

# Beginnings

*"Grasshopper, look beyond the game, as you look beneath the surface of the pool to see its depths."* — Master Po from the TV show "Kung Fu"

Have you ever heard the phrase "Your thoughts create your reality"? If so, your reaction may have been one of bafflement, "Excuse me, say that again?": one of wonder, "Hmmm, that's interesting; I'll ponder that for the next zillion years": or even one of fear, "That's far too overwhelming for me!" Whatever your reaction may have been, the concept of your thoughts creating your life experience is enormous and has far-reaching implications. But that concept is precisely what this book is all about, for it is the secret to life. However, because simply pondering those words can be both bewildering and intimidating, I have broken this concept down into simple steps, processes, and techniques that will allow you to harness the power of your thoughts to create a life that pleases you.

So, if you have ever wished there was an operating manual for life, a book that had answers — real answers — to help you resolve the various dilemmas you encounter day after day, this book is for you. If you have ever longed for a bird's-eye view of life, a perspective that enabled you to comprehend what you observe and experience, this book is for you. If you have ever felt a gnawing within that something was missing in life, this book is for you. If

you have ever desired to experience a life filled with passion, happiness, serenity, great relationships, radiant health, a job that lights your fire, prosperity, peace of mind, or a physical appearance that pleases you; if you have yearned to understand the true meaning of how life is meant to be lived, this book is for you. For the answers to those puzzles lie within these pages!

## Buckle Up! You're Leaving Your Comfort Zone

*"There is a field beyond right or wrong. I will meet you there." — Rumi*

*"One doesn't discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time". — André Gide*

*"In order to truly find the Path, each of us must loosen our minds and begin from a point of wonder and openness — of being willing to not know." — Laurie Beth Jones*

Throughout my life I have always wondered why. Whenever I would ask a question, I was never content with a surface answer or trite explanation. I wanted to know why. Well, my incessant seeking and ceaseless questioning led to my "finding." The answers I found, though, may not be what you expect to hear. So the question I pose to you is: Are you willing to consider that the Truth as you know and understand it to be today ain't necessarily

so? Are you willing to embark on a journey that could change everything in your life for the better, a journey that offers you a bird's-eye view where life actually makes sense? Are you open, curious, and willing to take in the whole picture? Or are you filled with doubt, uncertainty, and skepticism when introduced to new ideas? Have you ever suffered from a condition known as "contempt prior to investigation"? Actually, that's a pretty normal reaction. Why? Whenever you meet with information that doesn't fit neatly inside your "comfort zone," your internal guidance system will alert you to a potential intruder. How did you acquire this comfort zone? Quite unconsciously. To understand just how your comfort zone was constructed, let's start at the very beginning: The day you arrived.

## Your Indoctrination Into Life

From the moment you arrived, your indoctrination into life began and with it, the construction of your comfort zone. As a child, your primary caretakers taught you 'the ropes.' "This is good, that is bad. This is right, and that is wrong. If you do what is good and right, you will be rewarded. Conversely, if you do what is bad or wrong, you will be punished." Once your indoctrination was complete within your family, the school system then took over with its set of rules along with its set of rewards and punishments. At the same time, society taught you its rules, regulations, rewards, and punishments, until pretty soon you were 'programmed' — your beliefs paralleled those of most folks around you. And though you didn't consciously choose to believe what you were taught, you adopted these prevailing beliefs. Consequently, whatever beliefs you adopted have created your comfort zone, and your life, along

with it. In order to undertake this journey, however, it will be necessary for you to leave your comfort zone — a task that will feel uncomfortable because your comfort zone houses your beliefs, and your beliefs form the foundation of your life. Therefore, it is beneficial to understand in advance that you're probably going to feel a degree of discomfort while reading this book. Even though your comfort zone may be imperfect and include a few cobweb-laden skeletons in a closet, a leaky faucet, a toilet that runs incessantly, or a roof fraught with holes, it has become 'home sweet home.' Nevertheless, this book is all about evolution, and in order to evolve, you must take a step beyond what is known — a step outside of your comfort zone. Furthermore, as you progress along this journey, you may become less and less attached to your current comfort zone, for not only was it built unconsciously, but its foundation actually contains fundamental flaws — flaws responsible for much of the pain and discomfort you have experienced in life.

