

Clearing Away The Crap in my Cap

Lessons in Life Mastery



Mark Sentoshi Russo

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This Book is Dedicated To

My mother—words are woefully inadequate

My beautiful wife Helen—the wind beneath my wings

Stephen K. Hayes—friend and teacher

*And to Kenny Loggins and Jimmy Messina, whose song “Be Free”
inspired a vision, which became this book.*

Contents

Changing Views Dam	i
What Readers Are Saying	ii
Introduction	iii
1 Beginning to Doubt That I'd Figured It Out	1
2 The Shop Where I Stopped	6
3 Thank You For Your Interest	13
About the Author	14

Changing Views Dam



All illustrations by W. Hastings Hobbey

What Readers Are Saying

“While reading ‘Clearing Away the Crap in My Cap’ I could almost hear the missing links clink into place in my head. Mark S. Russo has created a whimsical and entertaining yet strikingly real read into our world behind the curtain. Thanks for the wake up call! This is highly recommended for kids and adults alike. I look forward to the next book in this hopefully continuing series of enchantment and reality.”

Mike Reardon - *Producer & Playwright, Write Paths Studio*

“Mr. Russo weaves an enchanting tale of the universal quest for deeper meaning, higher understanding and a better way of life. He has whimsically disguised many of the secrets to living on your own terms in peace and happiness. A masterful work and just plain fun to read.”

Stephen K. Hayes - *Founder, Blue Lotus Assembly*

“If you’re fed up with the way the world’s going, take this little journey - you’ll return with some answers.”

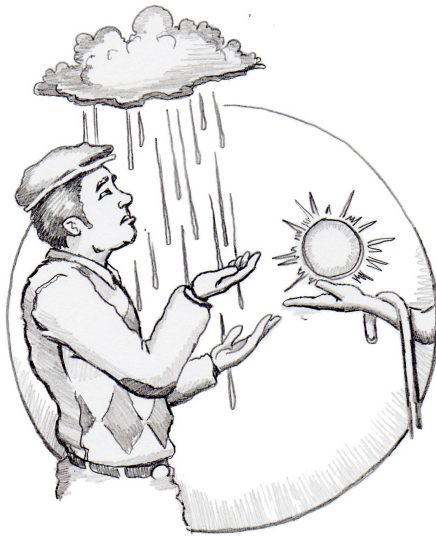
Scott Bragg - *President, Fired Up Entertainment*

“The most powerful persuasion? Persuasion you are not aware of... like reading ‘Clearing Away the Crap in My Cap’. You’re having too much fun and laughing too hard to notice the profound wisdom slipping in between your ears and lodging there. But when there is less crap in your life, when there is more power and joy... why then you’ll know you have been persuaded to a better way of living. Read on, relish the rhymes, and live better.”

Dr. Kirtland C. Peterson - *Clinical Psychologist*

Introduction

This is a book about asking some questions,
Changing your life, exploring suggestions.
All of us know there are things we can do
To make life feel more happy and a little less blue.
So if making your world a happier place
Is something you feel you might like to embrace,
Then taking the journey you will find in these pages,
Will be helpful and fun for those of all ages.
All you need bring is a sense for improvement,
A small bit of courage and desire for movement.
If there are things you believe need changing right now
Then follow these pages and you may find out how.

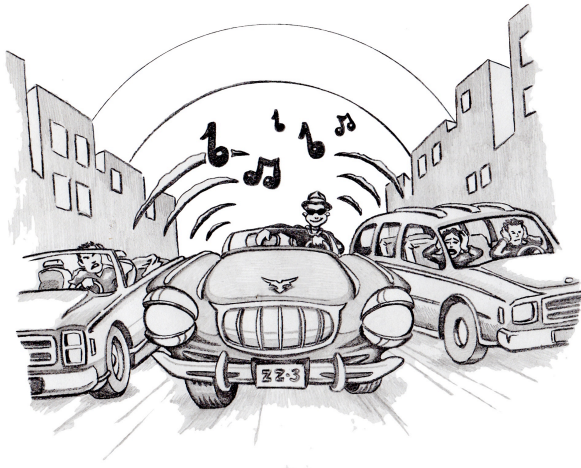


1 Beginning to Doubt That I'd Figured It Out

I have a story to tell you my friend.
Perhaps you will find yourself changed by the end.
My story is one that you just might enjoy,
then again you may find there are things which annoy.
It's about you and me and the things that we see.
Or the things that we don't and the things that we won't.
Sometimes it is happy, and sometimes it's sad.
It will make you giggle and it might make you mad.
It could make you think things you many not have thought,
you may even catch things you have not yet caught.
You may find that you're left in a pondering mood.
You might ponder things you used to exclude.
Then again you may snicker and screw up your face
proclaiming your judgment all over the place;
"It's garbage! It's rubbish! It's just so much scrap!
It's two scoops of B.S. It's a great load of crap!"
But whatever you think and however you feel
just enjoy the humor, 'cause none of it's real.
My tale is one of a very strange man.
I will try to retell it as well as I can.
He's a mystical, magical, wonderful sort,
full of wisdom and knowledge... and just a bit short.
Quite amazing he is in a strong quiet way,
he won't say a thing not important to say.
It's hard to explain someone such as he;
so complex... yet so simple... oh well, you will see.
Perhaps we should start by beginning with me.
My name is Alfred McEnny MacMan.

