

Chapter One:

ANNA'S TRAVELS

Deciding to Start



With my unquenchable desire to enjoy the fresh mountain air and to keep my body fat well below the normal range for a woman, I started out on my daily run. As I crossed the street to my well-known trail along the frontage road of the beautiful Rocky Mountain foothills, I was aware of my good fortune. As I approached my second mile, the trance state that keeps my addiction going enveloped me, and I began to contemplate that day's lunch date with Anna.

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Anna was an old friend from high school, which I might add was years ago. She looked me up and called me out of the blue. She had heard that I was a business and personal life coach, and she was desperate for help. After high school she moved back East, and I hadn't heard from her for years. On the phone she sounded sad and drenched with pain. Her voice was weak and hollow. When we finally ended our conversation, I found my thoughts reaching back in time.

I remembered how we used to dream of our futures. We just knew we would be rich and successful. We vividly imagined our ultimate ranch in Texas, breeding horses. We dreamed that we would own international companies. We fantasized about what our handsome husbands would be like, as the two of us enjoyed the happiness we deserved.

"Anna. Oh, Anna Marie, what has happened?" I asked myself in contemplative thought, as the pavement passed below my feet. In my mind I heard the echo of her sad voice on the phone that gave messages of depression, hopelessness, and pain. I continued on, in reflection.

After over an hour of running, which seemed like 10 minutes, I reached my destination: an ice-cold drink of water and a warm shower. My muscles were fatigued, and while the water rushed over my head, I realized that my hamstrings were especially tight on that crisp fall morning. It must have been because of the fight with gravity on the steep hills that sweep the area. My stiffness could also be attributed to the speed at which I ran in my deep state of concentration.

I stretched a bit in the limited space available and breathed in a large quantity of misty air. I focused my thoughts toward the principles of gravity as the steam filled the room. Obeying natural law makes life much easier. Rolling downhill is more effortless than climbing, yet there is some reason that I like to run the hills. I decided that after an immense upward exertion, it is nice to be rewarded with the opportunity to recover a bit and glide smoothly towards a lower elevation.

I wondered why most people have an innate need to strive, climb, reach for the top, and progress.



Considering all the mountains, hills, and valleys in life, I reviewed the age-old questions: “Why is it so hard for people to find peace? Why is it so hard for people to find the correct way to push and appropriately progress?”

I reflected back to Anna and wondered, “Why is Anna so tormented? What road has she been on, and what makes her path so difficult? Why doesn’t she ever seem to get a downhill break in life?”

After drying off and feeling comfortable in my fuzzy slippers, I made myself some hot chocolate and clicked on a morning television show. I watched all sorts of local news and cooking tips and heard interviews with new authors and actresses. The national news is always the most turbulent and eye catching. I found myself glued to the set as I heard about the latest excitement in the Middle East and the

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nation's weather with hurricanes and Mother Nature's many other dramas. Again I asked myself, "Why do some people find peace in the midst of turmoil and others do not?"

In the years that I have sat, one-on-one, face-to-face with clients, I have discovered many possible answers to these questions. I have observed many similarities in my client's issues and desires. Each guest in my office comes with seemingly unique pressures and pain. Interestingly enough, many times the previous client was experiencing similar problems. Each and every client wants freedom, choice, power, safety, acceptance, and peace. If I asked a congregation of one thousand people how many of them wanted peace, freedom, and safety, I wonder how many hands would go up in the air. Based on this information, I felt that I might have some ideas to assist Anna, and I decided that I would set my intent for this lunch with my long-time friend: to be a listening ear and possibly her guide.

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freedom, choice, power, safety,
acceptance, and peace.***

Quite frankly, when I have lunch with friends, I sometimes like to turn off my listening ear, and occasionally I like lunch to be psychobabble free. I

like to just talk about things I can see and feel, yet somehow that day I felt an incredibly deep desire to be a girlfriend and give Anna assistance if at all possible.

I tossed on a white sweater with black slacks and my first pair of covered-toe shoes since the temperature had cooled. After exerting this morning, I decided that being cold was out of the question, so I grabbed a light jacket in case of a chilly episode.

When I reached the restaurant, I looked for my old friend, the bubbly, zealous, and beautiful Anna-Banana, as we used to lovingly tease her. I remembered her silky-dark hair and small frame. I could replay in my mind her youthful, light-green eyes that were crystal clear like a fresh mountain lake.

