Chapter 1
From Zero to Hero

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Modest Origins

The sun is starting to set as I pen down this paragraph. I'm currently on the tropical isle of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean—a landmass roughly half the size of Rhode Island. It is winter at the moment, but that doesn't mean much here as the average yearly temperatures hover around 26°C (76°F). I'm sitting on the beach, in a quiet spot, and beneath me, the sand is a radiant gold, plush yet with a tactile crunch. The water before me is tantalizingly warm, clear, and painted in multiple hues of turquoise. I am currently experiencing what can only be described as a spiritual experience. I feel blessed to be here; I am connected to my breath, I am mindful of every moment, and as I contemplate my life, an immense feeling of gratitude overtakes my being.

Trading has allowed me to experience a level of freedom in life that most people can only dream of. But things weren't always like this; I struggled a lot before I became a consistent trader. In my early days, I grappled with many setbacks and hurdles that almost broke my spirit. Those daunting periods, filled with uncertainty, self-doubt, and tears, continue to resonate deeply with me, but as

I reflect on my journey, I've come to a profound realization. These seemingly insurmountable challenges, though harsh, served a grander purpose. In hindsight, they were not just obstacles; they were opportunities that shed light on my weaknesses, compelling me to change, grow, and prove to myself what I'm made of.

"Pain is the best teacher." I love this old saying, not because it is simply true but because it encapsulates the idea that we often find the impetus to change and adapt in our moments of deepest discomfort and distress. From my stance, I feel profoundly grateful for the pain that helped shape the trader I am today and the person I've become; it's something I wouldn't exchange for the world. Every moment paves the way for personal growth, and I'm continually learning to value life's teachings. For instance, right now as I'm writing this, in an almost comical twist, a random dog is relieving itself about a meter away from where I'm seated, and the stench is overpowering! Even in moments like this, there are lessons to be learned.

But let's go back a bit to the beginning of my journey toward trading composure. We all come to trading with our own story. My journey started in 1997; I was 17 years old, and the dot-com bubble was beginning to inflate. Everywhere I turned, it seemed like the world was buzzing about stocks, technology, and this new thing called the Internet. I grew up in the suburbs of Paris, France, and life there wasn't exactly a piece of cake. Picture this: a cramped apartment, four siblings, and an overwhelmed single mother struggling to keep the family afloat on welfare. That was my world. My mother also struggled with a mental health condition that wasn't formally diagnosed back then, leaving her without the necessary support to manage it effectively. Hence, her psychotic phases made life incredibly hard for my siblings and me, as we were often on the receiving end of it. The constant uncertainty and confusion, the emotional rollercoaster, the recurring conflicts and tensions—those were an almost everyday reality for us. Hence, growing up, we weren't the most well-adjusted human beings. For instance, I developed a stutter and a learning difficulty, to say nothing of limiting beliefs, and those became the chains anchoring my potential in life.

As a teenager, I withdrew more and more into myself. At school, the library became my refuge, shielding me from the relentless noise, bullying, and typical chaos of high school recess. But secluding myself from the world wasn't all that negative; in fact, it exposed me to the world of books. I was never a big reader to begin with. Instead, I had a habit of browsing, occasionally pausing to read a few passages without truly immersing myself in an entire book. This method of skimming, though unconventional, led me to stumble upon gems of wisdom, diverse perspectives, and intriguing narratives.

One day, a particular title caught my eye. It wasn't only the title that drew me in but also the book's condition. Worn and barely holding together, it seemed like the kind of book that had been donated to the school, as was often the case. The book was *How I Made $2 Million in the Stock Market* by Nicolas Darvas. As I began delving into its content, I found myself irresistibly pulled into Darvas's world. His narrative was a captivating blend of personal experiences, calculated risks, and a relentless pursuit of success amidst the ever-volatile stock market landscape. The book became the first one I ever immersed myself in from start to finish. Day by day, I would devour its pages, sometimes at the library, sometimes at home in the sanctuary of my room; it became my bible and took pride of place on my bedside table. Each night, with the powerful chords and lyrics of Guns N' Roses reverberating through my Walkman headphones, I'd lose myself in its pages. This ritual gave me great comfort, especially during the nights when the weight of my mother's psychotic episodes bore down on the household. The book was more than just a read; it was my refuge.

Being the young, wet-behind-the-ears fellow that I was, what fascinated me most was not the underlying principles and discipline that steered Darvas's decisions but rather the irresistible appeal of fast financial gains. This allure overshadowed everything else in the book, as I found myself daydreaming about replicating the man's success. In those moments, wrapped in the comforting dream of making it in the world of finances, I felt distanced from the chaos that unraveled around me. Darvas's success story of

mastering the stock market painted a world of possibilities—a stark contrast to the unpredictability I was surrounded by in my life. My grasp on financial markets was tenuous at best; still, the allure of making a living through calculated risks gripped me, even if I couldn't articulate the specifics. I saw myself in Darvas, and this was enough to fan the flames of ambition within me.

My high school grades, however, painted a different picture. They were dropping quicker than a stock in freefall. Every red mark and low score was a reminder that I wasn't thriving in that environment. I felt out of place in a conventional educational system that didn't cater to my unique ways of processing information. Teachers, classmates, and even family made me feel "less than" for being a slow learner—but it's not that I lack intelligence; rather, I absorb information differently and on my own terms. Yet, they all saw my pace as a deficiency rather than a different rhythm, and sadly, their perceptions and comments began to wear on me; I began internalizing their beliefs, doubting my own capabilities, and eventually, I dropped out of high school.

As I drifted through life, my journey was punctuated by an array of odd jobs, but nothing that genuinely ignited a passion within me or hinted at a lasting career. I've always had a stutter; back then, it was particularly pronounced. This condition, combined with my struggles with social anxiety, made job interviews daunting affairs. Consistent employment eluded me, adding another layer of hardship to my already tumultuous life. A few years later, as the Internet gained wider adoption in society, connectivity increased among people, and information was getting shared at a pace never seen before. Amid this tech revolution, online trading was carving its niche, heralding a new era of financial possibilities. One day, my older brother, who was always a step ahead in the tech curve, called me into his room to show me a financial website. The computer screen was awash with financial quotes, numbers, and news headlines as he remarked, "Check this out—some guys are pulling in millions just by trading stocks. They sit on their butt all day and press a few buttons. Crazy, right?" Feigning surprise, I nodded, though deep down, the spark from years ago rekindled.

In the era of Nicolas Darvas, day trading as we know it today was a foreign concept. The technological limitations of the time and the structure of financial markets didn't allow for the rapid buying and selling of securities within a single trading day. Darvas operated in a market environment where trading was more about strategic holding based on longer-term analyses and cues. However, the trading landscape underwent a seismic shift with the advent of the Internet and its subsequent integration into financial systems. The connectivity, real-time data, and tools made available by the Internet gave birth to this new style of trading, which allowed traders to capitalize on minute-to-minute (sometimes even second-to-second) price shifts. Obviously, I was immediately gripped by the possibilities. The world of trading, it seemed, was calling me once again. Here was a field where my stutter and distinct learning rhythm didn't matter. Trading was an arena in which I knew I could succeed. I often joke that it has done for me what years of schooling couldn't—it ignited a burning passion within me. In the market, it isn't about how fluently you speak or how good you are at office politics. Fundamentally, what matters is astute observation, keen analysis, and the ability to make thoughtful and strategic choices. In light of that, my surface-level "weaknesses" were almost irrelevant; I intuited that trading would allow me to reshape the disempowering narratives I had believed about myself for so long.

