

MY DRUG DEALER BROUGHT ME TO GOD

WORKBOOK

RYAN JOSEPH ALLEN



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HEALING REFLECTIONS, EXERCISES, AND AFFIRMATIONS FOR SELF-GROWTH AND AWARENESS

My journey from awareness to recovery to wellness was a bit like how I imagine the early American gold rush settlers made their way across the plains and mountains of the Midwest back in the day. To reach the gold was not a smooth ride. There were mountains to climb up and then avoid sliding down without destroying your wagon or depleting your horses; water to cross in the form of rivers, lakes, and streams; straight plains to cross with danger from wild animals, poisonous plants, droughts, and other hungry gold rushers. The prospect of getting the gold and finding a place to call home was attractive enough to keep people making the trek.

Trying to eliminate all my addictions went up with successes and down with backslides. There were times I felt I was drowning. There were times people tried to sabotage me for their own poisonous needs. There were many triumphs and regrets. There were times I felt alone and lost and wished I had some guidance. I chose not to reach out for help when I should have, and when I did ask for help, my request was rejected because I was told therapy appeared unmanly.

Ultimately, I pieced together my own path and found the strength within me through my relationship with a higher power. Had I been given the resources I now use, and if I was guided by someone who knew what I was going through, I would have avoided a lot of turmoil and pain for myself and my family.

My mission is to help people find the support they need to be their best selves. I start with sharing my own story. Here in this workbook section, I offer some tools that I find helpful to keep me moving forward in a positive direction. Addiction is a process, and we fight for stability and clarity every time the road gets bumpier than we'd like.

This workbook can be used to experience my memoir as a hybrid between a story and a self-help book. It can be utilized simply as a journal for reflection to help create learning and growth on your journey or path. Additionally, it can be used within a family or friend group or even more formally in peer support groups or other group therapies.

These exercises and reflections aid in personal learning and growth and can help you to understand why and who you truly are. When we know this, it's often easier to share our stories with others. My hope is that you share your story, which helps, in turn, make the world a closer and more connected place by displaying different perceptions or perspectives and ultimately allowing us to be a more peaceful and harmonious world.

Feel free to reread the sections that correspond with the reflection or exercise, or simply do the exercises and reflections in order straight through the workbook. Skip around, go in order, start from the back and go forward; whatever feels good for you. There's no right or wrong way to experience self-learning and self-growth.

Share with your friends, family members, and support systems and ask them the reflection questions or have them do the exercises with you. As we grow and expand, we create movement in our spaces, not only for ourselves but also for those around us!

If something challenges you or pushes a button, reach out. There are resources in your community or the next town over or on the internet with those of us who have gone through our own journeys and want to be there to help you! Truly! If the first person you reach out to isn't your cup of tea, search again. You'll find the right fit just when you're meant to. The right fit

could be the stranger you meet on an airplane who instinctively “gets” you, or it could be a therapist; it could be a religious leader or a yoga teacher; it might be a classmate, a neighbor, or your local barista.

May you find the answers that lighten your load and lift you up.

May you find the people who will make your journey lighter/easier.

REFLECTIONS & EXERCISES

REFLECTIONS

Chapter 4 Six Years Old—Chains

- *Are there things from your childhood that you enjoyed doing that others around you didn't enjoy?*
- *Were there activities or things you enjoyed that made you feel different, out of place, or not "normal"?*
- *Did you seem to fit in or always stand out or somewhere in the middle?*

Chapter 5 Be Careful What You Say

- *What are things you tell yourself on a daily basis that are part of your self-talk?*
- *Are they deliberate? Are they positive, negative, or neutral?*
- *How could you augment them to serve you and your life better?*
- *How do the same patterns when you were a child show up today in your self-talk or mindset about yourself? Paralleled, completely different, or somewhere in the middle?*

Chapter 6 13 Years Old—A Cut for Help

- *Are there current triggers that can be traced back to childhood trauma for you? What are those triggers?*
- *Have you ever had to hide who you were on a consistent basis or hide something about your life from a certain group of people? What toll did that take on you?*

