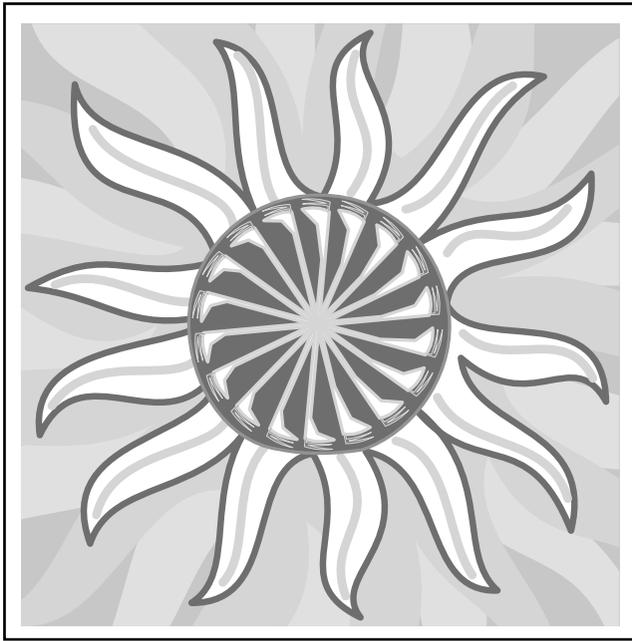


BEYOND SURVIVAL



LIVING WELL IS THE BEST REVENGE

Yvonne Dolan

A BT Press Book

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*To my mother,
Barbara Ogle Dolan Taylor,
with love and gratitude for our long ago walks
in the woods in the rain and so much more*

A PERSONAL NOTE TO THE READER

Terrible things can happen in life with no warning, and afterwards we have no choice but to try to carry on as best we can. I learned this at a young age. My first memory as a young child is of a memorial service for my father. There I witnessed first-hand the emotional devastation wreaked by war: my mother's and grandparents' hearts and spirits were broken when my young father was killed in the Korean War.

Very early on I grieved that my father was gone from the world before I even knew him. Despite my mother's love and her desire to shield me from harm, I suffered multiple episodes of sexual and emotional abuse during my childhood. At these times I tried to comfort myself by imagining that if my father had lived he would have protected me from the abusers.

As I grew into adulthood, I struggled to come to terms with these and other bad things that happened and to embrace the good in the world around me in order to find strength to make my life worth living.

For people who have struggled with painful past events, and even for those who have not, *Beyond Survival* will unlock psychological resources and abilities you may never have realised you had, and empower you to create the life you want. I offer you this book as a talisman of hope and courage for your own journey and that of your clients. I affirm my faith in your ability to create the rewarding life you've always deserved. I did it, and believe me, you can do it too, beginning with one small step.

Wishing you all of life's blessings.

Yvonne Dolan

FOREWORD BY HARVEY RATNER

Since it was founded in 1989, the Brief Therapy Practice has included international presentations as part of its programme of training events. Yvonne Dolan, a solution focused brief therapist and Ericksonian hypnotherapist from Denver, has proved time and time again to be one of our most popular speakers. She has that special ability to blend wisdom, humour and practicality with modesty and warmth, and it is a great pleasure to welcome her new book, which exhibits all these qualities in abundance.

Her 1991 publication, *Resolving Sexual Abuse*, is one of the most valuable contributions to the field, full of useful ideas and techniques for therapists helping those recovering from traumatic past events. I frequently raid her book for ideas (such as “the rainy day letter”, one of her most famous techniques) for work with particular clients. Now I can turn to her new book, in which Yvonne refines some of her older techniques and introduces many new ones. It is a mine of information written in a clear, non-jargon style that makes it easy for anyone – clients and professionals alike – to use.

My regret is that *Beyond Survival* was not available a few years ago when I was facilitating groups for incest survivors. The chapter on support groups will be a rich resource for both clients and workers in providing exercises for group members, both individually and collectively, that will enhance the cohesion of the group and empower the individuals within it.

