

FALLING AWAKE

*creating the life
of your dreams*



DAVE ELLIS

This book is part of a complete system—an interactive multimedia project dedicated to assisting people to dramatically and permanently improve the quality of their lives. To find out more about this project, visit our web site at www.FallingAwake.com or write to: Breakthrough Enterprises, Inc., PO Box 8396, Rapid City, SD 57709.

“After reading *Falling Awake*, I feel clearer about almost everything. Even truths I thought I already knew, seem more natural and easily attainable. This book is a beautiful presentation of some wondrous thoughts about the things that matter most.”

MARIANNE WILLIAMSON

Author of *Illuminata* and *The Healing of America*

“*Falling Awake* is a detailed, comprehensive invitation to the sweetness of possibility, so credible and compelling that you read it at your own risk. You simply will not be the same person nor lead the same life if you read and complete this book.”

PAUL G. HAWKEN

Founder of Smith & Hawken

Author of *The Ecology of Commerce* and *Growing a Business*

“Anyone who is serious about actually creating the life of their dreams must read and follow the guidance of *Falling Awake*. It is the work of a master teacher, coach, and above all, inspirational encourager of each of us to go the whole way in this lifetime.”

BARBARA MARX HUBBARD

Co-founder of Foundation for Conscious Evolution

Author of *Conscious Evolution: Awakening the power of our social potential*

“Dave Ellis lives the life he writes about. He genuinely brings qualities such as vitality, purpose, play, and authentic celebration to each day of his life. It is no wonder that when you read *Falling Awake*, you will discover a treasure chest filled with strategies for creating a more wonderful life.”

DUANE ELGIN

Author of *Voluntary Simplicity* and *Promise Ahead*

“*Falling Awake* is the book for anyone who wants to trade sleep-walking through life for the life of their dreams. You deserve it and so does the world.”

SAM DALEY-HARRIS

Founder of RESULTS, director of Microcredit Summit Campaign

Author of *Reclaiming Our Democracy*

“You can have a wonderful life—whatever that means to you. Dave Ellis has collected powerful, common sense strategies that feel as natural as walking. Reading them, you wonder why you’ve made life so hard for yourself. Applying them, you find yourself flying towards your dreams. I highly recommend *Falling Awake*.”

VICKI ROBIN

Co-author with Joe Dominguez of *Your Money or Your Life*

“In writing *Falling Awake*, Dave Ellis has done a tremendous service to anyone or any organization that has the goal of producing breakthrough results while leading a balanced, enjoyable, and wonderful life. He shows how to do so in concrete, achievable steps without resorting to self-help jargon. Immediately after finishing *Falling Awake*, I ordered one copy for each of my staff so that they can read it before our next retreat. I expect to make reading this book part of every new employee’s orientation.”

ALEX COUNTS

President, Grameen Foundation USA

“Dave Ellis is a superb teacher, and this book will help millions seeking more positive, satisfying lives. Its simple and compelling wisdom will set you on the path.”

HAZEL HENDERSON

Co-creator of the "Calvert-Henderson Quality-of-life Indicators"

with the Calvert Group of Mutual Funds

Author of *Beyond Globalization*

“*Falling Awake* is one of those treasures we constantly seek but seldom discover. It is a masterful combination of modern concepts and ancient wisdom. This book brilliantly leads us into a world where we find ourselves open to the limitless celebrations life truly offers. It is a roadmap to transforming our dreams into realities.”

JOHN PERKINS

Founder of Dream Change Coalition,

Author of *Spirit of the Shuar* and *The World Is As You Dream it*.

“*Falling Awake* is a common sense and comprehensive guide to personal transformation. It contains a multitude of steps and strategies drawn from perennial wisdom that will help anyone become more effective.”

STEVEN DONOVAN

Past president, Esalen Institute

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I am profoundly grateful to those who have enriched my life including: my parents Ken and Maryellen Ellis, my wife Trisha Waldron, and my daughters Snow, Berry, Sara, and Elizabeth.

I also acknowledge the thousands of others who have been my teachers—family members, friends, colleagues, authors, workshop leaders, people I have counseled, educators I have coached, and students I have taught.



