

INTRODUCTION



EMOTIONAL UTOPIA

STOP SEARCHING FOR HAPPINESS
AND START LIVING IT

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

Welcome to your first step toward emotional success. You want happiness, peace of mind, and enjoyable relationships, and I want you to have them. I want you to know that, yes, there is help for someone like you—someone strong, successful, and accomplished.

You're probably thinking, *There's nothing wrong with me. I don't really need help.* And you're right: there is nothing wrong with you. But maybe there's nothing that great, either. Maybe life is just okay or mediocre. You wonder why you're not happier.

You want something *more* or more meaningful out of life.

What if you were to feel really good more often, without having to be doing something to feel that way? If you're not emotionally satisfied, if you can't feel joy, or if you don't have good emotional connections with the intimate people in your life, there's definitely something wrong with *that*, and you know it.

Every day, I help people figure out what is keeping them from being happy. And every day, I help them develop internal tools to build the happiness they seek.

In this book you will learn, first and foremost, that you can be happy. You will learn about my proven method, bioenergetic psychoanalysis. You will learn why and how it works, and you will understand clearly how it can help you live the life you imagine for yourself.

The secret to happiness is being satisfied with who you are—deep down, in that private place, where you question yourself. Wouldn't you like to start doing the things you say you want to do? Or stop



doing the things you don't want to do but keep doing anyway? Doesn't emotional satisfaction and lifelong peace of mind sound great?

After going through the method described in this book, you will feel satisfied with who you are, and you will be free from any invisible tethers holding you back from the emotional achievements noted above. Enjoyable intimate relationships, understanding and controlling any once-mysterious behaviors, and an overall, ongoing experience of satisfaction with life will all be yours.

How do I know? I know because I did it, and it completely changed my life. I was “perfectly normal.” I was your basic “achiever” in an Ivy League master's degree program in psychology. I was moving forward with my life and had plenty of friends. It did not look as if there were anything “wrong” with me by any stretch of the imagination, and there was not, but . . .

It's kind of a truism that people go into psychology because they want to figure out their own stuff. I was no exception! I didn't have big problems, but I definitely had things to work on. My emotions would run really high or low. I would fall into funks for no apparent reason. The quality of my intimate relationships was “dramatic,” to say the least. I was kind of a spaz. I definitely could not say I was happy, and I did not have peace of mind.

Exercise helped me handle my emotions and kept them from running very high and low. But it was not enough. In graduate school, after one of my classes stirred up a lot of feelings I did not know what to do with, I made the decision to get help for myself. I did not want to manage with exercise, alcohol, medication, or anything else. I wanted to *thrive*.

I started seeing a psychoanalyst twice a week, which quickly shifted to three times a week. I was like a fish in water, growing by leaps and bounds. I could not get enough of the stuff. All in all, I had

ten years of analysis, ranging in frequency from once a month to four times a week. It was the most valuable investment of my life.

Ten years is a long time, and occasionally, I complained, “Why is this taking so long?” But it was worth it. When I finished, things were really good. I was emotionally satisfied, and I was happy with myself and my life. I was no longer plagued by bouts of misery or inexplicable periods of sluggishness. My relationships also felt really good. I did not waste time getting caught up in personal or interpersonal drama. All of this has remained, and since then, I have moved forward in life with a satisfaction that I know most people do not have—and may even envy.

As I worked with people in my own analytic therapy practice, I found that they often weren’t experiencing their feelings in my office. Unfortunately, if you aren’t able to *feel* your feelings and be real, you will never get the results you want. You are wasting your time on half-baked attempts.

Let’s say you seek help because you want to enjoy the fruits of your labor, but you currently feel bored or even miserable. If you don’t access the emotions behind these symptoms and the motivating beliefs they fuel, you will not change.

If your coping strategy is to completely avoid emotions, nothing you do in a talk-therapy or coaching setting is going to give you access to the feelings in your body. The power behind your negative beliefs will never be eliminated, and you will never see lasting results.

But there is good news. If you release the emotional power behind beliefs that fuel your symptomatic behavior, the behavior will be eliminated.

Since psychoanalysis works but takes a long time, I began to wonder how I could help people reach happiness and emotional satisfaction faster. I decided there had to be a better way. Feeling is in



the body, so I wanted to get folks more connected to their bodies. I had to help them get out of their heads. It was a vague idea, but I knew it needed to happen. The body is the key.

