

A black silhouette of a person with arms raised, standing against a vibrant orange sunset background. The sun is positioned behind the person's head, creating a bright circular glow. The sky is filled with warm, orange and yellow hues, with some darker clouds at the bottom.

# *Emotional Breakthroughs*

Eric Pabst

# Dedication

Dedicated to my truly wonderful wife,

*Syra May Mangus Pabst*

who is currently fighting cancer

while also making my life  
a heaven on earth.

# Acknowledgments

I owe so much to my wife Syra, for her incredible support throughout this whole process, and for teaching and exemplifying many of the principles I share in this book.

I thank my mom, Valerie Buckman, for cheering me on in my journey.

I thank my friend Theo Gilardo for egging me on to write this book.

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# Draft Status

This book is NOT done. Much of the content is in place. However, some sections are still empty and a large portion of it is from transcriptions of my various workshops. Those sections need to be rewritten.

Some areas that definitely need work:

- Chapters 7, 10, 16, 22, 27, 28, & Bonus 3 are still worded as workshops.
- Chapters 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 26, 27, 33, & Bonus 1 are significantly lacking in content.

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# Preface

I have had quite the transformation. For over a decade, I found myself stressed, sacrificing sleep, making mistakes, forgetting things, and haunted by the fear of rejection and failure. I was burnt out, terrified of falling short, pushing myself harder with each passing day, and barely having a moment for myself. Despite the relentless effort, I still felt like I wasn't measuring up. I yearned for more hours in the day.

Sleep deprivation was my constant companion, surviving on about 5 hours most nights, just to get everything done. Carpooling or public transportation became my safety nets, even if it meant snoozing on the train. Sometimes I would miss my stop, exacerbating my stress and fear. A tiny nap, even for five minutes, was a luxury, and there were moments I'd doze off while standing up.

Lists, goals, and time management attempts failed, leaving me feeling inadequate and yearning for a better way. I tried to juggle everything, and get the most important things done, but often failed to even finish those. Willpower became my futile ally. "Just try harder!" I'd tell myself, but it only led to more failures. Any goals I set just ended up being more things that I failed at.

I had some idea of how I should be behaving in my relationships, but no matter how hard I tried to be that way, I couldn't. My relationships suffered; I could see that I was disconnected, yearning for love and empathy but feeling broken inside. I wanted to be more loving, kind and empathetic but my heart seemed shattered. Life felt like a constant battle, and I didn't feel good enough.

When things frustrated me, sometimes I couldn't detect love in my heart even though I knew it was in there somewhere. I puzzled over my behavior, trying to understand why I was so damaged. Living in fear became my norm, carrying a weight that never lifted. Alone time felt disorienting. I was unfamiliar with the luxury of asking myself what I truly wanted. I would obsess over how others saw me. I didn't want to be seen as weak. People-pleasing and hiding problems became a mask, fueling insecurities and sabotaging genuine connections with those I was trying to protect.

Unbeknownst to me, anxiety had become my relentless companion. Its presence made it difficult to concentrate, rendering me forgetful, even neglecting to release my kids from time-out on numerous occasions when they were little. I navigated through life feeling uneasy, as if standing on shaky ground, lacking a sense of solidity.

My insecurities were self-sabotaging. I was building up resentment and frustrations that were destroying my genuine desires and my relationships with others.

I treated my family members poorly at times, even though I didn't want to. When one of my children wanted to play, too often I turned them down so that I could escape into one of my coping mechanisms. When I was a young parent, I would sometimes get judgmental and act like a dictator to try to fix my children's behavior. I'd make threats, dish out punishments, yell at them, explain what they were doing wrong, and emphasize how bad they were being. There were also many beautiful times, but my relationships with my children were often strained. One of my kids told me that they were learning from me how NOT to be. That hit me like a ton of bricks. My goal since my youth had been "to be a great father"

and this put right in my face the thought that I was anything but that. I felt myself shrink inside and disconnect even more.

A profound sense of brokenness and inadequacy consumed me. I longed for acceptance, even in my broken state, but the struggle to even accept myself was a battle I couldn't seem to win.