- *Have you done the work of tracing that trauma back as far as you can into your young life?*
- *What growth have you made to heal the past trauma?*

Chapter 7 The Birds and Bees

- *Is there anyone in your life who would benefit from knowing that you are open to listening and helping without judgment about whatever challenges they have?*
- *Have you ever presumed you knew the whole story about a situation, person, or group of people and then later found out you were a little bit (or a lot) wrong?*
- *Did you make amends?*
- *Did you educate and teach yourself how to do better in the future?*
- *Did you self-regulate so, in the future, you can notice those thoughts and patterns emerging and potentially steer them in a different direction?*

Chapter 8 13 Going on Addict

- *Are some of your childhood or young behaviors still being mirrored in your current day-to-day life?*
- *What are patterns that were created throughout childhood that still take a hold of you?*
- *What addictions did you form when you were younger that you still haven't shaken off, grown out of, worked hard to release, or obliterated?*
- *Are these addictions based on showcased behavior from friends and family, from TV or media, or simply original situations that turned addictive as a coping mechanism or self-medicating?*

Chapter 9 Bad Influence

- *Have you ever had friends (or even family members) in your life who steered you in the wrong direction when you knew it was wrong, but you love them so much you veered off your path to join them on their path?*
- *Or maybe you've been the person leading people astray?*

Chapter 10 Free to Be Me

- *What do you do to escape from challenges and overwhelming situations?*
- *Did you use these same coping mechanisms while you were growing up? Or did you develop them along the way?*
- *Are there things that you noticed your parents or family members did growing up that now you do?*
 - *Belief systems they held that you now hold?*
 - *Patterns, behaviors, prejudices, beliefs?*

The Letter

- *Does journaling or writing down your thoughts sometimes help shift your current energy?*
- *What kind of artistic expression did you use when you were younger?*
- *What materials or medium could be brought back into your life as an adult to provide comfort, support, and growth? Perhaps sharing words, art, music, dance, or other forms of self-expression?*

Coming Out for The First Time

- *Have you ever told someone something and instantly felt the weight of the world lift off your shoulders?*
- *Or quite the opposite: Have you shared something and then felt the doom and gloom of oppression and obligation?*
- *Has someone ever shared something with you that was hard to hear and it was challenging to provide support to them?*

Embracing the Fiend

- *Have you ever done something knowing that it was harmful to yourself or someone else but still made the conscious decision to do it? Or perhaps felt you had little or no control to stop it?*
- *In what ways have you self-medicated through various aspects or parts of your life?*
- *What coping strategies have you developed to get through the complications of life?*

Sewing Shears

- *Is there a time that you needed help and didn't ask for it?*
 - *Or asked for it and didn't receive it?*
 - *Or asked for it and then received it?*
- *Are there patterns in your adult relationships or friendships that are molded by triggers from the past around acquiring help?*
- *In which areas do you currently recognize that you could benefit from support/help?*
 - *Physically*
 - *Spiritually*
 - *Mentally*
 - *Psychologically*
 - *Emotionally*

Chapter 11 Mother Issues

- *Have you ever tried your absolute best in a situation and still felt like you didn't meet the needs of the other party?*
- *Have you ever felt like the whole world was against you? Or that you were against the whole world?*
- *Are there times when you felt like the other person in a relationship (family, work, school, romance, etc.) was trying really hard to do the right thing but completely missed the mark, and you still harbored resentments toward them either in your childhood or adulthood?*

Chapter 12 Confrontation Reaps Turmoil

- *Have you ever felt so minuscule based on something you couldn't change about yourself? (Something as simple as having too many freckles? Having too thin or too thick hair? The wrong color eyes? The wrong body type? The wrong kind of clothes or style?)*
- *Have you ever made anyone else feel small for not being like you?*
- *Did you make amends and do your best to reconcile the situation or do healing with that person/group of people? Have you done spiritual or energetic work around that situation?*

All Boys, All the Time

- *Have you ever had that one friend who was able to help you through a really hard time?*
- *Do you ever wonder if that person knows how much they helped you?*
- *Have you reached out or told them?*