## How Heavily Guarded is Your Comfort Zone?

The degree of discomfort you may experience along this journey will depend on the degree of discomfort you are currently experiencing in your life — either on a personal level or as you view the world globally. The more discomfort you're feeling in life, the less discomfort you will feel while reading this book. To determine your degree of discomfort, ask yourself a few questions: "Is the life I am now living bringing me more joy than sorrow, more laughter than tears, more love than indifference?" "Am I

healing or hurting, growing or withering, expanding or contracting?"<sup>2</sup> "Am I content with our world situation, or do I feel sadness, despair, fear, or frustration when I observe the conditions that exist?" For the true gauge of your life is how you feel in the majority of your moments, because 'Now,' friends, is all that counts. If you are now experiencing dissatisfaction or discomfort in your life, your comfort zone will more than likely sport a welcome mat at its front door. And though you may be cautious of someone who rings your doorbell, you will probably be willing to listen to the 'sales pitch' before responding. On the other hand, if you think that you already have all the answers, that life is just fine and dandy — regardless of how dysfunctional your life or the world may be, your comfort zone will more than likely sport a 'No Trespassing' sign. It may even resemble a thick-walled fortress, complete with trigger-happy armed soldiers stationed around its perimeter ready to shoot a 'trespasser' — one who rings your doorbell — if one dares to approach your front door. Regardless of the type of comfort zone you have built, your challenge will be to restrain your knee-jerk response to pass premature judgment upon one who rings your doorbell. Why? In order to actualize your authentic power, it will be necessary for you to reevaluate your comfort zone.

## The Missing Link in Life

Along this journey you will become acquainted with a critical missing link in life: your internal guidance system. Why is it critical? Because it guides you along your Path, alerting you if your thoughts are creating what you want or what you don't want — an essential aspect of living life the way it is meant to be lived.

Many psychologists refer to this aspect of who you are as your superconscious self. Others have labeled it as your spirit, inner being, or the presence of God that resides within you. And one man, after seeing the movie Austin Powers, referred to it as 'mini me.' I have ascribed it yet another label, christening it as your "inner Angel." I hesitated to use the word 'spirit' because the definition of this word is so varied and conflicting that it evokes a plethora of reactions from person to person, and many folks reject a message in its entirety when they encounter words that 'ring their doorbells.' 'Spirit' is one of those words. Some mistakenly define it as an abstract, celestial aspect of life conjured by religions and thus dismiss it as nonsense. However, the context in which I speak of your internal guidance system refers to the powerful subtle force that resides within you as a human being, whether you are religious, spiritual without a religious affiliation, atheist, agnostic, or still gathering data from which to define yourself. Although you may be unfamiliar with your guidance system, this aspect of Who You Are is as real as the head on your shoulders. Therefore, chapter by chapter, you will learn exactly how to utilize your spirit — to unify it with your body and mind, for when you do, you connect with the incredible untapped power that lies within you! In fact, failing to understand the mechanics of this interrelationship or how life operates at the most fundamental level, you and I — and most everyone else on this planet — are living life backwards! How do we reverse our direction? First, by understanding how life is meant to be lived.

