

OPEN UP AND SAY

aaah!

Discover...
who you are now

Shape...
who you are becoming

Create...
what you want to experience

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Foreword

Wouldn't it be great if we knew exactly what is was that we wanted and just went after it? Or what about specifically uncovering what is blocking us or keeping us stuck?

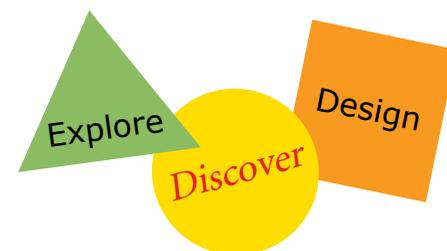
We can go into any bookstore and pick up hundreds of self-help books on the 10 ways to do this, the three keys to that, or the only five things you need to have whatever. They are mainly a directive style of trial-and-error self-help. They offer generalized solutions or popular answers to your problems. And, hey, doesn't everyone want the answers?

The hard truth is we all have different needs and reasons for why things are either working or not working in our lives. We are all individuals, each just as unique psychologically, emotionally, and physiologically as we are genetically.

So how do we get at this uniqueness and get the help we each need and want without years of therapy? Is there a personalized approach we can have access to that would allow us to self-manage the changes in our lives more comfortably and design the happiness we want to experience so we can realize our personal growth potential?

Personalized self-help, just like personalized medicine that specifically targets drug therapy based on recent advances with DNA mapping, could be what makes a breakthrough impact here. What makes personalized self-help different is that it guides you with questions and allows you the space and excitement of finding your own answers. The answers we all need are already inside each of us. We just need access to them!

Open up and Say aaah! is a self-directed, self-coaching book that utilizes a personalized self-help approach. So get ready to explore, discover, and design a practice of aaah! created for you, by you, and in service of you—and your happiness!



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How to Use This Book

Life is a completely different experience when it is lived from a mindful, purposeful place of intention setting as opposed to a random existence of hoping for the best. Of course, the latter may appear to be a comfortable place at first, but in reality, you are making a choice to experience limitation. I believe that if you have picked up this book, you are ready to choose and go after more of what you want in your life *now* rather than settling for “what might be some day.”

Learning how to manage change within ourselves and around us will have a transformational impact in our lives. It enables us to really go after what we want and therefore allows us to enjoy more of our experiences, whether personal or professional.

Leading our lives on our own terms is the most empowering perspective we can hold. This book, in part, is a **personal leadership journey** from which everyone can benefit. It is about becoming more self-conscious about revealing what really fulfills us and what we want in our lives.

Once we know, we will explore how to find the path to get us there.

Ultimately, we will arrive at the opportunity for choice and engagement in the experience that we believe will bring happiness for us.

Regardless of our occupations, our obligations, or our socioeconomic statuses, we are all the leaders of our own lives. If you are like most people, you have probably been leading much of your life from a state of unconsciousness. You weren't asleep, but you were just moving along, wishing and hoping that everything would ultimately work out for the best. This can leave you frustrated with and perhaps even resentful of some parts of your life if they are not working out the way you had thought they would.

The questions you need to ask yourself:

1. Am I *ready*?
2. Am I *able*?
3. Am I *willing*?



“To do what?” you may ask. *To change, grow, and shape your life on purpose.* These questions are in a precise order. To be *ready* requires entering a new state of being. To be *able* requires a clear understanding of skills and systems. To be *willing* requires that you engage in a practice.

Open up and Say **aaah!**

The title *Open up and Say aaah!* refers to opening your heart and mind and finding your voice. It is about building and strengthening your skills of **a**wareness, **a**ceptance, and **a**lignment to guide your choices toward **h**appiness. **Aaah!** is an acronym for a powerful life tool that will help you face change or challenges with new perspectives. With it, you can mindfully choose your responses and shape your experiences, regardless of the situation or circumstances.

