

True
Greatness

CHAPTER 1

Are You Scripted for True Greatness?



There is nothing more difficult to take in hand,
more perilous to conduct,
or more uncertain in its success,
than to take the lead
in the introduction of a new order to things.

NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI



With the publication of *True Greatness*, we hope to generate something special for you, something like the terrific results we get when working with athletes. That means activating your inner desire to take action and to make tangible change at deep levels. It also means creating a new way of thinking about greatness.

True greatness comes *when you activate that deep motivation* existing in the heart of nearly everyone—you included. That motivation presses you to seek worthwhile pursuits, usefulness, meaning beyond the ordinary. It represents one of the most profoundly good motivations a human being can experience.

If you're reading this book, you have a strong desire to better yourself. That's good because this book is your opportunity to get that feeling to rise within you. But trust us on one thing: This book is not a one-way street where we talk and you just listen. You have a major part in this play. We can't simply teach and expect good things just to appear. This effort won't do any good without you. In the hands of a casual reader or a skeptic, this information will fall flatter than a cracker. Yet an open-minded reader can create a huge leap in lifestyle, success, and personal satisfaction.

Your personal motivation for wanting to change is hugely important in how you learn and use this information. To figure out why you want to improve yourself, look at your life scripts. Most behavior (particularly dysfunctional behavior) is learned as a result of conscious choices made over and over for the purpose of survival. Such choices culminate in beliefs that solidify in what are called "life scripts." These life scripts get so deep in us that they are a barely conscious. They govern what you believe and how you live. They represent a general attitude or orientation on which you base most decisions, perceptions, and choices.

There are many possible scripts, functional and dysfunctional, such as:

- I will always protect myself at any cost.
- My life is mine to be lived anyway I choose.
- I am smarter than everyone, and I will prove it.

- I am a piece of garbage who deserves nothing.
- Life is not about creation; life is about doing what you're told.
- If I expose who I really am, people won't like me.
- The only way to protect myself is to attack.
- It is better to be right than to grow.
- My life is about serving others.
- If I am nice enough, everyone will love me.
- I can take something from this experience that will make me great.
- And on and on . . .

These scripts (and you might have several) constitute a mental organizing principle for making choices in life, and they deeply affect your inner urge for true greatness. To that end, they can help you or they can disable your efforts. Let's look at two different life scripts that came out of two very similar sets of experiences and how they affected their owners; reach for true greatness.

Consider the story of Sally, a woman who had been sexually abused as a teenager. The abuse was offensive and the mental anguish extensive. This woman had made a decision based on her experience never to trust men again or give them the opportunity to become close to her. She effectively committed her life

to avoiding men and never revealing any hint of emotional need or desire. She had repeated this decision to herself over and over to the point where she no longer was even aware that her life was scripted for loneliness. Her script was not for transcendent happiness, but rather for safety and isolation.

Now consider the story of Clara Barton, founder of the Red Cross. She was once asked about a similar circumstance in her life where she was repeatedly wronged by another person. It was a very costly type of abuse and difficult to get past. When she was asked about it, Clara Barton said simply that she didn't remember it. "In fact" she went on, "I distinctly remember forgetting it."

This life script directed Barton to handle her relationships and her life in a forward looking, hopeful way, not backward looking and angry. When things weren't going well, her script directed her to keep pressing ahead. Her script urged her to move on without dwelling on past anguish. This script allowed her to find a place of greater inner peace instead of a place of anger and bitterness.

To see true greatness in your life, you need scripts that permit it. Greatness scripts are those that open you, not close you. They allow for open-minded exploration in the face of problems, as well as the creative application of problem-solving strategies, rather than harsh hostile reactions that cause your attitude to spiral into negativity. For example, a script that assists you in your pursuit of true greatness in your career directs you to focus calmly on finding joy in your work circumstances. A script that deflects

you from true greatness in your career directs you to second-guess yourself and your ability to feel good about the things you do in your work.

You even bring a script to the primary task of this book: You are filtering what you read through your scripts and making decisions about how you feel inside. Do not allow *any* scripts to run inside you without noticing them and challenging them, if necessary. Are your natural reactions to situations helping you or harming you? Challenging the scripts that are working against true greatness begins by becoming aware of yourself and noticing your natural thoughts and emotional reactions to difficult situations. Be honest with yourself about what you see. Start by taking a small amount of time to check yourself: Strive to be open-minded to challenging and improving yourself. Most people aren't automatically scripted to move to a place of greatness, much less have experience in manifesting greatness. They've just chased rabbits too long and won't give up the chase. And let's face it: The pursuit of true inner peace and contentment can get frustrating. True greatness, as it turns out, has a two-sided nature: It is both easy to bring out, yet tricky. It is easy because all the elements are in all of us, yet it is tricky because our lives are full of competing scripts, noise, busyness and an endless array of both conscious and unconscious distractions. When people are overburdened, their conscious attention narrows to the things that are the most important to survival. Manifesting greatness loses out to participating in countless other mental and physical distractions.