At that time, every corner I turned, the world seemed abuzz with chatter about tech stocks, so my curiosity naturally gravitated toward how to trade them. While today's digital age boasts a plethora of online resources to guide budding traders, quality trading education was a rarity during that period. To learn, you typically had to attend seminars or voraciously consume books. Unfortunately, high-priced seminars were beyond my budget, which led me to join a local trading and investment club. Every Thursday after work, I'd find myself among seasoned traders and savvy investors, absorbing invaluable technical insights and strategies they generously shared. I also bought myself a copy of Nicolas Darvas's book—the one I picked up at my school library a few years ago—and re-read it numerous times. The man's story was a tremendous source of

inspiration and motivation for me then. Equally, I spent countless hours poring over financial websites, deciphering financial quotes, and navigating the dense influx of market information. I recall one particular element that grabbed my attention—a compound return table (see Table 1.1). As I began to grasp the formidable power of compounding, it dawned on me that the dream of becoming a millionaire within a realistic time frame wasn't a pipe dream; that ideal seemed tantalizingly attainable, and my pulse raced as I envisioned the boundless opportunities.

Yet, amidst this whirlwind of aspirations, the reality of my day job persisted. But its mundane routine was now juxtaposed against a fervent goal: I was unwavering in my quest to trade for a living. The vision of bidding adieu to conventional jobs became increasingly vivid in my mind. In the iconic movie *Scarface*, there's a scene where the protagonist, Tony Montana, drenched in frustration for his thankless service at a Miami eatery, dramatically throws his greasy apron at his boss in a bold act of defiance (De Palma 1983, 0:18:35). The intensity of that moment, where Montana decides he's worth more than the petty world he's confined to, resonated deeply with me. I longed for my own moment of liberation, to break free from the constraints of my dull and unfulfilling job, just as Montana had done with his, and each day, that scene from the movie played in my head with heightened clarity.

Time rolled on, and eventually, I reached a pivotal moment where I was finally ready to take the leap of faith, ready to make the

Table 1.1 A compound return table showcasing the substantial effects that both the return rate and the length of the investment period have on the expansion of a $10,000 trading account.

Years	5% Return	6% Return	10% Return	11% Return	15% Return	20% Return
2	$11,025	$11,326	$12,100	$12,321	$13,225	$14,400
5	$12,726.82	$13,382.26	$16,105.1	$16,850.58	$20,113.57	$24,883.2
7	$14,071	$15,036.30	$19,487.17	$20,761.60	$26,600.20	$35,831.81
10	$16,288.95	$17,908.48	$25,937.42	$28,394.21	$40,455.58	$61,917.36
12	$17,958.56	$20,121.96	$31,384.28	$34,984.51	$53,502.50	$89,161.00
15	$20,789.28	$23,965.58	$41,772.48	$47,845.89	$81,370.62	$154,070.22

magic happen, ready to bank millions, just like my hero, Darvas. The year was 2006, and I quit my final job as a count team member in a casino. The very next day, I transferred all my savings to a trading account. A few days later, I was up and running; a new chapter of my life had begun, and I was all in.

Almost Within Grasp, Yet Elusive

As the story unfolds, what transpired next is a series of events I'd equate to a haunting nightmare. My account plummeted in my inaugural trading year, witnessing a gut-wrenching 60% drawdown. This was absolutely brutal; it felt like the floor had disappeared beneath me, and my confidence was shattered. Understand, I wasn't navigating blind. I had a well-crafted trading system, the result of insightful conversations I had with fellow traders from the investment club I frequented and countless hours spent researching, fine-tuning, and testing against historical data. In terms of capital, I also had enough of it, at least a hundred thousand dollars that I saved over the years. Thus, I had the tools and the means to facilitate success, and every day, like tantalizing mirages on the horizon, the market dangled promises of unprecedented wealth right before my eyes. Yet, when it came to seizing these golden opportunities, my feet turned to clay, paralyzed by the ever-looming specter of emotions. I faltered at the very brink of success.

My response to uncertainty was amateurish at best; I was fraught with indecision and recklessness. Short-term trades turned into long-term investments and vice versa, a murky blending of strategies that no seasoned trader would endorse. Like a moth drawn to a flame, I found myself impulsively frequenting trade-call forums trying to catch a mover that would 100x my money. My gaze flitted nervously across the screen, toggling between time frames, desperately seeking a semblance of certainty in a landscape that inherently defies it. Rather than cutting my losses, I clung stubbornly to sinking positions, pouring more capital into them as if sheer will could turn the tide. Blindly, I defied the market's rhythm, going

long when all signs screamed bearish and short when the bulls ran rampant. Those are all moves that any savvy investor will warn you against, yet I made them all, and many times over.

Each trading session was a tumultuous carousel of emotions. The ebb and flow of wins and losses was mentally taxing—triumphs inflated my ego, while failures gnawed at my soul. My behavioral patterns and mental game weren't conducive to success in trading, and I wasn't even aware of that. I didn't even begin to suspect that the problem was me, the operator, the man behind the wheel. So, at some point, even though my original trading system was perfectly fine, I began tweaking it. I incorporated derivative instruments like options unplanningly, without the due diligence they demanded. And when that didn't yield expected results, I started chasing some illusory holy grail trading system, of course, spending a fortune doing so while never finding anything.

On a serendipitous afternoon, as if guided by fate, I wandered into my local bookstore. There, nestled among other tomes, was *The Disciplined Trader* by Mark Douglas. Intrigued, I took it home, immersing myself in its pages. As I delved deeper, a profound clarity began to seep in. Trading, as Douglas articulated, was not just about numbers or strategies; it was a dance of emotions, a test of self-control and mental fortitude. Though I had previously encountered this idea of "trading psychology" in the works of Nicolas Darvas, it hadn't truly resonated. Perhaps, in our journey through life, we only see what we're prepared to see; we comprehend only what aligns with our existing beliefs.

With every page of *The Disciplined Trader*, I felt a seismic shift in my perspective. Seeds of hope long buried beneath layers of despair began to germinate in the recesses of my mind. Galvanized by Douglas's insights, particularly his emphasis on probabilistic thinking and the individuality of each trade, I found myself reevaluating my mental game. No longer was I glued to the screens, agonizing over every fluctuation. I placed my trades with a newfound conviction, then stepped back, allowing the market to take its course. My thinking evolved, anchored more in probabilities than whims. My expectations became more realistic, grounded in a

commitment to discipline. Bit by bit, my confidence, which had once been shattered, began to rebuild. Remarkably, within a span of five months, my trading performance, once awash in red, transformed. I was on the cusp of recouping all my losses; but then, the 2008 financial collapse started unrolling.

Generally, maneuvering through bull markets is relatively "easy"—they tend to be more forgiving since they are predominantly fueled by emotions like greed and complacency, which inflate asset values across the board, providing a wider margin for decisional errors. Bear markets, however, are fueled by panic and fear; hence, they are more vicious and unpredictable. Thus, the real test for a trader worth their salt is to navigate such intricate market landscapes not necessarily profitably but with ongoing stability of mind to better protect their capital and past accumulated profits. Regrettably, I failed to uphold that basic rule. When the market turned, so did my mindset. My impulsiveness reared its ugly head again, and slowly, my life savings, which I had audaciously poured into my trading account, began to evaporate before my eyes. Witnessing the slow bleed of what I held dear, my resolve crumbled.