Finally, I felt a hand on my shoulder. "Darlene?" someone said gently. I slowly turned to see a wind-torn, middle-aged woman with deep pain apparent in her eyes. Her well-fed frame was a bit slumped, and her dull, lifeless hair was randomly tousled. Nonetheless, I naturally and immediately felt the connection with Anna that I had experienced years ago and gave her a big smile. I offered her a warm hug and expressed that I was so glad to meet up with her again.

We were seated in a private booth overlooking a beautiful mountain river. We started with small talk and eventually began to catch up on the last few decades. She stated that she had been a failure in business and personal relationships. She was financially upside down, out of work, and ready to lose the lease she had on an old apartment. She had two children out of wedlock when she was a teen, and she struggled terribly while raising them alone. Her kids

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hadn't spoken to her in years and had managed to move on with their lives without her. She was currently in a tumultuous relationship with many fears about her pattern of choosing men who abused her physically and emotionally. Her only joy was her two Golden Retrievers, King and Tahoe, whom she loved and adored.

I, in turn, explained my journey of being married at 19, having five great kids, and going through the trials of divorce after 21 years of marriage. During this period I experienced the death of my brother from cancer and my best friend's death from a car crash. With emotion, I relayed how my back was broken in this accident, which necessitated 10 years of acupuncture, spinal touch, and meditation.

All this pain and all my questions led me to my higher education in human development, psychology, drug treatment, and studies of hypnosis, NLP, and the unconscious mind. I told her some of the things I had learned and how I finally put it all together. I exclaimed that I was now married to a new husband who was supportive and awesome. (Yes, there is peace after all!)

Yes, there can be peace after all!

It never seems to fail that upon hearing the words "hypnosis and the unconscious mind," others are inquisitive. As Anna inquired, I began to explain to her

that about 98 percent of the brain is operated by the unconscious. When we understand how the unconscious works, we can begin to have power and control in our lives.

Anna said that she could feel the contentment I portrayed. She could sense that I had a congruent manner and was “in the moment” with her. She wondered what I did to find peace within myself in this crazy world.

“I know you are a successful life coach, and if there is anything you can teach me, I would be grateful,” she said.

“Anna,” I said, “Peace is not a thing. It is not an object or a destination. Peace is a state of mind.” I explained to her what I had learned about peace.

I have spent years analyzing what peace is, how to be aware of it, and how to achieve it. Let me share with you the definition of peace that I have come up with. Peace is when there is a void of conflict. Peace is the state of being in one piece and not in conflict.

Peace = One Piece

“Anna, you have been sabotaging yourself,” I said. “You have been acting out of one side or the other side of your mind your whole life. You have never been in one piece, have you? Either you please part of your mind and the other part is mad, or you please the other side of your mind and the other side is mad. It feels very confusing, and you certainly don’t need a spouse to mess it all up and cause more conflict. You have

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enough contention and conflict just inside your own skin. Am I right?"

"Oh yes," she said. "I seem to be experiencing constant torture. I change boyfriends, I change jobs, I drink too much, and I have contemplated taking my life much too often. I can't seem to put things together. As soon as I start to become successful, something happens. Something stops me, and I don't know what it is. I am so frustrated, and I get so mad at myself. I can say that I truly hate myself."

"My friend, I imagine that every day you can't be rid of yourself. Every day you eat with yourself, sleep with yourself, and even go to the bathroom with yourself. Am I right?" I asked.

She gave a slight smile while flipping one of her earrings around and around.

"So," I said, "it is pretty important to love yourself if you can't be rid of 'you,' isn't it? I mean of utmost importance. Do you agree?"

"How?" she asked. "How? Just tell me how."

Let's define conflict and sabotage, so that we can make sure we are both talking about the same thing.

CONFLICT: A struggle; clashing of views or statements; to meet in opposition; to be antagonistic.

SABOTAGE: An act or process tending to hamper or hurt or deliberate subversion; destructive or obstructive action carried on by a civilian or enemy agent to hinder a nation's war effort. *Webster's second edition

According to these definitions, if we are at war with our own business or self-interest, we are committing sabotage. In other words, we are at **war with ourselves**, not with someone else. The word “sabotage” does not apply if I reach over the table and knock your fork on the floor. This would not be sabotage; it would just be mean or weird. Yet, if you and I were on the same team having a spaghetti-eating contest and I knocked your fork off the table, this would be sabotage because I would be hurting myself or my own team.

It is common to have opposing parts and conflicts.

