

## Epilogue

I have written this book and have attempted to describe some basic laws that govern the way human life works because I wanted to give better than I got—perhaps better than most of us got. The vast majority of us never had someone sit us down and lovingly talk to us about how life works. Most of us bumbled through as best we could and learned some things along the way but missed other lessons. As I watch the behavior of people in our world in this year, 2011, I see stunning and sad examples of people behaving toward themselves and toward others in our world in ways that show massive ignorance of or downright rejection of the fundamental laws that, if obeyed, could produce lives that serve as examples to others. I am amazed to see people acting without any sense of personal responsibility for their behavior and with a sense that somehow, someone else is responsible and with a sense that their inappropriate behavior should be accepted just because it is theirs. That is, “I can do what I want when I want to who I want and I don’t care what happens as a result and everyone has to accept what I do.” The result is just more psychological, social, political, and religious dysfunction. Our world is already far too full of that kind of garbage, don’t you think? We need something better and we will get something better if we do something and be something better. Unfortunately it is awfully hard to do or be something better if we don’t have any understanding of or if we were never taught about some of the basic principles that can guide our doing and can help us make things so much better. This book is about those principles or laws. No one ever sat me down and explained these to me. Probably no one did the same for you. So, it is my hope that this book will redress that loss and help us understand and choose better ways of behaving and have better lives as a result.

As you end the reading of this book, I would like to provide you with a quick summary of all the laws I have presented. The most basic law is Law #1: *You and you alone are responsible for your behavior.* Being very clear about what lies within your boundaries (your behavior: anything you say, do, think, or feel) and what lies without is fundamental to making healthier behavioral choices and having healthier relationships. You can’t follow any of the other laws of life unless you take total responsibility for your behavior. As you reinforce your own positive behaviors and those of others you will find that these behaviors get repeated (Law # 2: *You get more of what you reward*). In a similar way, as you focus your energy on a task or idea or a behavior, you will find that it is reinforced in a way. It grows with your focus. Whatever you want more of, focus more attention on (Law # 3: *What you focus on grows.*) One thing, however, that will not grow with your focus is your ability to motivate others because only the person, him/herself can do that for themselves. If you want someone to change their behavior, reinforce the positive things you see that you want repeated and help them see how a certain behavior you want to see ties into what already is motivating to them. Remember Law # 4: *You cannot motivate anyone else.* Like motivation, happiness is an “inside job” and you will waste much of your life looking for it or trying to “find” things that “make” you happy. Happiness is produced as the byproduct of doing things that have intrinsic meaning to you. The more you focus on these things and do them, the more you will notice the quiet sense of

satisfaction (happiness) that is produced in accordance with Law # 5: *Happiness is produced, not found*. As you create such happiness in your life you will need to attend to the kind of thoughts you think. Your level of happiness/sadness and your overall mood are also greatly influenced by the way you habitually think. Watch for distorted thoughts that are not based on evidence and that bring you down. Use the tools provided with Law # 6: *What you think determines what you feel*. As you take greater responsibility for your behavior, your thoughts, your happiness, focusing on what you want, and forgetting trying to motivate others, you will need to remember one of the very hard but true laws...that life is not fair. Life dishes out unfair things and unfair situations in your life and you will waste your time trying to figure out why life is not fair to you or demanding that it should be fair. It is hard, I know, but accept the fact that all you can do is respond to life's unfairnesses by taking responsibility for your behavior and that you will do well to let go of efforts to make life fair or complaining that it isn't. It isn't and won't be. Remember Law # 7: *Life is not fair*. Similarly, spending lots of time envying those who seem to "have it better" or "have what I want" is not only a bad use of time and energy, it is an effort that will cripple you and render you bitter and resentful (Law # 8: *Envy cripples you*.) Better to spend your time working for what you want to have or do or be. In fact, you can pretty much have or do or be anything you want if you pay the price. Nothing is free. There is no free lunch. Being an adult in this world means accepting the fact that no matter what you want there is a price attached and you are responsible for paying it if you want to get what you want (Law # 9: *You can have, do, or be nearly anything you want if you are willing to pay the price*). In this unfair life you will have experienced things that are pretty rotten but if you take those rotten things and work hard to transform them you can have something much better for yourself and will be a terrific model for those who watch you do this work. Do not lose heart because, if you work at it, *all things can work to the good* (Law # 10). So many of us wind up missing out on all we could do, all we could transform for the good, and all the happiness we could experience because we live in the past too much (usually replaying old hurts that only creates more disempowering resentment). The responsibility you take for your behavior, your reinforcing more good behaviors, focusing on what you want, producing happiness, managing your thoughts, working for what you want or transforming into positive some negatives you received can only happen in the present moment. You only have now. You do not have yesterday or the last hour or minute and you don't have tomorrow or the next hour or minute. You have this moment and this moment alone in which to do whatever you will do. This moment is where your power lies. (Law # 11: *Your point of power is in the present moment*.) Although you really only have power in this moment, you must understand that your choices in this moment influence those in your future and in that of others. You do not simply choose for yourself. You are not an island. Your choices matter and they have both present and future impacts. Be careful of what you choose because *what you choose lives on* (Law # 12).

I hope that something in this book, even if only one idea, has helped you. If not, please give this book to someone you think might be helped by all of it or a small part of it. I do not pretend that my attempt to describe some of the basic laws of life that I have seen as important somehow cover all the laws there might be or that my description of the laws contained in this book are the very best possible ones. I offer these laws and the

material associated with each as an attempt to encourage, coach, and urge you to think more deeply about them or about how you would formulate your own description of basic laws of life that you could then share with those in your world. The fact is, it doesn't really matter if you or I get it "right" as we try to describe these or other laws of life there may be. Far too many people in our world today are too concerned about who is "right" and who is "wrong", who is "good" and who is "bad" (most trying hard to prove that they or their view is both "right" and "good" while everyone who disagrees with them is both "wrong" and bad"). This is all so sad and fruitless. It has produced nothing but more hatred, violence, and distance between people. The important issue is not at all about "right" or "wrong" or even attempting to be "right" and avoiding being "wrong". What is "right" anyway? Who can really say? It only matters that we ask the important questions, and try to understand the important principles of life, live by them, and so experience the more robust and happy life I believe we can have. That is my wish and hope for me...and, by writing this book, for you.