I am the most common MacMan in the land.
I have a fine dwelling a rich shade of blue,
quite large I would say, could be larger it's true,
but I'm working on that and a swimming pool too.
My car is a Super El Zoomzoom Mark III,
much too fast for the road and too fast for me.
It sparkles and glitters, quite something to see,
and wherever my car and I happen to be,
well, they 'ooh' and they 'aah,' and they all look at me.
It's quite common knowledge and everyone knows
any car is just fine as long as it goes.
But my neighbors have Zoomzooms, Mark I and Mark II,
it seemed the Mark III was the right thing to do;
and it can't hurt the image, it's shiny and new,
'cause if you're gonna make it you know that it's true
every MacMan's gotta do what a man's gotta do.
But that's not why I bought it, oh no, not at all,
to be so inclined would be rather small.
It's the seat that I sit in to drive, it's just right.
It places my head at the most comfortable height.
This is, of course, the main reason to own it.
It's the first thing I noticed the day I was shown it.
It's got an anytime, anywhere finding device
so I'll never be lost, and that's kind of nice.

The drink dispenser was part of the price,
it does hot, cold and tepid, it even makes ice.



And the Zoomzoom's got a boom boom music louder machine,
 you can hear it for miles, it's really keen.
 It rattles the windows and shakes all the doors.
 It vibrates other cars right through the floor.
 So none of the noise from outside interferes
 with the music that I myself want to hear.
 These things are important for someone like me
 to get from point "A" all the way to point "B."
 The driving I do is rather a lot,
 so you see in the end, like it or not,
 it's a practical thing this car that I've got.

I work for U Gotta Havit Express.
 We proudly produce products guaranteed to impress.
 We make all manner of things to delight,
 things that are useful like moondazzle lights...
 the latest in pushbutton sizzlebrain games...
 the best in foot fashions, why, we have *all* the names:
 Ferdinand Fastbuck, Dolores Bills, Tarsila Toomuch and Welthin-
 toomee Spills.
 We like making and selling and profits galore,

we love it when you shout for more, more, more, more!
We're here to help make your life less a bore
and you wonder sometimes as you stroll through the store,
'how did folks live without all of these things before?'



We've got people working all night and all day.
They fiddle and figure and puzzle away
to find what you will buy and how much you might pay.
We'll help you look cool and to learn what to say,
you'll have all the right gadgets, you'll look just the right way.
We work hard to help you keep boredom at bay.
God forbid you should find yourself unentertained
with your sense of enjoyment unpleasantly strained.

Your sense of fulfillment must be maintained.
Your right to have more must not be constrained.
These things are important, I'm sure you can see,

evolution and progress for you and for me.
It's a sacrifice all of this working, it's true,
but these things are all things that someone must do.

That's what they told me, that's what was said,
these are the things that were put in my head.
"Get with the program, get into the game.
Make more than the next guy, seek fortune and fame.
If you don't make it big you've got no one to blame."
You might have been given advice just like me.
You may have been told what to do, how to be.
Maybe you've thought that you think that you know
what must be accomplished and which way to go.
We've been taught to want all these things that we see,
we think wanting and having just might be the key.
So we work and we struggle, we make and we spend,
this they say is the way to win in the end.
It's all as it should be, just right... so I thought.

Then one day something changed in my mind and my eyes,
it all looked so different, like some grand disguise.
And all of the things that I'd paid for and bought,
all of the fights I was fighting and fought,
all of the seeking, the things that I sought,
all of the learning, the things I'd been taught,
none of it seemed any more as it ought.
He changed all of that this strange little man.
I will tell you what happened,
I will if I can.

2 The Shop Where I Stopped

I met him one day as I shopped for my wife.
That meeting caused me to rethink my life.
Quite a statement you say with a skeptical frown.
Yes it is, and I know it, it sounds rather trite.
Read on my dear friend
and maybe you may and maybe you might
hear what I heard, understand all the words,
change the way that you think and some things that you do,
and maybe some things will get better for you.
Maybe they will and maybe they won't
but you might as well try 'cause they won't if you don't.