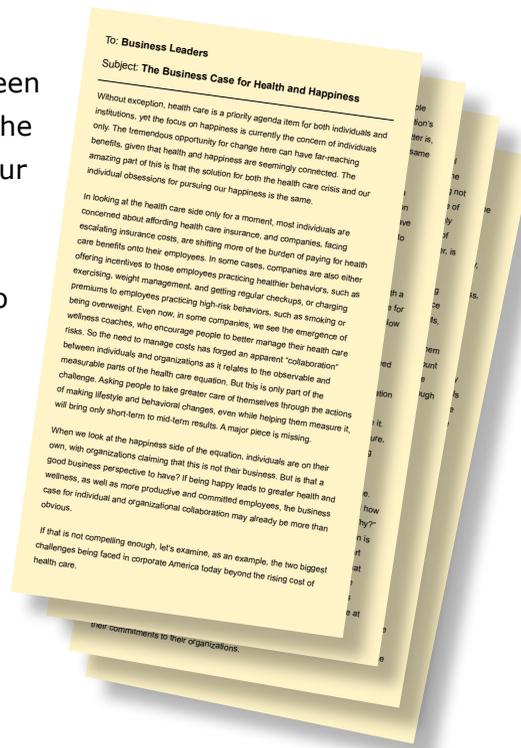
This book has two parts. In Part I, you will be introduced to foundational pieces that will make you “ready and able” to manage yourself through this personalized self-help process. Part II is where you must be “willing” to dig into your current circumstances and the process of shaping your life into what you want to experience—in your way and on your terms!

You may choose to read the book from the beginning and go right through in a linear and progressive way. Or, for those either returning to this process or brave enough to just leap into it, you may want to start with Part Two and the diagnostic section. The choices, you will learn, are always yours!

aaah!

Part I is designed and written to first introduce you to the concept of **selfhood**, a place you enter by choice, not simply by rite of passage. Here, we begin the process of becoming conscious and purposeful about leading ourselves through the change and growth process in our lives. When we are in a state of selfhood, we are ready to begin to do this. Within the state of selfhood, we will explore several areas that will both prepare us for and provide us with fundamental principles that later will allow us to reach our full potential:

- We will look at the links between health and happiness and highlight the importance of taking ownership for our **self-care**.
- We will discuss techniques for how to be **self-sufficient** and will learn to coach ourselves through the change and growth process.
- We will look at how to build and strengthen our most important relationship in life, the relationship with ourselves, and in doing so will create great **self-reliance**.



Coaching Tip 1
Set a Goal for Yourself

All of your coaching efforts should be centered on a goal you have set. Decide what your goal is and what it will feel like to experience it. Then commit to realizing it. **Remind yourself of your goal frequently.** While life is dynamic and our coaching will need to be flexible in terms of working with whatever shows up in our lives, we want to have consistent focus on our goal, or happiness target. As you move through your day, ask yourself, "What is here for me now?" As coach, you need to look for the learning and insights that surround your daily activities to support the realization of your goal.

- Finally, we will look at how change, growth, and happiness are an integrated system and how we can be **self-empowered** to manage each effectively and comfortably in our lives.

When you understand the elements at work in selfhood, you are ready to step into the leadership role of your life. With the tools provided next, you will be able to begin to work with change and growth to shape your life on purpose and create the happiness you desire.

Part II of this book is an interactive experience and a practical guide through a personalized self-coaching process. Because we all have different learning preferences, you will be offered visual, auditory, and kinesthetic approaches to the activities you will do, to best suit your learning style.

We will begin with a diagnostic tool to identify where you are in the growth and change process for different areas of your life. Once you have completed and scored your personalized assessment, I will frame the findings in the context of an intuitively based change and growth model. You will then engage in exercises to help you identify lost or hidden treasures within yourself. These findings will be extremely useful in your personal journey of seeking, finding, and creating the life you want to experience.

