, suddenly things going haywire will feel like an opportunity to try something creative and different. If you've had trust issues, watching your partner talk to another person will feel normal and good.

### **The more open you become, the more triggerless, free, and unfuckwithable you'll be.**





Photo of Nicole LeBlanc • Instagram @nikkideeze | Taken by Haley Zerga • Instagram @zeldazenon

## Compassion: Not So Nice

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**“If you’re not happy, you’re not helping.”**

**— Bentinho Massaro**

We have a collective belief that compassion looks a certain way. It looks like laughter and hugs and support and safe spaces. But this bias limits our capacity to be as compassionate and of service as we could be.

Take these two examples:

Oliver sees himself as compassionate. He is known for being nice and helpful and selfless. He wants to help as many people as he can, so he volunteers, works overtime, spends a lot of time trying to help his friends with their problems, and is always available for a favor, though often he doesn’t truly have the bandwidth to help his friends. His relationship is unstable so he spends weekends and weeknights doing whatever he can: giving massages, cooking dinner, going on dates, and having long, tough conversations. He often

finds himself overwhelmed—but he manages.

Julia sees herself as compassionate. She is known for being fun and powerful and creative. She wants to help as many people as she can, so she works hard on what she loves and says “no” a lot. When people invite her to things or ask her for favors, she makes her decision based on her current bandwidth—she knows that if she’s overwhelmed, she won’t be any good for her friends. They all understand this—so they know when she says “yes,” she means it and they’re getting her at her best. Because of this she is known for being remarkably helpful and generous.

Oliver represents how most people think of compassion and service and love: “Be nice and make other people feel good regardless of how I feel.”

Julia represents true compassion—the kind of compassion that actually feels like compassion to the people around her. She knows that the best way to lead is by example. If she wants to make a difference for many people, she has to first embody that difference.

Oliver has good intentions, but his bias limits his ability to create the results he most wants for himself and others. To Oliver, Julia’s behavior might look self-centered or careless. It scares him to operate that way because he fears losing his life as he knows it.

But once Oliver burns out (or reads this article) he’ll see that his way of being has been unsustainable and even counter-productive. He’ll see that his alignment is what gives him access to true compassion and service—not the other way around.

And when he decides he wants to shift his approach, here’s what he’ll need to do:

## **Get clear on your top priority.**

What Julia has done is make her life, her happiness, and her alignment her top priority. As a result, she has generated an environment that is supportive and in line with her intention.

What Oliver has done is make his circumstances (the feelings and opinions of his boss, his partner, and his friends) his top priority. As a result, he has generated an environment he can’t keep up with.

Prioritize your inner alignment over your outer circumstances.

## **Detach from the old.**

Going from Oliver’s world to Julia’s world is tough. This is the scary part. For Oliver it means detaching from things he depends on like his job, his partner, his friendships, and his old way of being.

Socrates said, “The secret to change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the

old, but on building the new.”

In Oliver’s case, “the old” is wannabe compassion and everything that came with that. “The new” is alignment and happiness and whatever comes with that.

## **Honor your alignment; your intuition.**

Trust that inner voice. Resonance = Relevance. If it resonates, follow it. Honor it the way you would honor private messages to you from your future self.

## **Let go of your assumptions about how the new looks.**

All you know now is how the new feels. It feels like living in alignment with your true self. If you get stopped up in attachment to how it should be you’re preventing whatever could be flowing to you. Open up. Drop your assumptions. Follow your resonance.





Photo of and by **Olav Stubberud** • Instagram @Olav

## How To Change Someone Else

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Think of a person you'd like to change and consider this:

**It's not them you're looking to change. It's your experience of them.**

If you see them as lazy and irresponsible or impressive and powerful, you will generate evidence to prove your point. The way you experience them exists within you. And your experience attracts

the circumstances that confirm it.

In other words, the only way to change someone else is to change your experience of them.

I had two boyfriends in college who illustrate this point well for me. One thought I was the best thing to ever walk planet earth. He thought I was brilliant and on point and funny. He looked up to me. He treated me like he was lucky to be with me. With that ex, I was on fire. I did better



in school, I lost weight, I read more, I was more productive and playful. I had more confidence and clarity.

The other ex was smarter than me and we both knew it. He thought I was a little impulsive and immature. He certainly didn't look up to me. With that ex, I got borderline depressed. I failed the only class I ever failed in college. I gained weight. I kicked myself for not reading as much as I should. I was self-conscious and anxious.

One boyfriend confirmed my strengths, the other confirmed my weaknesses.

