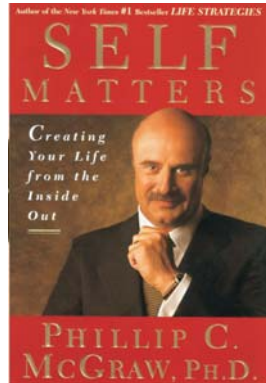


BestSummaries



SELF MATTERS

Creating Your Life From The Inside out

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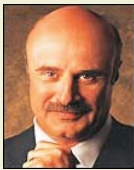
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About the Author



Phillip C. McGraw

Dr. Phillip C. McGraw has single-handedly galvanized millions of people to "get real" about their own behavior and create a more positive life. His nationally syndicated television show, *Dr. Phil*, has been making headlines and breaking records since its September 2002 launch — when it garnered the highest ratings of any new syndicated show since the launch of *The Oprah Winfrey Show* 16 years prior. *People* magazine named Dr. Phil one of the "Most Intriguing People of 2002," while Barbara Walters included Dr. Phil in her 2002 "Ten Most Fascinating People" special.

Dr. Phil is author of three #1 *New York Times* bestsellers, *Life Strategies: Doing What Works, Doing What Matters, Relationship Rescue: A Seven-Step Strategy for Reconnecting with Your Partner*, and *Self Matters: Creating Your Life from the Inside Out*. His books have been published in 27 languages with over 5 million copies in print. His new book, *The Ultimate Weight Solution: The 7 Keys to Weight Loss Freedom* was released in September 2003.

Wisdom in a Nutshell

The definitive psychologist for the masses, Dr. Phil McGraw draws up a very simple made-for-Oprah-TV-audience book that teaches you how to turnaround your life by figuring out your self-concept and personal truths. Your self-concept stems from your life's *Ten Defining Moments*, *Seven Critical Life Choices*, and *Five Pivotal People* who have shaped who you are today.

Oprah's favorite doctor, "Tell-it-like-it-is" Phil, injects refreshing "regular Joe" talk and his own personal stories to illustrate his points. How does one re-create a life from the inside out? First, stop taking your cues from external factors or other people. You have to take responsibility for the mess that is Your life. You are the one who chose to live this way, and nobody can choose for You.

Dr. Phil takes readers through a tough self-examination, with workbook-style exercises to help you remember the origin of your fears, think about the choices you've made, and acknowledge the painful truths about yourself, no matter how uncomfortable the process may be. If you need to redirect your life path towards one that is more satisfying and more in tune with your authentic self, Dr. Phil will help peel away the layers, and help fix your life. With over two million copies sold, this *New York Times* Bestseller answers the growing demand from many who may feel lost, stuck, and in need of reclaiming their authentic selves.

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What Is Your Authentic Self?

Dr. Phil defines the authentic self as “the You that can be found at your absolute core”. It is the part of you that is not defined as the job you have, or the role you play that the world has placed upon you. It is the You that flourished during the times you felt happiest, before life dealt you some nasty blows.

Dr. Phil's universal facts or cornerstones on your journey to rediscovering your authentic self:

- Each one of us was born complete. You already have within you what you need to do, be, and have.
- Your authentic self is there, it is accessible to you.
- The self that runs your life today is the result of key events, and the way you interpreted them and reacted to them
- Your fictional self is the source of false identity and wrong information.
- Your life is not a dress rehearsal. Begin living it now.

*Life is made up of a few major
decisions that spell your
happiness or your doom.*

Full Accountability

Understand that you are also to blame for living up to the roles people have placed upon you. You contributed to your own demise. You accepted the roles others gave you: your parents, teachers, friends, colleagues, employers, the media, your spouse, marketers, neighbors, old flames who rejected you, society.

Dr. Phil asks you to commit wholeheartedly to these challenges:

- You must examine your past so as to control it, rather than be controlled by it.
- Identify with refreshing clarity your Purpose for being in this world.

