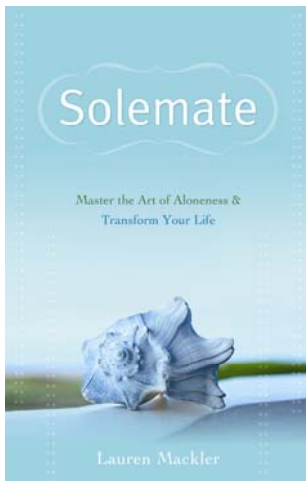


Solemate

Master the Art of Aloneness and
Transform Your Life

Lauren Mackler



SPECIFICATIONS

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SALES AND MARKETING

Many people spend years waiting for an ideal partner—a “soul mate” to make them happy and complete. Others settle for unfulfilling relationships out of fear of being alone. In *Solemate*, Lauren Mackler provides a groundbreaking road map for achieving mastery of your own life so you can experience a sense of wholeness and well-being whether you’re on your own or in a relationship. It’s about becoming the person you were meant to be, treating yourself well, and shedding the old beliefs and behaviors that limit your ability to realize your greatest potential. It’s about becoming your own cherished solemate.

Drawing from her own experiences; those of her clients; and the fields of psychology, physiology, sociology, holistic healing, and strategic business practices, Mackler has developed a unique program for

reclaiming your innate wholeness. This gradual, step-by-step process involves understanding where your self-defeating patterns come from and how to move beyond them. She helps you uncover and retrieve your authentic self—who you really are beneath the layers of life conditioning. This program will help you live in a more conscious and deliberate way and align your actions with the results you want in your life.

A world-renowned coach, psychotherapist, workshop facilitator, keynote speaker, and host of the *Life Keys* radio show, Mackler guides you through a process that, until now, has only been available through her coaching programs and *Mastering the Art of Aloneness* workshops. Through quizzes, exercises, and guided journaling, she helps you:

- Identify the limiting beliefs, fears, and behaviors that keep you from feeling whole and happy
- Learn to override these habitual patterns and manage your fears
- Uncover your authentic self
- Create a life vision and action plan to help you achieve any goal you set for yourself, and
- Build inner and outer support systems that help you bring your vision to life

Solemate is about mastering the art of aloneness. *But it's not about being alone.* It's a book for people who want to enhance the quality of their lives by improving their relationships with themselves and with others. *Solemate* gives you the tools you need to develop the self-awareness, life skills, and emotional intelligence to live a full, happy, successful, and financially secure life—with or without a partner.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bestselling author, coach, psychotherapist, and host of the *Life Keys* radio show, Lauren Mackler, has risen to international prominence by developing Illumineering, a groundbreaking method that integrates family systems work, psychodynamic psychology, and coaching. Demonstrated in hundreds of Mackler's clients, Illumineering is highly effective in helping people break free of their self-defeating patterns and create the lives to which they aspire. Lauren is frequently featured in the media, including CNN, FOX, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Huffington Post*, *London's Daily Mail*, *Money Magazine*, *Living Fit*, *Body & Soul*, *Marie Claire*, *Ladies Home Journal*, and *The Boston Globe*.

AUTHOR RESIDENCE: Boston, MA

Biography



Lauren Mackler

Lauren Mackler is a world-renowned coach, speaker, host of the LIFE KEYS radio show, and creator of the Illumineering™ Coaching method. She is the author of the international best-seller, *Solemate: Master the Art of Aloneness & Transform Your Life* and co-author of *Speaking of Success* with Jack Canfield and Stephen Covey.

Before entering the personal and professional development field, Lauren was a television host on the *PM Magazine* show and vocalist with the recording group, *Tuxedo Junction*. After attending a life-changing seminar in 1982, Lauren left the entertainment industry to become a psychotherapist and workshop facilitator. She lived in Germany for several years, where she gained national recognition for her pioneering work in combining the principles of psychoimmunology and holistic healing with psychodynamic psychotherapy.

In 1995, Lauren returned to the U.S. and spent several years in the corporate arena, leading Arthur Andersen's People Strategy consulting practice, and working as a career and executive coach. In the aftermath of 9/11, Lauren became inspired to start a company dedicated to helping people liberate their greatest potential. In 2001, she founded Lauren Mackler & Associates, using her expertise in human behavior, relationships, work, and leadership to offer coaching, workshops, and professional training programs that have helped people around the world create the personal and professional lives to which they aspire.