In the aftermath of embracing Mark Douglas's insights, I thought I had found my panacea. Yet, as the days unfurled, it became evident that those changes were mere plasters over gaping wounds. Beneath the facade of newfound understanding lurked the same old emotional and impulsive me. My unskillful states were just there waiting to resurface, and they did. Weeks, sometimes months, of consistent profitability were now punctuated by massive drawdowns because, somewhere down the line, I always found a way to lose my stability of mind. Any slight perturbation and I'd spiral into a vortex of irrationality.

Desperate for answers, I revisited Douglas's wisdom. But this time, I also sought solace in a plethora of other resources on trading psychology. The quest for a holy grail had reignited within me, only now it wasn't a fail-proof system I was after but a potent elixir to quell my tempestuous psychological storms. From the esoteric realms of Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) and hypnosis to the introspective corridors of psychotherapy, I delved deep, seeking a

way out of my unproductive ways. Some avenues offered glimmers of hope, others led to dead ends, but none provided the transformational change I yearned for. They merely offered temporary reprieves, not addressing the root of my psychological quagmire. Over five tumultuous years, the market—aided by my inner demons—devoured nearly $100,000 of my savings. That sum meant a lot to me at that time since it represented dreams, aspirations, and countless sacrifices. The weight of those losses bore heavily on my psyche; the mental toll was truly debilitating.

As days turned into weeks and weeks into months, the weight of my out-of-hand losses and failures grew ever heavier on my shoulders. The rooms of my home seemed dimmer, and my interactions with people, even close ones, seemed more strained. The few friends and family I had watched powerlessly as I withdrew more and more, pushed to the precipice of an engulfing abyss of despair.

Rock Bottom

"How did it come to this?" The surreal haze of disbelief enveloped me. In a breathless moment, I whispered to myself, "I'm done!" And in that echoing silence, it wasn't just the world of trading I wanted to abandon, but the very thread of life itself. The weight of desolation bore down on me. Days merged into nights as I neglected the man in the mirror. The sharpness of my jawline emerged, testimony to the meals skipped and the weight shed. Shadows deepened beneath my eyes, painting the grim portrait of a soul unhinged. The gnawing emptiness wasn't just a result of financial despair; it stemmed from the wounds of my childhood, wounds that failure rubbed salt into. Each setback felt like a reaffirmation of the inadequacies I had battled since my younger days.

As said earlier, I grew up cradling the erratic moods of a mentally unstable parent. The ground beneath me seldom felt solid; the sanctity of routine and predictability was a luxury I rarely knew. Every day brought adversity, shame, pain—things could turn sour in the blink of an eye; any moment could explode into chaos.

The relentless stresses of my formative years weren't the kind that fostered growth or resilience; instead, they were a relentless grind, always on the precipice of breaking me apart. Consider this: In nature, diamonds are birthed from carbon exposed to extreme pressures deep within the Earth's mantle. In the right measure, this pressure can transform a simple element into one of the most beautiful and sought-after gems in the world. But even in this natural marvel, there's a delicate balance—too little pressure and the carbon remains unaltered; too much pressure and it's crushed, never getting the chance to metamorphose. Drawing a parallel to my own life, the pressures of my childhood were excessive, nearly shattering the essence of who I was. I felt more like carbon being crushed rather than shaped and refined. The potential diamond within me was at risk of being lost forever, subdued by the immense stresses that sought to define my existence. To survive, I crafted a set of coping mechanisms—I became adept at reading the room, anticipating storms, and sometimes, when things got too intense, retreating into the safety of my shell, curling up, and making myself invisible.

As I stepped into the world of trading, the volatile nature of markets strangely echoed the unpredictability of my childhood. But this time, the old coping defenses would not suffice. Trading demands a surrender to uncertainty, a willingness to embrace the rawness of vulnerability, and accept losses as lessons, things I had never really grasped. No longer could I hide or recoil at the signs of danger, yet, time and again, I did exactly that. Even as my logical mind and trading knowledge urged me to act differently, my emotional self overrode those cues, which became the root of my undoing. It wasn't just about the money lost; it was the mental turmoil that took a toll on me. It was my inability to break free from automatic responses that put me in a catastrophic position. The market, in its brutal honesty, mirrors back to us our deepest fears and insecurities, and in my case, it held up a magnifying glass to the fractures in my psyche that had been long glossed over. And yet, amidst this bleakness, the irony wasn't lost on me. Here I stood, teetering on the edge of what I had once envisioned as my ultimate dream. Instead of the anticipated euphoria of accomplishment, an oppressive

weight threatened to pull me into the abyss. All my tools, all my preparation, and yet, the magnitude of my reality was paralyzingly overwhelming.

During one of these bleak evenings, I had an unexpected visit from an old friend from the investment club I used to be part of, Francois. Though Francois had amassed a staggering wealth from trading commodity futures, his appearance was disarmingly unassuming. Dressed in simple attire, he exuded a quiet humility. To the untrained eye, he could easily be mistaken for just another face in the crowd, his multi-millionaire status hidden behind a veil of modesty. We settled in a coffee shop down the street, steam curling up from freshly brewed expresso cups. The silence was comfortable, but the weight of my experiences pressed on my chest. Soon, the floodgates opened; I found myself recounting the highs and lows and the mistakes and lessons of my trading journey. Francois sat across from me, his steady gaze absorbing every word with an understanding only a fellow trader could offer. He didn't interrupt, only nodding occasionally, allowing me to navigate the labyrinth of my emotions, laying them bare. Over cups of steaming coffee, we talked—or rather, I spilled the story of my tumultuous journey while he listened, patient and empathetic. Francois spoke of balance and the importance of grounding oneself, not just in trading, but in life. "You're more than your trades, more than the numbers on a screen," he'd said, "The market is just one facet of a multifaceted life." His words struck a chord. I had become so engrossed in the volatile world of trading that I lost sight of the bigger picture. My identity, self-worth, and happiness became inextricably tied to the market and my trading performance.

Following that heart-to-heart, I took a sabbatical from trading. I reconnected with the hobbies I'd once loved, like hiking. I could barely get myself to look at my trading account because I was so afraid of what I would see there. At one point, I went to a park and sat on a bench. Summer had just ended; leaves were starting to fall, and the area, usually lively and colorful, was deserted and bleak, echoing the desolation I felt within. However, amidst this gloomy setting, I witnessed something remarkable. A squirrel, poised to

leap from a thin branch, launched itself into the air, traversing the daunting space between two trees. Its tiny frame, balanced on such a fragile twig moments before, now showcased an awe-inspiring blend of agility and grace. It dawned on me that these creatures operated on pure instinct—their every move was dictated not by deliberate calculations but by an innate sense of the odds. As I watched the squirrel's graceful leap, I realized that this seemingly mundane moment was a profound lesson in dealing with uncertainty. In its daily quest for sustenance, this squirrel constantly faced the unpredictable challenges of nature, from potential predators to rapidly changing environmental conditions. And yet, here it was, taking a risk with such finesse and confidence. This observation became the catalyst for my evolving thoughts on uncertainty.

