



The Journey to Be Your Own Best Friend: How to Discover Your Power Within

Paula Klee Parish

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"If you improve the quality of your thinking you will you must inevitably improve the quality of your life." So posits Paula Klee Parish the CEO of Performance Solutions Inc. and a professional development educator who offers a logical starter set of tools for those whose ambitions are stymied by defeatist behavior loops. She extends particular welcome to well-meaning folks who habitually sell themselves short subordinating personal goals and desires to those of other people believing themselves unworthy.

Excessive emotion is identified as the prime obstacle to success. To counter that the author presents a five-part program of Rational Thinking Processes designed to redirect people from loops of repetitive trouble to a sense of perspective and ordered reasoning necessary for achieving self-actualization. Whether one favors thinking over feeling or intuiting over sensing knowledge of the patterns used to make sense of the world enable greater advancement. Parish builds on foundational ideas originating with operant conditioning theorist B.F. Skinner business motivator Victor Vroom's *Expectancy Theory* and cognitive-humanist Abraham Maslow's *The Hierarchy of Needs*.

The book's layout features shaded text boxes labeled "Reinforcement Moments" and "Thoughts to Ponder" as well as instructive anecdotes within each chapter. A light tinting of Eastern philosophy broadens the aesthetic; most notable is the incorporation of the Art of *Mushin* the term translated here as "No Mind." Mushin is a matter of purposely internalizing pragmatic responses until they become involuntary. Its practitioners condition themselves "...to react appropriately without conscious thought."

Parish succeeds on general aims encouraging readers to get at the mysterious roots of their troubles by asking themselves the all-important question "What are you afraid of?" Some specific concepts are interpreted unconventionally such as the term "Compromise" here radically redefined as an undesirable opposite of "Negotiation." The last chapter packs the least punch—it can be boiled down to *let your conscience be your guide* a truism which is also the moral of *Pinnocchio*.

The theoretical neighborhood's signposts include a half dozen references to television personality Dr. Phil McGraw but the author's assuring voice is considerably warmer her approach less confrontational. Between Maslow and "No Mind" consciousness is bolstered allowing a practical framework for action to emerge. *The Journey to Be Your Own Best Friend* isn't the basis of the next revolution in social psychology but readers whose happiness is blocked by irrationality or a lack of self-awareness can undoubtedly improve their situation by integrating its lessons. (August 21, 2009)

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