Birthday Trouble

- *Have you ever had a situation that you couldn't control that felt absolutely unfair, unjust, or wrong and had no way to voice your concerns?*
- *Did that make you feel trapped, or were you able to learn mechanisms for releasing that and flying free like a bird that's let out of its cage? Or...*
 - *Did you stay stuck in that cage? How did that make you feel?*
 - *Are there patterns from your childhood around hopelessness or feeling loss that you still carry today in certain situations that arise?*

Pain Rises to the Surface

- *Have you ever done something that you didn't share with anyone for an extended period of time?*
- *How did holding on to that secret make you feel? (Did you feel heavy, dark, closed off, or living in fear that someone might find out?)*
- *Have you recognized that the more secretive you were, the more you thought other people might be secretive and hiding things from you?*
- *Did the secrets eat away at you until eventually you let them out, or did they no longer have a hold on you, thus enabling you to release them?*
- *How do you deal with secrets that other people share with you? Do they put a heaviness onto your shoulders or onto your heart?*
- *Do you ever have an "odd feeling" like things happened that you don't remember or that other people know things you don't know? Like there might be secrets buried in your subconscious that your family hasn't shared with you, but that might be impacting how you interact with the world day-to-day?*

Chapter 13 Living with Dad

- *Do you ever assume you know what someone's thinking without asking them?*
- *Do you presume that simply by someone's actions, or lack of actions, it means something about you or who you are as a person?*
- *Did/have you questioned them or tried to create a conversation around it?*
- *Have you ever been unable to express how you truly feel in a situation, and someone has misread or misinterpreted your intention?*
- *Were there things your parents didn't do for you growing up that would have been beneficial to you as an adult?*
- *Were your parents able to show up for you not just in the physical sense but also emotionally and build a connection with you about your emotions and feelings?*
- *How did your relationship with your father or father figure in your life sculpt your current relationships with males or other men in your life?*
- *How did your relationship with your mother or mother figure in your life sculpt your current relationships with females or other women in your life?*

Nashville, Tennessee

- *When you were little, did you ever wish for something so badly and then finally get it and be disappointed or end up feeling not as good as you thought you would?*
- *As an adult, have you ever received one of your dreams from when you were a child and realized it fell short of what you truly wanted as a kid or even as an adult? Did it not align with the vision of how you saw it coming to be?*
- *Did you have to do things you weren't proud of to achieve or obtain that dream? How do you feel about that now?*
- *Are you excited to have envisioned and had a dream come to fruition in your adult life?*
- *What dreams do you still have that you can bring to fruition?*
- *What do you hope achieving that dream will help you to feel?*

Consequences—More First Times

- *Are there areas in your life (currently or when you were young) where your thoughts and feelings don't/didn't align with societal norms?*
- *How did your first sexual experiences impact sexual orientation and behaviors as you reached adulthood and beyond?*

Freedom on Wheels

- *What in your life sculpted who you look up to and why you look up to them?*
- *What kind of influence do you believe you have on other people?*
- *Who influences you these days?*
- *Does likeability come into play when you feel influenced or are influencing others?*
- *How do you differentiate between control and influence?*

Work & Wheels

- *Has there ever been a person who has come into your life and lifted you up but at the same time brought you into experiences that tore you down?*
- *Have you been the person in someone's life who helped lift them out of the darkness only to somehow find yourself wrapped up in a whirlwind of negativity with that person?*
- *How do you differentiate between positive and negative relationships now?*

Intention

- *Growing up, did you ever get blamed for things you didn't do?*
- *If so, how do those situations play out now in your life when someone accuses you of something that you didn't do? How do you react?*
- *Are you quick to accuse other people of wrongdoings even if they haven't done anything wrong?*
- *How do you differentiate intuition from past traumas and triggers?*
- *Who has been an advocate for you at critical times in your life?*
- *Have you been an advocate for anyone to help them through a tough time?*

Chapter 14 The Pink Bath

- *What scars do you have on your body? How did they happen?*
- *What scars do you have on your heart? How did they happen?*
- *Have you done enough work to mend the emotional scars/trauma and heal them to prevent adulthood-triggered behaviors stemming from what happened in childhood?*
- *How do you acknowledge and prevent reactions to the past from creating a bigger scar or reopening old wounds?*