Lauren's book, *Solemate: Master the Art of Aloneness & Transform Your Life*, became an international best-seller nine days after its release. A blogger for the *Huffington Post* and her *Live Boldly* blog, Lauren is a frequent guest expert on CNN and FOX, and a subject-matter expert for the *Wall Street Journal*, *Marie Claire*, *New York Daily News*, *Whole Living*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Parade*, and other print, television, and radio media. A passionate teacher, Lauren has served as a member of Northeastern University's executive education faculty, a guest lecturer at Canyon Ranch and Brandeis and Harvard Universities, and she is a current faculty member at Omega and Kripalu. An international keynote speaker, Lauren has delivered motivational presentations for Deutsche Bank, New York Life, MetLife, Joseph Abboud, Boston Consulting Group, the Nature Conservancy, Sprint, Staples, and many other corporate and non-profit organizations.

In 2011, Lauren launched the Illumineer™ Coach Institute, which offers Illumineering™ Coach Trainings to train and certify professionals in the Illumineering™ Coaching method. Lauren holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology, Masters-level German certification in Psychotherapeutic Counseling, a Master's degree in Organizational Development, and she is a graduate of The Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute.

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The following excerpt is taken from the book, *SOLEMATE: Master the Art of Aloneness & Transform Your Life*, by Lauren Mackler. It was published by Hay House (Hardcover April 2009, Paperback April 2010) and is available at all bookstores or online at: www.hayhouse.com or www.amazon.com.

Solemate

Master the Art of Aloneness & Transform Your Life

Chapter 2

Embracing Your Aloneness

Today, in one out of four American households, someone is living alone.¹ In 2005, America reached a milestone. According to the American Community Survey released by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2006, for the first time in history fewer than half of all American households—just shy of 50 percent—consisted of married couples.² And, for the first time, more American women were living without a spouse than with one.³ This means, on average, Americans now spend half of their adult lives outside of marriage.⁴ These are major shifts that have been brewing for decades, and yet people’s attitudes about being alone have changed remarkably little during those years.

Aloneness is still associated with a variety of negative emotions. As an example, at the start of every *Mastering the Art of Aloneness* workshop, I ask participants what they think of when they hear the word “aloneness.” What words and feelings come to mind? I hear the same responses over and over. “Lonely.” “Depressed.” “Unwanted.” “Afraid.” “A loser.” It’s no surprise that most people think of aloneness as a negative state, something to avoid rather than embrace. From early childhood, we’re conditioned to associate aloneness with emotional pain. We’re taught that it’s a condition to pity, something to be ashamed of. That attitude manifests itself in all kinds of ways. Parents become anxious when their children don’t have enough play dates. Teenagers base their self-esteem on how many friends they have. And, all too often, adults measure each other’s well-being according to whether or not someone is married or in a committed relationship. For most people, being alone means being unhappy.

With this book, I’m not suggesting that being alone is something we should aspire to or that it’s the ideal lifestyle. Mastering the art of aloneness doesn’t mean living in isolation or never needing the love, support, and involvement of others. It means creating and living a life in which you feel whole and content as an individual on your own; a life in which you can take care of yourself emotionally and financially. Mastering the art of aloneness is a process. It involves developing the self-awareness, life skills, and emotional intelligence you need to share healthy relationships—and to live a rich, full, gratifying life whether you’re living it alone or with someone else. That process involves thinking about aloneness in a radically different way—making a conscious and deliberate change in the way you think and the way you live.

Recognize that the more you *engage in new behaviors*, the more you will *create the new results* to which you aspire. Here's an example: Let's say you have a free Saturday. You can look at it from two perspectives. You can stay at home feeling sorry for yourself because you're alone with no plans and nothing to do. You can sit around in your sweatpants and a T-shirt watching television, eating chips, and feeling lousy. Or you can look at it a different way: "I have a free day all to myself and I can do anything I want. I can go to the gym and work out. I can call a friend and go to the movies. I can work in my garden, make myself a delicious lunch, and read a great novel." Then do something. Do something gratifying. Do something productive. Or do something that truly engages you. But make a conscious effort to avoid doing something that will make you feel isolated and sad. By being more active and more positive, you'll reinforce and solidify your new perspective on aloneness and begin to create a new reality.

This same approach can infuse every aspect of your life—not just your plans for an open Saturday, but your plans for your future, where to focus your energies, and how you approach the challenges you routinely face. You can begin to see opportunities you may have never seen before—instead of being trapped in negative feelings about aloneness and the conditions those feelings invoke.