There had to be a better way. In 2017, a family member gifted tickets to a weekend marriage conference, complete with promising tools to enrich my relationship. It piqued my interest, and I went to two other conferences on different topics. This opened my eyes to some possibilities and gave me some hope. Inspired, I delved into life coaching, utilizing the newfound tools.

Later that year, a neighbor introduced me to the transformative technique of Inquiry by Byron Katie (which I now call the Trigger Buster). I attended her gatherings multiple times and witnessed some miraculous transformations in people. I experienced them myself multiple times. Applying the technique to myself, I discovered a profound sense of satisfaction and liberation.

Clarity dawned as I saw situations and people with newfound precision. A serene peace enveloped me, and difficulties held less sway over my well-being. Confidence surged within, fostering a sense of freedom and empowerment that transformed my outlook on life.

Yet, my journey with Inquiry presented challenges. Despite experiencing more peace, I struggled with empathy and felt disconnected.

Regrettably, my interest in others' stories waned, perceiving them as unnecessary drama with potential harm.

Lacking sensitivity, I suggested Inquiry, dismissing those uninterested and pressuring loved ones and friends. This misguided approach led to burned bridges and a realization that compassion, not coercion, was the key to helping others. It wasn't until later that I realized I needed to do Inquiry on expecting others to do Inquiry!

Another challenge emerged as my hopes and desires diminished. I was happy that my expectations were lowering, but I didn't want to stop caring about things. I yearned for passion, motivation, and deep gratitude, fearing a life on autopilot.

Furthermore, without as many hopes and desires, praying seemed less meaningful. The dwindling significance of prayer troubled me, as my connection with God remained a vital aspect of my life.

Navigating these challenges, I realized that I was mostly living my life out of fear. After doing Inquiry more than 30 times, I discovered additional tools and revitalized my perspective. Now, armed with a holistic approach, I've found a balance between inner peace, meaningful connections, and a vibrant, purposeful life.

On April 16, 2019, a significant milestone marked the end of my daily struggle with fear. No longer burning the candle at both ends, I embraced rest and connected with my desires, embarking on a journey to redefine my approach to life.

This transformative shift caught my family off guard; they were uncertain about what to expect from this new version of me, even though I was more emotionally available to help with their needs. Surprisingly, I was more energetic, less triggered,

and notably happier. However, stepping into this uncharted territory left me without a guiding framework, resulting in moments of uncertainty and rookie mistakes. I had much healing to do and, regrettably, some bridges were unintentionally burned along the way.

My transformation did not come in time to save my marriage and I ended up separated. I made a resolute commitment to self-improvement, plunging into a period of intense introspection and personal development. This phase was undeniably painful and challenging, marked by profound moments of recognition, grieving, and addressing deep-seated fears and insecurities. Navigating through frustrations and unhealthy expectations, I also took on the formidable task of mending relationships, learning the intricate art of reconciliation. With God's help, I developed additional tools that brought clarity, direction, balance, and joy into my life. For 17 months, I worked my tail off. I dedicated myself to this transformative journey, diligently tracking lessons learned, refining my approach through trial and error, and integrating newfound wisdom into my life coaching endeavors... It was quite the journey. It was uncomfortable and hard, but it was amazing. I let go of needing easy and comfortable, and embraced a whole new level of peace, safety, joy, fulfillment, and connection.

For 15 of those months, I had woken up with anxiety. I'd work through it each morning until I could feel a peace come over me, and feel a foundation under my feet. It was messy and unpredictable, but it worked. I learned that for all those previous years, I had been putting my effort in the wrong place. I underwent a radical shift in approaching stress, fears, frustrations, strained relationships, and other challenges.

Armed with powerful tools, I expanded my capacity and identified the triggers of my stress.

Uncovering what I believe to be the root cause of almost all relationship issues — self-blinding judgment (i.e. judgmental thinking) — I developed strategies to address it effectively. This pivotal realization marked a turning point, eliminating a significant hurdle in my personal growth.

Embracing a new perspective, I learned to authentically connect with my desires, cultivating a life driven by passion and hope rather than expectations and fear. The discomfort and difficulty of this journey were surpassed by the amazing transformation that unfolded, ushering in a newfound beauty in my life.