You are the coach here, but I will be on your shoulder and will be whispering in your ear, encouraging you, and supporting you along the way. This is not an easy overnight process. It will, however, be well worth your investment of time if you want to figure out where you are stuck and how to get over it. Like any practice, you will have to try it more than once. I call it **the practice of aaah!**

Building a relationship with **your self**



VITAL SIGNS

Family caregivers who provide care 36 or more hours weekly are more likely than non-caregivers to experience symptoms of depression or anxiety. According to a 2002 study published in the American Journal of Public Health, for spouses, the rate is six times higher, and for those caring for a parent, the rate is twice as high. Source: American Journal of Public Health, 2002

Signs of Vitality

Men are happier than women. Researchers at Princeton University found that, since the 1960s, men have gradually cut back on activities they don't like to do, focusing on working less and relaxing more. Women, however, have replaced housework with paid work and now spend almost as much time as in the past doing things they don't enjoy. Four decades ago, women spent about 23 hours each week doing unpleasant tasks—about 40 minutes more than men. Today, that gap is 90 minutes. Source: Alan Krueger, Brookings Panel on Economic Activity, 2007

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Open up and Say *aaah!* Diagnostic Tool

The diagnostic tool presents a series of 45 statements in 9 different areas requiring a yes or no response. You may find that taking a position on these personal issues is challenging or difficult. If you are true to yourself and answer honestly, you will create a personalized assessment that provides insight into a particular area of your life. Are you in flow or stuck?

Part I:

- 1 I think my environment/current circumstance is completely satisfying, and I am provided with opportunities for achieving my goals and personal growth expectations. Yes No
- 2 I think I am currently interacting with people in this environment/current circumstance who are encouraging and empowering me to be all that I can be. Yes No
- 3 I am completely satisfied with the personal contributions I am presently making to my environment/circumstance. Yes No

Part VI:

- 1 I feel passionate about my desire to grow and make a personal difference in this part of my life, and I do not hold back on bringing forward my gifts and talents to the world. Yes No
- 2 I believe that my life experiences have brought me purposefully to where I am now and to what I must do now in this part of my life. Yes No
- 3 I am willing and ready to act on my personal beliefs and to fully express them in this part of my life. Yes No

Part IX:

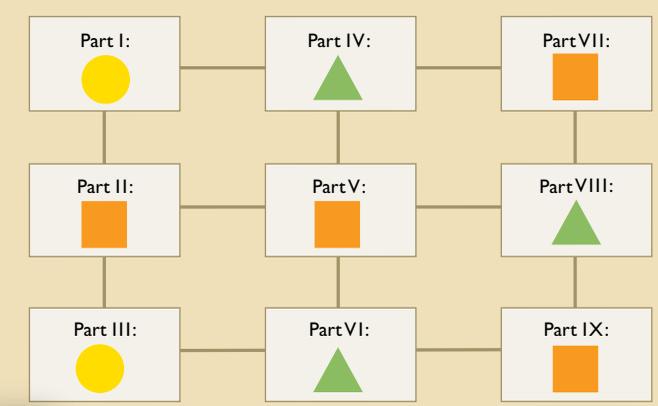
- 1 I know that I am fully embodying and living "out loud" the life that I was meant to live in this area. Yes No
- 2 I have a clear purpose for this part of my life, and I am experiencing it in an integrated and authentic way. Yes No
- 3 I know that each experience I have is a guided message to keep me moving forward on my path for the fulfillment of my purpose in this part of my life. Yes No
- 4 I am clear on what happiness means for me. I allow myself to consciously choose to experience it and express it in this part of my life in every way I can. Yes No

Scoring the Diagnostic

After you have completed the diagnostic, please use the following scoring system to determine your results:

-  If you answered yes to ALL of the statements in a section, give yourself a **CIRCLE** score
-  If you answered with 3 or 4 yes responses in a section, give yourself a **TRIANGLE** score
-  If you answered with 0 to 2 yes responses in a section, give yourself a **SQUARE** score