We have all waited a long time for Yvonne’s follow-up to her earlier book, and have been amply rewarded for our patience.

Harvey Ratner
Brief Therapy Practice
London
September 2000

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My mother, Barbara, to whom this book is dedicated, taught me to love books, defended me in grade school when a teacher mistook my extreme shyness for mental retardation, and insisted that I go to college at age eighteen even though I had no idea what I wanted to study.

Without the help of my agent, Leslie Breed, and the encouragement and kindness of my wonderful in-laws, Mary Ann and Gene Johnson, this book would not exist.

My husband, Charlie, helped me keep the faith when I was going through a series of hells including “book proposal hell”, “title hell” and a few others for which I now have mercifully developed traumatic amnesia; he hugged me when I was profoundly discouraged; and took me out to dinner on numerous occasions when I had been too busy writing to remember to take anything out of the freezer. I love him more than words can say.

As with my previous book, my dear friends and colleagues Insoo Kim Berg and Steve de Shazer provided encouragement and professional inspiration through their books and work and, especially, by example.

The support and friendship of the following special people helped me endure what turned out to be a much longer writing project than anticipated: David Bice, Frank and Susan Bonomo, Bill and Evelyn Braithwaite, Marie-Christine Cabie, Louis Cauffman, Cheryl and Jeff Chang, Gene Combs, Mark and Julie Disorbio, Christine and Paul Drumwright, Jim Duval, Jill Freedman, Luc Isebaert, Miriam Le Fevre, Phyllis Firak Mitz, Kim Minor, Linda Mraz, Ruth Moorehouse, Denise Ross, Joan Robey, Katherine Lane Rossi, Karen Sands, Bob Schwartz, Steve Stajich and Jane Wingle.

Special thanks to David Schnarch whose books and conversations altered the way I view relationships, to Stephen Gilligan who has helped me to better understand the psychology of self relations, and to Ernest Rossi whose Ultradian concepts have transformed my work and lifestyle.

I especially want to thank my psychotherapy clients who have taught me so much and continue to do so.

Special thanks to the people who have sponsored my workshops and seminars and to all who have participated in them. Particular thanks to my colleagues and friends at the Korzybski Institute Brugge, the Korzybski Institute Holland, the Korzybski Institute Paris, the members of the European Brief Therapy Association, IACT, Bonomo & Bonomo, Chang & Chang, the Brief Family Therapy Center of Grand Rapids, the Justice Institute of British Columbia, the Milton Erickson Foundation, the Hinks Institute, the Brief Therapy Practice in London, the Brief Therapy Service at Centrecare in Perth, the Milton Erickson Institute of Chile, Centre de Psychotherapie Strategique in Montreal, the Suncoast Center of St Petersburg, the Milton Erickson Institute of Baltimore, the Maritime School of Social Work at Dalhousie University, ZIST, NIK in Bremen, NIK in Berlin, FKC in Stockholm, Klinik St Martin, the Family Institute of Maine, the Family Therapy Networker, and the Richmond Veterans Hospital.

PREFACE

As I write this preface to the new British edition of *Beyond Survival*, yet another war rages in eastern Europe leaving many people homeless and grieving the loss of loved ones, others carrying painful memories and physical scars from the violence they suffered. Newspapers, television and radio broadcasts continue to document the alarming frequency of sexual and physical abuse, domestic violence, hate crimes and other acts of senseless cruelty in our modern world.

At times such as this, I am reminded of the long-ago advice of my grandmother: "It's better to light even a little candle than to curse the darkness." Grandmother understood the practicality and efficacy of small steps. This book is my attempt to light a "little candle".

Terrible things can and do happen every day to good people and afterwards there is little choice but to try to carry on as best we can. Ironically, life itself is often the most effective cure. In order to move beyond the negative effects of trauma, loss, abuse and other painful past experiences, the present needs to become more vivid and compelling than the past, and we need to recover the ability to hope and dream about the future and to take practical action towards making those dreams come true.