By the time I was officially single again, I found myself in a remarkably positive emotional state, ready to embrace the prospect of a new relationship. The positive changes in my life were palpable, leading to improved relationships with all my children and a profound personal shift. Today, my life is nothing short of wonderful—marked by high productivity, minimal stress, and a sustained sense of well-being. Gone are the days of burnout and overcommitment. I now enjoy the luxury of ample sleep, enhanced energy levels, and clear thinking. The fears of failure and rejection no longer haunt me, replaced by an abundance of joy. I've learned to embrace sadness, savoring its depth. I love how I show up as a parent. I am present, loving, and empathetic without fully taking on others' burdens. Instead, I allow them their line-upon-line journeys.

With a clear vision of the qualities I sought in a companion, I embarked on the journey of dating. Surpassing my imagination, I found someone who, like me, had invested in

personal growth and achieved a high level of emotional intelligence. Our connection is not only incredible but harmonious in the realms of emotion, intellect, spirituality, and physicality. We have forged a relationship where obstacles are swiftly overcome, and our intentional commitment to staying on our "honeymoon" has created a solid yet blissful state we call "Fog 9", which is like "Cloud 9", but beautifully grounded. Because of how we approach life and each other, our relationship is one that I anticipate will stand the test of time and eternity. Our fairy-tale wedding and honeymoon were just the beginning of a truly fabulous chapter in our lives.

# Chapter 1. Introduction

## Why I am writing this book

Everywhere I look, I see suffering. Individuals are lonely, even when surrounded by people. They hurt others, and even hurt themselves. There is misery, contention, and so much pain. It makes my heart ache.

I care. I might not know you personally, but I really care about you. I care about the pain you're going through. Life can be extremely hard. Stress comes in all shapes and sizes. It is draining. It affects every area of our lives.

I'm an experienced life coach and I have tools that really work. My earnest desire is to offer assistance to you, yes, specifically to you, and to anyone receptive to the guidance I provide. I aspire to contribute to positive change on a global scale. In fact, I wholeheartedly grant you permission to not only utilize these tools for yourself but also to share them with whomever you choose—be it your children, friends, or anyone within your network. My sole intention is to disseminate these invaluable tools widely. By doing so, I aim to foster a world characterized by reduced suffering and stress, driven by the genuine belief that positive transformation can lead to a better, more harmonious existence for all.

The pervasive issue of stress affects us on various levels, leading to burnout, misery, sleep deprivation, and a decline in overall well-being. Its detrimental impact extends to health, energy levels, peace of mind, relationships, joy, and fulfillment. Fear of failure, rejection, and a sense of helplessness keep us awake at night, while internal struggles often contradict our external image of success and capability.

The desire for acceptance, freedom, and meaningful connections is prevalent, yet the path to achieving these aspirations remains elusive for many.

Witnessing widespread suffering deeply moves me. I encounter individuals overwhelmed, burnt out, feeling lost, and unable to be authentic due to fear of rejection or failure. The prevailing sense of loneliness, even in the midst of others, tugs at my heartstrings. Amid this suffering, I offer my own transformative journey as a testament to the possibility of finding peace, fulfillment, and genuine connections.

My personal evolution has granted me unparalleled peace of mind, freedom from fears, and the ability to connect with others without thoughts of inadequacy or rejection. I am driven by the desire to extend these positive changes to every individual on our planet. However, my journey was marked by a scarcity of resources that reliably provide the practical steps toward healthy living. While many delineated healthy ideals, few provided actionable tools. Frustration with this gap led me to specialize in creating and discovering effective tools, initially born out of desperation and now fueled by passion.

### **What should you expect in this book?**

The tools presented in this book diverge from conventional self-help advice such as "think positively" or adhering to a rigid daily routine. Unlike methods involving repetitive affirmations that the mind may struggle to absorb, these tools stand independent of the need for constant daily commitment. They don't necessitate external assistance, although support from others can be beneficial. It's important to note that if you already have practices like meditation, deep breathing, goal-setting, therapy, or other coping mechanisms

that work for you, you're encouraged to continue with them. The tools in this book are designed to complement existing practices and can be applied with or without them.

This book is not a promotional platform for another agenda; there are no hidden endorsements or undisclosed motives. The content is transparent, and nothing is being withheld. The sole objective is to contribute to positive change on a global scale. Readers are not only free but encouraged to utilize and share these tools without any restrictions.