**Life is Meant for Living, Loving,  
and Laughing!**

Life is meant for living, loving, and laughing. To be lived with joy, freedom, love, peace, wisdom, power, abundance, blessings, acceptance, meaning, gratitude, and understanding — for everyone. To live means more than to simply exist from day to day, more than to merely accomplish a "to-do" list. To live is to be eager to awake each morning, to look forward to the day ahead; to anticipate it with joy. To truly live means to be without fear, to be filled with love, to feel a connection with all things; to have a sense of inner peace, fulfillment, and a feeling of purpose. To love means to appreciate the wonder of everything that surrounds you and feel joyful because of it. To love is to treasure every person for the unique being he or she is — even if you disagree with that person. To truly love is to look at the world in awe as a child does; to cherish everything for its intrinsic beauty; to be enveloped by a radiance of love to the core of your being. To laugh means to enjoy the world around you, to have fun, and find humor in life. To laugh is to reconnect with the child within who is silly, funny, spontaneous, shouting with glee, and filled with a curiosity for the wonderful, magical world we live in. How do you create this great life filled with love, laughter, and everything else that sounds too good to be true? By learning and applying the Four-Step Formula. The Formula is the step by step process that underlies how your thoughts create your reality. The Formula reveals how and why you are experiencing whatever you are experiencing in life. And because knowledge is power, you can utilize that knowledge to experience what you want.

## Discovering the Secret

How did I stumble upon this Four-Step Formula? The story began to unfold in 1973 when a stream of rather unusual folks, under curious circumstances, told me that I was going to do something later in my life that was important, never disclosing or even knowing the actual 'something.' Well, I guess it must be 'later,' because one day in the summer of 1996, I connected with that something. My search for greater truth led me to the enlightening books I mentioned in my note of thanks. As I read through these books, I dog-eared many pages, intending to outline the problem-solving, life-enhancing techniques they offered so I could get more of what I wanted out of life. But life was always moving too fast, I never had time, and I am one of those people who doesn't need to add yet another project to my list of 'things to do.' On one fateful day, however, I experienced an epiphany — an aha! moment. Most of the books I had read conveyed a recurring message — a profound message. Underlying every experience in life — good, bad, or indifferent, there is a four-step process — a formula. This Formula is at the inception of every success or failure anyone has ever experienced. Additionally, it underlies any experience that a group of people has — a family, a corporation, a town, a country, our world, or any faction that comprises a collective entity — in the same manner! This Four-Step Formula is the genesis of every experience in life. And its conscious application has the potential to significantly impact many aspects of life. Tell me that is not profound! Once I recognized this truth, I experienced a 'knowing,' a 'click' in my mind that said: "This is your Mission." I have never had the least inclination nor desire to be a writer, nor have I ever written a darn thing before in my life. (And my husband wondered if I had passed English upon scanning the first, second, third, hundredth, and every draft thereafter.) But I was meant to write this book. So, bear with me, for although I am a somewhat reluctant messenger, I have accepted this challenge and written this book from my heart. I now present to you the simple Formula incorporated within the context of a step-by-step workbook and guide that provides you the processes to attain whatever you want

out of life on a daily basis. Actually, it is exactly what I always wanted, a "Cliffs Notes®" version of all the information I was inspired by. So, this book is really written for me, so that I can live the most wonderful life I have ever imagined! But not being selfish (well, maybe a little sometimes...), I thought I would share this secret with you so that you can live the most wonderful life you have ever imagined, too! (Aren't I nice?) Think of this book as the Rules for Life on Planet Earth coming to you now rather than at birth. (Better late than never, right?)

## The Four-Step Formula is the Foundation for Health, Prosperity, Love, and Joy!

As you learn the basis of the Formula, you will discover how to be everything you've always wanted to be, do everything you've always wanted to do, and have everything you've always wanted to have. And if you are not sure about what you want to be, do, or have, don't worry. This book will help you to uncover your desires. The steps to find your purpose in life; attain the job of your dreams; enjoy relationships that are loving and fulfilling; enjoy perfect radiant health; achieve a physical body that pleases you; have all the money you want; and find happiness, serenity, and a passion for life, are all included within these pages. Tall order? Indeed. But once you understand Who You Really Are and exactly how your thoughts create your reality, not too tall!

