

T Stepping OUT OF THE Shadows

[Re]Connecting with Your Life's Journey

Dr. Steve Frisch, Psy.D.

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For years I have been the collector of a wide variety of quotations.

Too often, however I carelessly neglected to note sources.

In preparing this book I have spent countless hours attempting, unsuccessfully to locate the origins of some of the quotations cited.

If you know the sources, please contact me at the numbers listed in this book. My apologies to the authors, and to the readers for the absence of credit.

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The wisdom contained within the pages of this book has been woven from the shared experiences it has been my privilege to enjoy with so very many special people. Although you are too numerous to mention, I trust that you all appreciate how much you have meant to me. Thank you all for including me in your lives.

The creation of this book was a collaborative effort with many truly gifted people. I especially want to express my gratitude to my editor and publication designer.

To Donna. You worked hard rounding the manuscript into readable condition. I greatly appreciate your hard work. All that is right about this book is due to your talents, any uncorrected mistakes are reflective only of my stubbornness. Thank you!

To Mary Burroughs, our publication designer and creative director, you continue to outdo yourself. Thanks for keeping the dream alive!

With any work I complete, I always take pause to acknowledge the gratitude I feel towards my teachers. You have come in all shapes and sizes, but it is your essence that resonates within the pages of this book. Thank you all so very, very much!

*D*edication

In loving memory of my best friend, Karen.
In a life that has been blessed with much abundance,
you were the most precious gift ever sent to me.
Your incredible spirit brightened my world in a
way that I had never experienced before. Please know
that your spirit will always live in my heart.
You have my everlasting love and gratitude for having
invited me into your world.

About the Author

Dr. Frisch is a clinical psychologist in private practice in Chicago, Illinois. He is a graduate of the Adler School of Professional Psychology where he received his doctorate in clinical psychology. He received his masters degree from National-Louis University where he specialized in addictions counseling. His undergraduate degree was awarded to him by the University of Cincinnati, where he graduated with honors.

Dr. Frisch received post-doctoral training in two specialties at the Adler School of Professional Psychology. He completed a certificate training program in clinical hypnosis at the Center For The Advanced Study Of Clinical Hypnosis. He also completed a certificate training program in marriage and family counseling. He is licensed by the state of Illinois as a clinical psychologist. He was certified in Illinois by IAODAPCA as a certified drug and alcohol counselor in 1988.

Dr. Frisch's first book, *The Comparative Effectiveness of Group Therapy Versus Individual Therapy As Measured By Self-Concept, Interpersonal Orientation, and Degree of Emotional Adjustment* was an empirical investigation of the treatment modalities he utilizes in his private practice. This book was based on a study he conducted to demonstrate the effectiveness of his treatment protocols.

He has since written the *Bridge-Builders* series, which focuses on the development and enrichment of relationships. As well, he has written the *Pathfinders* series, which focuses on personal growth and self-actualization.

His treatment philosophy has grown out of his diverse clinical background in which he has worked with a variety of different clinical populations. From these diverse experiences, Dr. Frisch has assimilated a variety of assessment and treatment interventions into his integrated treatment philosophy.

Dr. Frisch has worked on the staff of both inpatient and outpatient chemical dependency programs. This experience provided the foundation for his work with issues that arise from the impact of chemical dependency on the individual, the family, and the workplace.

As a result of his work in the field of chemical dependency, Dr. Frisch founded the Adult Children Institute. This treatment clinic specialized in working with adults who were raised in families that were emotionally organized around the influences of drugs and alcohol, sexual and physical abuse, and emotional neglect.

The Adult Children Institute developed treatment interventions that enabled the program's participants to develop effective ways to heal from the aftereffects of trauma they experienced from their earlier development. These aftereffects included substance abuse, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, shame, and relationship issues such as fear of emotional intimacy and commitment.

Dr. Frisch co-developed and was the coordinator of a mental health program for homeless adults who required treatment for substance abuse and emotional disorders. He developed an individualized assessment

and treatment protocol that provided the impetus and support for each individual to rebuild their lives within their local communities.

The Relationship Bridge Building and Pathfinders personal growth programs represent the integration of Dr. Frisch's ongoing research and work in the area of human growth and potential development. Program participants develop the necessary awareness and skills to create an empowered life that maximizes their full potential for both their interpersonal and professional lives.

Whether by individual consultation, group experiences, workshops, or seminars, Dr. Frisch engages his audiences with a mixture of common sense and sound psychological principles of change to awaken and inspire their dormant potential. He consults with individuals, couples, groups, and organizations that are seeking to implement the principles of development, change, and growth in their lives.