Consider this book an invitation to embark on an incredible journey. Together, let's delve into some of the most fundamental challenges we all face and explore powerful yet straightforward techniques to conquer them one by one. Welcome to a transformative experience that holds the potential to reshape not only your individual journey but also contribute to the broader aspiration of changing the world for the better.

For your convenience, all of the diagrams throughout this book are also in the bonus section in the back of the book, as large as can fit on the page.

## **Who is this book for?**

If you find yourself caught in the web of stress, wrestling with anxiety, confronting fears, or navigating the tumultuous waters of overwhelming emotions like disappointment, frustration, or anger, and if you harbor the earnest desire to elevate your life experience, then this book has been crafted with you in mind. Brace yourself for a journey that goes beyond the ordinary, expanding the boundaries of your mind and introducing novel perspectives that you've yet to encounter. It's

not about delving into convoluted theories; instead, it offers a refreshingly actionable and practical approach that promises a deeper understanding of the intricacies at play.

This isn't your run-of-the-mill self-help manual; it's a guide designed to transform your perspective on life. If your current state of being leaves you content and there's no itch to improve, then perhaps this book isn't the right fit for you.

In these pages, I extend a helping hand to those grappling with stress or dissatisfaction, offering a roadmap to attain peace, joy, fulfillment, emotional safety, and genuine connection. Here, criticism and shame take a backseat as we traverse the path to a more enriching and fulfilling existence. Get ready to embark on a journey that promises not just change but a profound shift in the way you experience and engage with life.

I am deeply passionate about providing individuals with uncomplicated yet potent tools that wield the power to profoundly alter how one navigates and addresses stress. At the core of these tools are impactful questions designed to resonate with both the conscious and subconscious mind, strategically eliminating stress triggers and propelling individuals towards a heightened emotional state. These tools serve as catalysts for transformative change, offering insights that dismantle barriers of fears, frustrations, insecurities, and shame—barriers that permeate every facet of our lives.

The aim is to empower individuals not merely to manage stress but to conquer it, leading them to a realm of peace of mind, absolute emotional safety, fulfillment, joy, genuine connection, and elevated influence. These principles are crafted to be universally applicable, transcending religious

affiliations and belief systems. Whether you identify as an atheist, follow a strong religious path, or find yourself anywhere in between, these tools are inclusive and not tethered to any particular set of beliefs.

For transparency, I must share that I personally identify as a Christian, specifically a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. While some of the personal stories I share may allude to my beliefs, they are presented solely in the context of my individual experiences at those specific times. I recognize and fully honor that each person is on their own unique journey, and I extend the utmost respect to the diverse paths we all traverse.

### **Why should you listen to me?**

While I may not boast formal credentials like a therapist or psychologist, and I won't overwhelm you with an array of official qualifications or exhaustive scientific studies, what I bring to the table is authentic and grounded in practical experience—I am a self-made life coach. Since 2017, I've had the privilege of coaching over 150 individuals, garnering excellent reviews and witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of the principles shared in this book.

What I present here isn't theoretical; it's a testament to the proven success I've personally experienced and observed in the lives of those I've had the honor to assist. I am confident that what I share will resonate with you, enlightening your understanding and, most importantly, prove effective in your own journey. I know it works because, since implementing these principles, I haven't experienced burnout since April 16, 2019.

These tools have not only enhanced my personal life, but have also fostered an incredible marriage with my wife Syra, characterized by deep connection and an absence of barriers. I've witnessed the effectiveness of these principles with individuals across various age groups—children, teens, young adults, middle-aged, and those advanced in years. The impact is tangible, and I don't find myself perpetually stressed about anything.

I take pride in the fact that I've developed nearly all of these tools and continue to refine and expand my repertoire. What sets these tools apart is their immediate applicability; they make a difference even in the very first coaching session. Importantly, they aren't designed to create dependence on me; instead, they empower individuals to use and share these tools independently. This journey is my passion, and while I derive immense joy from it, the reality of financial needs and aspirations keeps it grounded in the practicalities of life.

