

Chapter 1: Who Are You?

What you are is the price you paid to get what you used to want.

—Mignon McLaughlin

Above the entrance to the ancient Greek temple at Delphi are the words, "Know thyself, and thou shalt know the universe and its gods."

How well do you know yourself? It's a challenging question. Many of us go through periods in our lives trying to "fit in", "get by" and "play the game", seeking approval and validation from others. On the other hand, some people seem to have greater clarity and confidence, and manifest their vision consistently. What are the core strengths that lead to inner and outer success?

One of the primary lessons that successful people learn is that progress requires changing the way they think, and consequently their actions. They also recognize that their egos will resist most changes. When we're in transition, our sense of self is usually fragile, and this provides opportunities to learn how to handle change amidst uncertainty and fear of the unknown. Unpleasant as this feels, it is a skill that can be learned. Thank goodness – because, ultimately, we don't have much choice! The rude lesson of history is that whatever doesn't change, eventually ceases to exist. That's why it's often said, "It's not the strongest or smartest that survive, but those who learn to adapt."

The fact is that all of us have unlimited potential. On some level, we all know that we have the capacity to be and do more, and it is thrilling to acknowledge that most of our limitations are largely self-imposed. We all have unlimited potential to achieve everything we want. We can experience our grandest dreams. No matter who we are, or what we do, there is always room to think bigger and bolder and achieve greater excellence. *The Next You* was written to help you achieve your highest potential and live fulfilling lives – with abundant inner and outer success.

Who are you really?

Let's take a fresh look at this issue of personal identity - our own sense of self. If someone asked you, "Who are you?", how would you answer? If someone spoke your name, would you turn to see who called? Are you the name that was called? What if you changed your name, would you still be the same person? You can change your clothes, job, or move to another house, but you are still the same person.

Can you change who you are? The possibility that we are the creators of our own destiny is a thrilling and challenging prospect – thrilling because it means we are potentially empowered in the most fundamental way, and challenging because it implies increased personal responsibility. If we accept the possibility that we can innovate *The Next You*, our prospects can change radically and immediately. The next question then becomes - what do we really want?

Most of us want the same fundamental things out of life. Inwardly, we long for basics like peace, love and joy, and in our outer lives we want happy families, successful careers, meaningful relationships, good health and so forth.

Is it realistic that we could achieve success in all the *Slices of Life*? Usually, achieving success in one *Slice* involves significant trade-offs in other *Slices*. Achieving financial success for instance, often calls for long hours at work and enduring a fast-paced life, which precludes time spent with the kids and meditating.

Success is difficult to measure. We observe each other from an external perspective, so it's impossible to know how fulfilled anyone really is. Plus, it's a challenge to quantify such qualitative personal data. Yet, most of us know enough about others to understand that truly integrated success is pretty rare. Many seem to struggle to balance their busy lives, juggling personal and professional responsibilities, without time and energy to achieve the dream of fulfillment that they always hoped for.

How We Live Life

Bobi was a successful interior designer and television host, but she worked seven days a week and suffered the effects of perpetual stress. As she became clear about her core strengths and passions, she built a team around her to do all the marketing and sales that had been wearing her down. Within a few months, she was doing more of what she loved and a lot less of the detail work that was driving her crazy.

In the beginning, it was hard for her, because she was both a controller and a perfectionist, but her experience eventually proved to her that there were people who could not only complete tasks to her satisfaction, but actually do a better job than she ever did. Yet, to step into this collaborative and effective environment, she had to re-define herself as an "executive", rather than the person who does the endless required tasks herself. When she redefined her identity, she could then successfully redefine her role – because for most of us, who we are, is inextricably linked with what we do.

Around the age of 50

Somewhere along the road of life, many of us disconnected from our idealistic dreams and settled for various compromises. As many people over 50 know (and

those in their 30's and 40's are beginning to discover) such concessions often lead to some kind of "mid-life malaise", a process happening to younger and younger people these days. Renouncing one's youthful dreams may have seemed OK for some time, but at a certain point, many of us began to question our roles and accomplishments in life and began to reflect on what really meant the most to us. Such introspective inquiry is often triggered by a specific event – the loss of a job or significant relationship, or maybe a health challenge - and while negotiating this specific issue, some of us begin to question our entire lives.

The first remedy we usually look for is some kind of superficial fix – a new wardrobe, joining a gym or taking an exotic vacation. Yet sometimes it seems that no matter what we try, a gnawing feeling remains that something isn't quite right. We may practice yoga, join a support group, or read personal development books, but sometimes it seems that no matter what we do, we still feel stuck and lost.

Unlike a snapshot taken at a given moment in time, all of us reflect the sum total of our life experiences, including our beliefs, choices, learnings, memories and dreams. Our identity is defined both by who we are and what we do. Furthermore, life moves through different chapters, so our sense of self shifts along the way. When we were young, our future was in front of us and our identity was still being formed. Then, we made major decisions that took us on specific journeys through life. Before we knew it, our list of responsibilities grew so long that it was an accomplishment to just get through each week. For many years, we built careers, raised kids, and were ever involved in countless demanding projects.

Awareness is Key

Awareness is the first step in understanding ourselves or life. The following story illustrates the challenge of taking greater ownership of our personal experience.

In a typical high school English class, students are required to read many novels. So, one teacher found a creative way to help students relate to the characters they were studying - by relating those individuals' experiences to their own. Toward the end of the semester, the teacher asked his students, "What book did you enjoy studying least?" A lively discussion ensued, and various books were severely criticized. Then he asked his students to halt the discussion and write an essay on the following question, "What personal attitudes within yourself do you attribute your lack of enjoyment to?" The students stared at him, but he just sat down, and, one by one, the students slowly began to write. The teacher had forced them to take a next step toward personal ownership of their experience. Sooner or later, life does this very same thing to us all.