God's Adult Bookstore Message

- *Have you ever received a message at a time or place when you feel like you shouldn't have received the message?*
- *Have you ever had an unexpected gut feeling to go somewhere, say something, or show up in a certain way? Do you believe you were divinely guided there?*

Emancipation

- *Have you ever said or done anything that you can't take back but wish you could?*
- *How did you work through it? Who did you turn to for advice or help?*
- *Were you able to admit to yourself that you made a mistake immediately, or did it take a while to realize that mistakes were made on your part?*
- *How do you respond when someone else says or does something that you know they don't mean? Do you give them the benefit of the doubt, make up stories about why they might have said it, ask them directly and have a conversation, or use other techniques to break free from the entrapment of what other people say and do that hurts you?*

Chapter 15 The Airport

- *Have you ever had two family members or friends who didn't get along, and you were put in the middle of that situation?*
- *Maybe you are that friend or family member who didn't get along with another friend or family member, and there was a third party who was affected by it. How did that feel?*

- *How have you learned how to have healthier relationships and not triangulate situations as a control mechanism?*
- *When you were a child, did you ever see triangulation in your family or with groups of friends, and how is that played out in your adult life? Do you see those patterns arise when significantly triggered or upset with yourself, your spouse, or your friends or family?*

Jagged Edge

- *Two wrongs don't make a right, and two unhappy people don't make a happy relationship. Have you ever been in a relationship where both parties were unhappy? How did that transpire?*
- *What did you learn from that situation?*
- *How did you (will you) go from that unhealthy and unhappy relationship to a healthy and happy relationship?*

Big News

- *Did you see abusive types of relationships growing up with family or friends or your parents?*
- *Have you ever been in an addictive, abusive cycle?*
 - *If so, how did you get out of it?*
 - *How many cycles did you go through before you were able to break free? Why did you stay as long as you did?*
- *As an adult, if you notice that one of your friends or family members is in an abusive situation, do you call it out and help them get out of it? Do you ignore it?*

Mommy, I'm Gay or Bisexual or Whatever

- *Normal...?*
 - *What are social norms growing up that didn't feel good to you?*
 - *Gender norms that didn't feel good?*
 - *Religious norms that didn't feel good to you?*
 - *Just norms, in general, that didn't feel like they resonated with your heart or soul?*
- *As adults, how do we free ourselves from these societal norms and break free into our own essence?*

- *How do we express our own individuality in a positive way while still being welcomed into society?*

Chapter 16 I'm Coming Out Again

- *Answer this in a virtual or physical journal: If someone gave you an assignment to share your truth, what would you share?*
- *With whom do you need to share this?*
- *How would it make you feel if you didn't keep this to yourself anymore?*

Need to Know for Sure

- *When do people push your buttons now? How do you react? Do you call them out? Do you simply sit back and not say anything and keep your cool?*
- *If you notice you're pushing people's buttons, how do you work through that to get to a healthy place where both people in the relationship feel good about it?*
- *Have you ever been friends with someone or dated someone who you knew wasn't good for you? Did you stay because you didn't want to be alone?*
- *Have you seen these behaviors in those around you? Either growing up or currently?*
- *How does codependency take form in your life?*
 - *With people?*
 - *With food?*
 - *With substances?*
 - *Within situations?*

Chapter 17 Here We Go Again

- *When you find yourself in a deep hole, how do you dig yourself out?*
 - *Do you ask for help?*
 - *Do you expect other people to intuitively know to pull you out?*
 - *Do you lay in the ditch and cry?*
 - *When do you decide to try to climb up the side of it, digging your fingernails into the dirt and mud?*

- *How do you know when to help others when you can see that they are struggling?*
- *How do you lend them a hand without doing all the work for them?*
 - *Or do you swoop in like a superhero and do everything?*
- *Where have you seen all these behaviors modeled in your life?*

Out of Control

- *Have you ever been wildly out of control?*
- *How did you reign it in? How did you regain control of your life?*
- *Have you seen other people around you spiral out of control?*
 - *Did you step in and intervene?*
 - *Did they ask for help?*
 - *Did they ever get the help they needed?*
 - *Do they talk about it openly and with authenticity? Or keep it hidden?*
- *Do you share stories about your struggles and spirals?*

EXERCISES

Chapter 18 To Heroin or Not to Heroin

Write down four things you saw as struggles (negative, caused hardship) but turned out to be blessings.