## Testimonials

**"Eric is a great Life Coach! He is a very caring and invested coach. He has helped me far more than any therapist. His ability to help me work through my issues and internalize a new healthier perspective has freed me from so much suffering I really can't express enough gratitude. I would recommend it to anyone that is struggling with feelings of disappointment, sorrow or anger. His system of doing The Work of analyzing your thoughts and understanding your feeling about those emotions and changing the framing has allowed me to get to and address deeper and deeper issues. It is almost**

**miraculous. You really have to try it to believe it. So try it." - Olin A.**

"Eric is a compassionate life coach. He listens and leads with knowledge. Eric has developed tools to help you through crises, career changes, and family growth. **I am using suggestions he gave me a year ago to make everyday life better.** I would totally recommend Eric as a life coach who will improve your future." - Sheila A.

"Eric is an excellent life coach! Since I began, **I've found greater peace in my life. I have stopped my negative self-talk because my false beliefs have changed so my brain doesn't even think those judging thoughts about myself anymore!** I'm also less judgmental of others. I've learned new ways to **connect with those around me and became a better listener.** I'm able to recognize and celebrate the many deep connections I have with my spouse and others. **I'm finding greater joy as I'm able to live from my desires.** Eric has a great flowchart about that. I tested it with something I normally dread, going to the dentist. I was able to change my desire and was so grateful and happy to go to the dentist! That was very life changing and it works with anything we can create the desire to do! **I am becoming more in tune with myself so I can choose what I desire to do and the perfect time to do it.** This also makes it much easier to choose to do what God desires for my life, which is my desire! **I've**

**also been able to eliminate some fears I have had and feel greater safety in Christ. Eric shares excellent tools that you can use on your own immediately when challenges arise.** He also creates a document during each session that is very helpful to review! I highly recommend Eric as a life coach!" - Debra F.

"My experience with Eric was **transformational!** I am a seeker of truth. **The skills and tools Eric uses to create personal discovery** and to be able, like the prodigal son, to come to oneself, **are very powerful!** It literally created new pathways in my brain which is life changing! The truth does set you free! If moving forward, being responsible for your own thoughts, feelings and actions are your desire, this man is a messenger sent from God! Thank you Eric for guiding me back home to my true self and facilitating me as I desire to make peace with myself and others. I love the way you coach me!" - Pam B.

"He is the best literally!!! So eye opening! I can't wait to work with him more. He is such a intellectually inclined person & overall just astounding with his work & everything is so relatable with life! Super genuine! Wouldn't want anyone else to work with! I am so thankful that he is doing this work to help others! Only enjoy to inspire other in their true potential & passion in this life. **I will be forever greatful for the impact he put on me with just a beginning session & many**

more to come! Everything will be okay if you let it. Eric has been in my life a long time & every time I see him I just admire how he is always learning & helping others learn along the way! Truly I am blessed to have been apart of his life. Thank you for your willingness to help others! ❤️" -Emily W.

"For the past 30 years I have been a student of many experts and mentors in the field of self development. They all offered a plethora of useful information that has really enchanted my life, but Eric's "TOOLS" are by far the most helpful method I have ever found that has REALLY TAUGHT ME HOW to explore my own negative, self limiting thoughts." - Joyce M.

### My Invitation to You

I extend a sincere invitation to you: don't merely take my word for it or rely on the testimonials of my clients. Dive in and try these tools for yourself. Witness the transformative power they hold and observe what they can do for you. Embrace the process, trust it, but also resist the urge to rush through it.

If you encounter challenges or find something isn't working immediately, allow yourself the space to sit with it for at least 5 to 10 minutes, particularly with the more reflective questions. The process unfolds at its own pace, and giving it time can often unveil deeper insights.

As you navigate this journey, keep in mind that these tools are versatile and adaptable. Once they start working for you in one situation or problem, continue to apply them. Challenge yourself by exploring their efficacy in new situations or with different issues. I've personally been surprised by how consistently effective they are across diverse circumstances.

Feel free to integrate these tools into your life whenever you encounter stress or negative emotions. Let them become your go-to companions in navigating life's challenges. The real magic happens when you embrace the process, trust its unfolding, and make these tools a natural part of your approach to stress and emotional well-being.

# Part 1: Core Principles and Tools