# This "Secret" has Been Around for a Long, Long Time

The information I share with you is not new. It is universal ageless wisdom, having neither religious affiliation nor bias. What lies at the core of this information is a principle of nature that has somehow escaped notice. In fact, as I researched this subject, I discovered book after book after book, dating as far back as 5000 B.C. to the secret mystery schools in ancient Egypt, all conveying the same information. And to tell you the truth, I am actually amazed that at the dawning of a new millennium, we, as humankind, still don't get it! Following in the footsteps of Dale Carnegie, I, too, have gathered my ideas from a multitude of visionaries: "The ideas I stand for are not mine. I borrowed them from Socrates. I swiped them from Chesterfield. I stole them from Jesus. And I put them in a book. If you don't like their rules, whose would you use?" — Dale Carnegie I believe it is no coincidence that you are reading this book. I believe that you are ready to hear this message and whatever information you glean that will help to make your life more enjoyable, God bless. I am going to share a great deal with you, for life happens to be an all-encompassing subject. You may utilize some information right now, and other information you may 'put on the shelf' to ponder at a later date. Whatever you believe, it matters not; just try to feel with your heart rather than think with your head and know that you are in the right place at the right time. Trust yourself, try to keep an open mind, and don't be fooled by the greatest salesmen of all: Fear, Uncertainty, and Doubt. How do you recognize Truth? Truth resonates in your heart. Truth is that which empowers and unifies humanity.

*"Love breaks down the barriers and creates unity. That which creates barriers and creates separateness and differences is ignorance."* — Brian L. Weiss, M.D., a message received from a patient under hypnosis

*"It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye."* — Antoine de Saint-Exupery

*"The heart knows truth as that which sets it free."* — Glenda Green, "Love Without End: Jesus Speaks"

*"Only the heart knows how to find what is precious."* — Fyodor Dostoevsky

I have divided the book into the following nine sections:

Part I — The Prelude — introduces you to the secret to life and explores life on a hypothetical Earth living with the knowledge of the Four-Step Formula.

Part II — The Puzzle — reveals the Four-Step Formula, its implications, and the far-reaching repercussions of not understanding it. Examining information from many diverse sources — medical, scientific, and metaphysical, you will connect the pieces of the puzzle of life and reconsider how it operates. You will become acquainted with your internal guidance system — your inner Angel — who continually guides you along your path of free will. Next, you will learn how you and Angel co-create what you desire in life.

Part III — The Present — examines the state of being we exist in today, the evolution of humankind, and your current personal reality. You will begin to ponder new solutions to problems and issues, both global and personal, created as a result of being unaware of the Formula.

Part IV — The Past — dissects your personal history and uncovers the hidden treasures that lie buried deep within it. By uncovering your beliefs and what you were taught as a child, you will learn how those beliefs have impacted your life experience.

Part V — The Pathway — provides the tools to redefine your Path. By articulating the life you choose to live, you will define your Vision Statement — who you choose to be, and learn the steps to consciously create what you want in life. Next, you will discover both your personal Mission and the steps to actualize our collective global Mission: The recreation of our world.

Part VI — The Procedures — provides the tools and techniques to stay on track. You will learn how joy, appreciation, compassion, and love are the key ingredients to living a life filled with happiness, health, and prosperity. By understanding the awesome nature of your authentic power, you will learn how to effectively help others, as well as the strategies to develop and sustain wonderful relationships.

Part VII — The Predicaments — provides the processes that will guide you back to your Path when you lose your way. Step by step methods are articulated to help resolve the conflict that oftentimes arises between what you desire and what you believe.

Part VIII — The Physical Body — explores the vast and enormous implications of the Four-Step Formula on your physical body. The steps to eradicate illness and attain a state of perfect radiant health

are provided. Last, you will delve into the subject of food and diet and learn how to manifest a physical body that pleases you.

Part IX — The Postscript — sums it all up and addresses how you add immeasurably to the joy in our world as you create the best possible life experience for yourself. To assist you in creating a magical life experience, I have included affirmations that you may choose to adopt. Afterward, I share my personal story — how I was ‘called upon’ to write this book, followed by my intention for you and your life.

Are you excited yet? I am!