Assessing Where You Are Today

We're all different. Each of us faces a unique set of challenges and confronts a unique set of obstacles to mastering our aloneness. The following questionnaire will help you assess where you are today, and which areas of your life require further development as you move forward in mastering the art of aloneness.

Mastering the Art of Aloneness: A Self-Assessment Exercise

The following areas include the core components of mastering the art of aloneness. Check those areas that are going very well in your life—areas where you are experiencing a high level of satisfaction. Check all boxes that apply.

Physical Health and Well-Being:

- I am in optimal physical health and rarely get sick.
- I'm physically fit and energetic.
- I consistently practice self-care by eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, and maintaining a healthy and balanced lifestyle.

Relationship with Yourself:

- I feel good about who I am on the inside and about my physical appearance.
- I have a strong sense of self-esteem and self-respect.

- I enjoy emotional and mental balance, health, and well-being.
- I consistently honor myself by expressing my feelings and needs and setting healthy boundaries with others.

Professional Life:

- My work is enjoyable and meaningful to me.
- My work activates my full potential and leverages my skills and strengths.
- My work provides me with the level of success and compensation I want to have.

Personal Development:

- I have a strong sense of who I am and what I want in my life.
- I have a clear understanding of my strengths, weaknesses, passions, and values.
- I'm able to set and follow through on goals and commitments to myself and others.
- I can effectively communicate my thoughts, feelings, and needs to others and manage conflict in an effective and resourceful manner.

Social Relationships:

- I share healthy, supportive, and joyful relationships with others and actively engage in the world around me.
- I feel connected to a community that uplifts and supports me.

Spiritual Life (if it's important to you):

- I have a connection to a higher power or energy and draw from it in my daily life.
- I'm able to be fully present in each moment and take time to appreciate the blessings I have.

Financial:

- I have the financial resources I need to provide the life quality and experiences that I want to have.

- I am financially self-sufficient and feel in control of my financial security.

Identifying your Challenges and Opportunities

Now, look at the areas you didn't check. Identifying the specific areas of your life that are not satisfying, and the opportunities inherent in improving them, will help you to develop a more positive view of aloneness.

Challenges and Opportunities Exercise

Step One. Take out your journal and write “The Challenges in Mastering My Aloneness” at the top of a new page. Referring back to the items you did not check on the questionnaire, make a list of all the challenges and obstacles you face in moving toward your mastery of aloneness—the areas on which you feel you need to focus to move forward. These will serve as benchmarks as you go through this process. For example, if you didn't check *Relationship with Myself*, what are the reasons? Your list might include: “I'm out of shape and feel self-conscious about the way I look,” or “I make other people's needs more important than my own,” or “I feel shy and insecure when I'm around people I don't know.” Identify anything you feel is holding you back from reaching your fullest potential—such as negative emotions (feelings of sadness, loneliness, hopelessness) and negative behaviors (overeating, smoking, drinking too much).

Step Two. Now write “The Opportunities in Mastering My Aloneness” at the top of a new page. Based on the challenges you've identified, list the opportunities inherent in these challenges—those things you can focus on to begin changing your perception of aloneness from a negative situation to one that's full of opportunities. Based on the challenges I listed as examples in Step One, your list might look something like this:

- Get in great physical shape.
- Learn how to set healthy boundaries with people and better meet my own needs.
- Develop greater self-confidence and feel more at ease around people.

This list can be as general or specific as you like. It might include such opportunities as: “Become more independent.” “Learn how to manage my finances.” “Uncover new interests and passions.” “Engage in social activities that will inspire and fulfill me.” “Find more meaningful work.” “Increase my self-esteem.” Or it might include more specific goals and actions, such as: “Join Weight Watchers and lose fifteen pounds.” “Go through a Human Resources certification program so I can increase my income.” “Find a coach or therapist, and focus on developing a better relationship with myself and increasing my self-esteem.” What's most important here is to develop a list that inspires you to begin to turn your own challenges into new opportunities.

