

Greetings. Blessings. Love.

Dear friends, life has brought us together at this moment for a great purpose: positive change. Individually and collectively, we stand at a crossroads, in a state of transition between what has been and what could be. The choices we make in thought, word, and action- create an immeasurable ripple effect, influencing every one and everything around us. In any given moment, we are either choosing consciously (meaning we are aware of our decisions) or we are thinking unconsciously (that is, without awareness). Conscious choices affirm life, unaware choices destroy it. These choices are the seed from which we shape our world. Thus here we are.

You may be holding these pages right now for the same reason I wrote them: because we know it is time. It is time to ascend to the next level, individually and collectively, so that we can consciously create a harmonious, prosperous, and sustainable future while honoring each one's uniqueness. We each have an important role to play. To authentically support others on their path and fulfill our destiny, it is essential to elevate our thinking, evolve our language, and live with awareness of how our presence influences the whole of existence.

Please allow me to share a bit about my life and what has inspired me to write these pages so that your credence will be forthcoming. My name is Ernesto Cole Jr. and I was born in Colon, Panama many years ago to the most loving, caring, and God loving woman I've known.

Was sent to Boston, Massachusetts to live with my Daddy- God rest his soul- and acquire a better education. During those years, my confusion, negativity, and peer pressures were so disruptive that I was sent back to Panama by my Daddy. While back home, my unconscious choices were very destroying to all around me that even psychiatric intervention was sought after for me by my dear mother. Eventually, I migrated back to the U.S.A. and by continuing to make very bad choices, here I am serving two life sentences and more. Many of you may think: "If that's the case, what can he do or say to help me?" Well gentlemen, that's exactly the point, due to my experiences and errors of the past, you will get a true example of what the power of positive thinking and change can do for you in every sense of the word.

In this Recidawareness workshop, you will embark on a journey of a deeper understanding of who you are and why you are here. All you must do is stay COMMITTED (emphasis intended) and the rest will come to you, deal? In the meantime, allow me to introduce you to something I've come across in my readings that has helped me stay deeply committed to my purpose in life of being content and happy with myself, others, surroundings, and serving all I can. It is what I call the 10 secrets to a beautiful and purposeful life and those topics will be touched during this wonderful and insightful workshop.

Secret 1- The world is what you think it is. You are creating your experience of the world moment by moment. The secret is that we each live in our own separate reality. This isn't some kind of an esoteric theory, but a physiological

fact. Our brains filter information through the five senses, then make representations of that information inside our minds. We then experience these representations, first as thoughts and then as emotions. But as we represent the information in our minds, certain bits of the data are inevitably deleted, distorted, and generalized. And since we all delete, distort, and generalize that information slightly differently, we all have slightly (or sometimes completely) different perceptions of what is going on around us.

In other words, the way we think determines what we see, hear, and feel, regardless of what's actually going on around us in the world. Or, to put it slightly differently, there's what happens, and there's what we think about what happens. And what makes this important is that the lion's share of our decisions, feelings, and actions in life will be based on our thoughts, not the objective facts.

Secret 2- Well being is not the fruit of something you do; it is the essence of who you are. There's nothing you need to change, do, be, or have in order to be happy. The reason why this understanding of the source of well-being is so significant is that so much of our energy and time is squandered in pursuing goals and projects and financial incentives and relationships that we believe will "make" us happy. And so much of the stress and strain we experience in our lives is brought on by our misguided attempt to make ourselves feel better by having, doing, or achieving the right things. Simply put, what we attribute our good feelings to will determine what we do and where we go to get more of them.

Secret 3- There's nowhere for you to go- you're just here. This thought could be disturbing at first to people who feel that "the next big thing" is continually just around the corner. But if they sit with it, most feel their shoulders begin to relax as their experience of the present moment deepens.

Of course, just because there's nowhere to get to doesn't mean you'll no longer travel- just that you'll no longer do so in order to get somewhere that's better than right where your sitting now. It doesn't mean that you can't upgrade your car, your job, your finances, or even your relationship. It just means that if you do, it will be because you want to, not because you think you have to or should.

Secret 4- What you decide will never impact your life as much as how you handle the consequences of that decision. In other words, marrying the wrong person is just a mistake; staying married to them for the next 25 years and being miserable about it is a bad decision.

Choosing one job over another might be a mistake; giving up on your career and spending the rest of your life pining over what might have been is a bad decision.

Getting tipsy and embarrassing yourself in front of that hottie from the office might be a mistake; letting it define you as a loser, a drunk, or someone not fit for human society would be a bad decision.

