

PATHWAYS
through your
MINDFIELD



Prologue

I've wanted to write this book for a long time but never seemed to get around to actually doing it. Other things took priority and the years flew by. Then certain events happened in my own life and my wife, Berit, suggested I write the book, if for no other reason than to help other people. Her reasoning was that if I could help myself with the knowledge I have, and if I shared that knowledge, maybe other people could also be helped. That, I thought, was an excellent reason to follow through and put pen to paper.

The first three chapters of the book are about the mind/body connection, which is a fascinating subject. The fourth chapter, called "Mapping Your Mind," contains the teachings and ways of being that I have learned over the years, and which have helped me a great deal. The fifth chapter, "Your Personalized How-To Pathways," offers some valuable information about yourself, which will help prepare you for learning the techniques in the final chapter. These are the techniques, or tools, that I utilize myself so that I can enjoy a happy and healthy life. I look forward to sharing them with you.

I didn't start out wanting to be a psychotherapist and workshop presenter; in fact I wanted to be a lawyer! But events or, rather, an event intervened and changed my life.

Forty years ago, I was a single male driving a sports car across the country and having a great time. The next thing I knew, I woke up in a hospital and three days had gone by. "What happened?" was the first question I asked when I came out of the coma. The doctor proceeded to tell me I'd had a horrific car accident—and I would never walk again. The world as I knew it no longer existed.

What could I do? Maybe it was my age (I was only 20), or maybe it was my character (I am strong willed—some call me stubborn), but I knew, on a very deep level, that "they" were wrong, and I could do something to prove it.

I began my healing journey by reaching out to anyone, and everything, I could find to help myself. Thus began my journey on the

road to discovering the mind/body connection. Way back then, there wasn't much information, but what there was, I found. It was a long journey, and painful at times, but I'm happy to report that after a bit of time I was out of the wheelchair and walking.

My life took many interesting twists and turns before I knew what I wanted to do with it. One day, I realized that I wanted to help others. Help them the way I had helped myself. One way I could do that was by learning as much as I could about the mind/body connection, and then spreading the word.

I've been a psychotherapist in private practice for 21 years and I also present workshops on a variety of topics. Over the years, I've helped a great many people to lead healthier and happier lives, and I still get a kick out of doing so. I believe in the information I share with my clients and put my beliefs into action every day.

Now, I'd like to fast-forward in my life to about 12 years ago. I had a routine physical (I generally get one every five years or so) and came home one day to a message on my answering machine. It sounded ominous. I'd never had a request to call my doctor and book an appointment to see him (probably because the only "illness" I'd had was the car accident). *I'm a fairly healthy guy!* Or so I thought.

I went and saw the doctor who said, "You have cancer—leukemia." My mind froze. Before I could ask, he proceeded to tell me that this was very serious, they didn't know the cause, and there was no cure. If I chose to take the available treatments (chemotherapy and/or a bone marrow transplant) it might help. There were no guarantees. Maybe, in a few years, there would be a course of treatment that could provide more hope, but there wasn't one at the time. I was advised to go home and put my affairs in order.

On the way home, all I could think about was: *What, and how, am I going to tell Berit?* It's truly amazing how our minds work. I made a decision. This cancer was not going to win. I needed to be 100 percent congruent in this regard. Otherwise, I couldn't tell Berit without both of us breaking down over this life-changing news.

I got home and told Berit. I also told her not to worry, that I'd take care of it. I reminded her of my car accident and how well my life had turned out. I'd do the same thing again by applying my knowledge of the mind/body connection and I would be okay. She cried. I hate to see a woman cry, so I hugged her and said, "Trust me." Berit said, "Yes."

Then I went about doing what it is I do: talking to myself, visualizing, and practising all the "stuff" I've learned over the years. It's been 12 years since the diagnosis and I am still okay. The white blood count has not changed. Not one bit. I have the same white blood cell count as the day I was diagnosed; it's as if it became frozen in time.