*"I want to get you excited about who you are, what you are, what you have, and what can still be for you. I want to inspire you to see that you can go far beyond where you are right now." — Virginia Satir*

## So, You Want Evidence?

While writing this manuscript, I encountered people who were experiencing painful issues in their lives. Having gained a knowledge that most people are unaware of, life now made complete sense to me. In fact, it was utterly logical. Therefore, I believed that in sharing my knowledge, these people might gain a clearer understanding of their problems and resolve them using a different approach. Thus, I gave each a copy of my manuscript. The results? Some were helped immensely. Some gained new

insights that allowed them to change their lives. Some saved their marriages. Some became more prosperous. Some gained a new perspective on their illnesses. However, others (mostly members of my family who, incidentally, did not read the manuscript) felt otherwise. Their reactions? I was "full of it," "delusional," or "should start looking for a real job." (Ouch!) Rather than being open, curious, and willing to examine the potentiality of a new (old) truth, they found it easier to find things wrong with me, the messenger. After reeling from those less- than- supportive reactions, I took a step back and saw their real purpose: Those experiences were meant to teach me, for I then understood just how frightened people can be when presented with new information — regardless of its potential value. Although many people's lives are filled with blame, confusion, despair, and victimization, those nasty experiences are actually deemed safe because they are familiar and known. As a result of my adverse experiences, I clearly understood that in order to reach people where they stand today — as perfectly normal, rational, analytical, logical, folks who have been 'programmed' to be skeptical of anything that 'pushed the envelope' beyond traditional thinking — it was essential that I present this information in a convincing manner. However, as I pondered that daunting task, I was overcome by feelings of inadequacy. I looked up and asked the 'powers that be' to send me help — quick. This 'Mission' was making my life miserable — destroying my credibility and integrity. I was in need of additional evidence, further validation of the profound truth I had discovered. The result? I was 'led' to supplementary material. Initially, I chose the title of Life 101 — Guess what? We're doing it backward, folks! However, I soon discovered that another author, Peter McWilliams, had chosen Life 101 as the title for a series of books he had written, so it was unavailable. Curious about his book's content, I ordered it over the Internet. What arrived, however, was Life 101: The Quote Book. My reaction? Frustration. I now had to go through the hassle of returning it. But when I opened this book, I became awestruck!

This book contained a plethora of quotations from visionaries who represented a multitude of diverse cultures that spanned centuries — quotations that verified, validated, and confirmed exactly what I was writing! And these quotations were from familiar people — names you have heard before. People whose wisdom has stood the test of time. People who were not 'full of it' or 'delusional.' People, whose reputations would make this message far more difficult to dismiss. It was then that I experienced what I now refer to as the 'big wink' from above, or "Get it, Lauren?" I also was 'led' to material from other sources, albeit non-earthly. For Christmas in 1997, I received the book *Conversations with God: Book 1* as a gift from my husband. My reaction? This was a rather unusual gift. How credible could this author be? After all, he purported to have had conversations with God — the Big Guy. How was I to know if what he conveyed was for real. As fate would have it, however, this book came to me at the perfect moment. I had just finished *The Nature of Personal Reality* by Jane Roberts, which I was also initially skeptical of, as its content was garnered from a highly evolved spiritual source who utilized Jane as a conduit. Incredibly, the information in *The Nature of Personal Reality* was consistent with the information conveyed in *Conversations with God*. Furthermore, the information from these two sources also was consistent with still other information I had been given. A few months prior to reading those books, I had serendipitously received audio tapes by authors/speakers Esther and Jerry Hicks, whose content was also garnered from a highly evolved spiritual source who utilizes Esther as a conduit. Although the wisdom conveyed through these sources differed in phraseology and grammar, the content was congruent and coherent. Therefore, I considered it far too coincidental to dismiss, and offer specific passages for your consideration. Even more interesting, though, the information conveyed by these sources sheds a whole new light on the wisdom imparted by the visionaries of our past. To impart this message in a convincing comprehensive manner, I chose to present this information as an attorney would present a case to a jury — a jury