Secret 5- Every emotion you experience is a direct response to a thought, not to the world around you. The more clearly you see that your emotions are always reactions to your thoughts, not to the world, the easier it is to simply

feel them and let them go. And the gift of that insight is that you stop needing to change the world in order to change the way you feel. Therefore, there's no such thing as a "bad day." Your day doesn't create your mood; your mood creates your day.

Secret 6- No matter what seems to be going on in your life, you don't have to do anything. Everything you do (or don't do) is a choice. Given that, why would anyone ever choose to do anything they didn't want to do? Two reasons: 1- Because they think it's necessary in order to get or maintain something that they want. 2- In order to live up to an idea of how they're supposed to be in the world. In other words, we do what we do (and don't do what we don't do) either because we want to, because we think it's a prerequisite for getting something else that we want (in other words because we "have" to), or because we think it will make us into the kind of person we're supposed to be (i.e., because we "should").

In a nutshell: Being overwhelmed is just a thought. No matter what seems to be going on in your life, you don't have to do anything. Everything you do (or don't do) is a choice. When in doubt, slow down. Clarity, structure, and boldness underpin every time management system in the world.

Secret 7- You create other people by how you listen to them. Now, obviously this is not meant literally. But in the same way that we'll almost always see what we're looking for, we'll nearly always hear what we're listening for. This creates a self-fulfilling prophesy within our relationships.

If I'm listening for my lover, I'm sure to hear her. If I'm listening for a harri-dan of a wife, I'll hear her, too. Listen

for your loving son and he's bound to respond; listen for that irresponsible young man and sure enough, he's there. This works because our relationships with other people happen almost entirely in our heads. Remember that when you think about people, you aren't actually thinking about the "real" them- you're thinking about a representation of them in your mind, like an icon on a computer. You're actually re-creating them in your mind; and you're deleting, distorting, and generalizing some of their characteristics as you do so.

Secret 8- You can ask anyone for anything when you make it okay for them to say "no." Your ability to not take the word no personally, no matter how dramatically that "no" may be delivered, is the key to success- not (by definition) because people will always say yes, but because it won't be emotionally devastating to you if they don't. The more comfortable you get with the word no, the less likely you are to get caught up in a sort of "post-traumatic stress disorder" of the mind, walking on eggshells and becoming more and more afraid to ask for what you want.

Secret 9- Financial security doesn't come from the amount of money you currently have; it comes from your ability to get more of it whenever you want. Master the art of serving others and you will secure your financial future. The fact is, money and wood (and metal and pork bellies) are just commodities. The difference between them is that you buy wood with money and you "buy" money with service. In this sense, money is just a measure of the difference you're making in the world, If you're not making any difference, it will be difficult to make any money.

Secret 10- There is never a good reason not to hope. The dictionary defines hope as "a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen" and "as grounds for believing that something good may happen."

False hope, then, doesn't have to do with my feeling of expectation and desire for my relationships to be successful, my business to make money, and my body to be healthy, but with my grounds for believing that these things are possible.

If I ask you to believe in yourself and your dream because I have a "secret" knowledge of the future that reveals that as long as you do X, Y, and Z, you'll ultimately succeed, that is unfortunately false grounds for hope- I have no such knowledge. However, if I ask you to believe in yourself and your dreams because there are hundreds if not thousands of stories of people who have succeeded in spite of the evidence, that is indeed grounds for legitimate hope, regardless of how things ultimately turn out.

CONCLUSION

As you begin to gain insight into these secrets for yourself, your life will begin to transform. "Results" will matter less than ever, and you'll find yourself producing them even more consistently. Your fears and stresses will fall away as you recognize that the capacity to create the life you want to live has been inside you right from the very beginning. You may even find that your biggest problem is that you have no more big problems.

As your life gets better and better, it will begin to have a positive impact on the people around you and transform their lives, too. Even if your "job description" isn't part of the helping profession, people will just feel more relaxed in themselves when they're with you. They'll find themselves creating more effortless success in their lives and producing results far beyond their expectations. There's nothing you need to do to make this happen- it's the natural result of resting in your innate well-being and evolving your understanding of how people are creating their experience of whatever it is they're expecting.

Happiness and a meaningful life come from making differences. But this is the most important rule to follow: always make the differences you can make, not the differences you would prefer to make but can't. That being said, allow me to conclude with what I've learned and experienced by sharing it with you from the depth of my heart: You have wisdom inside you- listen for it and give it voice. You have a light inside you- feel its glow and let it shine. You have the power to

speak and act and make things manifest in the world- let your wisdom and light guide you as you do.

With lots of love and thanks.

Ernesto Cole