Take the time to monitor how you automatically react to

new opportunities. Set yourself about the task of allowing your inner life scripts for greatness to emerge and function fully in your minute-by-minute attitudes. Speak to yourself in ways that foster inner greatness, and be careful about addressing old attitudes and behaviors that would stop your ascent to true greatness before you've even begun.

Choosing to follow that inner path honestly to true satisfaction despite the challenges is being scripted for greatness.

You can liberate yourself from the grind of routine mediocrity and build life scripts for true greatness. Don't let everyday obligations stop you. It really isn't that hard to learn.

Once you begin to have a sense of how you are scripted now and have made a determined decision to change whatever is necessary, you're ready to take on the next challenge.

The Next Challenge

That challenge is seeing clearly where you are going and getting a clear vision of true greatness. One of the leading causes of failure in the pursuit of anything is simply the lack of a clear idea of where you're aiming your energy. What does true greatness look like? What is the target at which you must aim yourself to be successful in hitting it? How do you acquire a vision that will take you where you want to go?

Read on.

CHAPTER 2

The Joy of Being Something and Knowing That You Are Advancing



Great men are they who see that
spiritual is stronger than material force,
that thoughts rule the world.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON



Truly successful athletes and business leaders are successful in their minds long before they ever reach the gridiron or the boardroom. They have discovered the power of controlling their own minds and owning their vision. Interestingly, this is the path to true greatness as well. How do you acquire this sort of transcendent greatness using your mind and your focus? The answer is surprisingly simple, and it's not what you'd think. This chapter defines the exact attributes of creating true greatness first in your mind and gives you a specific target at which to aim your energy. It begins with knowing the difference between excellence and true greatness.

Excellence Versus Greatness

As a practical matter, you must understand the difference between excellence and greatness. *Excellence* is the process of taking some personal talent or skill and stretching it as far as it can go. It could take the form of rigorous training to break a world record or studying to get straight As. This is excellence: developing your talents as far as possible. Excellence is a wonderful thing and is what most people think of when they think of greatness.

True *greatness*, however, is not an extension of excellence; it is an entirely different game. It is not attainable through training and straining and working yourself physically. True greatness is about living life from a core belief that says you don't accumulate or compete yourself to personal happiness, but pursue it for inner motivations. We like the words of Wallace Waddles in his classic book, *The Science of Being Great*, as he describes the pursuit of greatness:

Great people never seek for recognition or applause; they are not great because they want to be paid for being so. Greatness is reward enough for itself; *the joy of being something and of knowing that you are advancing* is the greatest of all joys possible to man.

There is a curious, almost mysterious truth in the words of Wallace Waddles. His words tempt us to think deeper about the nature of pursuing true greatness. How do we find the “joy of being something and knowing you are advancing”?

Let's start with what we know about true greatness:

- Greatness is rare.
- Greatness is a process that starts in your head.
- Greatness needs to be exercised.
- Greatness is possible for anyone.
- Greatness is social.
- Greatness is selfless.

Greatness is Rare

True greatness has an unmistakable beyond-the-ordinary feeling to it. You *know* something unusual or perhaps profound is happening when you encounter it. You can simply sense that you are in the presence of someone special. If you think back to all the people you have known in your life, you can think of a small handful who stood out in this way. Perhaps they demonstrated some unusual act of leadership or kindness that was timely and unique, perhaps they did something special or remarkable, or maybe they just touched you in a special way. It's interesting—don't you think—how three or four people can just stay in your memory like that? The experience of encountering greatness is rare.

Greatness is a Process That Starts in Your Head

Greatness is not magic. It begins within the six inches between your ears. If one person can do it, anyone can. Though few choose greatness, life seems to offer endless opportunities, almost minute by minute, to do something truly great. But only great minds see those opportunities and act accordingly. You will begin seeing them soon. It's a sign you are learning.

Greatness Needs to be Exercised

So much of life is automatic. We can literally live great chunks of our lives in autopilot mode, simply going through the motions of existence. Greatness never grows from a mind drifting in this fashion. Greatness is a deliberate act—thoughtful, prepared, rehearsed, exercised, and displayed.