- Clearly define those skills, abilities, and qualities that make up your authentic self.
- Create a track to run on where you by your choices and actions, allow your authentic self to find expression.
- Give up your fear of the unknown and leave your comfort zone!

Drilling Down to the Core

Dr. Phil offers these important questions in order to help you define your authentic self, and gain some understanding of your own self-concept:

- What are the internal and external actions you have done and are doing to create your self as an entity in this world, not just a passive being reacting to life?
- What are the thoughts and feelings, the patterns that influence how you see yourself?
- What behaviors, actions, and reactions shaped who you are?
- What choices did you make that led to results you now live with?
- How do you make new choices and new behaviors to bring about new and more productive results?

You Can Become A Star, The Star In Your Own Life.

In order to stop those internal dialogues, those negative things you have believed about yourself for so long, you need to recognize there are a few things that influence your perception of yourself:

- Putting labels on your self
- Playing tapes, e.g. “I can never seem to lose weight.”
- Sticking to limiting beliefs, e.g. “I'm no fashion plate. I'll never look that good.”

Get into the Driver's Seat

Your defining moments are those memories you can recount clearly as if they happened yesterday. You may be sixty years old, but that humiliation you suffered when you were in fourth grade still affects how you react to bullies in the corporate playground.

The Critical Choices are those you made that put you on the road you are on now. Life is made up of a few major decisions that spell your happiness or your doom.

Pivotal People are those wonderful or terrible teachers, those who inspired, terrified, or made some indelible mark on you that made you what you are today.

Connecting the Dots

These steps will provide a structure for you to review your personal history.

- List your defining moments and describe each in one brief paragraph. "That time Mrs. Johnson chewed me out."
- For each defining moment, identify the "before" and "after" in your self-concept.
- Describe the long-term residual effect of that defining moment.
- Write down how and why the defining moment either clarified or distorted your self-concept.
- Review your interpretation of and reaction to the defining moment. Decide whether or not you believe your interpretation was accurate or inaccurate.
- Write down whether this is something you should keep or reject with regard to your concept of self. Include a paragraph as to why.
- Review these defining moments as a whole, and what has been the bottom line effect on your self-concept?

Locus of Control

Your locus of control is where you tend to assign causation for events in your life. You either assign control to internal factors (yourself) or external factors (others/circumstances)

Internalizers say:

"Anything bad that happens is my fault."

"Anything good that happens I make it happen."

They may have a tendency to take on the world's problems. They stake ownership on behavior even if it really isn't their fault.

Externalizers: When something bad happens the externalizer takes no ownership of it. When something good happens, the externalizer takes no ownership of it.

They blame everyone or everything else.

Chance People: People who think everything happens because of fate, accident, or sheer luck. There is no authenticity in a life left to chance.

*Forgiveness is one of the most
important things we need to do
to move on.*

The Fundamental Characteristics of Internal Dialogue:

- Your internal dialogue is constant.
- Your internal dialogue happens in real time.
- Your internal dialogue triggers a physiological change.
- Your internal dialogue is heavily influenced by your locus of control.
- Your internal dialogue tends to be totally monopolistic.
- Your negative internal dialogue gets loudest when you need it the least.

Getting Our Payoffs

We do things because they seem to work for us at the moment. We don't like to take huge risks, or try to make a change. We don't rock the boat. We hold on to what is familiar to us. It is simply "easier" to stay in a bad relationship because it is "harder" to get to know someone new all over again. It is easier to stay stuck in the job you have now, even if your authentic self is

dying inside. You sit and stay where you are because of your fear of the unknown.

Using Positive Internal Dialogue

A positive internal dialogue is what helps Olympians perform at critical moments. They tell themselves they can do it. The runners, swimmers, and best athletes of the world have a positive internal dialogue so strong, it helps them visualize and achieve their goals. Maybe you can learn to create a mantra for yourself! If you are from a poor neighborhood, tell yourself everyday, "In a year or so, I'll be out of here".