While nothing can erase past traumas, creating a rewarding life in the present so that it becomes more figural and vivid than the past can help counterbalance the terrible things that happen in life and take away much of their power. Sometimes the first and most significant step towards making the present more figural than the past is realising that you are not alone in suffering.

Telling the details of painful past events to a supportive listener can provide validation, support and release from shame. While this constitutes an important step in recovering from the effects of trauma, unfortunately it is simply not enough. Furthermore, continuing to dwell on painful details of trauma or abuse over extended time can exacerbate symptoms of anxiety and depression and contribute to a "victim" mindset of passivity ("Why bother, nothing good ever happens to me") and learned

helplessness (“There's nothing I can do to make things better”). Often something more is needed. I wrote this book to provide exactly that.

Recorded between the lines of this book is my own journey as well as that of my psychotherapy clients, family and friends who inspired me by their courage and determination to create lives that now shine brightly.

Early on in my own life, I endured the death of my father and multiple episodes of sexual and emotional abuse. As I grew into adulthood, I struggled to come to terms with these and other bad things that happened and to embrace the good in the world around me in order to find strength to make my life worth living.

For people who have struggled with painful past events, and even for those who have not, *Beyond Survival* will unlock psychological resources and abilities you may have never realised you possessed and empower you to create the life you want. I offer you this book as a talisman of hope and courage for your own journey and that of people who are dear to you. I affirm my faith in your ability to create the rewarding life you've always deserved. I did it and believe me, you can do it too, beginning with one small step.

Yvonne Dolan

September 30, 2000

INTRODUCTION

MOVING BEYOND SURVIVORHOOD

“If I had my life to live over, I would start barefoot earlier in the spring and stay that way later in the fall. I’d go to more dances, I’d ride more merry-go-rounds. I’d pick more daisies.”

– Nadine Stair, age eighty-five

“IT’S TIME TO GET ON WITH MY LIFE”

Maggie slumped on the couch in my office, fingers fidgeting in her jacket pocket, searching for the cigarettes she had given up several months ago. Her eyes were red from crying, and her voice trembled as she spoke.

I’ve spent my whole life getting over what happened to me. I keep trying and trying to make a good life for myself, a happy life, but it never works out the way I hoped. I’ve done all the things you’re supposed to do to survive being abused as a kid, and to get over the other bad things that happened later. I’m 32 years old, and I’m tired of waiting. When am I going to start enjoying my life?

Maggie’s awareness that she needs to move beyond surviving the past and start living a rewarding life, and her frustration at feeling stuck in her efforts to do so, reflect the experience of many people I have seen in my psychotherapy practice over the past twenty-three years.

The answer to Maggie’s question is *now*. I wrote this book for people who have endured traumas and now want to get on with living their own lives. If you have survived pain - physical, sexual or emotional abuse, divorce or relationship difficulties, illness or accidents, loss, or other

traumatic life experiences – and want to finally live with joy, this book is for you.

Beyond Survival is especially intended for the person who is willing, but at times finds it difficult, to embrace the future with joy. It is an invitation to create the kind of future that you want to live, regardless of what happened or was done to you in the past. If you are wondering whether this applies to you, ask yourself this question: “Why settle for anything less?”

Maggie is not only going to start living her own life, she is also going to give herself a good life, a life that authentically reflects the self she was born to be: she will restore her capacity to experience joy.

SMALL STEPS TO A REWARDING LIFE

Regardless of what happened in the past, you can begin to create a rewarding and satisfying life for yourself now. This book will guide you through the process of creating the life you’ve been wanting, one small step at a time. As you progress through the chapters, your hopes and dreams will gradually become far more vivid and compelling than your past experiences, resulting in a restored sense of wonder and joy in living that you may have once feared was gone forever. Approaching cherished hopes and dreams one small step at a time makes them less daunting and, most importantly, makes them undeniably achievable in everyday life.