Wanted: your ideas

Please help me write the next edition of this book. Sometimes, after a book has been written, rewritten, edited, designed, typeset, and printed, it is declared complete. That is not true of this book. *Falling Awake* is still in development.

In fact, this book will be in transition for many years. I will change it frequently as I learn more about what works to assist people to live the life of their dreams. For this reason, I want to hear from you. Please write to me to let me know about your experience with this book.

Most of the interactions I have had with others have been in workshops, classrooms, and coaching sessions. In these situations, feedback is usually frequent and complete. The communication takes place in two directions.

Communicating through a book is different. After publishing their ideas, authors get little feedback or none at all. Such one-way communication does not give me a chance to learn.

I want your feedback. When you see ways to improve this book, write to me. I want the next edition to reflect your experiences as a result of “doing” this book.

If an idea in this book doesn’t work for you, let me know. If a technique is particularly effective, let me know that, too. If you particularly like or don’t like a photo or part of the design, please tell me.

When you write to me, you are completing a communication loop. You are teaching me to be a more effective teacher.

Thanks for your help. Please write to me at:

Dave Ellis
PO Box 8396
Rapid City, SD 57709

or email me at dave@FallingAwake.com
or sign on to our web site at www.FallingAwake.com

This book is more than a book

This book reveals a time-tested, life-changing process. In addition to articles that explain the key concepts, there are exercises and journal entries to assist the reader in putting the core ideas to work in real life.

Additionally, you can request individualized support and feedback from me by visiting our *Falling Awake*TM web site at www.FallingAwake.com.

There, a community of staff and participants in the Falling Awake project is creating a broad network of support that would have been, until recently, simply impossible to sustain, due to limitations in technology.

If in reading this text, you have feedback or questions, or wish to be more deeply and individually assisted in the process of making your life exactly the way you want it to be, please log on. I'll do all I can to help you feel right at home.



A note about gender-fair language

To avoid awkward sentence constructions, I alternate the use of male and female pronouns throughout this book. My intent is to use language that is as inclusive and bias-free as possible.

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The purpose of the pictures... and the design

The design of *Falling Awake* is intended to inspire both your creativity and your logic—to engage the left side of your brain and the right side. The pictures have been chosen to set a tone, evoke a mood, or arouse a passion—and to stimulate your thinking. Perhaps what you see will help your eyes and mind relax, feel comfortable, and linger just a few moments longer with the messages in the text.

This book is designed to have a different look and feel from other books. My purpose is to invite you to participate actively and to be the “co-author.”

I have intentionally left a lot of white space in the margins. This is your space. You can use it to write notes, argue with me, doodle, or draw. As you think about the ideas presented in this book and explore new possibilities, you can use this white space to let your imagination soar, dream big dreams, and create a clear and compelling vision of a wonderful future.

This book has a format similar to that of a magazine. Each article stands alone and is presented as an individual unit. After reading an article and before moving on to the next one, I invite you to stop, think it over, interact with it, and consider how to integrate the ideas into your life.

Whenever you see an exercise, you’ll notice a change in the typeface and a colorful, whimsical brush drawing. That’s a signal for you to do something besides just read. You’ll also notice pages that look like homemade paper. These are invitations for you to write. Doing exercises and writing are powerful ways to get the most value from this book.

LIFE CAN BE WONDERFUL

*There is a paradise in and around you
right now, and to be there you don't even
have to make a move, not even lifting
your eyes from this page.*

THADDEUS GOLAS





AN INVITATION

The simple experience of waking up from sleep is natural and easy. It requires no effort, struggle, or will power.

This book invites you to “fall awake” with similar ease. First, you can fall awake to a full awareness of what you really want in all areas of your life. You can invent new possibilities and unleash inspiring passions. You can fall awake to all of the amazing details that make up the life of your dreams.

Second, you can fall awake to what you already know. You can recognize all of your achievements and acknowledge how accomplished you’ve become. You can tap into your natural brilliance. You can become more fully aware of your ability to make things happen and to turn your visions into realities.

And third, you are invited to appreciate more fully how wonderful your life is right now. Even while wanting more and recognizing that some things could be different, you can celebrate all of the wonderful and abundant attributes of your current life.

By reading, writing, discovering, and taking actions, you can fall awake and create the life of your dreams.