- What did you learn?
- What pain did you avoid in the future because of something that happened earlier?
- What person did you meet or skill did you learn that turned out to be helpful later on?
- What revelations did you have by coming through a challenge that helped you teach others or bring more blessings on you and your family ultimately?

Going forward, using a journal or any pad of paper, write down your struggles as they come up and leave room to go back and re-evaluate them in regular increments (30 days, 60 days, each quarter, each year.)

- How many of your challenges have you later determined were there as messages/blessings/gifts?
- What lessons did you learn that you can now use to inspire, lead, teach, and help others?

Chapter 19 Trippin' and Rippin'

If you'd like to start understanding your body's connection to the energy of the Earth and open yourself to clearing out any negative energy that may be causing distress or illness in your body, you may consider beginning a meditation practice. I have several free meditations and links to various resources on my website at www.ryanjosephallen.com or www.mydrugdealerbroughtmetogod.com.

Included is a page for you to write down your experiences that may seem other-worldly, godly, angel-like, messages from loved ones, etc. Once these visions and messages start being collected in one place, you will find yourself at peace knowing that we are all part of a much bigger picture, and everything and everyone has a purpose.

Include your thoughts; what you know to be true in your heart.

What would you do if none of the voices of judgment were in your head?

If money wasn't an obstacle, what would you want to accomplish, create?

What does your intuition tell you about what you were meant to do and be here on Earth?

Chapter 20 Evanescence

A few lined pages and questions follow. These are meant for you to combat your past by writing the actions you have taken that have created an energetic toll on your body, mind, and spirit, as well as on the people around you. Once you've put them into writing, you can examine them and begin healing. You can even rip them right out of this workbook (or print them off) and burn them outside to fully release them.

Write about the things you do to make yourself sick or abuse your own body or mind.

Make a list of the things you regret doing because other people persuaded you to. Especially note down if this action went against your better instincts/gut.

What is blocking you from achieving everything you could ever want? Why can't you let it go?

Some people feel that they can better express themselves through artistic immersion. If so, perhaps you can make a list of what songs, movies, podcasts, or writings move you. What expresses who you are/how you feel?

If you could write (or film) a song/poem/story what would you include? Why?

If someone was going to write your life story or a memoir about a significant part of your life, what would they include? What would they possibly learn from that set of experiences?

Chapter 21 Rebooting

Mother Mary Healing Meditation

Use this worksheet to write down affirmations you would like to repeat to keep your energy focused on what you want to welcome into your life. Examples: I love myself. I am perfect, just the way I am. I choose to put healthy, life-sustaining foods into my body. God loves me. I am full of love and light. I am a beacon of the divine's love. I am strong mentally and physically. I am beautiful just the way I am. I AM, I AM.

Chapter 22 Getting Back on the Right Path

When is the last time you checked in with yourself? What is your motivation for wanting to change your life or habits?

How will you set up a routine or reminder to check in with yourself regularly? Write your commitment to do so here.

What signs have you witnessed in your life that led to good decision-making?

What signs have you missed or ignored that led to negative situations?

What negative habits do you have that make you feel shame after indulging?

Do any single habits lead to a pattern of troublesome behaviors?

What healthy resources do you have in your life to get you back on your intentional path? Social, physical, emotional, spiritual, financial, educational, etc. Write those contacts here:

Chapter 23 School of Metaphysics

When have you found yourself someplace that you felt compelled to go despite everything else going on around you, and it turned out to be a significant experience in your life?

Why was it significant? Was it someone you met? Something you learned? Something you received, saw, or heard that was used to help you achieve your mission in life?