having no previous knowledge of the case. I submit facts, ideas, witnesses, and evidence for your consideration in a logical sequential order to impart, in no uncertain terms, the validity of this truth in order to obtain a favorable verdict — one that will enable people to live their lives in a completely different way. To weave in the veracity of this truth, I have enlisted the credibility, integrity, and wisdom of my 'expert witnesses' (my new quote-book friends who heard my plea and came to my rescue): God, Plato, Socrates, Henry Ford, William Shakespeare, Mark Twain, Gautama Buddha, James Allen, Mother Teresa, Pope John Paul II, Jesus, Aristotle, Helen Keller, William James, Albert Einstein, Margaret Mead, Thomas Paine, Emily Dickinson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Confucius, Chief Seattle, Mahatma Gandhi, Mohammed, George Bernard Shaw, Thomas Edison, Marie Curie, and many, many other notables. Chapter by chapter I (we) present my (our) case: a synthesis of knowledge from a multitude of diverse sources, that when completed will hopefully present you with a clear, concise picture of how life really operates. And even though I am unknown, by the end of this book I hope that my friends and I will have succeeded in presenting a case that is so convincing that you render a verdict in our favor (which happens to be in your favor, too!).

## I Believe...

My innermost wish is to inspire you to live the most magical life experience you can possibly imagine and to provide you with an insight that will enable you to ease any pain you may encounter along your journey.

*"If I can stop one heart from breaking, I shall not live in vain; if I can ease one life the aching, or cool one pain, or help one fainting robin into his nest again, I shall not live in vain."* — Emily Dickinson

As I share these pearls of wisdom with you, my intentions are pure, from my heart, and based in love. However, I also believe that you have a right to know what I believe. I am not asking you to believe what I believe, for I respect every person's spiritual values as I would appreciate their respecting mine. Actually, I believe this message broadens and expands on what you may already believe. I share my beliefs so you know where I am coming from, fully understanding that I am not intending to alienate, judge, or discriminate against anyone. I have a profound respect for each of you, even if we embrace opposing viewpoints, for you are my brother or sister and we're all in this thing called 'life' together. I have come to recognize that your unique perspective contributes to the essential diversity that makes our world a wonderful environment from which to experience life. The following is a brief summary of my beliefs: First and foremost, I believe that a wonderful, loving, nonjudgmental Greater Power (God, to me) exists who has created this glorious world in which we live. I believe that life is eternal; hence, we have a lot of time on our hands. I believe that we incarnate in many lifetimes, donning the costumes of many different types of people. We may choose to experience life through the eyes of a man or woman, as a specific race, or as a person having an infirmity. Each life that we live provides us the opportunity to experience a unique perspective which results in our personal evolution. I believe that Earth provides us a rich environment endowed with a vast spectrum of people, beliefs, and experiences. And from this variety, we choose various experiences from which to evolve, define, and discover Who We Are. I believe that prior to our birth, each of us drafted an

overall plan — a blueprint or Path — for the goals we wished to accomplish in this lifetime. Hence, the conditions, circumstances, challenges, or obstacles that we encounter in our lives are, in actuality, catalysts that allow us to accomplish our goals. I believe that our objective is to awaken to Who We Really Are and 'walk the talk,' but at every step we have a choice, or free will, in how we respond when presented with our opportunities. I believe that we are all sacred souls on a sacred journey of experience, all a part of God, and that there is essentially nothing — no race, religion, or physical difference — that separates us. I believe that we have been asleep for a long period of time, and as a result, adversity became the avenue most commonly used to reawaken us to Who We Really Are. Adversity offers opportunities for our evolution because it forces us to examine what is truly important in life. Adversity oftentimes manifests in loss: loss of employment, health, financial state, a family member or, on a global scale, worldly power. Loss presents the opportunity to grow by challenging our character, compelling us to define Who We Choose To Be in the midst of those experiences. In fact, those definitive moments provide our greatest opportunities for a turning point in life — one that compels us to reach beyond the pain we are experiencing and seek a better way. I believe that each moment we experience in life is an opportunity for growth, no matter how old or wise we are. I believe that life is meant for joyful living rather than simply existing; loving rather than hating; allowing rather than judging; appreciating rather than taking for granted; seeking to find points of harmony rather than those of disharmony; and laughing rather than suffering. I believe that life is meant to be a magical, creative experience.