THE POINT OF THIS BOOK

The fundamental message of this book is outlandish: You can get what you want and create the life of your dreams—no matter what your history and no matter what your current circumstances.

And you can create the life of your dreams in a relatively short amount of time—within days, weeks, or maybe as much as a few months—no matter how much money or time you have.

“Creating the life of your dreams no matter what your circumstances in a short amount of time” might sound like a late-night television advertisement for an expensive self-help program or a new religion. But I’m not asking you to part with your money, and I’m not trying to start a cult.

However, I *am* selling something. I want to sell you on the idea of applying the twelve Success Strategies described in this book. You can use the Strategies to create a life full of deep intimacy, vibrant health, full celebration, daily ecstasy, or whatever else you want.

The purpose of this book is to help you raise the quality of your life—immediately, dramatically, and permanently. I want this book to make such a difference that it becomes one of the three most influential books you’ve ever read.

Open up to the possibility of joy

What if you *really could* create the life of your dreams within the next few weeks?

I think you can. And my best suggestions for creating the life of your dreams are the Success Strategies outlined in the chapters that follow.

Please be clear about what I'm suggesting here. I am not saying that you will create a life in which you feel bliss at every moment. And I am not saying that you will create a life that's problem-free.

I *am* saying that you can live a life that you can honestly label as wonderful—one that you can authentically describe as the life of your dreams. I do believe that it's possible for each of us to create lives filled with ecstasy that occurs on a daily basis; lives of celebration in which we are continuously being thankful; lives with health that allows us to do almost everything that we want to do; and lives filled with intimate and loving relationships.

If you think that this concept of creating the life of your dreams quickly is too outrageous, please practice a strategy I describe later in this book: Ask yourself *What if this is true?* Then, rather than arguing with the idea, you'll begin to consider what your life could be like if this unusual idea is accurate.

You may already have a life that works well. Once in a while, you might even tap into a sense of wonder, beauty, and ecstasy. And I'm guessing that you don't do this as often as you'd like.

The Success Strategies are practical suggestions that can repeatedly connect you with the life you want at any moment. These Strategies can increase your happiness by helping you determine exactly what you want in life and then take focused, practical, and powerful action to get it.

Use the same strategies to meet “any” goal

Many self-help books focus on *content*—on getting what you want in specific areas of life. One book might suggest ways for you to achieve greater health. Another might recommend ways to create more loving relationships. Still another might list a series of steps you can take toward financial independence.





Falling Awake is different. This book offers a core set of strategies to help you achieve *any* specific goal.

The key word is *strategy*. A strategy is a general technique, method, habit, practice, transferable skill, or pattern of behavior. I suggest that the strategies for creating more loving relationships can also help you create more wealth. These same strategies can help you become healthier or accomplish anything else you want in life. *No matter what you want, you can use the same set of core strategies to get it.*

People in many disciplines recognize the power of any part to influence the whole. Biologists know that the chromosomes in each cell are the blueprints for that entire organism; careful study of any one cell will show a plan for the entire body. Sociologists study a few members of a group to discover how the entire group behaves. Pollsters can survey a few hundred people and determine how millions feel about an issue.

The same principle is at work in your life. When you carefully observe one part of your life, you gain insight into the way you conduct other parts of your life. And any change in behavior that produces new results in one area of your life can produce new results in any other area. For example, telling the truth can help you create more loving relationships. Truth telling can also help you get out of debt, exercise regularly, lose weight, and achieve just about anything else you want. The joy of this strategy is found in adopting one small change and then watching it expand throughout your whole life.

Success Strategies represent the “kernel”

The Success Strategies are based on several sources.

One is my own experience of creating the life of my dreams. I’ve applied the Success Strategies in many areas: career, friends, community, time, money, health, and that which is most precious to me—my family.

Another source is the coaching and teaching I have done to help others create the life of their dreams. I’ve presented these twelve Success Strategies to well over 11,000 workshop participants and clients.

A third source is my review of key works of literature, philosophy, education, psychology, religion, and spirituality.