WHY VIEWING YOURSELF AS A SURVIVOR IS NOT ENOUGH

I originally decided to write this book because I was troubled by the emergence of a “survivor culture” in America. In attempting to respond to the very real and pervasive phenomenon of victimisation, the psychotherapy profession inadvertently created a “survivor identity”.

I do not believe this phenomenon has occurred because past ideas about what helps people recover from abuse and other traumas were necessarily wrong. Rather, it has occurred because psychotherapists have not yet extended ideas about recovery far enough to help people move beyond Survivorhood. Overcoming the immediate effects of abuse, loss or other trauma and viewing yourself as a Survivor rather than a Victim, are helpful steps, but are ultimately not sufficient to help people fully regain the ability to live a life that is more compelling, joyous and fulfilling than your past.

While many self-help books have documented the painful effects of

victimisation and the value of recognising oneself as a survivor, no one warned us about the negative consequences that can result from continuing to think of oneself over an extended period of time primarily as a survivor.

Unfortunately the “survivor” mind-set that people typically develop to get through painful past experiences can later interfere with their capacity to fully enjoy life. People who embrace “survivor” as their primary identity over the long-term by necessity tend to filter experiences of daily living through two criteria: how a current event resembles or differs from the traumatic event that happened in the past, and a current experience mitigates or worsens the continuing effects of the past trauma.

As a result, people who remain at the Survivor stage see life through the window of their Survivorhood rather than enjoying the more immediate and unconstricted vision of the world with which they were born. Such a limited view diminishes the ability to experience, much less enjoy the moment. This inability to truly appreciate your present life can also interfere with the capacity to fully enjoy a healthy and rewarding sexual relationship with a partner.

The idea that continuing to think of oneself primarily as a survivor over an extended period of time was not helpful first occurred to me in the late 1980s when a puzzling phenomenon was described by numerous North American psychotherapists attending my seminars on treatment of sexual abuse and other traumas.

Many of their patients who described themselves as “survivors” (of abuse) over an extended period of time seemed to be suffering from a low-grade depression, and expressed pessimism about the possibility for happiness in the future. Furthermore, these patients complained that they found themselves constantly evaluating the present in comparison with the things they had survived in the past, and that they had trouble enjoying themselves in the moment.

Later, in 1995, I noticed a phenomenon that suggested that moving beyond thinking of oneself as a survivor could be a valuable step. I had just begun interviewing people for a small pilot study exploring the characteristics of people who had suffered sexual abuse earlier in life and were now living healthy, satisfying lives characterised by enduring relationships, meaningful work and an absence of debilitating psychiatric symptoms.

Of the twenty people I interviewed, not one of them used the words “victim” or “survivor” to describe how they currently viewed themselves. I was not surprised at the absence of the word, “victim”, since by definition these were people who had managed to get beyond their victimisation in terms functioning in life. But I was puzzled by the absence of “survivor” in their responses to questions about how they thought of

themselves.

When I asked the various interviewees what they thought about the “survivor” label, there was a striking consistency in their responses. They told me, “Yes, I survived what happened to me, but that’s not who I am now,” or “That’s not how I think of myself now.” Or they answered, “I haven’t thought about myself that way for a long time,” or “Well, that’s part of me, but that’s not *all* of who I am,” and other similar responses.

In contrast, many of the people seeking my help as a psychotherapist seemed to be experiencing the phenomenon described by the psychotherapists attending my seminars. Repeatedly they told me, “I’m a survivor of sexual abuse [or physical abuse, or emotional abuse, or other trauma] and I’ve done all the right things the books say we’re supposed to do to get over it, but I’m still not happy.”

These people were not lazy or what doctors sometimes call malingerers. They were genuinely and earnestly trying to get on with their lives. And like Maggie, they were frustrated as hell. It gradually dawned on me that in creating the label of “survivor”, the psychotherapy field had created the potential for a new set of problems.