**Talking Points
for Lauren Mackler**

author of

Solemate: Master the Art of Aloneness & Transform Your Life

Interview Lead in Segments:

- Fewer than half of all American households consist of married couples, and Americans now spend half of their adult lives outside of marriage. Despite these trends, people still think of aloneness as a condition to pity or feel ashamed of.
- Few adults escape from childhood with their “innate wholeness” intact. Lauren explains the life conditioning process—how the patterns and behaviors we learned as children can inhibit our ability to create a fulfilling and secure life, and have healthy relationships as adults.
- Many people invest countless hours and dollars in self-help resources and therapies, but still struggle with the same issues over and over. Lauren explains why these approaches fail to help people attain a sense of well being and achieve their greatest potential.
- Many people spend years waiting for their “soul mate” to make them happy and complete. Instead of *pursuing* their ideal partner, Lauren talks about the benefits of *becoming* the partner they seek.
- Fear is one of the biggest blocks to achieving the life vision to which we aspire, yet most fears are not based on our current reality. Lauren discusses the hidden roots of fear and her five-step process for moving beyond them.
- Most people just stumble through life, *living by default* instead of consciously creating their lives. Lauren shares the four keys of *living deliberately* to align your actions and behaviors with the life you want to have.
- Many relationships and marriages turn into “love’s battlefields.” For people already in or aspiring to a relationship, mastering the art of aloneness is an important and powerful prerequisite for creating a healthy partnership or marriage.
- Drawing from the fields of psychology, physiology, sociology, holistic healing, and strategic business practices, *Solemate* presents a groundbreaking roadmap for achieving mastery of your own life, and creating a happy, fulfilling, and secure life—on your own or in a relationship.

**Interview with
Lauren Mackler**

author of

Solemate: Master the Art of Aloneness & Transform Your Life

April 1, 2009

1. There are a multitude of self-help books that address many of the same topics as *Solemate*. These include books for singles, and books about how to overcome fear, live a more fulfilling life, and build self-esteem. What makes *Solemate* different from the rest?

Many self-help books targeted to singles are “how to” books for snaring the perfect mate. They reinforce the myth that happiness is found by searching outside yourself—instead of within yourself. Other self-help books focus on overcoming low self-esteem, fear, and loneliness, but fail to address their *root causes*—the limiting beliefs and behaviors we learn in childhood that drive our adults lives. And, while there are a few books that espouse the message that aloneness can be a positive experience, they don’t offer a clear roadmap for how to make it a reality.

Drawing from my own experiences and those of my clients, as well as the fields of psychology, physiology, sociology, holistic healing, and strategic business practices, I’ve developed a unique program that helps people move beyond the limitations that spring from their early conditioning and begin to live in alignment with what I call the “authentic self”—the person they were born to be. And, unlike other personal development books that are purely theoretical, *Solemate* includes quizzes, exercises, and guided journaling that help readers understand where their self-defeating patterns come from and how to move beyond them, and provides concrete tools and strategies that help them begin living a full, happy, successful, and financially secure life.

2. You say that the book is about mastering the art of aloneness, but that it’s not about being alone. How is aloneness different from being alone?

Mastering the art of aloneness is not about being alone or isolated from others. It’s about having a good relationship with yourself and becoming the person you were meant to be. It’s about treating yourself well, and shedding the old beliefs and behaviors that limit your ability to live a healthy, happy, satisfying life—with or without a partner.

3. Studies show that nearly half of all U.S. adults are living single lives, numbers that have steadily increased over the last thirty years. To what do you attribute this trend?

One reason is the increased life choices women have in the wake of the women’s movement. Another is that people are marrying later. Thirty years ago, 64 percent of American women ages 20 to 24 had already married. Today, most American women in that age group (73 percent) have *never* married. And these trends aren’t restricted to the U.S. In 2002, researchers in the U.K. reported that more people were living alone or as single parents than in traditional nuclear families. And, throughout the European Union, by the year 2000, a growing proportion of all private households were reportedly one-person households—representing at least 30 percent of all households in most northern European countries.

Roughly 50 percent of U.S. marriages end in divorce, another factor driving this trend. Given the high divorce rates, and the fact that women outlive men by an average of seven years, it’s very likely that a married adult will go back to being single at some point in his or her life.

4. You say that rather than look for someone else to make you happy, you should “become the ideal partner you seek.” What does that mean? What about people who are already in a relationship? Do they have anything to gain from the insights and tools you provide in *Solemate*?

Many people spend years waiting for an ideal partner—a “soul mate” to make them feel happy and complete. The problem with waiting for Prince or Princess Charming is, all too often, people sabotage their own lives by living in a kind of limbo, waiting for a man or woman to complete their life picture. They might hold off on buying a house, delay plans for an advanced degree, or turn down job promotions. They spend their leisure time watching television, hiding out at home, staying in their comfort zone—instead of pursuing their passions and fully engaging in life.