Greatness is Possible for Anyone

Greatness is not about intelligence, talent, motivation, personality, or fads. In fact, greatness has nothing to do with intelligence at all. Great people are not a breed apart. If you had known Martin Luther King Jr. or Albert Schweitzer in school, you probably would not have thought of either as particularly amazing or smart or special. But certain qualities about them would emerge. These qualities would include sharing, encouraging, ego-lessness,

optimism, thoughtfulness, curiosity, courage, leadership and so on. These qualities, though unique, are not in the DNA. They are simply human traits that individuals—any individuals—choose to exercise and develop. Great people choose to display these traits consistently over time. In hindsight it's clear that these qualities, openly shared, are what set these people apart. They started out just like everyone else, but choosing to develop different personal traits. Greatness is an open game, available to anyone.

Greatness is Social

Greatness is linked to *interpersonal* events, not just to personal achievement. Loners report lower levels of self-satisfaction in almost all categories measured. Dwelling on happy, thankful thoughts toward others for a half hour a day will generate significant changes in optimism and purpose in just two weeks. Greatness has a strong social element.

Greatness is Selfless

Selflessness means taking action in life for reasons that are beyond yourself. How do you do this? When you study the words of mankind's great teachers and philosophers on the topic of greatness, you will find that there is huge overlap among them at one very crucial and interesting spot: the need to *give up a personal agenda to benefit others*.

There may be biological root to this. Brain science suggests that the rudiments of greatness are present in all human beings. Healthy brains have a good supply of a neurotransmitter called serotonin. It is called the “happy hormone” because people who have high levels of serotonin in their brains are happy and upbeat. Serotonin is missing or low in people who are depressed all the time. Many antidepressant medications work simply by raising the serotonin levels in the brain.

When you do something heroic or courageous—that is, selfless—serotonin is released into your bloodstream in large quantities. Your body reacts to the experience of greatness by releasing chemicals to make you feel good; this is a biological means of rewarding behavior and encouraging its reoccurrence. But get this: If you receive or even just observe a kind act, serotonin levels go crazy high in your brain too. What’s happening is that your brain is recognizing goodness and making you feel good in response. It’s amazing, really. Simply witnessing a great business deal close, hearing a motivational speech, watching someone win a gold medal, witnessing an act of kindness, and so on actually makes you feel great.

For some reason, we’re programmed to recognize and respond to acts of greatness with some sense of feel-good. It’s biological: It’s as if your body is naturally rewarding you for something it wants you to repeat. Interestingly, serotonin levels do not go up when people experience personal power, acquiring security or desires, or any of the other traditional definitions of happiness, success, and excellence. We are clearly not pro-

grammed for selfish forms of success by itself. What many people think will make them happy, in truth, does not.

This biological facts are borne out in real life. There is story after story about people giving up their own needs so that others may benefit. The entire *Chicken Soup for the Soul* franchise was built on stories of ordinary folks who exercised greatness simply by giving up their own selfish needs to help others. Something about those stories stirs us. They have the mark of rightness about them. It's as if there is a universal knowing that to be selfless is rare and worth doing.

Yet despite this knowing, we have not traditionally been taught that selflessness is the best way to succeed. Instead we have been indoctrinated to think that the only way to get ahead is by tirelessly competing, selling, persuading, fighting, worrying, pressuring, cajoling, and so on. We've been taught that selfishness is how you get the things that make you happy. Right?

Well, not really. It appears that true greatness may have less to do with making yourself happy and more about making others benefit from what you bring to the world.

Let's boil this down: True greatness is finding that special inner place of peace, purpose, and happiness that is of a different order than material achievement. You find the path to this place by developing your gift or gifts and using them to serve some purpose beyond just yourself, day in and day out. You can live a life that transcends your individual existence. You can make a difference.



Hide not your talent, they for use were made.

What's a sundial in the shade?

BEN FRANKLIN



A Pure Example of True Greatness: Golda Meir

The elements of true greatness are hiding in plain sight. Golda Meir was the prime minister of Israel and widely regarded as one of the true heroes of the 20th century. She was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, of immigrant Russian Jewish parents. She was a sensitive, strong, and intelligent girl, committed to her education and to a desire to be a teacher. Though she was married at 19 and taught school, she was consumed with a burden to help the Jewish people of Palestine. She subsequently quit her dream teaching job and canvassed the United States, raising funds to help. Her marriage suffered, ending in divorce, but she was consumed with something she considered a higher calling.

She emigrated to Palestine in her early twenties to live and work on a kibbutz. Tireless behind-the-scenes work damaged her health, but in 1948 her bigger dream came true: The country of Israel was born.