THE OLD STAGES AND THE NEW ONE

As a psychotherapist interning at a telephone crisis centre in the 1970s, I was taught that there were two stages of recovery from traumas involving emotional, physical or sexual abuse, and other life events. The Victim Stage is necessarily the beginning of healing. When you first face the reality of a bad thing that was done to you or the bad thing(s) that happened to you, you begin to acknowledge the feelings (usually grief and anger) that accompany this.

Allowing yourself to feel these emotions and express them is a vital part of the healing process and a valuable aspect of the Victim Stage. Furthermore, realising that you have been victimised implies that you recognise that what happened was not your fault. Recognising that you have been a victim of circumstances or other people serves the important purpose of allowing you to let go of self-blame and shame. Another aspect of recognising yourself as a victim is finding the courage to tell someone else what happened to you.

Telling your story to a compassionate listener breaks down the isolation that causes fear and shame. You are no longer alone with the bad thing that happened or was done to you. The only disadvantages of the Victim Stage are those that occur if a person continues to identify with the Victim Identity beyond its usefulness.

Once you have identified and expressed the feelings that resulted from

being victimised, broken down the isolation by telling a caring person what happened to you and realised that you are not to blame for the abuse or other bad things that were done to you, the Victim label has done its work.

Continuing to think of yourself primarily as a Victim beyond that point can eventually lead to feelings of helplessness, despair and a resulting passivity that can make you vulnerable to further victimisation. As soon as you realise that you are not to blame for the bad thing(s) that happened, it is time to begin to recognise yourself as a Survivor.

The Survivor Stage begins when you understand that you have lived beyond the time at which the traumatic experience occurred. Thinking of yourself as a survivor has many advantages. "Survivor" undeniably reinforces the fact that the abuse or other traumatic event is in the past.

Realising that you survived leads to wondering, "How did I do it? How was I able to survive this?" Acknowledging that you are a Survivor invites you to develop an inventory of the positive personality characteristics that allowed you to survive what happened, to identify and appreciate the internal strengths (knowledge, courage, spirituality or other positive aspects of yourself) and external resources (friends, supportive family members, community support) that you already possessed at the time of the trauma or developed afterwards in order to survive it.

A significant hallmark of the Survivor Stage is that you regain your ability to function productively in everyday life. A Survivor is able to focus on daily activities such as work, childcare, household duties, community activities, hobbies and spending time with friends.

Once you recognise that you have lived past the occurrence of the traumatic event and you acknowledge and appreciate the strengths and resources that have allowed your survival and eventual well-being, the Survivor Identity has done its work. For people who remain at this stage permanently, life is constantly filtered through the window of their Survivorhood. All events are evaluated in terms of how they resemble, differ from, mitigate or worsen the effects of the past. This diminishes the ability to fully experience and enjoy life and is, I believe, responsible for the "flatness" and low-grade depression reported by so many self-described Survivors of sexual abuse and other painful life events.

As Clarissa Pinkola Estes explains in her wonderful book, *Women Who Run With the Wolves*:

If we stay as survivors only, without moving to thriving, we limit ourselves and cut our energy to ourselves and our power in the world to less than half.

Estes goes on to suggest that rather than becoming a permanent primary identity, Survivor needs ultimately to become "one of many

badges” that you wear, a source of pride but not the determinant of your identity. Survivor is not an aspect of yourself that should be discarded, but rather appreciated as a significant aspect of yourself. Embraced in this way, surviving the trauma you endured in the past is an accomplishment that you can continue to celebrate without suffering negative consequences. Furthermore, this will allow you to move on and create the life you so richly deserve.

Recently, I have been heartened to hear psychotherapists and people in support groups echoing the need for people to move beyond thinking of themselves primarily as Survivors. In some psychotherapy circles this next phase has been referred to as a “Thrivers” Stage. While defined vaguely until now, the notion of a third stage indicates that people are beginning to realise that more research is needed.