Your *aaah!* Diagnostic Scorecard

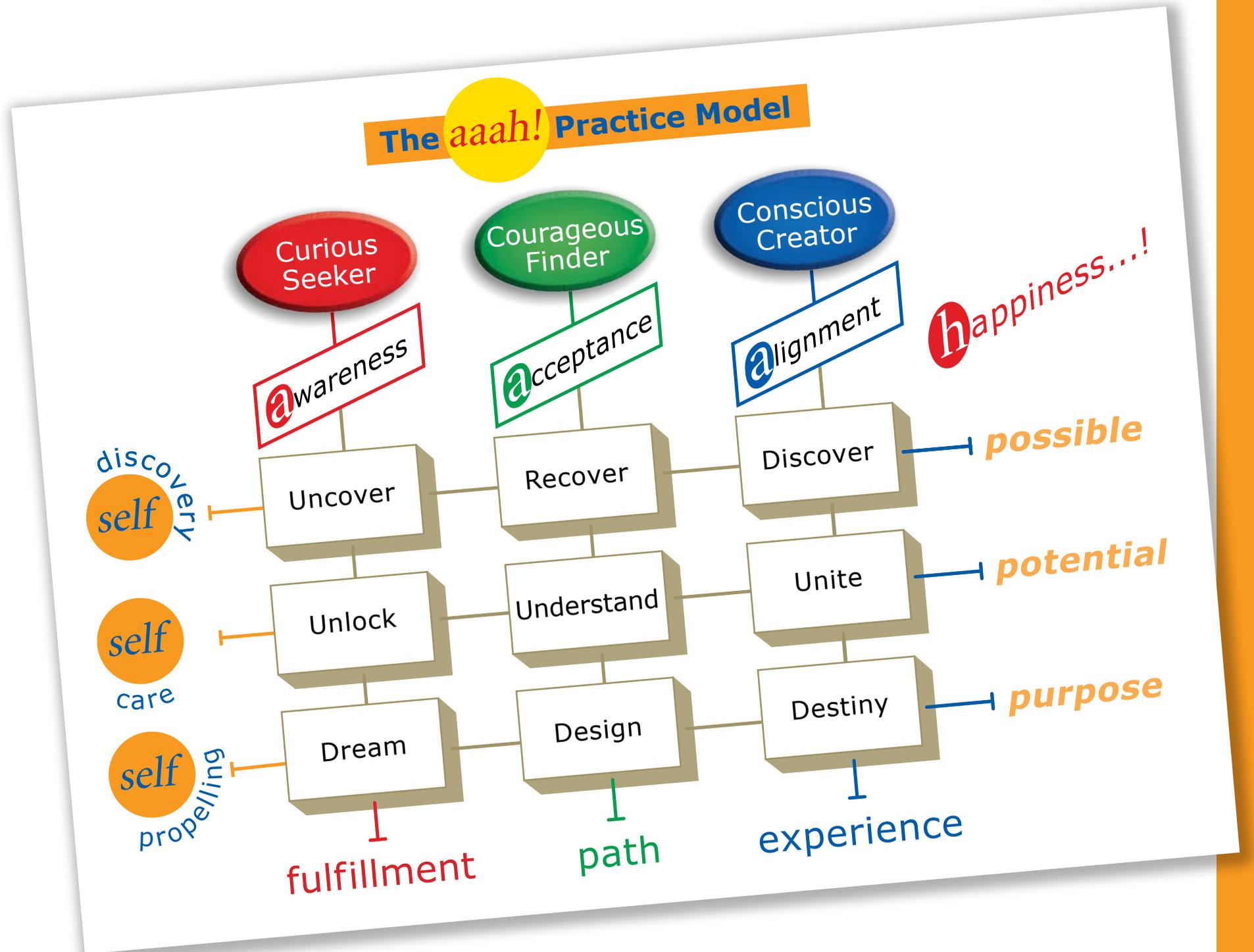


Find out what your personal geometry means.....and what you can do next!

The aaah! Practice Model

The centerpiece of this book is a unique model that invites you to explore areas of your life in various stages of progression. The model has three phases: the Curious Seeker, the Courageous Finder, and the Conscious Creator. Just as life is a holistic set of experiences, the model recognizes that we are in all three stages simultaneously.

The practice of aaah! brings your awareness capabilities to new levels, challenges you to accept and be accountable to yourself, and encourages you to be integrated and aligned with what you want to create and experience in your life: happiness!



Learn how your personal assessment in your diagnostic translates into where you are in the growth and change process. Are you willing to seek, find and create what you want to experience in your personal and professional life?