When you have a high white blood cell count, this can indicate an infection or a cancer. Further tests are then done to ascertain the problem. Therefore, the fact that my white blood cell count has not increased since the diagnosis means the cancer has stayed in abeyance. I have not had any medical intervention or treatment. One oncologist thinks I'm a walking miracle. "You're certainly outside the textbooks" was one statement uttered. I know that the information I have (and applied to myself) about the mind/body connection has done the job. I am fully confident that I'll live a lot longer and continue to enjoy the ride.

Now that I've told you about all that, I'd like to put it aside. I'm not comfortable talking about myself in that manner and only started to tell people about the diagnosis a year ago—and that was because Berit urged me to do so. She felt that my story would inspire and motivate people to learn as much as they could in order to help themselves. It turns out she was right.

Whenever I tell people, be it my clients or participants at a workshop, the impact has been the same. People are somewhat amazed and also encouraged by my story, and they tell me that they now have a new feeling of empowerment. They come around to believing they can help themselves, even if the odds are daunting. And a bonus has been that, much more than ever before, these same people are now open to doing things to help themselves in various aspects of their lives—they are not just confining their attention to the big "stuff."

In other words, positive change doesn't have to be about dealing with cancer; or other life-threatening diseases. It could be about overcoming a fear of bridges or public speaking, or it could be about developing more patience with your child. The general consensus from my clients and workshop participants can be summed up in the following: "The techniques you teach have given me the tools I need. Thank you!"

To these people I, too, say a very heartfelt "Thank you!" These are the people that make what I do for a living worthwhile. It can be both humbling and gratifying at the same time.

While this book offers inspiration and encouragement to all kinds of people, I want to point out that it is not specifically aimed at those fighting serious medical conditions. It is *not* about guaranteed ways to cure or fight a disease or illness. But if you do have a disease, or know someone that does, the information to follow might just help influence the course of that disease, or help you cope with its effects, in some positive and supportive way.

I must also stress that this book is not about motivation. There are many excellent books available on the subject; many people have specialized in this area and do a great job of getting people excited about making changes. These books are also good at pointing out what's wrong and suggesting different ways of being. For example, we should have happy, positive thoughts and, if we do, we will be successful in whatever areas of our lives we wish. Unfortunately, not many of these books tell you how to have, or get, those positive, happy thoughts and how to maintain them over time.

To understand the importance of the how-to part, I believe we need to know a little about the ways in which the mind and body work, and to grasp that they are one, working in concert. I suppose I'm issuing a warning here: Reader, beware—you're going to learn some science! But it's not complicated or boring. In fact, science "stuff" can be interesting, amazing, and fun. It's also very important, because if we understand how our mind works (especially in relation to our body), then we have a pathway to follow in order to make changes, if we so desire. This and other pathways you are about to discover will enable

you to go beyond being motivated and wanting to make changes, to actually starting to transform your life.

To help you better understand and know yourself, you'll learn about:

- biology and chemistry, which will help you understand what you're made of, and how you're put together—you will also discover that even your biological makeup is changeable;
- the processes involved in how you think and feel, how you act and react, which will help you in all aspects of your life;
- your thoughts, your model of the world, your perceptions, and your belief systems, which will help you know just who you are;
- techniques, or tools, which will not only improve your communications but will also enable you to make certain changes in your life, so that you can be healthier and happier.

Together, we're going to be unlocking your potential in all areas, or pathways, of your life:

Personal Pathway: Your aim in life is to be happy, have peace of mind, and the freedom to live your best life. You want to live a life that you can enjoy; and when you wake up in the morning, you feel good and capable of tapping into your full potential.

Health Pathway: You want to be fit, active, energetic, and free from pain, illness, and disease.

Relationships Pathway: You want your relationships with loved ones to be loving, comfortable, safe, and enriching. You want to have friends you enjoy and have fun with.

Career Pathway: You want your work to be meaningful and give you a sense of accomplishment, and co-workers that help make your work environment a good place to be.

Financial Pathway: You want to have financial independence, which means enough money to be self-reliant and independent.

Spiritual Pathway: You want to have a feeling of growth and meaning in your life, so that you can fulfill your promise and purpose.

There's a lot to cover, much to learn, and some fun awaits you on the following pages. I invite you to join me on a journey: *Pathways Through Your Mindfield*. Let's begin at the beginning.