She went back and forth to America several times over the

next few decades, serving selflessly behind the scenes on behalf of the new Israeli government. Against her personal inclinations, she became actively involved in the politics of the country in the 1950s. It was a choice motivated not by ego, but by a selfless desire to see something great happen for Israel, no matter what the personal cost to her. And the personal cost was great: She was diagnosed with lymphoma in the early 1960s and would quietly fight cancer the rest of her days.

In the late 1960s, despite failing health and the ravages of cancer, she was chosen to lead her country as prime minister. This happened just prior to the surprise 1971 Yom Kippur War that nearly saw her small country overrun by vastly superior Egyptian and Syrian forces, as well as the disastrous 1972 Munich Olympics that saw seven Israeli athletes murdered by terrorists. She served bravely and successfully. The world might look very different today if not for her sacrifice.

When Golda went to Palestine as a girl, she was acting *not* from a mindset or core of “me,” but from of the core of “others.” She had a powerful and pervasive sense of taking care of others, even at her own expense, safety, and inconvenience. That is an entirely unique platform from which to conduct a life. Nobody is born doing that sort of thing; it is a conscious choice to get away from the me-me-me that so commonly defines the core of most people.

Golda Meir’s life is a testament to the world-changing power of seeking true greatness; it is a life that is measured by a better yardstick than mere personal gain.

Are You Ready?

So now you know what true greatness is and what it involves, and you are ready to upgrade your life.

In the chapters to come, you will learn about a simple five-step path to creating a new inner core of true greatness. Your old thoughts and expectations involved seeing *external* rewards like power, wealth, approval, social advancement, and material things as ways to create *inner* peace and happiness. This is a common and false path. We can all think of major celebrities who at the height of their fame and success became depressed and chose to end their lives. Looking for internal happiness by chasing an external dream is a catastrophic error. An external chase yields little more than frustration and galling emptiness.

The path of true greatness is the total reverse: It is an internal change first that manifests externally second. Inside out. That's how we roll.

We hope you will spot greatness hiding within yourself and reach for it eagerly. It is the sure path to true greatness.

In the Quincy Market Holocaust memorial in downtown Boston, six pillars are inscribed with stories of Holocaust survivors. On the sixth pillar, however, is a very different kind of story. It is about a little six-year-old girl named Ilse, friend of Guerda Weisman Kline, an Auschwitz survivor. Guerda recalls that one day little Ilse found a single raspberry somewhere in the camp. Ilse carried it all day long in her pocket, carefully protecting it from

damage. That night, she presented it to her friend Guerda on a single leaf. “Imagine a world,” wrote Guerda on the pillar, “in which your entire possession is one raspberry, and you give it to your friend.” Ilse did a great thing that day, and her sole motivation was to see the smile in her friend’s eyes.



There are no great things,
only small things done with great love.

Happy are those.

MOTHER TERESA



The New Path to True Greatness

While many readers will consciously endorse the lessons of this book, subconsciously they are living by a very different set of rules. Conscious-versus-subconscious misalignment is often the difference between business and life greatness and frustrating failure.

It is important to draw a clear line between what you know on a conscious level and what you truly act on subconsciously. Realigning these two mental levels launches all sorts of new, powerful, and purposeful behavior. It releases intentionality. Influencing your subconscious thinking is your best hope to reveal the greatness hiding within you.

The Perplexed and the Knowing

We like to separate people into two groups: the perplexed and the knowing. Many professional people are doing what they've been told to do to reach success, yet a sense of success eludes them. They've worked toward a life that has the appearance and

trappings of success, but a true sense of success slips past them. In their hearts they are quietly wandering, seeking something more deeply satisfying. They are the perplexed.

As it turns out, the standard pathway to success creates something other than reliable peace and power. What it creates looks a lot more like an unquenchable reliance on external rewards for internal satisfaction. This is a mindset that leaves you feeling hollow and desperate for something lasting and sustaining. Those who follow this external path (most of us) end up living in a strange sort of emptiness that is far from our original goal. We're privately frustrated and *perplexed* because we bought into an external system of success, and it has failed us.

Yet other people are *knowing*: They possess something distinctly different deep down inside and are living reflections of those ineffable inner qualities of peace, joy, and happiness, which define a deeper sense of life success. These people don't consciously force their lives to fit together but experience a more graceful and effortless way of living directed by something clear and well aligned *within themselves*.

This internal standard is unshakable. They are rarely slaves to their environment, or battered by the waves of life. Rather they are directed by something deep within. They live from a core that says, "Live in the world, but be not *of* the world." This internal instead of external focus is the source of knowing and of true personal power.

We need to create an *internal* environment so clear, so well ensconced, and so powerful that it literally flows toward the *out-*