About the *Stepping Out of the Shadows Program*

When asked how he was able to create his artistic wonders from mere pieces of marble, Michelangelo is said to have replied, "I didn't do anything. God put them in the marble, they were already there. I had only to carve away the parts that kept you from seeing them."

Much like Michelangelo's marvelous statues, our lives are ever unfolding miracles of transformation. Transforming our lives from a never ending cycle of despair, fear, and fragmentation to one of hopefulness, wellness, and wholeness is the purpose of the *Stepping Out of the Shadows* program.

All that the human experience is about is our journey toward wholeness—a wholeness forged from the aspects of ourselves that we are aware of with the aspects of ourselves that we have disowned, existing only within the *shadows* of our awareness.

So much of who we are we have disowned. Many of us have been taught not to express certain parts of who we are. However these parts, like jealousy, lust, greed, anger, and selfishness take on a life of their own when hidden in the shadows.

These disowned aspects of who we are do not live quietly in the shadows. These parts seek to be expressed, to be seen in the light of day as integrated parts of who we

are. At the same time, we expend an enormous amount of energy pushing these parts away from our awareness. The energy we expend contributes to much of the despair and emotional discomfort we experience in our lives. The essential drama that leaves us feeling so fragmented is the underlying ongoing psychological and spiritual conflict between the parts of ourselves that we know and the parts that are demanding to be known.

In order to become whole, we need to reclaim all of these disowned aspects. Think for a moment about all the things that you deny about yourself. Vulnerability? Emotional expressiveness? How comfortable are you expressing your softness, compassion, and playfulness? Creativity may live within you but never be expressed. How safe do you feel expressing your anger, your sexuality, all the good, the bad and the ugly about who you are? Yet it is these very qualities—not given expression, forever pushed further and further away—that take up space in the shadows of your life, oftentimes creating chaos, and ultimately leaving you disconnected from your life's journey.

Reclaiming those parts of ourselves forever unrealized, unacknowledged, and disowned, requires us to look deeply within. For stepping out of the shadows is a process of self-examination, of making the unconscious conscious. By honestly looking inside and discovering these *old-new* pieces of who we are, we can begin to view ourselves in new ways. Quite simply, the process of stepping out of the shadows is the path that enables us to emancipate the rest of our humanity, wisdom, and compassion, thereby healing the relationship we have with ourselves, enriching the relationships we have with the

people in our lives, and creating an understanding of the meaning of our life and our connection to a higher power within our universe.

Stepping out of the shadows affords us the opportunity to bring greater balance to our lives. Challenged to heal the relationship we have with ourselves, we may finally create a space of self-acceptance rather than self-condemnation. Challenged to affect essential shifts with the people in our lives, we can transform our relationships from one of isolated independence or enmeshed dependence to one of supportive interdependence. This newly created space of interdependence will lift our relationships out of the quagmire of fear, control, retribution, and judgment. When this shift takes place within us, as the totality of who we are finally emerges, we will begin to accept the full humanity of ourselves and the people in our lives with all of its blotches and blemishes.

Taking ownership of all of who we are and emerging whole, we will feel safer and freer in our day to day lives. Unburdening ourselves with the need to keep our guard up, we will no longer live in fear of being found out for who we fear ourselves to be. A new found openness towards others will accompany our new found self-acceptance. Developing a deeper, kinder knowledge of our inner selves will free us to be more available to the people in our lives: free to create authentic intimacy with the people who matter most. This new found level of intimacy will create a new sense of safety as we feel more grounded in our world.

Reclaiming those parts of ourselves abandoned to the shadows of our awareness will enable a healing process to unfold within us. A sense of wholeness will emerge where

once there was only the pain from our many fragmented wounded selves.

No longer will we expend the enormous amount of emotional energy it takes to keep aspects of who we are hidden from ourselves and the world. Life will begin to feel lighter, easier. We will begin to learn through our new found wisdom the choices that enable us to release patterns of negativity, doubt, and fear, that are no longer appropriate to who we are and what we are becoming.

Authentic empowerment can only be gained by making choices that stretch us in ways that take us from the incomplete beings we are to more fully integrated, whole souls. When we finally step out of the shadows, we will create a new place for ourselves in the universe. No longer will we empower ourselves through the familiar tactics of control and intimidation. We will be able to respond to the events in our lives rather than merely react. Finally, we will be able to discard the tools of avoidance and withdrawing as we discover the joy of living a life of empowerment rather than enduring a life of paralysis.

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If he [the teacher] is indeed wise, he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own.