Now, of course, it's my responsibility to manage my life. But at the time I didn't know that. At the time, I was unconscious of my power. I was a victim of my circumstances. I was disempowered. I was in my way. Just like most people are in the world today.

Right now, the person you want to change is probably in their own way. Whether it's your kid who dropped out of school and started smoking cigarettes, or your coworker who gossips and perpetuates office drama, or your patient who is depressed. They're not being their best self.

**To change them you must change your experience of them. To improve your experience of them you must improve your experience itself.**

In other words, the better you feel, the

more positively you'll see—and therefore impact—the person you want to change.

Here's how:

## **Stop making assessments.**

“If you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will spend its whole life believing it is stupid.”

It is not your responsibility to figure out that the fish should be in water. It is not your responsibility to see the fish as a master swimmer despite its decision to climb trees. **Your responsibility is to not make the assessment that the fish is bad because it can't climb a tree.**

Let me clarify: if your experience of someone is anything less than neutral, you don't get it. There's something you're missing. Get quiet. Get curious. At the very least, don't perpetuate your judgement that there's something wrong with them.

**“I don't like that man. I must get to know him better.”**

— Abraham Lincoln

This will give you space to see them anew, and it will give them a break from your judgment. (Remember how the way you see someone generates evidence in their behavior? Releasing the way you see them gives them freedom from your expectations.)

## Identify and raise your level of energy.

If you feel angry, tolerant, **or even compassionate** toward this person, in some way you're perpetuating whatever about them you want to change. If you're trying to resist something about them, deal with them, or help them, you're attracting a reality of more resistance, tolerance, or problems to solve.

At the root of your desire to change them is the intention to help them get out of their way. To see them be their best self. It's what everyone wants for themselves.

**The best way to lead is by example. So if you're committed to seeing this person be their best, be your best. Raise your energy. Take responsibility for yourself.**

Become someone who sees and creates opportunity and joy.

**You'll discover that the better you feel, the more positively you experience this person. And the more strengths and possibilities you see in the person, the more positively you'll change them.**





Photo of **Bendik Mogensen** • Instagram @bendikm | Taken by **Charlotte Dworshak** • Instagram @charles\_mcgillicutty

## Lighten Up. If It's Heavy, You're Full of Shit

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Do you want to expedite the process of getting out of your way? Take this to heart: If whatever you're thinking about feels bad, significant, serious, daunting, or heavy in any way, you're full of shit.

The experience you have of whatever is currently happening is 100% the result of how you're defining whatever is currently happening. The better and lighter it feels, the more productively you're defining it. The heavier and harder it feels, the more bullshit you're smearing on it.

**In other words, if it doesn't feel good, you don't get it yet. And to compensate for not getting it yet, you're making something up. And the thing you're making up makes you feel bad. Talk about being full of shit.**

It helps to remember that everything—EVERYTHING—is inherently neutral and

meaningless.

Rain just means it's raining. It does not mean that now you're going to have a slow, sulky day.

Getting punched in the face just means you got punched in the face. It does not mean that person is an asshole, and now you'll be angry and vengeful for a few days.

The fact that young people use their phones a lot just means that young people use their phones a lot. It does not mean that the trajectory of humanity today is going downhill fast and millennials are entitled, worthless imbeciles.

All of those definitions are arbitrary.

The fact that you got abused as a kid could mean that now you're a vulnerable, abused adult who can't trust people anymore; someone who resents authority.

Or it could mean that now you're in a position to relate to, empower, and help transform the lives of many others who've been abused.

Both of those definitions are arbitrary, but one weighs you down, closes you off, and negatively impacts the quality of your life.

The other propels you forward, enlivens you and gives you relief and clarity. This definition gives you access to more of

yourself. It frees you from limiting beliefs. It puts you in a position to make a difference in the world. This definition is productive.

**Your choice to identify with and believe in definitions that haunt you is the reason you suffer.**

Everything is neutral and meaningless. So no matter what we tell ourselves about what's "true" and what's "real"—we're automatically full of shit. We're all always full of shit.

But if your intention is to get out of your way, love your life, and make a positive difference for others, you'll integrate this rule of thumb: the shittier something feels, the more full of shit you are. Choose another story.





Photo of **Forrest West** • Instagram @misterrwest | Taken by **Adam Kinner** • Adamkinner.com

## 10 Reminders To Get You Out of Your Way for an Epic 2017

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#1

### **Follow Your Resonance**

The better it feels, the more aligned it is with your path. Elle Luna, author and artist, talks about the difference between Should and Must. Must is what you day-dream about. It's what fills you with joy and excitement. Go in that direction.