His name is Ahminyu Ahmolwaze Thair
Aihwil Beyur Besfrenif
Yul Tritmee Wivkair
When he told me I said "Wow, now that's quite a name!"
"Yes it is," he replied, "and it's rather a shame,
you see most don't remember, they forget who I am.
So let's make it easy, you can just call me Sam."
His shop was the strangest most interesting place.
It had a warm feeling... a comfortable space.
There were things everywhere that I'd never seen.
It was light, it was bright, it was squeakily clean.
The whole place had a comfy, bright white sort of sheen.
"What manner of shop is this," I inquired.
"I wasn't sure what you sell as I traveled by,
but something about this place caught my eye.
I had to come in, I felt... well... inspired."
"Well, in you should come then, of course, do come in."
Then he trundled over with a wink and a grin.
"What is it you need, what do you require,

with what may I help you, what do you desire?"

"Now there is a question... what a question you ask,
to answer that question is no simple task.

It's my wife you see she has all kinds of stuff,
whatever it is she's got more than enough.

I would like to find something... some grand surprise.
A thing that will bring back the light to her eyes."

Sam thought for a moment while scratching his head.
He looked quite concerned and finally said,

"I think you and I should go for a walk,
and while we are walking perhaps we could talk."

My mouth just fell open in a dumb sort of way.

My mind went all blank, I wasn't sure what to say.

Then I snapped back awake with a stiff snippy snap
and I cried, "Hold on just a minute,

now look here my dear chap,

though I'm quite fond of walking

and I'm frequently talking,

just what's the idea, all this walking and talking?

Now don't get me wrong, it's not that I'm balking,

I just don't have the time for lollygag walking.

I've not got the leisure for 'waste my time talking!'

All this walking and walking and talking and talking,
just what do you mean,

what is it for, all this talking and walking?"

Then when I shut my mouth he just stood there gawking.



“Well,” said I, after moments went by,
“Come, come my good man what have you to say?
As I’ve stated quite clearly I’ve not got all day!”
His nose sort of wrinkled and his eyes kind of twinkled.
All at once he looked just a bit sad, mad and glad.
Then he took a deep breath and let out a sigh,
quickly he brushed a small tear from his eye.
He grabbed up his cane and he put on his hat.
He bent down and said something strange to his cat.
Moving quite nimbly he swept ‘cross the floor,
he bolted the lock and flipped the sign on the door.
Now the inside said “OPEN,” so the outside said “CLOSED,”
blinking blankly I huffed, “Out for a walk I suppose.”
“Oh absolutely, yes indeedy my friend,
and we’ll hope that we’re not too late in the end.
We’ll do what we can, our very best,

I believe you are way overdue for this quest.
Watching you speak and hearing your plight,
it's a frightening thing, you're a quite scary sight!
We must do what we can you and I, just for you.
We must do our best to give you a clue,
or you'll wake up one day and your life will be through.
Your time will have passed and you'll look back on you,
you'll say what was all of that, all those things that I knew,
and where'd the time go, oh my, how it flew...
and who was it all for, all of that, tell me...WHO?!

And if you're not careful you'll end up so blue,
it could all turn out so unhappy for you.
It's painfully clear... there is much work to do."

With that he did some funny thing with his hands
while muttering words I could not understand.
Touching his cane to the top of his hat
he pointed and smiled and winked at his cat.
The room sort of glimmered
and everything shimmered,
"Take heart, find your courage, be brave!," Sam had cried.
"One must become strong to travel inside!"
'Inside what?... inside where?...' I thought in my head.
I was seriously thinking, 'It is time that I fled!'
He took two steps forward, he went straight for the door.
My heart started pounding, sweat poured from my pores.
Before I could stop him, before I could say
"Hey! Don't be bothered! Wait up! It's O.K.!
I'll just do my shopping on some other day."
He said with an eerily grinulous grin
"Right here...this is where our quest must begin.
Welcome my friend, let us now go *within*."



As he said this he threw his arms open wide
like a wizard attempting to turn back the tide.
I closed my eyes tight and listened with fear,
too scared to look and not sure what I'd hear.
Then things settled down from what I could tell,
and I heard the faint ding of a crystal clear bell.
It seemed, somehow, that all was still well.
Nothing had broken, not one thing fell.
I opened my eyes and the shimmering stopped.
My knees were still shaking and my jaw sort of dropped.
Still, the sign from inside said 'OPEN,' it's true,
but with trembling knees and sweaty palms too,
right then it's the last thing I wanted to do.
To walk through that door and to see what was there,
I just couldn't do it, I just didn't dare.
With his hand on the handle he unlocked the lock.
I braced myself for a staggering shock.

With a sense of great purpose he opened that door,
hands over eyes I stared at the floor.
Not really sure I could handle much more,
I ventured a glance...