## Relax and Enjoy the Journey

Regardless of where you are on your Path right now, love yourself for who and what you are, for you are at the right place at the right time. Appreciate this moment for all its potential as it unfolds before you, for this moment is a gift. If you are not where you would like to be and have made mistakes that you regret, that's okay, for you will now be provided with the tools to learn from them, get past them, and understand their broader significance — that your mistakes have been essential elements of your experiential journey through life. And believe me, I'm struggling along my Path like everyone else — a work in progress. However, this message has allowed me to relax and enjoy the journey; for the journey is meant to be as much or more fun than arriving at the destination!

## Graduation Day is Approaching

I believe that we, as humankind, are on the threshold of a greater understanding of life; on the brink of a magnificent future and a new stage of evolution — the Age of Spirit. We are now on the verge of discovering the impenetrable triad of power: the connection between the three aspects of Who We Are — body, mind, and spirit — that allows us to accomplish anything! It is when we begin to apply this knowledge that we will graduate to a more expansive recognition of our true nature and the vast abilities we possess. It has taken generations and generations of those who came before us to build the bridges and set the stage to create the potential for the rebirth of our world. There has never before been a more fertile time in history for this to occur. These are indeed the

keys to the kingdom, my friend, for as each of us — you! — becomes aware of our power and begins to create the life we wish to live, we will simultaneously create the world we wish to live in.

*"Come, my friends. 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world."* — Alfred Lord Tennyson

*"We have it in our power to begin the world again."* — Thomas Paine

*"In our time, what is at issue is the very nature of humankind, the image we have of our limits and possibilities. History is not yet done with its exploration of the limits of what it means to be human."* — C. Wright Mills

Prepare yourself for an exciting journey. My heart is with you as together we cross the bridge that leads to the best that life has to offer. I will accompany you on every step of your journey as your friend, your ally, and your cheerleader, interweaving my personal life experiences as well as the invaluable opportunities for insight they provided me. It is my hope that my experiences assist you in better understanding your own experiences, for in reality, it is not words that teach, but life experience. Now take a deep breath, relax, and let go of any anxiety or fear, because I will tell you in advance that this book has the happiest ending you could imagine, an ending that states: You are powerful and you now have the tools to unleash that power! So enjoy, enjoy, enjoy (as Angela, the most joyous server with a heart that sings at the Bakers Square® restaurant in Naperville, Illinois, would say)! Let's now forge ahead so you can begin to live your life as it is meant to be lived!

P.S. Throughout this book, you will be asked to write down your thoughts. Although you may have the urge to skip ahead with the good intention of filling in the blanks at a later date, please understand that this material will have a far greater meaning if you follow the steps in the order they have been written. Each step is a 'brick' that helps to build your foundation, ensuring its strength, and each 'brick' builds upon the previous. Therefore, following the book in the order it has been written (whether you choose the shortcut or read it from cover to cover) will allow you to fully understand and utilize the Four-Step Formula to create joy and abundance in your life. So control yourself and do not "cheat" (ha, ha, )! (I have first-hand knowledge of this because my husband 'cheated.' He skimmed the book without filling in the blanks, and still doesn't quite 'get it.' He claims to know this material by osmosis after being subjected to my pontificating on countless occasions. However, to know this truth and to live it are two completely different experiences.)

*"I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand."*  
— Chinese Proverb

P.S. S. You will soon discover that I am repetitive and redundant, but bear with me, there is a method to my madness. Essentially you have been programmed backward to react and respond to life. However, the Four-Step Formula necessitates a proactive approach to life, so this is my attempt to help you begin to reprogram yourself.