Tools and Treasures

You will coach yourself through the use of experiential exercises. The tools are the exercises; the treasures are the pieces of you that you will find and reconnect with along the way as you build up your relationship with yourself.

In each section, you will be asked to participate in a combination of exercises that are **mind based** (encouraging illumination), **heart based** (encouraging reflection), or **voice based** (encouraging expression). Your diagnostic score will guide you toward the exercises that are right for you. The exercises will not provide you with definitive answers; they will be a *gateway of exploration* from which you will unearth or remind yourself of what you need to know and remember so that you can move forward and shape your life on purpose.

Some of these tools will be familiar, while others will be new. Be open and playful. Try them, even if they initially strike you as silly or you think you already know the answer. There is always something to learn here.

Tools and Treasures

design box

Exercises for The Square

Illumination
Write the various choices and considerations you currently have for your path forward in this part of your life. If there are a few that naturally belong in the same group or theme, put them together. For each theme, select one word that describes the essence of the choices. Do you see any patterns emerging? Make a priority list for yourself based on your excitement level for the preferences. Make a few notes for yourself.

Reflection
Imagine a time when you were experiencing peak performance. You may have been speaking to a group, playing a sport, or telling a great story. What were you doing? What were the reactions of others who were witnessing you? What type of feedback did you receive? How did it make you feel? What about that experience do you want to bring forward as you determine your path in this part of your life? Capture a few notes on this.

Expression
Imagine you are a human piece of metal. A huge magnet is pulling and attracting you toward it. The power and force are so strong you cannot resist. What are you being pulled toward in this area of your life? Say it out loud. What steps do you need to take to move you toward that attractive place? Write a few notes to yourself.

Exercises for The Triangle

Illumination
As you consider the paths available to you in this part of your life, assessing their strengths and weaknesses may be helpful. Make two columns on a page, and on the left side, list your top two preferred paths. On the right side, list another two that you are considering in your due diligence but that you have less heart for. Consider the opportunities and limitations for each choice. Do any new choices

or combinations emerge? Consider passing these ideas by your advisory team for insights and perspective. Now make a choice, for right now, on one of the options that feels exciting. Make a few short notes and map out the first two or three steps for a plan on how to move forward. Decide to go out and experience this choice. You can always choose again.

Reflection
For the path you are about to take, what type of shoes do you need? Describe them (sneakers for speed, sturdy boots for climbing) and the supplemental supplies you wish to have handy on your journey. You are metaphorically packing for an important trip, so be prepared. Write what you need.

Expression
What intentions regarding your path would you declare to the universe if you knew absolutely that they would come true and you could not fail? Write them here.

Exercises for The Circle

Illumination:
Draw three concentric circles on a piece of paper. Your life is now the center circle. Your desire is to share more of your learning and insights with others. How can you extend your wisdom? Make a few notes on what each expansive circle means as a next step for you in this area of your life.

Reflection
Look at yourself in a mirror. Give yourself a minute to take in all that you are, all that you've done, and all that you still have to do. Acknowledge yourself for the amazing person you are. Commit to yourself that you will fulfill your destiny and walk your path as a gift to yourself and to the world. Write a few sentences about what this experience feels like.

Expression
You are speaking to a group of people who are at a crossroads in their lives and who are trying to choose a path forward. What advice can you offer them about your journey and decision-making process? How can you inspire them to accept accountability for their lives and their choices? How might you inspire their courage? Write the wisdom or advice you would share.

design box

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Explore over 100 experiential learning exercises to help you discover who you are now and shape who you are becoming!

aaah!-mazing Questions and a Plan of Action

We will specifically take the learning from these experiential exercises as well as your answers from the aaah-mazing questions and put them into actions you can take to move yourself toward your fulfillment goals, or **happiness targets**, as we call them in the practice of aaah! Now let's put some achievable next steps in place to create some traction and momentum in your change and growth process! *Here is where the coach within you gets to step up!*

10 aaah-mazing Questions

Remember to stay focused on the area of your life for which you completed your diagnostic.