#2

### **...And Your Fear**

Think of fear like a road sign on the path of your resonance. Whenever you find it, you know you're right on track. Train yourself to find fear and get excited because it's proof you're exactly where you want to be.

#3

## Take The Leash Off Your Imagination

What's the best case scenario? No, really. What is it? Forget the reasonable, doable path. What if you could wave a magic wand? Too many people have become creatively jaded. They don't let themselves dream without giving themselves a limit. "Ok I want a better job but I'm not going to pretend like I'll be waking up excited for work every day. I'm not delusional." Good grief. You are the only one imposing that limit on yourself. Get out of your way and let yourself dream for god's sake. What is the best case scenario? Answer the question again until you actually can't imagine better.

#4

## Just Start

Shhh. Start. Now. It's never going to be the right time. You're going to have to start at the bottom. Scary? Read #2 again. The sooner you start, the sooner you'll be where you want to be.

#5

## Be Patient

Put yourself in a state of excited anticipation without getting attached to how or

when something manifests. Don't expect results right away. Relax. Set intentions and know that there's more going on than you can see yet.

#6

## Give Yourself Permission To Suck

Get out of your own way by completely allowing yourself to blow it. If it helps, aim to fail. Do whatever it takes to make things less significant and heavy.

#7

## Give Your Identity A Break

Stop being the kind of person who *anythings*. You're limitless. When you identify with an identity, you limit yourself.

Start emptying your mind of the thoughts you have about yourself. Go from "I'm a 25-year-old entrepreneur and artist who is trying to become more productive and less likely to withdraw when things get hard" to "Me. Ok what's relevant now?"

Giving your identity a break feels good and gives you space to discover things about your true self—not the you you've been conditioning for your whole life.

#8

**Open Up.**

Over and over. Do it every time you think of it. Build it into a habit. The more open you are, the less triggerable you are.

#9

**Compare Better**

Comparing yourself to others feels bad. But there's something valuable in there. Whatever inspires you, enlivens you, or fills you with awe is just a really clear reflection of your truest self. Next time you catch yourself comparing yourself to another, separate the part that inspires you from the part saying "I'm not there yet" or "I could never be like that."

What about them fills you with enthusiasm? Tune into that feeling WITHOUT the feeling that comes with the associated story of something lacking. Get good at filtering out that salty little hijacker and you'll discover that comparison can be empowering.

#10

**Raise Your Energy**

The better you feel the more aligned you are. The more aligned you are the more on track you are to the future you want.

Use everything as an opportunity to raise your energy. One way to strengthen this muscle is to practice changing your energy while you're alone in your room with changeless circumstances. Start by feeling like a victim. Can you feel the pity party? Okay now try anger. Now try tolerance or compassion or love. Then get excited about the future and opportunities. Can you go higher than that?

Getting good at managing your energy in easy, nonconfronting circumstances sets you up for emotional resilience when you're in tougher situations—and having emotional independence from your circumstances is among the most rebellious and impactful things a person can do.

"Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."  
— Viktor Frankl



# Outro

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The future we all want is filled with people living in alignment with their true selves. People who are confident and generous and effective at creating what matters to them and fills them with enthusiasm.

Relatively often I see the opposite: people living far out of alignment. They pass blame, dodge responsibility, identify with their facades, project their past traumas into their future, and postpone their fulfillment as they wait for circumstances to improve.

But we're waking up. As we continue to discover our power, take responsibility for ourselves, and raise our energy regardless of what's going on circumstantially, we are getting closer to a collective potential so epic most of us can't imagine it yet.

**In other words: the more we get out of our way the closer we get to the future we want.**

So thank you for where you're at on this road to reaching our collective potential. Thank you for prioritizing your alignment, power and freedom enough to make it to the end of this book. Thank you for following your resonance and taking your development seriously. But not too seriously. ;)

I loved working on this project in partnership with an organization that is committed to the same future I am.

Though I have only recently become familiar with iPEC I know enough about them to be drawn in. From my inspiring conversations with the founder to the fact that they proposed this project to me—this group of people feels good. They're mission-driven and edgy. They make decisions using their intuition. I want to learn from them. I want to know what makes them feel so different. I want in.

Their mission is to raise the consciousness of humanity. And they're not just doing it by spreading information—they're empowering people directly and then showing them how to share that empowerment. I think that's brilliant.

"Leaders don't create followers. They create more leaders." —Tom Peters

Because I'm fascinated by this company, motivated by this kind of work, and hungry for more I'll be attending the iPEC coaching program this year. If you've got the same hunger to step up your game in 2017, I'd love to see you there and hear about how epic your 2017 is going to be.

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