

# Chapter 1

## The Roots of PSYCH-K

*People wish to be settled. Only as far as they are unsettled is there any hope for them.*

–Ralph Waldo Emerson

### **I**s This As Good As It Gets?

It was 1983. I don't remember the month, or even the season. I recall only the circumstances. Sitting in my office at the cable television company, I stared into space. For the last couple of years I'd pushed thoughts of "How much longer?" and "Something's got to give!" far into a back room of my awareness. The door to that room had been ajar for some time, and I'd sneaked glimpses into its dim recesses. Why, I'd wondered, was I now earning three times the money I had made in my first job yet feeling three times worse? Certainly one of the main reasons I'd taken my current job was to reduce my commuting time from several hours a day to just a few minutes, but a convenient commute was no longer a satisfactory trade-off for my need to contribute something more to people's lives than I could managing a cable TV system. The fat-wallet, thin-life feeling became overwhelming, putting me in one of those life-assessment moments, where in the

privacy of my own mind I could be completely honest. This was not unfamiliar territory to me, having known such moments more than a few times in the previous several years. The social trappings for happiness were all there: a wife, two children, a home in the suburbs, and a combined income that afforded the creature comforts of middle class America. And yet, something vital was missing.

Until that moment, my ability to reason had been my most effective tool for navigating through the whitewater of life. Indeed, reason and logic were responsible for most of what I had created, and yet simultaneously I knew these seemingly all-important faculties were no match for the deep feelings of emptiness sitting in my belly. Logic, in fact, was making things worse, reminding me that I *should* be happy, because I had what most people wanted. Who was I to complain? The real issue wasn't about me rocking the boat, because the boat was rocking me!

I sat at my desk, unaware of anything on that day but the simple fact that for two years I had been trying not to rock the boat and now the boat was sinking! Something had to change. I was not clear about

what that something was, but a sense of despair and impending disaster haunted me.

I had reached a point of no return. In the past, it had never gone that far. All of a sudden I was in touch with what was at the very core of my being, beyond the boundaries of my personality and the day-to-day social concerns that are the domain of logic. I became aware that the greatest joy I derived from my current job came from working with people and that it was only a matter of time before I would have to make a change. Those two realizations catapulted me out of a fourteen-year business career and the financial security it provided.

Compelled by a persistent sense of urgency, I enrolled in a graduate program for counseling at the University of Colorado. Over the next three years I completed the course work at night and received a master's degree in counseling in 1986. During that time I realized that the world of business and the world of counseling were worlds apart! Whereas business stressed results, counseling emphasized the process itself. Success in business, often measured as profit and loss, was quantifiable. Counseling, on the other hand, was

difficult to quantify in any concrete way, and the process could take years before results were apparent. Yet I loved it.

As I grew as a therapist, I found myself not always agreeing with the business philosophy of just doing whatever it took to achieve success, yet I was equally disturbed by the overemphasis on the *process* of psychotherapy, with so little attention being paid to achieving *results*. This widening schism forced me to look outside my university training for more results-oriented approaches to my future profession as a psychotherapist, a search that led me through a myriad of alternative therapies such as Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), hypnosis, Educational Kinesiology, Touch for Health, Reiki, and a plethora of other contemporary and ancient healing techniques. I read countless books, attended numerous lectures and workshops, and listened to the best and the worst of the self-help gurus. Out of this primordial soup of therapeutic approaches I eventually arrived at the conclusions I share with you in this book.

Finally, in 1986 I left the business world to begin a private practice in psychotherapy, struggling for two

years to find better ways to help my clients make positive changes in their lives. I was frustrated by the limitations of the old counseling formula of Insight + Willpower = Change. Many of my clients, up to their eyeballs in insights about how and why they had become the way they were, were still not experiencing the satisfying lives they sought. I helped them develop mental and behavioral strategies for moving beyond their current limitations, yet the problems persisted despite their motivation and efforts to change. They knew the right things to do, yet they weren't doing the right things. Something was missing. But what? I did know that just using insight and willpower alone seldom resulted in real and lasting change. I believed my clients deserved a better return on the time and money they were investing than I was capable of offering with the techniques I learned in graduate school.

My search for synthesis finally came to fruition early in December 1988. I remember that day clearly. I was putting together a marketing flyer for a workshop I had done several times before. With money tight and Christmas shopping in full swing, I was counting on the workshop to ease the extra expenses of the season.

I took the master flyer I'd prepared on my computer to the local printer. I drove home and began to fold them for mailing when I noticed the *dates* of the workshop were missing: 150 flyers and no dates! I considered hand-correcting them, but my sense of perfectionism would not permit it. So the only option was correcting the master copy and going back to the printer for more copies.

Home again with dates in place, I began the folding job once more. When I was halfway through the task, my eyes caught the registration section. I couldn't believe what I saw—or rather didn't see. I had left off the *times* of the workshop. In disbelief I stared at that flyer for five full minutes, thinking maybe if I stared long enough I could make the times magically appear! I had never made that mistake on the flyers before. Soon I went from being stunned to being angry—deeply angry. I was faced with the same dilemma of correcting the copies by hand or starting all over again. I had already wasted 150 flyers, yet couldn't bear the thought of sending out anything that looked unprofessional. Furious with myself for being so careless, frustrated by the economic pressures of the Christmas season, and plagued by an ominous feeling that something

or someone other than just myself was sabotaging me, I went out to the backyard to let the December air cool the rage in my flushed face. Still fuming, I sat on a half-frozen lawn chair and closed my eyes. Through clenched teeth I said out loud, “Okay God, if you don’t want me to do what I am doing, what *do* you want me to do?”

I sat in silence, not really expecting an answer. But, to my astonishment, within minutes the details of a pattern for changing subconscious beliefs *showed up* in my head. I could barely believe what I was experiencing. When the information stopped coming, I jumped up, ran to my computer, and feverishly began typing. In a matter of a few minutes the information in my head was gone and I was reading what I had typed: *thirteen paired belief statements and the complete instructions for their use!*<sup>3</sup> Even though certain components of the pattern were recognizable as ideas with which I was already familiar, most of them were new. In fact, the entire format and sequence of steps was completely unique. This experience was remarkable, to say the least! It became the first in a series of patterns I received

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<sup>3</sup> This information is called a Core Belief Balance and is taught in the Advanced PSYCH-K Integration Workshop.

in a similar manner over the next several months. These unique processes constitute the body of work I call PSYCH-K™.

As you can see from this example, PSYCH-K was created more out of *inspiration* than perspiration. It wasn't a laborious, intellectual process of discovery, but instead arrived in a series of "blinding flashes of the obvious." In reality, years of experiences and hundreds of books had prepared me for those "blinding flashes." Over those several months, the belief change techniques that make up the total PSYCH-K process came to me in separate "packages" of insights.

I was skeptical at first. After all, this new way of changing broke every rule I had been taught in graduate school about counseling. It violated the assumptions of mainstream psychology that had prevailed for more than fifty years. So before using this new approach with my clients, I experimented with these new patterns using willing friends and myself. The results were often dramatic and life changing. Eventually, with a proven track record, I began to use the techniques with my counseling clients. The successes continued. With PSYCH-K, I was able to facilitate many changes with my

clients in just a few sessions. Changes that took months or even years to achieve with traditional methods were happening in just three to six sessions with PSYCH-K. Eventually skepticism yielded to experience. It was working. It wasn't long before I had arranged the techniques into a workshop format and was teaching them to others. It was gratifying to see how easily people of all ages and walks of life were learning and using this new approach to personal change. What's more, it seemed so effortless!