-Kahlil Gibran

Let's Start at the Very Beginning...

Our most profound existential urge is to grow and evolve. We all are moved by our inner quest to find meaning, to create a sense of orientation in the universe. I can't think of anybody who isn't hungering for a deeper sense of purpose in their lives, a deeper connection to the underlying forces of life.

The path we follow to quench our thirst for meaning and growth is a process of transformation fraught with challenging milestones along the way. Each step of the process presents us with different obstacles from which valuable lessons can be learned about ourselves. These lessons are the source from which enlightenment sheds its brilliance on our path, enabling us to find our way out of the darkness of the shadows and discovering the means by which we can [re]connect to our life's journey.

I have written this book to assist you in your own searching. Included in *Stepping Out of the Shadows* are the lessons I have discovered in my own searching, as well as those I have learned from guiding others on their own personal journey.

But more than just a guide for your journey, this book is a special invitation. An invitation to shrink your ego and expand your soul. An invitation to explore and discover. To create a personal blueprint for your emotional and spiritual well-being. A blueprint that will reveal to you the path to a life of emotional richness and well-being.

Come explore within yourself. Explore the festering

wounds that hold you back, that tend to appear in your life in ways that limit you. Wounds that never seemingly heal. Wounds that leave you feeling estranged from yourself, the people in your life, and the purpose your life serves.

Throughout the years, it has been my privilege to share this journey with people just like you. We've touched the depth of despair as well as ascended unimaginable heights. Through my own journey, as well as my work with others, I have learned much. One thing I have discovered is that in order to step out of the shadows so that we may [re]connect with our life's journey, we all will inevitably encounter a series of passageways as we follow our evolutionary path of growth and becoming.

This book is my attempt at presenting to you what process we follow as we step out of the shadows. Because the telling of a story is only two dimensional while our lives are three-dimensional, it's impossible to capture the true interrelated nature of these passageways. Although I present each passageway of the process in a particular order, you will encounter them in your life in a continually evolving, ever-changing interdependent fashion.

I've divided this book into eight sections. The first section will provide you with an overview of the journey that lies ahead. Following the first section, I present to you each of the seven passageways we will walk through together on this very special journey.

Each section of the book is intended to serve as a mirror for you to look into—an opportunity to find yourself in each stage of transformation. For many of you, a specific section may serve as a rearview mirror. You may discover that you have already *walked the walk* of a certain

section. Use such a section as a way of measuring how far you have already come, as well as reflect upon what the lessons of that process were for you. For others, each section will serve as a beacon of light, shedding a bright ray of hope where now there is only darkness.

I have included in each section what I call *Pathfinder's Tips*. These tips will enable you to either begin or to continue your very personal work. Beyond providing you with specific tools to enhance your journey, there are exercises throughout the book that will enable you to more personally explore the material covered.

What follows is a short overview of the sections contained in the book.

Awakening the Soul focuses on the toxic influences that deaden the soul as well as the means to awaken what we have buried so deep within ourselves that we have lost touch with those parts of ourselves.

Liberating the Spirit explores how we bind our spirit in such a fashion that our lives become emotionally and spiritually dead. In this section, we examine what our spirit is and how we can set our spirit free.

Illuminating the Path provides a direction for us to focus our efforts on. Once our soul has awakened and our spirit has been liberated, this section will provide a means for self-examination in order that we can create the necessary focus for our journey.

Transforming the Mindset is an important section for anyone who is seeking to unlock the prison that their mind creates for themselves. We explore how to free ourselves from the prison of inflexible thinking as well as create the joy we might experience from living a life grounded in the here-and-now.

Healing Your Wounds paints a picture of ways we can change the relationship we have with ourselves. The very quality of this relationship we have with ourselves is very much connected to the depth of well-being we experience in our lives.

Strengthening the Bonds of Fellowship focuses on our need to connect to the people who matter most to us in a very special way. We will discover how our relationships are the most important antidote for a spirit that has been ravaged by loneliness and alienation.

Rhythm of Life enables us to put into perspective what our journey can be like, as well as some specific pointers that we all need to bear in mind as we stay involved with our personal growth.

The journey you and I are about to embark upon is unique—unique because no two people will experience the material in this book the same way. No two people will find the same material equally important or irrelevant.

Just one word of caution as you begin. There's nothing here that needs to be *learned*. But there's much here for you to *experience* so that you may *learn*. Do the best you can to *patiently* work with the material that is presented to you. My only intention in writing this book is to light a thousand small fires to illuminate your path as you step out of the shadows and [re]connect to your life's journey.