The squirrel doesn't possess a conscious understanding of risk as we humans do. It doesn't weigh options or overanalyze situations. It instinctively evaluates its environment, processes information in real time, and acts based on its instinctual understanding of the odds. Again, it's not a calculation; it's an innate knowing. For the squirrel, life is a continual dance with uncertainty, and its survival hinges on its ability to adapt and respond effectively. In the world of the squirrel, uncertainty isn't a burden but an integral part of existence. While it's true that every jump or decision it makes doesn't guarantee safety or success, the squirrel doesn't get paralyzed by fear. Instead, it embraces uncertainty as a natural state of being, focusing on the present moment, gathering all its energy and intent into that singular leap.

This observation led me to ponder my own relationship with uncertainty. In the trading world, I was often overwhelmed by the unpredictability and volatility of the markets. But if a squirrel could tackle its world of uncertainty with such aplomb, surely there are lessons I could learn here. Instead of perceiving uncertainty as an adversary, could I—like the squirrel—see it as a constant companion, a force to be acknowledged and respected but not feared? The squirrel's behavior became an allegory, urging me to reconsider my views on the market and, more broadly, on life. I had a sprouting realization that embracing uncertainty and operating within its

confines with agility, rather than overthinking and overanalyzing, could be the key to success. It's not about eliminating uncertainty but learning to dance with it, just like the squirrel.

I further realized that top-tier traders are detached from the emotional rollercoaster of trading. They respect the boundless opportunities in the market but are firmly anchored in the disciplined execution of their strategies. By emphasizing probabilities over possibilities, they remain grounded, their emotions in check, echoing the squirrel's unwavering focus. The age-old adage warns against emotional trading, but as sentient beings, how do we transcend our inherent emotional nature without going through a lobotomy? Emotions form our very core, as inseparable as our heartbeat. Hence, the key lies not in suppressing emotions but in minimizing their influence. And the first step toward this detachment is adopting a probabilistic mindset. It wasn't that I was unfamiliar with this concept; instead, I had failed to truly realize it. Sometimes, we stand too close to trees and can't see the forest.

During my sabbatical, I found solace in solitude, often amidst nature, reflecting on the trajectory of my life, its purpose, and my perpetual struggles with trading. A newfound companion during these introspective journeys was my journal. The act of penning down my thoughts and reflections provided clarity, transforming the abstract into tangible revelations. It became a conduit for self-awareness, a mirror reflecting my deepest fears, desires, and insights. As the days ebbed and flowed, my journal burgeoned with revelations, and naturally, I felt more and more compelled to emancipate myself from my internal shackles. While journaling provided a therapeutic release, what I discovered next was nothing short of transformational.

My Journey to Composure

Imagine I hand you a key; however, this isn't just any key—it unlocks a vault of unparalleled wisdom and clarity. Once turned, it sharpens your decision-making, calms your nerves, keeps

impulsiveness at bay, and heightens your overall aptitude to respond wisely and measuredly. Beyond these riches, the vault also reveals more treasures: a surge in self-confidence, peace with your past, comfort with the mysteries of the future, a newfound trust in yourself, and so much more. The best part? This key isn't forged from gold or silver but from something far more invaluable and pure. It won't cost you a dime, but it demands dedication: a commitment to use it every day of your life. Are you intrigued? Would you use such a key? Well, this key is the profound practice of meditation.

Amidst the myriad habits and routines I've adopted over the years, if there was one singular practice that has profoundly shaped my journey, especially in the ruthless realm of the markets, it would be meditation. This ancient, timeless ritual has not only centered my being; it has become the very compass guiding my decisions and actions in life. I wasn't introduced to meditation by anyone; instead, I stumbled upon it almost by mistake. Every so often, especially during the quieter moments of my day, I found myself gravitating toward a unique solace. Without any prior instruction or understanding, I would simply lay down, close my eyes, and drift inward. It wasn't a practice I was taught or something I had consciously decided to adopt. It just happened naturally and organically. The world's clamor faded into the background when I sank into myself, replaced by a profound sense of presence and serenity. The overwhelming rush of thoughts, worries, and plans that usually consumed my mind dissipated. Instead, a refreshing spaciousness and clarity enveloped me. While I hadn't yet recognized it as "meditation," this innate, intuitive act offered a state of being I had never felt or experienced before.

One evening, bathed in the afterglow of one such impromptu session, a new curiosity took hold. With no clear intent, I found myself typing the words "meditation retreat" into a search engine. Scrolling through the results, my eyes settled on a serene image of a secluded retreat center enveloped by towering trees and mirrored by a calm lake. Something deep within nudged me toward it. I signed up on a whim, driven by a force that evaded explanation. I wasn't entirely sure what awaited me, nor did I have any

preconceived notions of what a "retreat" entailed. All I knew was this inexplicable pull, this magnetic draw toward exploring, understanding, and deepening this newfound state of being.

Arriving at the retreat, every cell in my body felt aligned with this decision; however, as the days unfolded, unexpected challenges arose. Immersed in prolonged silence, the hours seemed to stretch endlessly. What's more, my years of sedentary living—sitting in front of a computer stalking the market for opportunities—had taken a toll on my body, leaving my lower back vulnerable and weak. And now, confined to the stillness of the meditation posture, every twinge and ache magnified. One particularly grueling session saw me caught in a whirlwind of torment, the pain so intense that silent tears streamed down my face. Emotionally and physically overwhelmed, I found myself at a breaking point. I got up and sought out the assistant teacher, ready to declare my intention to leave the retreat. But her calm, measured words halted me in my tracks: "If you choose to leave, that's your decision, and I respect it. However, before you go ahead with this decision, see if you can spend just one more day here. Reflect deeply on the nature of your discomfort. Observe it; see if you can discern how much of this pain is truly physical and how much is a construct of your mind." Skeptical, yet with a seed of curiosity planted, I returned to the cushion, silently vowing to depart the following dawn.

As the hours passed, a shift began to unfold. With every conscious breath, I delved deeper into the intricate dance of sensations, thoughts, and emotions, and gradually, the boundaries began to blur. Was the pain genuinely as insurmountable as it had seemed, or had my mind amplified and distorted it? The layers began to peel away, and an empowering realization dawned. While some pain was genuine, a significant portion was born from mental resistance, deeply rooted beliefs, and patterns of perception. The journey of deciphering between physical discomfort and mental constructs had just begun and promised profound insights and transformation.

With this newfound perspective, the subsequent days took on a different hue. Each meditation session became an exploration rather than an endurance test. I started to approach every pang and

discomfort with curiosity, attempting to untangle the web of physical sensations from the threads of mental narratives that had previously dominated my experience. By viewing the pain through this lens of inquiry, it began to lose its vice-like grip on me. Moments of discomfort that previously felt eternal now seemed to ebb and flow like waves upon a shore. I recognized the impermanent nature of pain and, even more crucially, the impermanence of the stories my mind wove around it. The atmosphere of the retreat, the serene surroundings, the collective intent of all participants, all contributed to this evolving understanding. Shared meals became moments of reflection, and walks in nature turned into profound lessons on the interconnectedness of all things. Days melded into nights, and the retreat's end was soon in sight. However, by this point, my earlier desire to flee had vanished; instead, it was replaced by profound gratitude not just for the physical practice but for the invaluable lessons learned.