1. When you were a kid, what was a great day like for you?
2. Who was your best friend, and what did you like to do together?
3. What did your parents or adult figures do for you?
4. What gifts and talents emerged in you?
5. Where and how are you using your gifts and talents?
6. Which part of you are you using every day?
7. As a child, were you free to be who you are? As an adult? What changes?
8. What is it about you that you love?
9. What do you internally value in your lifetime?
10. What dream or expectation did you ignore it?

Identify Three Happiness Blockers:

- 1
- 2
- 3

Identify Three Happiness Insights:

- 1
- 2
- 3

Identify Three Happiness Targets:

- 1
- 2
- 3

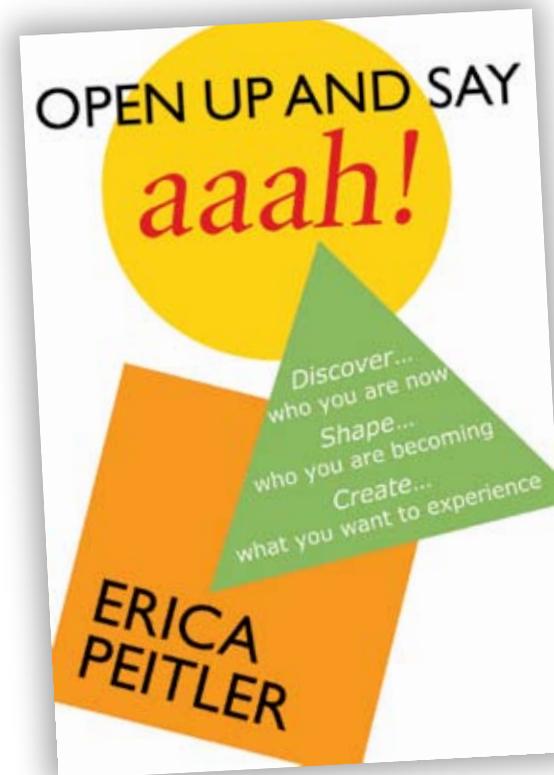
destiny box

Your **aaah!** Action Plan

aaah!

Take aim at setting your focused intentions and goals armed with the acknowledgement of what previously was blocking you... as well as the new insights you have discovered through the process of aaah! This is action planning for real change... designed by you and for you !

For More Information or to Contact Erica Peitler:



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“If only.... I wish I had.... When I....”

STOP!

Want to experience your life more fully *right now*? Are you ready to claim and realize the potential which exists inside of you? Do you have the determination to transform the change that surrounds you each day into opportunities for personal growth?

Take a personal and self-directed leadership journey into the practice of *aaah!* With an easy to use diagnostic tool you will identify your change readiness in any area of your life with a customized assessment for where *you* need to focus to get “unstuck” and moving forward. Then with the breakthrough *Open Up and Say aaah!* model you will visually see and be guided to overcome the challenges of change in your own life.

In these pages, you’ll be introduced to the powerful concept of Selfhood and meet the **Curious Seeker**, **Courageous Finder** and **Conscious Creator** within you as you learn to open and integrate your heart, mind and voice. You will build and use your awareness, acceptance and alignment skills on your way to creating your own version of happiness.

While other self-help books attempt to give you the answers, *Open Up and Say aaah!* is an experiential learning adventure which is fun, engaging and visually compelling as it provides you with the questions to reveal your most important personal insights. Learn how to call on this life tool called the practice of *aaah!* It will change everything!

As a child, she always wanted to be a doctor. Through a journey of self-discovery she has realized the essence of her dream: to help people be better!

Erica Peitler is a pharmacist and an internationally respected business leader with expertise in organizational performance, strategic direction setting and cultural development. She most recently was the youngest member of the global management team for a \$2 billion dollar consumer healthcare organization. Hand-picked to tackle challenges throughout her 20-year corporate career ranging from business turnarounds, joint ventures and entrepreneurial initiatives within large infrastructures, Erica has brought insightful creativity and a strong futuristic view of possibilities to her work.

Now turning her focus to her lifelong passion of leadership, Erica is a professionally trained and certified leadership coach, speaker and author who works with curious and courageous individuals to reach their personal growth potential.



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