Examples of Positive Internal Dialogue:

- I'm good enough
- If I work hard I will be valuable to this team
- I don't have to earn my right to be here
- I am a beautiful woman.
- I am a responsible father.

"There'll be two dates on your tombstone and all your friends will read 'em but all that's gonna matter is that little dash between 'em"
- Kevin Welch

Taking Stock

- Every two hours, jot down the self-talk you've been having in a journal or notebook. What do you tell yourself about your appearance? Your work? Your job? Your intelligence? Your skills? Your abilities? Your worth?
- The night before a big presentation to the boss or a client, what do you find yourself thinking as you lie in bed? Are you setting yourself up for failure by focusing on the negative? Or are you excited and prepared and thinking only positive thoughts?
- What is the overall tone of your journal?

Where is your locus of control?

- Are you kind to yourself? Are you a friend to yourself?

Labels

A label happens when

- You allow someone else to define you based on how they perceive you.
- You judge yourself and crystallize that judgment as a lasting self-characterization.

We've all seen the high school beauty queens who get stuck in their labels of the past, never exerting any effort to sharpen their minds or be more interesting. Any label you assign yourself will keep you stuck.

- List on paper all the labels you have been given.
- Next the column of labels indicate when the labels were first mentioned, and what behavior it encouraged.
- Include all labels, even the ones you have rejected.
- Which of these labels were given by people other than your parents? Which labels were given by you? E.g. When did you label yourself as a loser, a dummy, or ugly?
- Look at your list. Not a very good resume, right?
- Resolve that you will no longer assign labels to yourself, nor allow others to assign limiting labels to you as well. Remember the wise words of Eleanor Roosevelt, "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."
- Move out of your comfort zone once and for all.

Tapes

Stop playing those tapes in your head.

"Men always use me. Maybe I deserve it."

"Men are selfish."

"Men are pigs."

"I was abused as a child. All men will use me for what they want and will be insensitive to how I feel."

"I am ugly. My body and face are so different from the popular kids."

"I have done some pretty horrible things. I will not be forgiven."

"My family is low class. I am low class. There is nothing I can do to change my status."

A tape looks backward, to your past.

A tape expresses itself as a judgment about who you are in the present.

A tape predicts the outcome you will have in the future.

*There is no authenticity
in a life left to chance.*

fixed beliefs or scripts.

If you know what has driven your self-concept, If you can identify the reactions you've chosen to these events, Then you know what you can do to change things around.

- Isolate a target event
- Audit your internal responses to that event
- Test your internal responses for authenticity
- Come up with an authentically accurate alternative response
 - I am a quality human being who suffered and can now be healed.*
 - I am a worthy human being who can live with dignity and respect.*
 - I am living in the present, where I can decide for myself, instead of being a prisoner of the past and its pain.*
- Identify and execute your minimal effective response. What will give you closure at the least risk, cost, or energy?

Scripts

Throw out all your old scripts. You know, the ones where you play the loser, the underachiever, or the second fiddle. Take time to write a life script for yourself and let yourself dream.

Forgive

Forgiveness is one of the most important things we need to do to move on. We need to forgive our selves, others, and the world. It doesn't mean whoever hurt you should get away with it, or that what she or he did is okay. Forgiveness is essential so you do not let yourself get eaten up by bitterness. Give yourself permission to move on.

The Five-Step Action Plan

First, review our lessons. You came to this earth already equipped with everything you need to fulfill your life purpose. If you feel you have stayed focused, you are living as your authentic self. If not, you have allowed the world to assign you a fictional self.

You have a learning history, composed of internal and external experiences, and a few major events, defining moments, critical choices, and pivotal people have shaped you into what you are today.

Five internal factors influenced how you internalized external events. These are your locus of control, labeling, internal dialogue, tapes, and