On the last day, we broke our silence. The peace, the clarity, and the transformative insights I had gathered were so precious that I felt an innate desire to dive deeper, to explore further, so I approached the assistant teacher, expressing my wish to extend my stay. "I've just begun to scratch the surface," I confided. "There's so much more I feel compelled to understand, and this place feels like the right environment to do so." She looked at me, her eyes reflecting a blend of wisdom and compassion, and then shared about the "sitting and serving program." This program allowed participants to continue their practice while also contributing to the daily operations of the retreat, creating a harmonious cycle of giving and receiving. Thus, my initial 10-day retreat transformed into a profound 2-month sojourn. Every day brought new revelations, deeper meditative experiences, and a growing bond with the retreat community. As I meditated, served meals, tended to the gardens, and participated in group discussions around the teachings and the philosophy behind the practice, I felt an unparalleled sense of purpose that nurtured my soul.

When I finally departed the retreat center, the world outside seemed different, as if I were seeing it through a newly polished

lens. But one thing was clear: my journey into the depths of meditation and its myriad philosophies had only begun. An insatiable hunger to understand more—to delve deeper into the annals of this ancient art—had taken root within me. Over the next four months, my compass was guided by this thirst for knowledge. Maps and travel plans became a testament to my quest, leading me to various corners of the world. From the tranquil monasteries perched on the mountaintops of Bhutan to the serene ashrams by the sacred Ganges in India, every destination was a chapter in my unfolding saga of discovery. Each location, each tradition, brought with it a unique flavor of contemplative practice. While some places emphasized rigorous discipline and strict adherence to timeworn techniques, others championed a more fluid, intuitive approach to meditation. There were places where silence reigned supreme, enveloping every aspirant in its comforting embrace and others where chants and mantras resonated through the air, creating an ethereal symphony of devotion. Living in these monasteries, among monks who had dedicated their entire lives to the practice, I was privy to a wealth of knowledge. With them, I learned not just meditation techniques but also the philosophy and wisdom behind those practices. Being the curious mind that I am, I would often have hour-long discussions with fellow monks, spanning topics from the nature of the self to the intricacies of the mind and the impermanence of everything. There was an unspoken bond, a shared understanding that, despite our varied backgrounds and cultures, we were all seekers on the same path, looking for answers to life's most profound questions.

Throughout this period of exploration, I found myself constantly reflecting on my experiences in trading and the many setbacks I faced in the market. I further realized that a significant part of my struggle in trading wasn't just about making the right calls or predicting market trends; it was deeply rooted in my difficulty in confronting and truly accepting the inherent uncertainty of the market. As days turned into weeks, this introspection deepened. The serene environments of the monasteries and the wisdom shared by fellow contemplatives provided a conducive setting for me to dissect my previous decisions, my reactions to losses, and my overall

mindset toward the market. It dawned on me that, much like meditation, trading, too, requires a balance of focus, detachment, and a deep understanding and acceptance of impermanence and chaos. In between sessions of meditation and teachings on ancient philosophies, I would often lie on my bed and juxtapose my past trading patterns with the newfound insights from this spiritual journey. I began to see correlations between my impulsive decisions in the market and the unchecked, reactive thoughts that the practice of meditation aimed to tame. The more I reflected, the clearer it became that my challenges in embracing uncertainty in trading mirrored the broader human struggle of accepting the unpredictable nature of life itself. As time passed, these reflections enriched my understanding of my past trading decisions. They laid the foundation for a renewed approach to markets, one that was more balanced, grounded, and in tune with the ebb and flow of both the market and life's uncertainties. Concepts that once seemed superficially understood now felt more integrated, like deeply rooted trees that had finally found nourishment in fertile soil. This newfound depth of understanding began to permeate every aspect of my life.

Life was good in these monasteries. Not luxurious by any means but peaceful and good. Life unfolded with a serene simplicity that belied its profound depth. Yet, as days turned into weeks and weeks into months, a persistent whisper echoed within the corridors of my mind: "You're running away from your true life." Though the monastic life held a certain allure, promising a horizon of eternal serenity, I found myself grappling with its implications. There was no denying the beauty of it: immersed in the study of the philosophy of mind, partaking in hours of introspection, diving deep into the intricacies of my psyche, and cultivating profound insights. Nestled away from the relentless hustle of modernity, this environment became a crucible for forging composure and peace. The monastic realm offered an idyllic existence, and I could have easily lived here for the rest of my life. Yet, with every sunrise, a nagging thought persisted: as profound as it was, the tranquility here felt almost too easy. It became clear that maintaining composure within these sacred walls was one thing, but could this serenity hold its

ground amid the tempests of the "real world"? The real crucible, I realized, lay beyond these walls—in the unpredictable theater of everyday life where chaos, hardships, losses, conflicts, and uncertainties choreographed a relentless dance. It's one thing to remain zen when ensconced in solitude, but the true mettle of one's practice is tested amidst life's turbulent currents. There was an urgency for me to take this cultivated wisdom and apply it to the "real world," to the cacophonies of daily existence, to the unpredictable ebb and flow of emotions, to the very core of humanity's shared experience. I yearned to know: can inner tranquility withstand life's fiercest storms? Embracing this epiphany, I returned to the familiar yet now-altered landscape of my "ordinary life," ready to navigate its labyrinth with the tools and insights from my monastic sojourn.

Upon my return, the rhythm of the world I once knew had changed—or perhaps it was I who had transformed? But now, I was out of a job, and the necessity to sustain myself weighed heavily like a cloak reminding me of real-world responsibilities. But the crucible of my time in the monastery had imbued me with a treasure more valuable than gold: a renewed perspective and an enriched mindset. Gazing upon the vast expanse of possibilities, I felt an old spark reignite within. The world of trading, which had once been a maze of confusion and setbacks, beckoned again. Yet, this time, I vowed to approach it not as a mere player but as a sage armed with insights from a journey beyond the mundane. Drawing from the depths of my newfound wisdom, I waded back into the tumultuous waters of the market. As I plucked the courage to glance at my trading account, the numbers staring back were a stark reminder of past battles—from an original investment of $100,000, only $14,000 remained. However, to me, this wasn't a number of defeat anymore; it stood as a symbol of resilience, of lessons learned and of the potential to begin anew. And perhaps above all, it was a test, for if I could grow this amount consistently and predictably, it would confirm the transformation I underwent.

Lo and behold, that is precisely what happened. With every trade, I embodied a dance of strategy and equanimity, blending analytical precision with the serene detachment I had cultivated.

Setbacks, while inevitable, no longer shook my core. Instead, they were lessons, echoes from the market teaching me its ever-evolving rhythm. The emotional rollercoasters of past trading days were replaced with a poised equilibrium, grounding me even in the face of challenges. As weeks turned to months and months into years, the growth of my trading account was not just monetary but symbolic. It was a testament to the profound importance of inner transformation.

The failure rate is high among traders. There are many chart analysts out there but very few consistently profitable traders. It's not an exaggeration—the number of consistently profitable traders is astonishingly low (Rolf 2019). If trading were merely a matter of chart analysis and deciphering patterns, we would see a greater success rate. However, this is far from reality. Beneath the surface-level complexities of graphs and data lies an even more intricate challenge: the ever-present cloud of uncertainty. Markets, by their very nature, are chaotic, and this inherent uncertainty often clashes with our deep-rooted desire for stability and control. Coming to terms with this uncertainty isn't just about intellectual acceptance. It's a profound psychological shift requiring more than just analytical skills. Embracing this uncertainty and learning to dance in its ebb and flow requires specialized training, transcending traditional chart analysis, and diving deep into the recesses of one's psyche. Only by mastering this can one hope to thrive in the chaotic world of trading.