In thinking about this third stage, I have struggled with what to call it. Initially I liked the term “Thrivers” because of its positive connotation. But it rhymes with “Survivor”, which may have negative connotations for people who are trying to leave behind painful memories.

Then it dawned on me. In retrospect, it seems obvious: the third stage is the stage in which you become fully, joyously and authentically yourself. You begin living not only in reference to the bad things you survived or even in reference to present experiences and hopes for the future, but according to the totality of who you really are as a person deep inside. You become completely yourself and enjoy the rewards of doing so.

The Authentic Self Identity allows you more freedom than either of the preceding roles. Thinking of yourself in this way will allow you to experience a more compelling present and contemplate a future that is more vivid and fulfilling than your past.

You will be able to enjoy life to the fullest, exulting in experiences that reach the potential you were born with, expressing yourself in the most personally rewarding and creative ways available to you as you go through your every day life. Your current experiences and relationships will increasingly evoke a sense of immediacy, wonder and an enhanced potential for growth.

So what could be disadvantageous about identifying with your Authentic Self, embracing your own potential to fully experience life and express all the gifts you were born with? While the drawbacks are minimal to the advantages, it is only fair to state them. When initially connecting or re-connecting with your Authentic Self, this new way of thinking may feel unfamiliar and therefore uncomfortable.

Over time as you continue to live in harmony with your Authentic Self, lifestyle, relationships and life decisions may be less predictable and more complex than they were when you primarily identified with the Survivor or Victim images. From the vantage point of your Authentic Self, you

should become increasingly secure with and trusting of your own knowledge and abilities. Consequently you may become less invested in maintaining the status quo in your life, and therefore less willing to squander your time and energy on relationships or situations that have become abusive or toxic for you. Instead you will devote your time and energy to the life you truly want and deserve.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book can be used in several ways: as a series of mental exercises, or as a daily or weekly format for your personal journal. You can record your responses to the exercises on paper or on audiotape, or just think about your responses if you prefer.

No matter how you chronicle your responses, the most important result of continuing to take small steps towards alignment with your Authentic Self will be the rewarding changes that allow you to confidently pursue your hopes and dreams.

This book is divided into four parts. The first part, *Enjoying the Gifts of the Present*, is dedicated to exploring and expressing your Authentic Self. Chapter One, *Getting to Know Your Authentic Self*, is devoted to exploring, identifying and appreciating who you really are deep inside, beyond whatever bad things happened to you in the past. Chapter Two, *Welcome Home!*, invites you to develop new ways to express and enjoy yourself at home. Chapter Three, *Enjoying Yourself More at Work*, offers ideas for making the work environment a place that enhances rather than detracts from your quality of life.

Part Two, *Creating a Joyous Future*, invites you to reclaim cherished hopes and dreams, to begin making them realities and to create time to enjoy the results. Chapter Four, *Hopes and Dreams and Miracles*, guides you through identifying what you really want from your life now. Chapter Five, *Yes, You Can!*, offers strategies for transforming seemingly impossible or daunting goals into realistic possibilities. Chapter Six, *Time on Your Hands*, provides ideas for changing how time affects your ability to realise goals and enjoy your everyday life.

Part Three, *Responding to Life's Current Challenges*, helps you identify what really works best for you when people, memories from the past or demands of the present threaten the gains you've made in creating the life you deserve. Chapter Seven, *Partners, Parents, Kids and Extended Family*, provides guidelines to help you identify ways to be creative, flexible and true to yourself while responding to the needs of the people you love. Chapter Eight, *Coping when the Past Rears its Ugly Head*, offers ways to limit or permanently resolve residual effects of post-traumatic stress in

your life. Chapter Nine, *Dealing with Rainy Days and Dark Nights*, provides sensible coping strategies for getting through the “blues” that occur occasionally as a by-product of living a heartfelt life.