Instead of *pursuing* their ideal partner, *Solemate* helps people *become* the ideal partner they seek. Rather than look to someone else to transform your life—that special person who will make you whole—you focus on making yourself whole. The question isn’t: “How do I find my soul mate so I can have the life I want?” The better question is: “What do I need to do to create the life that I want for myself?”

Mastering the art of aloneness is critical to creating healthy and sustainable relationships. Why? It’s not uncommon for people to seek out relationships that fill their personal voids—relationships that make them feel whole and complete. But those relationships tend to be conflict-ridden and unfulfilling, because if you’re seeking someone to fill your voids, you tend to attract your opposite—someone else who’s on a quest for wholeness. In the end, there will be more differences than similarities between the two of you, which tends to create conflict. In contrast, when two people have mastered the art of aloneness, both partners feel whole and complete on their own, and have learned to meet their own needs and take responsibility for their own lives. They come together out of conscious choice—not an unconscious drive to find someone else to make them whole and happy. That’s the hallmark of a healthy relationship.

5. You say you’ve drawn from a variety of disciplines in writing the book, including psychology, physiology, sociology, holistic healing and strategic business practices. What’s your professional background and how did that shape your ideas?

Mastering the art of aloneness draws on both my personal and professional experiences. My interest in the field of personal development began in the early eighties in California. And, in 1982, I started co-facilitating holistic healing workshops with my ex-husband, a physician. Much of my early work was inspired by the field of psychoimmunology and the work of Dr. Bernie Siegel, the author of *Love, Medicine, and Miracles*. In the years that followed, I became a practicing mind-body psychotherapist in Germany, studied Breath Therapy in India, and learned other healing modalities such as Bioenergetics, Voice Dialogue, Emotional Release, and CranioSacral Therapy.

But it wasn’t until 1995 that the underpinnings of my current work really began to take shape. In the wake of a devastating divorce, I began a new course of personal development work, and resumed my studies in psychology with a concentration on divorce, relationships, and the family of origin. I began to see the strong connection between the family of origin and the life choices we make—and, not just theoretically. I was seeing those factors at work in my own life. Alone with two children to care for, I struggled with feelings of loneliness, depression and fear; I knew I had to find a way to build a new life for myself and my children. Very methodically and deliberately, I began to develop my own “self-renewal program” to transform my life. That program incorporated many of the same ideas and tools you’ll find in this book. I went on to complete a Master’s degree in business and worked as a career coach and management consultant. In 2001, I founded Lauren Mackler & Associates, integrating all of my experience to create coaching programs, workshops, and training programs that help people unleash their greatest potential in their personal lives, careers, relationships, and organizations.

6. *Solemate* is described as a practical roadmap to mastering the art of aloneness—one that involves a step-by-step process. Let’s talk a little bit about that process. What kinds of steps does it involve? And what kinds of tools do you employ to guide the reader through it?

Mastering the art of aloneness is a process that entails three fundamental keys for mastering this art: Focus, Strategy, and Commitment.

First, you need a *focus*. Mastering the art of aloneness is about *living in alignment with your life’s purpose* and your *authentic self*—what you were meant to do and who you were meant to be. That’s your *focus*. Finding your focus is central to this entire process. Throughout the book, I give readers the tools they need to define and clarify the life they want; and to identify and understand what areas of their lives they need to focus on to create that life.

Second, you need a *strategy*. The book is the roadmap. It’s designed to enable readers to develop a specific strategy of their own to get where they want to go. I also provide a set of skills that are essential for achieving mastery over their own lives and improving their relationship with themselves and others.

Finally, this process requires a *commitment*. It involves creating an ideal relationship with yourself. To be fully committed to this process, you have to feel deserving of it, and you have to love yourself. After all, you’re not going to feel compelled to invest your time and energy in somebody you don’t like very much. That’s a central theme of the book: Providing the guidance you need to build a healthy, constructive, and loving relationship with yourself.

7. One of *Solemate*’s chapters is titled, *Living Deliberately Versus By Default*. What is “living by default?” How do you go about living deliberately and what are the benefits?

Living deliberately involves recognizing that our actions have consequences, and by those actions, we create our own life experiences. Most people behave as if cause and effect didn’t exist. They go through their lives on autopilot—living by default—acting and reacting to events without thinking about the results of those actions or the role they’ve played in creating the circumstances of their lives.