As I draw this reflection on my life's journey to a close, I believe there's power in sharing our struggles and triumphs. Offering you this snapshot into the winding path of my pursuit of composure isn't just about transparency; it's about kindling a beacon of hope and possibility for you. My own hope is that in my experiences, you see a mirror to your potential and the affirmation that greatness isn't the preserve of a select few. In the vast realm of trading, where my name now resonates with some measure of recognition, it's essential to understand that my beginnings were as ordinary as they come. Far from the plush comforts of inherited wealth or privilege, my journey has been one marked by trials and tribulations.

The confinements of traditional education did not suit me, leading to an early departure from high school. In addition, grappling with a learning difficulty meant that my path to knowledge often deviated from the norm. However, within this perceived disadvantage lay my strength. Fueled by an unparalleled commitment, unwavering passion, and a relentless drive, I approach challenges with genuine sincerity. When I encountered the world of trading, it wasn't just another endeavor for me; it became an all-consuming passion, a vocation I pursued with every fiber of my being.

In retrospect, it's fascinating how the universe orchestrates this path for me. I'm very fortunate and grateful to be in the position that I'm in today. Currently, I'm managing a multi-million-dollar fund for myself and on behalf of a small group of investors. And perhaps the better part of it is that I'm doing this from the comfort of my home. Admittedly, I'm not the best trader that ever lived; far from it. However, I'm exquisitely consistent. Some days I win, some days I lose, but in totality, my gains substantially eclipse any losses incurred resulting in a steadily rising equity curve that is a testament to the viability of my strategies and the strength of my composure. With trading occupying only a fraction of my time, I dedicate my off-hours to guiding serious traders through the transformative journey of recalibrating their mindset for trading.

I've always considered myself a private individual, not one who naturally gravitates toward the public eye. Social interactions have always been a challenge for me, marked by a level of awkwardness I've been working hard to overcome for as long as I can remember. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, I've always spoken with a stutter, a condition that has, in many ways, shaped my preference for privacy and introspection over public discourse. When I first began sharing my insights on trading psychology online, it was a modest endeavor, more of a personal outlet than a quest for recognition. The thought that my musings and experiences would resonate with a broader audience seemed far-fetched. To my surprise, what started as a small personal project blossomed into something much larger and more impactful than I could have imagined. As my online presence grew, so did the attention. I found myself with an audience

that was not only interested in what I had to say but also found a reflection of their own struggles in my journey. The influx of emails from traders worldwide, many of whom were grappling with similar challenges, was overwhelming. Hundreds of messages poured in every month, each sharing personal stories of struggles and seeking guidance. My unexpected foray into the public eye didn't stop there. I began receiving invitations to appear on popular trading podcasts, participate in radio interviews, and contribute to well-respected media outlets. Opportunities arose to speak at events, often alongside esteemed experts in the trading and investing world. I had never sought out this level of public engagement, and frankly, it was quite daunting, considering my innate preference for privacy and my struggles with social interaction. However, despite the discomfort and the challenges this posed to my personal nature, I felt a compelling sense of duty to continue this path. Helping struggling traders became more than just a casual pursuit; it turned into a responsibility, one that was deeply intertwined with my own search for meaning and purpose.

I firmly believe that trading is a mental game. It is a game one plays against oneself. Unfortunately, most traders ignore that; they only pay attention to charts, and that's a big mistake. I, too, was guilty of that: I believed trading was all about finding the right strategy. In reality, trading is mainly about becoming the right person—someone who consistently acts in their own best interest. Realizing that potential isn't just about desire; it requires dedicated effort and an ongoing commitment to growth. So much more is possible than what you're currently getting; so much more awaits you in terms of growth and success if you have your heart and mind in the right places. And I don't doubt that you do! But then, it's about doing the work and starting the journey to composure.

A Three-Pillar Approach to Composure

This book doesn't pretend to be anything; it's simply a collection of thoughts, experiences, and insights from my years of trading and

working with traders in my coaching practice. I give you things as they are and as I currently understand them. I am not portraying myself as something I'm not; I don't have big diplomas or technical jargon to impress you. In writing this book, my goal wasn't to boost my ego but to be helpful by shedding light on the mindset and behavior required to excel in an uncertainty-ridden field like trading. Within the book's pages, I've distilled years of observations, personal experiences, and lessons from fellow traders into insights that will illuminate your path. I shed light on how trading isn't just a test of your analytical skills but also a reflection of your mental landscape. My goal is to help bridge the gap between the technical aspects of trading and the emotional challenges that often overshadow them. With the insights and lessons captured in these pages, you'll embark on a journey of self-discovery and growth, enabling you to approach trading not just as a financial endeavor but as a holistic pursuit of personal and professional mastery.

My original choice for the title of this book was *Riding Uncertainty: Insights from a Consistent Trader*. However, I felt compelled to choose a title that more aptly depicted the profound personal transformation required to excel in the realm of trading. Hence, *Trading Composure: Mastering Your Mind for Trading Success* became a natural choice. This composure I keep alluding to is multifaceted and nuanced. It is more than just a stoic facade; it goes beyond the mere robotic execution of trades. At its core, composure embodies a profound inner resilience, a steadfastness of mind that transcends the fluctuations of the market or life. It is the ability to remain grounded amidst chaos, to approach each trade with clarity and equanimity, regardless of external circumstances, in an ongoing manner. It entails radical acceptance of the natural flow of sensory experiences, whatever they are and however long they last. For instance, when emotions arise in response to market fluctuations, rather than suppressing or ignoring them, one adopts an observer stance, allowing them to arise and dissipate naturally. This avoids impulsive reactions, enabling actions aligned with core values rather than transient emotions or wavering convictions.

It's crucial to distinguish composure from what is often perceived as "the zone," a state of heightened focus popularized by figures like Mark Douglas. "The zone," however blissful it is, is a temporary state, typically achieved under specific conditions or circumstances. Composure, on the other hand, is enduring and not reliant on external factors. It is not a fleeting moment of peak performance but rather a steady state of mind that can be sustained regardless of conditions or circumstances. In other words, composure is a proactive mindset cultivated through deliberate practice and self-awareness. It involves an ongoing radical and visceral acceptance of positive and negative experiences without being swayed by them. Unlike "the zone," which may come and go unpredictably, composure is a quality that traders can develop and strengthen over time, providing a solid foundation for consistent decision-making and performance in the market. Moreover, while "the zone" often implies a narrow focus on the task at hand, composure encompasses a broader perspective that extends beyond individual trades or moments of trading activity. It involves maintaining clarity, perspective, and emotional stability amidst the ups and downs of life itself. This cultivated mindset enables traders to navigate broader life challenges with resilience and adaptability, creating an overall inner experience that deeply favors success and well-being.

