

PART ONE
The Essential Foundations

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Misunderstanding: The Hidden Trap

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*“None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who
falsely believe they are free.”*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe,
Poet, playwright, novelist and philosopher

**“An addict is someone who’s trying to use a visible solu-
tion to solve an invisible problem...”**

I started drinking when I was 12 years old and didn’t stop for good until I was 30. On the journey of recovery, my life improved in ways that I didn’t even imagine were possible. But, in the process, I discovered an even deeper addiction at the very heart of modern culture. This addiction is so subtle, it’s almost *invisible*; a life-eroding trap that has hooked countless millions of people...

THE LITTLE BOOK OF CLARITY

The hidden hamster wheel

The hidden hamster wheel is one of the most common barriers to clarity. It's based in a misunderstanding that's taken to be "obviously true" by most people. It's so subtle and pervasive that it shows up in everything from children's books to leadership programmes; from movies to marketing campaigns.

The Power of Misunderstanding

In the 1800s, it was widely accepted that illnesses such as cholera and the plague were caused by "bad air" (also known as atmospheres or miasmas). At the time, huge numbers of people were moving to Soho in London, with an associated increase in sewage. The council of the day decided to dump the excess waste into the river Thames, unknowingly contaminating the water supply, and causing a cholera outbreak that claimed the lives of 618 Soho residents in just a few weeks.

The miasma theory was a misunderstanding that was seen as fact. As a result, the decision to pump sewage into the water supply was taken from *within* that misunderstanding. While you and I know it's crazy to let human waste anywhere near your drinking water, that's because we have a better understanding of how the world works.

Misunderstanding can lead to needless misery, suffering and even death. But as soon as people get a clearer understanding of the nature of reality *as it already is*, there can be a massive and widespread improvement in quality of life.

The life-damaging misunderstanding that I call the hidden hamster wheel is the mistaken belief that our "core states" such

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as security, confidence, peace, love, happiness and success can be provided or threatened by our circumstances; by something “visible”.

We have this belief because we’ve been conditioned to believe that there’s somewhere to get to, and that “there” is better than “here”. And “there” comes in a variety of tantalizing flavours that look something like this:

I’ll be [*happy/secure/fulfilled/peaceful/better/successful/ok*] when I...

- Find the right work/hobby/partner/community – the “there” of *doing and relationships*.
- Get the money/write the book/start the business/lose the weight – the “there” of *accomplishment*.
- Change my thinking/my limiting beliefs/do my affirmations – the “there” of *mindset*.
- Meditate properly/find the right practice/get enlightened – the “there” of *spirituality*.

The “*I’ll be happy when...*” trap is an example most people can identify with. The core states and circumstances vary, but the basic structure of the superstition is the same:

I’ll be [*core state*] when I have [*circumstance*]

It’s based on an even simpler structure:

[*circumstance*] causes [*core state*]

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The idea that our core states are, at least to some degree, the result of our circumstances seems so “obvious” to people that calling it into question can seem ridiculous at first.

Reality Check

I know what you may be thinking... “Are you really trying to tell me that my work doesn’t actually stress me out? That my security doesn’t come from money? That I don’t feel love because of my partner? That I don’t like going on holiday?”

Yes and no.

Your examples of your experience are real for you. I’m sure you can identify numerous circumstances where you experience certain feelings. I’m not saying you don’t enjoy the things you enjoy, or that you shouldn’t want the things that you want. What I’m saying is that the feelings aren’t the result of the circumstances – they’re coming from somewhere else entirely. And, as you start to understand where they’re coming from, and how the system works, some wonderful things can start to happen.

But I’m getting ahead of myself.

These days, I experience more clarity than I ever thought possible, but I didn’t get here in the way you might expect.

In brief: I grew up in an alcoholic household and started drinking heavily when I was 12 years old. By age 19, I was a scholarship engineering student and a full-blown alcoholic. The alcohol was

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like rocket fuel for my life – I got jobs, was promoted rapidly, and started experiencing many of the trappings of success – expense accounts, foreign travel, luxurious surroundings – but on the inside, I was slowly falling apart.

At the age of 30 I got married. A month later, her bags were packed; so I decided to stop drinking in order to save my relationship.

Oh yeah – I missed one. I’ll be happy when I get a cigarette/a drink/a line of coke – the “there” of *addiction*.

That was in 1996, and I haven’t had a drink since. Today I live a fulfilling life that’s beyond anything I dreamed was possible for me, but how I got here is a story of struggle, frustration and heartbreak (much of which I could have avoided if I’d known what you’re going to be discovering in this book).

Just to give you an idea, in the time period from 1996 to 2008...

I managed several multi-million pound projects, and struggled with a combination of fear of failure and fear of success. I got married, had two daughters and got divorced. I quit my job and built a successful training company. I got caught in an endless cycle of gaining weight and losing weight, spent countless hours talking to a Freudian psychoanalyst and participated in various addiction recovery programmes. I had numerous false horizons, thinking I’d finally “got it”, only to find myself feeling like I was back where I started. By the end of 2008, I was unhappy, stressed-out and at the end of my tether. I was on the verge of giving up.

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Then I was introduced to the understanding you're going to be discovering in this book. As I write, it's six years on, and they've been the best years of my life. I'm experiencing a sense of clarity, peace, security and aliveness unlike anything I've had before. And as my level of understanding has continued to increase, my relationships, results and external circumstances have been improving too.

The good news is that it can be replicated. My clients are getting similar results, including:

- less stress, more clarity and peace of mind resulting in better health, with more vibrancy and aliveness;
- fears, anxieties and limitations falling away with solutions to problems emerging more easily;
- better working relationships, and more harmony in their personal lives;
- getting more done and having more free time, with better business results, and better performance where it counts.



CLARITY equals Capacity minus Contamination

It's working for them, so it can work for you; because seeing through a misunderstanding can give you an "out of proportion" increase in the results you get. So how do you escape from this addictive, life-damaging trap? How do you start seeing through

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the misunderstanding, and begin to experience an enormous increase in clarity and quality of life?

***keep exploring ❖ connect with others
share your discoveries ❖ deepen your understanding***

Thought experiment: We all fall into the “I’ll be happy when...” trap from time to time. As you reflect on your life so far, what are some of the ways you’re starting to realize you’ve been accidentally hoodwinked by this illusion until now?

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