Living deliberately means living consciously in every moment, so that you can begin to make changes in your life and take full responsibility for your actions, your choices, and your decisions. When you’re living by default, you’re automatically reacting to life in habitual ways, many of which may be limiting you and your life. In contrast, living deliberately means making more conscious and constructive life choices. When you’re living deliberately, you’re living from a position of responsibility; you’re making choices with greater awareness. You’ve taken yourself off autopilot, so you’re better prepared to align your actions with the results you want to achieve and the quality of life to which you aspire.

8. You write about “reclaiming your innate wholeness,” “uncovering your authentic self” and overriding self-defeating patterns and limiting beliefs of your life conditioning. Why are these steps so central to mastering the art of aloneness?

When we’re born, each of us is a whole, integrated human being, capable of expressing the full range of human emotions and our unique personality traits—what I refer to as our “innate wholeness.” In childhood, our life conditioning—the positive and negative circumstances and experiences to which we are exposed—plays an enormous role in determining whether we’re able to sustain this innate wholeness throughout our childhood and into adulthood.

As a young child, all we have to go on is our immediate environment. We don't yet have the capacity to intellectualize or rationalize. We take the world at face value—and the world our family creates is our reality. From that reality we develop what I call *core beliefs* and *habitual behaviors*.

Those beliefs and behaviors enabled us to function within and adapt to our own family system. But when we take those beliefs and behaviors with us into adulthood, they often don't make sense anymore. We're operating in a different environment—our world, our needs, and our goals have changed, but our habitual perceptions and behaviors haven't. As an example, let's say you grew up in a family in which your mother's love was conditional. When she approved of your behavior, she was loving and affectionate. But she chastised you whenever you did something she didn't like, withdrawing her affection, or rejecting or punishing you. Growing up, in order to avoid the pain of her disapproval, you might have developed a habit of behaving in ways that were designed to please her—at the expense of your own needs. As an adult, you have no idea how to articulate your needs, because you're so used to suppressing them. While your overriding goal—seeking others' approval—made sense during your young life, because pleasing your mother made you feel loved, it's counterproductive to hold onto that pattern as an adult.

That's just one example of a self-defeating pattern that can inhibit a one's ability to have a healthy relationship with oneself and with others. *Solemate* is about understanding *your* family of origin and *your* self-defeating patterns, and learning how to override those patterns so you can move beyond them. I call that process “reclaiming your innate wholeness” so you can live in alignment with your “authentic self”—and have a fuller, happier life whether you're in a relationship or on your own.

9. You use the word transformative to describe this process. Can you talk about how and why the results are so dramatic?

I first developed the Mastering the Art of Aloneness workshop back in 1998—first, as a 12-week program then as a weekend workshop. I have to tell you, from the very beginning, the results of those sessions were profound.

I'm still amazed by the number of clients who come to me with little understanding of the human conditioning process and how it holds them back in their lives. Many people invest countless hours, dollars, and resources on self-help approaches focused on *changing their behavior*—but they still struggle with the same issues over and over. I strongly believe that it's because they've failed to address their family of origin issues. Other people spend years in therapy talking about their family of origin. They may come away with an intellectual understanding of their families and patterns of dysfunction, but they don't know how to move past them. They lack the tools and strategies to change their habitual patterns.

With *Solemate*, that's what I'm endeavoring to provide: Tools and strategies to help readers make a connection between their family of origin, and the limiting beliefs and patterns that are holding them back; and then—and *this is a very important point*—to help them develop *actionable strategies* to change those patterns.

I've found that once people begin to understand the patterns that are creating negative results in their lives and in their relationships, they begin treating themselves very differently. Their attitudes and outlook begin to change. They can begin to live more consciously and deliberately. And they can accomplish things they never dreamed possible. The transformation can be dramatic. I see it all the time in my workshops and in my coaching practice.

10. Where do strategic business practices come into the picture? What compelled you to include them in a book about personal transformation and how do you use them in the book?

That's where the strategy—the action plan—comes in. Many books encourage people to use visualization, affirmations, or vision statements as a means to achieving their life goals. However, these books typically lack an important part of the process—effective action planning for bringing those goals to fruition. Visualizing a desired future state or life circumstance, writing down an affirmation, or saying a vision statement aloud are great tools for clarifying and focusing on what you want. But the next step—developing and implementing a good action plan—is critical to producing the results you're trying to achieve.

One of things I used to do for companies was to design and lead strategic planning retreats for their executive and management teams. During these retreats, the teams would articulate their company vision and develop a strategic action plan for achieving it. In *Solemate*, I've integrated the principles of strategic business planning not only to help readers craft a clear vision of their ideal life, but to help them develop and implement an effective action plan to bring their life vision to reality.