How do we go about becoming more aware of what's going on around us, and of our internal attitudes and perspectives? How can we analyze our identity in an objective way? Are we the thoughts we think?

Thought Leads to Actions Leads to Results

One of man's greatest discoveries is that...thought creates! Thought can be said to be the originator of everything that is brought into existence, the starting point of all innovation. This is a profound fact. Everything is actually created three times: first as an idea, then as a plan, and finally in action. Thinking causes things to happen. Action is the movement of energy that flows from thought. Thus, new thoughts create new actions, which create *The Next You*.

The idea that thought leads to actions and results sounds self-evident. However, do we really grasp this fundamental fact? When we get poor results, do we blame our poor thinking? Accepting the responsibility that "thought is causal" is vital to innovating swiftly, effectively and continually - because the primary challenge of change lies in our limited ways of thinking. If our thoughts don't change, then we will interpret "new" data in essentially old ways, leading us to produce familiar results.

Many old thoughts and perceptions continue to affect our actions, even though we are no longer consciously aware of them. A wise man once said, "The problem is behind us, not in front of us." Only by changing our thoughts can we release ourselves from the past.

Each one of us has a unique identity and also a unique purpose in life. There is no one like us. We were born to be someone and do something completely unique, and our roles in life are deeply intertwined with our sense of self. How would you answer this challenging question: "Who would you be, and what would you do, if you knew you could not fail?" If you could accomplish one single thing, knowing you could not fail - who would you be, and what would you do?

Change is often viewed as a challenge. When we start to plan the future or think new thoughts, our egos almost always resist. When we think "out of the box", our limiting inner "voices" automatically begin to question: "Do I have what it takes?", "Am I willing to pay the price?" and "What happens if I fail?"

So let's take a look at the various Slices-of-Life. Every transition begins in one, and is an opportunity to move into *The Next You*.

zipTips

Below are some *zipTips* to help you dig deeper into your personal identity.

- Ask your parents and family members about their sense of self. Then list a few ways that you are different or similar.
- Become aware of your mental “self-talk”. Write down what you regularly say to yourself about yourself.

Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice.

—Steve Jobs

Testimonials

I'm now on a different playing field, one I've wanted to be on for a long time. I see new possibility and potential, and fear is not around. It's very grounding and it affects everything. My life-purpose is now conscious and impacts how I relate to my wife and my kids, and everything.

Ward Hendon, founding partner, Axiom international legal firm

Your assistance has been invaluable to the future success of our business!

Josie Natori, International Fashion Designer

Your systemic approach to thinking and innovation is a game changer. It sped up our innovation process and led to more breakthroughs in product development. It is something I am teaching to all our new scientists.

Jack Emert, chief-scientist, Infineum, a division of Exxon-Mobil

Your System makes total sense in our Chinese culture and it is being embraced fully as a great tool for future success. Thank you for allowing us to translate your material, which will help many students reach their goals.

Wong Karwai, Professor of Economics Perking University

My work with Andrew & Craig has given me greater clarity, and I've taken more constructive actions than I did during 10 years of therapy.

Tia Hoberman, photographer

Craig and Andrew have helped me balance my professional and personal life in a controlled, structured and loving way. The GAPzip System is phenomenal and has helped light up my career and relationships.

Paul Dougherty, M.D., Founder of Laser Vision, Los Angeles, CA

I'd read a ton of self-help books and been to numerous workshops, but GAPZIP is different. It taught me one of the most important lessons I ever learned – that HOW I think is more important than WHAT I think.

Richard Kahn, marketing executive

I just love the laser-focus the GAPZIP System has brought to my television series. Your direction, input and inspiration are really appreciated. I think you guys are brilliant.

Shadoe Stevens, television and radio producer

With only three months from start date to implementation, the customer-service innovation your team partnered with us on was accomplished - on time and on budget. The initial results exceeded our expectations. The acid test was that, even though customer calls more than doubled, the average wait time was below target.

Joyce Rodgers, Nordstrom's Vice-President

As a TV host, I meet many inspired people, but Andrew and Craig are special. Andrew's vast business experience and Craig's depth of understanding make them two of the most amazing people I know.

Bobi Leonard, Bobi Leonard Living, Inc.

The Transitions: The Next You Learning Program is helping me to quickly become conscious of what I'm doing in my head that gets in my way. As soon as I become conscious, my thoughts start to change. You've created something pretty incredible and powerful.

Lisa Ruby, software engineer

I must say there are NO OTHER people quite like Craig and Andrew. They don't change systems - they change lives. They are like an introspective mirror that shows what we may be hiding from ourselves, and plainly show how to move to the next level.

Dr. Alonzo King, ballet impresario

Thanks you for assisting in the development of our Client Acquisition and Service Program and our Leadership Program for Managers. We appreciate your profit focused, systematic approach and recognition of the importance of working in teams.

Brent Bisson, American Express, Group Vice-President

I had been unable to get hold of my thoughts in an organized fashion before this training. Clearly defining my goals in a systematic way, plus tracking progress for where I want to be with my personal life is priceless.

Sean Bowles, IT Manager, AT&T

The partnership of your organization with ours was essential in pulling ourselves up by the bootstraps and really getting through a dark period in our history. We continue to scope out our next area of innovation, training our staff and instituting the metrics, discipline, and accountability so your processes are sustainable.

Ric Serafin, President, Dawson Company

Today, I feel the best I have about our operation in the four years I've been here. I have now moved into the total confidence arena, a place I've not been before here. So, my thanks and praise to YOU for working with all of us to help move us forward. You are a wonderful and insightful facilitator.

Jan Jackson, Dean Extended Studies, University of California San Marcos