

Introduction

*Regard man as a mine full of gems
of inestimable value.*

Bahá'u'lláh¹

This book is about greatness in ordinary people. It is not about becoming famous, powerful or rich. It is about discovering the gems of your own natural greatness and polishing them into jewels. It is about acknowledging difficulties and moving past them. It is about finding your purpose in life, being your best self and having a positive impact beyond yourself. It is about the discipline of personal mastery.

Public-opinion pollsters have reported that those held in highest esteem by most people interviewed are neither the great artists nor the great scientists, the great statesmen or the great sports figures, but those who master a hard lot with their heads held high.

Life is wonderful! Life is difficult. Which is it? Or, can it be both?

Victor Frankl showed us that we can and do choose our state of mind. Through the remarkable story of his Holocaust survival² we learn that, regardless of the external circumstance of our life, we have choices. He was an inspiring model. How can we do what he did?

This book, conceptual and practical, is about understanding and unlocking the capacity in each of us. The pathways to that inner greatness are through the brain's vast neural circuit systems. When we see how amazing these pathways are, understand how they work and learn how to use them, we have discovered a tool of enormous power.

Over the past twenty years I have given a seminar series I called "Pathways to Greatness," to more than ten thousand participants—from the corporate setting to the factory floor, from churches to

penitentiaries, from treatment centers to the community-at-large. Many have asked that a book be made available so they could continue the process of deepening their understanding of the principles put forth and to share with others what they learned. I present this book to fulfill those requests, to provide some of the recent findings about the mechanisms of our brains and to offer some simple mental tools to rewire your brain so you can become all you can be!

Often at the close of the eight-hour program (usually presented over a span of four days), participants approached me and commented, “Hal, this is fascinating

Greatness is...discovered in goodness, humility, service and character.

William Arthur Ward

stuff you have shared with us. But how do we know that it works?” The principles, ideas and explanations find their origin in years of research, experimentation and, most

importantly, in my own life experiences. Stories from my own life are woven throughout the book and serve as the most profound source of my knowing that this material works. I also share stories about how real people have put these

Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and go do that. Because what the world needs is people who come alive.

Gil Bailie

tools into practice and liberated their own greatness.

I am a seeker and a synthesizer. For years I have read articles and books on the brain, creativity, cognitive science, and self-help.

Difficulty is the nurse of greatness

William Cullen Bryant

While each contributed to my understanding of life, the work of Peter Senge is especially noteworthy in the unfolding of this book. In 1990, Peter Senge's book, *The Fifth Discipline*, arrived as if a gift from God.

The discipline of systems thinking helped me recognize that the Newtonian approach to understanding cause and effect and stimulus-response did not accurately explain many of my own experiences. Systems thinking acknowledges the interconnectedness of influences upon a being. It further recognizes that the cause often leads to more than one effect and can also produce some unintended consequences. Time delays separating a cause from its effect can obscure one's analysis. I began to comprehend that the reason some self-help attempts worked and others did not had to do with the systems nature of things...and people. It also helped me to understand how we live in a world of systems embedded in systems.

The coming together of all of these influences culminated in the curriculum with its corresponding techniques. My ability to express the concepts in this book in a cogent way has been significantly enhanced by my marrying Sharon Eakes (See Chapter 1, *Life Begins Anew*), whose background in psychology enriched the material. Her voice throughout this book lends feeling and expression to my ideas.

How to Get the Most from This Book

You will find this book most useful if you write down some things you would like to have, to do, or to be, in the future that seem difficult at present. I invite you to pause now and choose several goals from different parts of your life. Write them down here so you can refer back to them.

Family _____

Career _____

Physical _____

Financial _____

Social _____

Spiritual _____

Intellectual _____

Keep these in mind as you move through the book, but especially as you read Chapters 16 - 20. The book will help rewire your brain for the accomplishment of your own desired future.

Robert Frost reminded us that we choose our path in life.³

**Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -
I took the one less traveled by,
and that has made all the difference.**

I invite you to begin your own journey on these pathways to greatness — to master the tools to change what you want to change about yourself, and get what you want out of life.