Then, one day by random chance, I found myself listening to a lecture by the YouTube health and fitness celebrity Elliott Hulse. It was about deep breathing and called “Breathing into Your Balls.” This really means breathing fully and relaxing your muscles all the way down into your pelvic floor as you inhale. The lecture was based on ideas of bioenergetic analysis, developed by Alexander Lowen, MD. The therapeutic method involves deliberately focusing on the body to access emotion. I was stunned. This was the answer I had been looking for.

It turned out there was a Society for Bioenergetic Analysis in Florida, not too far from where I lived. It offered a training program for therapists. I contacted the organization immediately. Within three weeks, I had an individual bioenergetic therapy session, and I was accepted into the program. A month later, I started training.

Incidentally, throughout the book, I will use the terms *bioenergetic analysis*, *bioenergetic therapy*, and *bioenergetics* interchangeably. They are the same thing. Dr. Lowen officially called it bioenergetic analysis, but he also referred to it as bioenergetic therapy and bioenergetics.

Before I went to that first individual bioenergetic therapy session, I really felt I was done with my own therapy. Overall, I was happy and often described myself as peaceful, despite the fact that I’m a pretty intense person. Going to the session was more of a novelty for me. But lo and behold, I discovered in that session, and the ones to follow, all kinds of emotions were still hiding in my body, fueling powerful unconscious beliefs. I became aware of many ways in which

I was, in fact, holding myself back from things that I wanted to do and had not been doing.

Since then, I have had many bioenergetic therapy sessions. I know bioenergetics works because it worked for me and has worked for my clients. It enables people to identify and access deep emotions that more conventional therapies are powerless to touch. I have gained a new insight and control over my life that has taken me to the next level. I incorporate bodywork into my practice as long as my clients are willing to try it, and I think they are ready for the intensity of the experience.

As I mentioned earlier, psychoanalysis changed my life, and subsequently, bioenergetic analysis has taken me to an even higher level of satisfaction. I am now a completely different person. I did not lose anything or become someone else, but I am “more”: I am flexible, able to react and respond in ways that are appropriate to whatever situation is at hand. I’m not locked “in character,” meaning that I don’t do things because “that’s the way I am.” I have the energy to do what I need to do when I need to do it because I’m no longer bogged down with managing excess emotional energy that I was once unable to release. I feel joy easily. I have peace of mind, and I am happy.

Here’s the thing: you are a capable, competent, successful person. You are accustomed to making things happen on your own. But in the area of emotional satisfaction, you are stuck. You may have used all the logic and rationality you could summon but have found that you still cannot make a problem go away, or maybe, you still cannot feel the joy and peace of mind you know exists and that you should have.

You may have tried exercise, yoga, massage, or escaping from your routine, but none of these brought lasting results. Did you try medication but didn’t like it, or it didn’t work? Maybe you gained



insight or learned strategies from some other form of therapy but still didn't achieve the lasting outcome you'd hoped for. You want deeper answers and a better solution than you have been able to reach on your own. I bet you know from past experience that having insight into why you do things is not necessarily going to make them change.

If any of these descriptions apply to you, don't give up. You *can* be happy, emotionally satisfied, and free from the restraints that are holding you back from being your best self. The analytic method is powerful. It has made a huge difference in my life and in the lives of my clients. A few of their stories are included throughout this book. (Please note that individuals' names and identifying details have been significantly changed to protect their privacy.)

This is not a self-help book. Rather, it is a book to help you understand how committing to bioenergetic psychoanalysis will help you access unknown internal resources and, ultimately, the life you want. You will understand emotions much better, and you will be familiar with the unconscious. You will also understand bioenergetic bodywork and why intense bodywork is most effective (and safer) when practiced under the guidance of a psychotherapist.

That said, I've included some basic exercises you can do at home to give you an idea of the bodywork and its effects. I've also included a Notes and Resources section to help you find qualified professionals and additional information if you decide you would like to pursue this method further.

Quite simply, if I ask, "Are you emotionally satisfied? Do you have peace of mind?" and you cannot say yes, fully and whole-heartedly, then read on.

First, you'll learn what I mean by *happiness* and what you may be doing to keep yourself from experiencing it. You'll learn how psychotherapy (both talk-centered therapy and therapy that includes

bodywork) operates. You will also see clearly how my method can put you in a position to say, “I am happy, I have peace of mind, and I am satisfied with myself and my life.”

By the end of this book I hope you realize that emotional utopia is not a fantasy but, rather, the experience of life with an optimal balance of rich and varied emotions.

If you have never had therapy, it may seem mysterious and intrusive. Once you understand it, though, I believe you’ll feel absolutely enthusiastic. You deserve to be happy.