Part Four, *Support and Further Resources*, helps you maintain the momentum you’ve built up as you’ve progressed through the earlier sections of the book by inviting you to connect with supportive, like-minded people in person or through literature. Chapter Ten, *How to Start a Small Steps Support Group*, supplies the specifics you need to start and continue an ongoing group of people dedicated to supporting one another’s exploration and positive expression of life beyond Survivorhood.

A Suggested Reading List offers a selection of books you may want to read for further exploration. Finally, there are blank pages in which to record important thoughts and insights that occur to you as you continue to pursue and develop a good life for yourself.

ORIGINS OF THE TECHNIQUES IN THIS BOOK

Beyond Survival is not intended as a substitute for psychotherapy; however, the exercises throughout have been carefully designed according to psychotherapeutic principles in order to evoke feelings of comfort and reassurance, and to empower the reader to identify, explore and expand her own unique solutions to the “problem” of creating a joyous, healthy and rewarding life in the future that extends beyond Survivorhood.

The exercises in this book are derived from the principles and psychotherapy techniques of Solution-Focused Therapy (Berg, Miller, de Shazer, Lipchik, Nunally, Molnar, Gingerich, Weiner-Davis, Furman, Ahola, O’Hanlan).

Basic to this approach is the concept of the client and therapist co-creating solutions by client and therapist (O’Hanlon and Weiner-Davis, 1989.) This idea is based on the respectful assumption that psychotherapy clients have highly individualised and uniquely effective solutions to the problems that bring them to therapy, and that these solutions can be elicited through therapists asking meaningful questions. Solution-focused therapy assumes the construction of a solution is a joint process between client and therapist, with the therapist taking responsibility for empowering the client to create and experience her own uniquely meaningful and effective therapeutic changes. This posture of respect, pragmatism and hopefulness is uniquely suited to people who have survived physical, emotional and sexual abuse and other traumas.

While consistent with solution-focused concepts, the Ericksonian Relaxation Method in Chapter One and the Symbol for the Time of Your Life centring technique in Chapter Six are derived in part from the

psychotherapeutic principles of Ericksonian Utilisation. Closely related to the solution-focused approach, Ericksonian Utilisation was developed by the psychiatrist Milton Erickson.

The Ericksonian Utilisation approach is based on the principle that psychotherapy clients' already existing perceptions, life experiences, behaviours and personality traits are potentially valuable resources that may be incorporated into the therapeutic change process for the purpose of relieving symptoms and improving quality of life.

The Utilisation concept implies that every part of the person's behaviour, personality traits, relationships, personal beliefs and values is potentially valuable and useful in enabling them to achieve more rewarding choices and experiences in life. Based on this concept, the Ericksonian relaxation exercises I include in this book invite the client to utilise aspects of previous moments in every day life in which she has felt comfortable, centred and relaxed in order to re-elicite these feelings when needed in the present.

My own work as a psychotherapist in treating survivors of sexual abuse and other traumas using Solution-Focused Therapy and Ericksonian approaches is documented in *Resolving Sexual Abuse: Solution-focused and Ericksonian Hypnosis for Adult Survivors* (1991, Norton), and in various journal articles and book chapters. I have been training psychotherapists in Solution-Focused techniques for ten years, and conduct seminars at universities, hospitals and mental health centres throughout the US and Canada and in Europe, South America, Australia and Asia.

AND NOW TO BEGIN

I am inviting you to make a commitment - not to me, or to this book, but to yourself. I suggest that you devote at least one hour a week to implementing the ideas described in this book. Certainly, you may decide to spend more time, but even an hour a week will yield results. Change is inevitable. Our goal here is to increase the percentage of changes that happen in your life that are to your liking, and to empower you to create the changes you desire through series of inviting small steps that you'll want to do.

I realise that by the time you are reading these words, you may have been badly battered by life, and may be experiencing the cynicism and despair that sometimes result. Nevertheless, the meaning of these words applies to you. (I assure you, it does!) Step by step you will build or reclaim the life for which you secretly long, a life beyond the past that joyously and completely reflects who you really are.