As you can see, trading isn't just about numbers, charts, and strategies. It challenges our emotional resilience and demands unparalleled self-restraint and awareness. It requires that we embrace uncertainty, not just superficially but deeply—soul-deep. Hence, the journey we embark on is more than just about money; it is a voyage of self-discovery, a deep dive into the intricacies of our psyche. This book is an endeavor to guide you through that intricate maze. Countless books have been written on the topic already, so I'm not bringing anything new to the table. What I'm endeavoring to do instead is to deliver the information in a way that is simple, relatable, actionable, and perhaps above all, impactful.

Trading is not a get-rich-quick endeavor! It could be, but if you get in for that reason alone, chances are that you will end up

disappointed. It is essential to discuss this honestly. Most of the glamorous tales of overnight fortunes you might hear about are outliers, often embellished for the sake of a good story or to sell a particular product or course. While it's true that some traders have achieved rapid success, the majority have had to toil, falter, learn, and persevere over extended periods to realize consistent profitability. One of the primary reasons many aspiring traders find themselves in turbulent waters is that they are inundated with advertisements and stories that paint an overly rosy picture. These tales often gloss over the countless hours of study, the emotional highs and lows, and the sheer persistence required to trade successfully. Instead, they highlight rare windfalls, feeding the fantasy of instant wealth. However, if you peel back the layers and talk to seasoned professionals—real ones, not those in rented Lamborghinis—you'll often hear tales of initial failures, hard-earned lessons, and the painstaking process of refining trading strategies and developing a winning mindset. These narratives provide real educational value, laying bare the complexities and challenges of the trading world, not those from the "trading bros" selling you a get-rich-quick dream.

So why trade if it's not an instant goldmine? Well, beyond the potential for financial gain, trading offers a unique blend of challenges and rewards. It's a continuous learning journey, testing one's analytical skills, emotional resilience, and decision-making abilities under pressure. For many, the thrill lies not just in the profits but in the ability to flow with the chaotic dance of the market and the tremendous opportunities for self-growth this presents. Trading with an appropriate mindset means understanding that it's a marathon, not a sprint. It means cultivating patience, dedicating oneself to continuous learning, and maintaining humility in both wins and losses. It is about the quest for mastery and personal growth as much as it is about the allure of financial rewards.

Drawing from the vast reservoir of my personal trading journey and the privilege of mentoring hundreds of traders over the years, I've discerned a powerful truth: achieving consistency in trading doesn't happen by mere chance or luck. Instead, it hinges

on three foundational elements, three cornerstones if you will, that hold the structure of successful trading together. I affectionately refer to these as the "Three Main Pillars of Composure." These pillars are the essence, the guiding principles, which, when deeply understood and integrated, pave the way for a trader's enduring success.

Pillar One: Grasping and Welcoming Uncertainty

The first pillar delves deep into the realm of market uncertainty, a concept that many grapple with, often unknowingly. You see, most traders are blissfully unaware of the inherently chaotic nature of the market. Though they might have an inkling of the uncertainty at play, it's a faint acknowledgment and truly comprehending it remains elusive. At our core, as humans, we are hardwired to seek patterns. We crave predictability—we are creatures of habit and comfort; hence, we are innately designed to resist uncertainty. We yearn for control, for the assurance that if we follow X, Y will undoubtedly follow. However, confronting uncertainty unsettles our deep-seated need for predictability, rendering things inherently challenging psychologically. Instead of facing this uncomfortable truth—the truth of uncertainty—head-on, most traders immerse themselves further into the labyrinth of chart analyses. They subconsciously mold these analyses to fit their biases, sometimes bending reality to a point where they can't discern fact from fantasy. The mental contortions they subject themselves to can be astounding. And when the unforgiving markets shatter these carefully constructed illusions, the fallout is profound. They don't just lose financially; they are emotionally and mentally devastated, having tied their self-worth, aspirations, and very identity to these predictions.

Our brains, fascinatingly complex and evolved, are pattern-seeking devices. From our earliest days as nomadic tribes, our survival depended on our ability to anticipate danger, understand seasonal shifts, and foresee potential food sources. In essence, we are hardwired to resist the unknown because, historically, what we

didn't know could harm us. However, this evolutionary trait, so crucial in our past, is a hindrance in the intricate dance of modern trading. In the market, every transaction, every buy or sell order, plunges us into a realm of probabilities, not certainties. Every decision carries a risk, and every prediction has a potential for error. For many traders, especially those just embarking on this journey, this inherent unpredictability often becomes an overwhelming force. The markets don't just test our analytical skills; they challenge our very psychological makeup; hence, most traders respond impulsively when faced with this uncertainty. I am not making a "good or bad" judgment; the fact is that people are simply enacting what they are wired to do via millions of years of evolution. They also perpetually seek solace in so-called "foolproof" strategies. They labor under the illusion that they'll conquer the uncertainty if they can just amass enough data, uncover the right technique, or decipher the ideal pattern. However, more often than not, this quest only amplifies their anxiety. Every unexpected market movement, every unforeseen dip or surge, becomes a source of doubt and stress, leading to rushed decisions, missed opportunities, or ill-timed exits.

True mastery in trading requires a profound shift in mindset. Instead of resisting uncertainty, we must understand, accept, and embrace it. I would even add that we must learn to love it! Rather than viewing uncertainty as an adversary, we should recognize it as a constant companion, a force to be respected but not feared. By truly internalizing this and making peace with the unpredictability, traders can cultivate a calm detachment. From this centered space, decisions are made not from a place of fear or greed but from rational analysis and seasoned intuition. The journey to this enlightened state of trading can be challenging. It demands introspection, self-awareness, and, above all, relentless practice. However, by recognizing our intolerance of uncertainty and by actively working on improving it, we lay the foundation for not just trading success but a more balanced, harmonious approach to the myriad uncertainties of life itself. Hence, this first pillar is pivotal; its significance cannot be overstated.

Pillar Two: Fostering a Resilient Emotional Core

Diving deep into the world of uncertainty, after dissecting its various facets and reshaping your perception of it, leads you to the next challenging frontier: mastering the internal storms that such uncertainty unleashes. This journey demands introspection. And a lot of it! It's a call to look inward, to scrutinize the intricate whirls of your thoughts, your emotions, and the very fabric of your identity. The goal of this journey is to develop emotional equilibrium, an anchor that steadies you amid the volatility of markets. Imagine navigating the tumultuous seas of trading without such an anchor. You would agree, it's not recommendable. Market movements are bound to send your heart racing and your emotions spiraling. The wear and tear on your psyche won't make trading sustainable.

Understand this: consistent profitability in trading doesn't hinge solely on market acumen. This can't be said enough. Consistent profitability also leans (heavily) on one's ability to stay grounded when faced with market uncertainty. You cannot succeed as a trader if you don't understand this. It's not my intention to paint a grim picture but rather to emphasize the absolute necessity of emotional discipline in this profession. Visualize a sniper stationed with a singular objective, waiting for that perfect shot. The sniper's prowess isn't just in their skill but in their ability to remain calm, patient, and focused. Similarly, as a trader, if your elation soars with every win, if despair plummets with each loss, not only will you lose sight of your objective, but the emotional toll will lead to reckless decisions, jeopardizing your trading journey. The bedrock of enduring success in trading lies in cultivating unwavering emotional stability amidst the inevitable storms of the market. Hence, this second pillar is another pivot in achieving the behavioral consistency needed to sustain profitability. Rest assured, developing emotional stability isn't a herculean task; however, it does require commitment.