Will you take what you learned and share it with other people? If so, how and when? And it may help you to include a list of who you want to share with as well.

Chapter 24 Joey

What are your life priorities? Do the people you care about know and recognize/honor them?

How do you include self-care into those priorities?

What have you learned from the significant relationships in your life? What have they taught you about trust, boundaries, past triggers, and current triggers?

Chapter 25 Education/Cultivating My Own Style

Who do you think would benefit from hearing your story? Are there lessons you've learned or cautionary advice you can offer that could help others? How might you go about doing that?

Chapter 26 Recovery from Addiction

What can you not live without in your day-to-day life? If you were heading for a castle on your own island for a year, what would you insist be included in the supply list? Are the items on that list good for you? Healthy for your mind and body? If not, can you begin a program to reduce the need for these things in your life?

For fun, make a list of what you would bring in your single suitcase for one year and why. Then review the list every six months or so and evaluate if those same things are still important to you.

What do you struggle with?

- What would your life be like if you didn't struggle with that anymore?
- Do you have a plan to control this? Who could help you?
- Have you identified enablers that facilitate your indulgences?

Chapter 27 Perfectly Imperfect

- A) Pick one area for self-improvement and make a list of five steps you can take in the next 30-60 days to reach your goal(s).
- B) Reread this list every day and, when you finally reach your goals, rework your list and continue.

To help you start your list:

What are you already pretty good at?

What area of your life would you like to improve upon?

What does “being the best” in that area realistically look like for you?

Chapter 28 Safe Haven 2015

I have found that there is nothing that makes me feel better about my purpose on Earth than knowing I’ve made a difference. Here are some small ways to make a big difference in your community, family, and life. These are just meant to inspire your thinking process. Feel free to expand as much as you like!

What in your life brings you down? Is there a perspective shift that can make you think of that in a different way to bring you a more positive outlook?

What program or event has impacted you in a meaningful way?

Did you thank the person/people who put that together and/or brought it to you?

Make a list of people you may want to thank for the positive impact they've had on your life. Doing so will improve their lives immeasurably.

Thank a sponsor of an event and patronize their business in some way so they will be inclined to continue offering support for the organizations that mean something to the people in your community.

Who have you supported or listened to this week? Ask yourself that question each week.

Who listened to or supported you? Did you remember to say thank you and show your appreciation?

Chapter 30 Falling for a Married Man

What do you feel you need to do or learn before you can be fully present in a relationship? If you're not there yet, perhaps you want to make a checklist here of things you plan to achieve/accomplish so you are ready when love shows up for you.

Chapter 31 Intention of Beliefs

How can you expand your understanding of other people? How can you help others understand you?

Make a commitment to try something new with someone not in your regular circle within the next sixty days or so. And then invite a new face to join you for your family customs and celebrations.

Suggestions:

- Attend an event from a different culture or religion, perhaps a Jewish Seder or Hanukkah menorah lighting or an Indian wedding or a Native American sweat lodge or French Bastille Days or Mexican Day of the Dead, a Brazilian or New Orleans Mardi Gras/Carnevale or Italian Feast of San Gennaro, etc.

- Volunteer at an event at a group home for Down syndrome adults or Alzheimer's/dementia residents in memory care or homeless veterans.
- Attend a festival that celebrates a culture or heritage other than your own. Pride festivals, Chinese New Year, Puerto Rican Culture Celebration, Juneteenth, etc.

Message from Beyond

What memories are you contributing to your loved ones' memory banks?

What small pleasures do you find in your day-to-day life? Do you take the time to appreciate them and add them to your memory bank?

What can you add to your plans to increase the number of positive memories for yourself and your family and loved ones?

Learning from Each Experience

- What have you learned from your last or most recent relationship?
 - What do you think you have taught people in your life?
 - What would you like people to say about you after they've gotten to know you?
 - Do your current behaviors reflect that?
 - If you're not sure, ask three people who know you to describe you in three sentences. What have you learned from their answers?
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-
-
-

Golden Rule with a Caveat

Make of list something you will do to treat yourself well, give yourself respect and love, every week for the next twelve weeks. I've started with some things my friends said they do and hope that you will add your own to the list.