I also work with a group of people who are constantly in conversation about the Success Strategies. As a self-funded think tank, we operate from the point of view that people are not broken and don’t need to be fixed. We affirm the fundamental genius of every human being. And we have an outlandish purpose—to dramatically improve the quality of life on Earth by inventing success strategies and ways to communicate those strategies.

We've promised to test these strategies by applying them in our professional and personal lives. Our lives are our laboratory, and what you read in the following pages is largely the result of our collective experiments in creating wonderful lives.

Over the last 27 years, I've constantly asked *What's the kernel?* What are the core processes in creating the kind of life that most people say they want—and in creating that life as quickly as possible? My answer is the twelve Success Strategies described in this book.

The ideas and strategies that you can use to be happier, healthier, more loving, and more wealthy have been available for centuries. But they have often been explained in ways that are not easily understood and therefore not widely used. The aim of this book is to communicate powerful ideas, both old and new, so that you can put them into practice immediately.



THE SUCCESS STRATEGIES IN A NUTSHELL

In the twelve chapters that follow, I explore each Success Strategy in detail. To prepare you for what's coming—and to invite you to keep reading—I offer these capsule summaries of the Success Strategies.

1. **Determine what you want.** Trust your desires and create a bold, detailed vision for the long-term future.
2. **Tell the truth.** Speak candidly, make promises, and align your actions with your words.
3. **Move toward love.** Be willing to release antagonism, and embrace problems as a step toward solving them.
4. **Take responsibility.** In any situation, ask How did I create this? and How can I create a new result?
5. **Lighten your load.** Move toward bliss by letting go of your attachments and expectations, and by choosing new ways to manage distress.
6. **Focus your awareness.** Release mental distractions and pay exquisite attention to moment-to-moment choices.



7. **Listen fully.** Open up to receiving any message—compliments, criticisms, or whatever the world is sending you in the moment.
8. **Choose your conversations.** Understand the role of conversations in creating your world, and enter conversations with care.
9. **Change your habits.** Take the mystery out of personal transformation by following three simple steps to make consistent changes in your behavior.
10. **Persist.** When faced with a problem, look beyond the first solutions that occur to you, and stay in action until you get what you want.
11. **Contribute.** As you get more of what you want in life, find added joy by assisting others to get what they want.
12. **Celebrate.** Constantly notice what you enjoy about your life right now, and go for fun.



TREAT THESE IDEAS AS TOOLS

Human beings constantly filter the things they hear and see and feel. That's understandable. If we paid equal attention to every sight, sound, and sensation we experience, we'd quickly be overwhelmed. Filtering helps keep us sane.

When they enter the world of ideas, many people have long-standing filters, or judgments, already in place. Familiar ideas automatically become “right” or “good.” And unfamiliar ideas become “wrong” or “bad.”

These filters work well—so well, in fact, that they sometimes choke off *any* new ideas. People get stuck with the same old faded, wrinkled ideas for decades.

Imagine what our world would be like if people had filtered out all new ideas for the last 500 years or so: No electricity. No railroads. No skyscrapers. No notion of equal rights for women or people of color, to name just a few recent ideas. Not much fun.

Use the filter of application

There is another option: Put a new filter in place. Instead of reading this book through the filter of evaluation, read through the filter of application. Instead of asking whether an idea is right or wrong, or good or bad, ask *How can I use this idea? How could I be different? What could I do differently?*

Every concept and invention that we now take for granted was once a new idea. Remembering this, we can greet new ideas with friendly curiosity. Even the most “outlandish” or “dangerous” idea might have an element that we can use.

By the way, you don't have to postpone evaluation forever. Just save it for later—*after* you've experimented with an idea from this book and tested it in daily life.

See the Success Strategies as options

Some books offer beliefs that people cherish and defend to the death. *Falling Awake* has no such ideas. It only offers tools—ideas to try out and suggestions to apply.

I don't ask you to *believe* anything I write about the Success Strategies. I do ask that you *use* anything you find in these pages, just as you would experiment with a new tool in your workshop at home. Keep the ideas that work for you. Release those that don't work, or put them on the shelf for now and test them again later.

My intention is not to give you advice or final answers but rather to outline new possibilities that you can use to improve the quality of your life. I ask that you read these Success Strategies, test them, and question them. If need be, revise the Success Strategies so that they work for you.