In the pursuit of regulating one's emotions, meditation presents itself as one of the most potent tools. Meditation is not just a practice; it's an exploration, a journey inward. It offers us a mirror to our innermost thoughts and emotions, allowing us to become acquainted

with the transient nature of our thoughts and feelings. As traders, the market constantly challenges our composure, pulling at the strings of our patience and resilience. Meditation teaches us to observe these internal fluctuations without becoming entangled in them. Just as a bodybuilder trains at the gym to enhance physical strength and mass, meditators use meditation to bolster their mental muscles, fortifying qualities like patience, resilience, and composure. The financial titans of Wall Street, including luminaries like Paul Tudor Jones, Ray Dalio, and Daniel Loeb, have all recognized and harnessed the unparalleled advantages of meditation. Their endorsement of this ancient practice in modern high-stakes trading is a testament to its efficacy (Baer 2014). In an arena where every decision carries weight, these magnates have found solace and clarity in the stillness of meditation. In fact, the embrace of meditation has become so widespread in the financial world that renowned firms like Goldman Sachs now offer meditation classes and seminars, with waiting lists stretching into the hundreds, as reported by Bloomberg (Burton and Effinger 2014). That is because meditation works! It isn't just another trending buzzword; it's a transformative, scientifically backed approach that empowers you to adopt a researcher's lens, delving deeply into the intricacies of your psyche and understanding its ebbs and flows. As a result, clarity, focus, and composure are all improved.

Drawing from my intensive forays into meditation during intensive months-long retreats and everyday life, I can vouch for its transformative potential. The richness and depth it has brought to my perception, understanding, and management of my inner world are unparalleled. On a foundational level, it has illuminated the inner workings of my psyche. It has shed light on the intricate dance of emotions, impulses, and thoughts, allowing for more mindful responses, especially in high-pressure situations typical in trading. The ramifications of such heightened self-awareness regarding my trading psychology were profound. Having said that, tempering expectations is crucial. While meditation is, indeed, powerful, it's not a magical elixir that remedies all challenges. It doesn't erase problems but equips you to navigate them with greater resilience

and clarity. Additionally, meditation is a journey, not a destination. It demands dedication, persistence, and unwavering commitment. However, for those willing to embark on this path, the rewards—in trading and life—are truly immeasurable.

Pillar Three: The Accountability Factor

In the vast expanse of information on trading, much of what you'll stumble upon is steeped in theory—to some extent, so are the insights found within the pages of this book. Theory is foundational as it sketches out the path; however, the transformative journey comes alive in the act of walking that path—through relentless implementation, hands-on practice, and unwavering dedication to the craft. And the final beacon guiding this journey? Accountability. After having developed a proper understanding of uncertainty (pillar one), as you keep working on the emotional management component (pillar two), accountability is the last piece of the behavioral consistency puzzle—it will make a world of difference to your bottom line.

For instance, take the story of the billionaire trader and hedge fund titan Paul Tudor Jones. In his quest for unwavering discipline and focus, he sought counsel from Tony Robbins, the celebrated motivational guru. The value Tudor Jones placed on this advisory relationship was evident in the substantial fees, running into millions, that he willingly disbursed. As reported by *Business Insider* (Feloni 2017), this relationship profoundly impacted Jones's trading trajectory. Robbins became pivotal in anchoring Tudor Jones during his trading endeavors, holding him accountable at every turn. Furthermore, at another juncture, the illustrious Deepak Chopra also played a guiding role for Jones.

Consider the emphasis on accountability for a seasoned expert like Tudor Jones. The truth is that self-accountability is one of the most elusive disciplines for most of us. This statement isn't just about trading; it's about life. Whether it's sticking to a rigorous diet, keeping up with fitness goals, or resisting the urge to light up another cigarette, we constantly grapple with our commitments.

Even our most iron-clad resolutions can waver in the face of shifting moods and fleeting desires. Willpower, as powerful as it can be, is also temperamental, wearing thin amidst daily challenges. Relying solely on it is a gamble. That's where the strength of external accountability steps in, acting as a steadfast lighthouse guiding us back when we drift off course. Such external accountability doesn't diminish our capabilities or self-worth; rather, it magnifies our potential. It's akin to having a co-pilot on a treacherous journey, ensuring we don't lose our way. When we openly commit to someone else—a mentor, a coach, or even a dedicated peer group—we are not just voicing our goals; we are solidifying our dedication to achieving them. It becomes a symbiotic relationship where growth, consistency, and progress are the fruits reaped. Hence, if the likes of Tudor Jones, with all their expertise and prowess, see the merit in external accountability, it underscores its pivotal role in success. Whether in trading or any endeavor, weaving in this support can be the transformative element that elevates one from good to exceptional.

In this book, we'll embark on a deep exploration of these three foundational pillars that form the bedrock of trading consistency. These pillars represent not just a method but also the most direct route to enduring profitability in trading. I state this with conviction, drawing from my extensive years fine-tuning my own trading psyche. I've broken down the key elements of my success in the market, pinpointing fundamental principles that have also propelled many others. This is how this three-pillar approach was born. Over the years, I've meticulously honed it, guiding numerous traders to the pinnacle of their potential.

I have grappled with the same challenges you might currently face in your trading; I've sifted through the overwhelming inundation of information, most of which can be misleading or irrelevant. The market is rife with those who gamble under the guise of trading, and it's a travesty that earnest individuals get ensnared in such traps. With utmost sincerity, I wish to shepherd you through this maze. Believe me when I say my commitment to your success is personal. With a profound grasp of these pillars and a relentless

pursuit to embody them, you will not only differentiate yourself from the herd but also massively improve your luck in the market, catapulting yourself into the echelons of trading elites.

This three-pillar approach is logical, pragmatic, time-tested, and scientific. But above all, it's easy to grasp and implement. The typical trading psychology book is very dense. It covers a lot of ground and is often entrenched in academic rhetoric. These pieces of work are helpful, but they are often removed from the realities of trading. They are written by those who have never felt the pulse of live markets. I present a contrast. My foundation may not be based on ornate academic degrees, but it is solidified by hands-on experience. A lot of it! Thousands of trades, countless traders coached to success, and an intrinsic understanding of what truly constitutes a winning trading psychology—this is the perspective I offer.

Let me emphasize: simplicity is strength. I aim to demystify, not complicate. There is beauty in stripping things down to their core, eschewing unnecessary complexities. Adding verbose explanations or grandiose lexicon only muddies the waters. Instead, I've chosen clarity and simplicity as my allies, hoping to make the voyage ahead smoother and more enlightening for you. As you delve deeper into this book, I invite you to approach it not just as a manual but as a companion on your journey to mastering the intricate dance of the market. Ground yourself in the three pillars mentioned above. Doing so will instantaneously elevate your game, distinguishing you from the multitude. Once you've cemented this foundation, you can venture—if you want—into more complex trading psychology topics to further hone your mental edge.

In closing this segment, it's worth noting that readers may hold differing opinions or perspectives, and that is perfectly fine. However, I earnestly request that you approach this work with an open heart and mind. The wisdom encapsulated here isn't merely a product of fleeting trends but stands as an enduring beacon. If you allow yourself even a modicum of openness, you'll recognize that the principles in these pages transcend trading, reflecting deeper truths about the art of living itself.