Suggestions:

- Take twenty minutes to meditate in the morning
- Turn off media, phone, and family for thirty minutes to enjoy a warm beverage and look at a pleasant view/pictures
- Take a run or walk in nature
- Go to a flower market and just stand there, breathe in and smell, and look at all the glorious selections. If you're feeling generous, buy yourself a flower or two. If you're broke, wait until the market ends and look for someone who wants to give away what they didn't sell!
- Get a snorkel mask and go for a swim and listen to the sounds of your heart

- Bake or cook something you love
- Call a friend you miss talking to
- Take a drive to a peaceful spot and just sit and be still
- Pamper yourself with something good for you that you don't often allow yourself (massage, facial, manicure/pedicure, wax, hot shave)
- Record a journal entry on your phone
- Write a letter or card to someone
- Confess your darkest secret onto a page and then burn it
- Ask a friend if you can take their dog for a walk
- Eat a treat/snack you loved as a child
- Tell someone you forgive them
- Tell someone you're sorry

Your list?

Chapter 32 Multi-faith

What part of your story might help someone else to make a decision, learn something new, change perspective? We all have a story to tell. Where will you share yours? Make a plan to share your story sometime before the end of the year. Write down the story points here and the lessons you think people will get, and then come back to write how you felt after the experience of sharing.

Chapter 33 Hearts & Hugs in Orlando

One of the greatest gifts we can offer to people that costs us nothing but time and attention is to listen and let someone unburden. You don't have to agree with them. You don't have to offer help. Make a commitment to help someone by listening. Maybe just once, maybe once a week, maybe once a day, or more often if you find it lifts your spirits and makes you feel great too.

Using supportive statements when listening to someone who needs to share is a great way to help your community and family. Supportive statements don't offer advice, critique the problem/person, nor put anyone down. They let someone know you care and that your opinion of them hasn't changed just because of the challenge ahead.

Offering to listen, empathizing that a problem sounds challenging or hard to handle or you can understand why they would be upset, and affirming that you see why this seems like a problem is being supportive.

Then you can talk about how it would make you feel in the same situation. Is the situation one that you would struggle with as well? Would it make you angry or sad or scared? Does it seem like a difficult situation that would challenge anyone in a similar place?

Even something as simple as recognizing and empathizing that you're sorry that they are going through this, and thanking them for trusting you with the information is vital in healing and being heard. Then offering support in a way that you can healthily offer. Let them know that you admire them.

Chapter 34 Dr. Allen, I Presume

Commit to including educational experiences into your life to enhance your mind, reduce the risk of dementia, feel stimulated, and get your happy on.

- I challenge you, especially if books aren't your thing, to watch an informative TEDTalk. They are highly impactful, short in duration,

and helpful videos and podcasts. You can find tens of thousands of them on YouTube, TED app, and through your favorite search engine.

- Maybe go to a museum.
- Write a story or paint a picture or play an instrument.
- Learn to sail or drive a race car or ride a horse.
- Make your own fishing lure.
- Plant a tabletop or herb garden.
- Go outside and explore a park or waterway.
- Learn how to build a campfire like you've always wanted.
- Learn how to camp and go on an adventure.
- Learn to make something you've always wanted to make.

Make a commitment to stimulate your brain by learning something new. Write a list of things you'd like to learn about, things that inspire your curiosity, and then set a goal for when you might start exploring one or two of them.

Write here how you feel about what you have learned and how it has impacted your life. When you finish with one area, set a goal to complete another! Or revisit areas after some time goes by to see what has possibly changed since the initial learning opportunity?

Chapter 37 Next Generation

What “You Must...” rules have you questioned? Are your questions coming from your heart and innate sense of right and wrong, or does your questioning come from lack or perhaps a desire for more—money, things, time?

Write down the things you question and listen to your heart for the answers.

Tenfold Return Challenge

“I ask and receive a tenfold return on this _____ for the goodness of all concerned.”

	First Day: __/__/__	Name:
Day	Making this contribution makes me feel...	I received/noticed the following...
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
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11		
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