I couldn't believe it...
I looked up and swore,
"Holy Cow!,... this is crazy, you're a nutter for sure,
I've had all of this that I can endure!"
As I looked out the door what did I see?
Everything was still there, just as it should be.
All the sidewalks were busy with folks just like me,
going places to go, seeing people to see.
The cars were all zooming making zoom-zooming sounds,
coffee shops selling coffee and grinding up grounds.
The petrol dispensers were all pumping gas,
people pushing and honking and trying to pass.
The smoke stacks were smoking,
the joke makers joking,
teachers were teaching and preachers were preaching.
The weather was good, it was sunnily sunny,
all was in place as the world made and moved money.
To my great relief nothing seemed to have changed,
all in all everything seemed to me quite the same.
Relieved but annoyed I looked at this Sam,
I said very evenly, cold as a clam,
"Just what kind of fool do you think that I am?"
His face did not change as he tilted his head.
His eyes glanced about as he simply said,
"Look again my dear friend, but look closely this time.
Look past the glitter, the glow and the shine.
Look past the tatters, the dirt and the grime.
Look very closely, what do you see?
None of this is the way that it seems to be."
It was then that I saw my friend Eddie McFee.

I waved at him and he waved at me.
As he drove he smiled his every day smile
and joked about traveling many a mile.
Very wealthy is Ed, quite the businessman he,
the senior partner he is of McFee and McFee.
Worked so hard all his life and he's doing it still,
he throws wonderful parties, (I can't imagine the bills!).
I've always thought Ed the happiest guy,
the world is his oyster, the moon, stars and sky.
He has all the things anyone could desire,
but just now, somehow, he looked scared...
very sad... very tired.
Perhaps it was something I saw in his eyes,
a thing he'd worked very hard to disguise.
But now...
Some how...
I cannot explain...
I could see past the show, right through to the pain.

Ed was a frightened most unhappy man,
I am sure that I saw it, but I don't understand.
He seemed lost,
he seemed lonely,
he seemed not so proud.
"How can this be?" I was thinking out loud.
"He's got boats...
he's got planes...
and a beautiful wife...
how could this man not be thrilled with his life?
Why, Ed's got it made, what is this all about,
I really don't get it...
I can't figure it out."

"Come along," said Sam, "there is much more to see."
I was shocked and still thinking about poor Ed McFee.

3 Thank You For Your Interest

We hope you've enjoyed this sample of Mark S. Russo's *Clearing Away the Crap in my Cap: Lessons in Life Mastery*. Continue your journey with Alfred McEnny MacMan in the full edition of the book as you learn ways to increase your peace of mind, gain focus, and learn to see the world differently.

Full Table of Contents

1. Beginning to Doubt That I'd Figured It Out
2. The Shop Where I Stopped
3. Confronting Illusions and Mounting Confusions
4. All the Cells on the Loose and Increasing Abuse
5. About Good Opinions Set Forth by the Minions
6. Choosing to Choose, So You Don't Choose to Lose
7. Of Cheaters and Lairs and Not So High Flyers
8. Taking and Giving and in the Flow Living
9. Understanding the Need... But Now... How to Proceed

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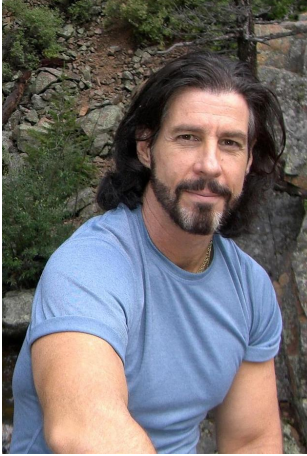
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About the Author



Mark S. Russo's lifelong quest for a fuller understanding of the human condition has led him to explorations of philosophies both eastern and western. As a management consultant and leadership development specialist for Fortune 500 companies Mr. Russo immersed himself in the vagaries of the modern business world. The state of the current human experience compelled him to write "Clearing Away the Crap in My Cap" as a way to

laugh at ourselves while we consider the serious implications of the underlying issues.

In the world of martial arts he is known as Master Mark Sentoshi Russo. Senior student of world renowned Grandmaster Stephen K. Hayes, Master Russo holds the highest rank in the world in his chosen art. He has studied martial arts from the age of eight, has earned black belts in six different disciplines, has appeared in several films, is a member of the Screen Actors Guild, as well as the Warrior Knights of the Blade. He owns a thriving school which is recognized as one of the top fifty in his industry nationally.

Mark S. Russo earned a Masters Degree in Business Administration and a Bachelors Degree in Marketing and Advertising and is currently pursuing a PhD in transpersonal psychology. He lives in Florida with his wife and two cats, near to his two step-daughters and grandson.