We might think of our bodies as a whole company. If my head wars against my heart, this would be a form of sabotage, would it not? If part of me wants something different than another part does, it feels awful. Part of me wants to eat and gorge, and part of me wants to be thin. We have all heard of “the fat man versus the thin man” conflict – the two opposing parts that never agree about food and fitness. One part wants to eat and be comfortable and feels entitled to enjoy life, and the other part wants to be thin and sexy for many reasonable as well as absurd reasons. As the saying goes, “The twain never shall meet.” Most of us have these two opposing parts. For example, part of me did not want to go running this morning. Trust me:

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part of me screamed, “No! Sleep in.” Yet the other part that has a goal to train for a race was just stronger today. Have you ever felt this way?

Now we don’t all have multiple personality disorder, yet we **all** have parts of our minds that make us feel moody or different on various days.

“OK,” Anna said, “last week I was ready to check myself into the funny farm. I had really given up, and I wondered if I would start to wander the streets and talk to myself!”

The goal is to have all our emotional and mental parts in agreement; then sabotage does not exist. If all of me wants something, and if I know how to do it and I believe I can, there is nothing to stop me. Right? I then experience peace and can enjoy the present moment. I have the tools to **go forward towards my dreams and live the life I want**, with power, choice and control.

Anna said, “If only I could have a therapist/coach to assist me. I have never known where to turn and what direction to take. I have been to numerous therapists and counselors and seem to return to the same old patterns I’ve always had. Is there any way that you could help me?”

I thought for a moment and then slowly and methodically told her what my dad used to say. He said, “**If you don’t love your passion enough to charge top dollar for it, you don’t believe in it enough.**” He also added, “**If you don’t believe in your passion enough to give it away, you don’t believe in it enough.**”

Anna quickly pulled out a note pad and paper. She

said, "I better start taking notes. This is getting good!"

I explained my policy based on my dad's advice. "I charge top dollar for my sessions. Clients expect to pay a hefty price for peace, and they report that no amount of money is too much for mental and physical health." I told her that I also have a policy of offering my services at no charge when I feel right about it. When the particular person I am working with is complete and whole, I offer that slot for my next guest.

Anna nearly jumped out of her skin. Her eyes glared straight through me.

"I would be pleased and honored to consider you, Anna, as my next opportunity to coach, love, and offer my time," I said.

I then explained, "Anna, I would absolutely love to work with you on the following conditions. Are you ready to hear them?"

She leaned over the table between us. Her lime-colored eyes glistened and her countenance softened. She looked so beautiful at that moment. She told me that she was more open than ever before and that she would climb the highest mountain to get results. Anna grabbed my hands and looked me in the eye. "What can I do?" she said.

I told her my rules when working with someone at no cost. "If you will adhere to my rules," I told Anna, "then in return I will give you my heart, soul, expertise, time, and energy."

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My rules are:

1. Be open to learning and be willing to change.
2. Never miss an appointment. Give two days' notice, please, if you need to change the time, and remember that no-shows are billed at my premium rate.
3. Be willing to complete all assignments and tasks each week.
4. Read other books and pamphlets that I recommend to enhance and complement what I have taught you.
5. Teach what you have learned to someone else during the process. Deep and lasting change occurs when you teach concepts and principles to someone else.

With an animated response, Anna said, “When do we get started?”



I told Anna that when I returned to my office, I would e-mail her a copy of **My Beliefs and Principles for Change**. I told her that she needed to read them **before our first meeting** because they would help her understand my beliefs that support all my teachings.

I asked her to start writing down her dreams for the future and to start focusing on all the things she wants out of life.

Anna said, "What in the heck is a dream? I haven't been able to dream forever. I've been too busy fighting for my life!"

I said, "I remember in high school we used to dream of having a ranch in Texas. Do you remember that? Also when you were a child, didn't you ever press your nose against the window and gaze out into the distance imagining all the things you wanted to do and be, in the future, in vivid color?"

"A dream is a future picture and feeling, created in a state of relaxation and freedom. A dream is what you want as an end result, with out any hesitation of how to achieve it. Our dreams cause us to live with **purpose, determination and passion**. When one gives up their dreams they emotionally die. Have you ever seen the walking dead; people with no purpose or passion?"

"So Anna, begin to create your dreams; make them big and full of energy. In the weeks to come, I will show you how to make appropriate changes to fully live the life of your dreams!"

Anna looked like she was in the starting blocks. She was ready to start her life again.

Then I said, "Let's spend a little more time over lunch to get you going. Besides, the cheesecake is so very good." We both chuckled.