The Success Strategies are not *the* way to live your life. Instead, they are just a set of options. They include ideas that have been around for years—in some cases for thousands of years—all expressed in modern language.

Think of yourself as a gardener. You're about to grow something called the life of your dreams. Your seeds, fertilizer, and groundbreaking tools are this book and your own natural experience. Happy planting.





Do a book reconnaissance

Start participating actively with this book by doing a book reconnaissance. This could take anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes. Begin by reading the table of contents. Then turn page by page through the entire book, noticing whatever catches your eye—a picture here, a headline there. You can dip into this book at any page and receive something of value.

The benefit of this exercise is that it establishes a mental framework. With this framework in place, you are ready to absorb new ideas and information.

Think of this book as a house you're entering for the first time. Once you become familiar with the overall floor plan, you can find your way from room to room more easily. In this case, the "rooms" are the self-contained articles that make up this book.

To make this exercise more effective, be on the alert for techniques you can use right away, or for ideas that are particularly interesting. List each idea or technique in the space below, capturing it in a phrase or two and noting the page number.

DID YOU DO THE EXERCISE?

If you did not do the previous exercise, please do it now. Exercises present you with an opportunity to actually "do" this book and actively create the life of your dreams. Your active involvement with this book is what makes it work. You're far more likely to remember and benefit from ideas if you *use* them.

I recommend that you do each of the exercises as you read them. And I realize this may not be your preference. You might want to read the entire book without doing any of the exercises, knowing that on some level your mind is absorbing and applying the ideas. You could choose to do some of the exercises but not all of them. Or you might want to read large portions of the book and then return to do many of the exercises, which have all been marked by a graphic in the style shown above on this page.

KEEP A VISIBLE RECORD OF YOUR DREAMS

Throughout *Falling Awake*, you'll find exercises and journal entries that ask you to write and to act on what you write.

Together, the journal entries and exercises invite you to experience three steps toward creating whatever you want in life:

- Summarizing your key discoveries (insights)
- Creating specific intentions (goals) based on those discoveries
- Acting on your intentions

Journal entries include discovery and intention statements that guide you through the first two steps. Exercises invite you to experience the third step by taking specific actions.

When writing discovery statements, you can note “where you are” in your life right now—your current strengths and areas for improvement. You can also use these statements to declare what you want for the future, to state your feelings, to transcribe your thoughts, and to chronicle your behavior. In order to get the most value from discovery statements, suspend self-judgment, tell the truth, and record specific details.

You can also do several things to increase the value of intention statements. For one, state your intentions positively—for example, say *I will stay smoke-free* instead of *I will not smoke*. Also be careful of intentions that depend on other people; if you delegate a task to someone else, then your success could hinge on that person's action. Another option is to break large intentions into smaller steps, setting deadlines for those steps when possible. And when you complete a step, reward yourself.

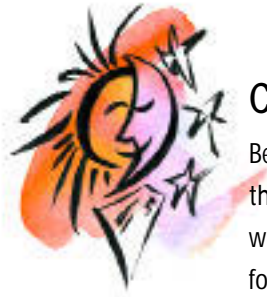
There are many ways to keep a written record of your discoveries, intentions, and actions.

One low-cost, flexible, and practical method is to use lots of 3x5 cards. I like to carry 3x5 cards with me and write on them (one idea per card). That way I can capture ideas quickly when I'm on the run. Later, I can easily sort, eliminate, prioritize, and store those ideas.

You can use 3x5s to remind yourself of strategies that you want to practice. Just write one strategy on a card. Then tape the card to a mirror, put it in your pocket, store it in your purse, or put it somewhere else where it's easily noticed.

You could also write on large Post-it® notes, in a bound journal, or with a computer. Many of the exercises and journal entries in this book suggest that you write on a separate sheet of paper; remember that you can use any medium that works for you. The important thing is to consistently keep a written record of what you want in life, the ways you intend to get it, and your experiences in taking action.





Create a personal time capsule

Before using this book to help you create the life of your dreams, take a few minutes to mark this moment in time. Write a letter to yourself that sums up who you are right now and who you wish to become. To get your letter started, you can complete any or all of the following sentences:

The most important thing I want to remember about this period of my life is ...

The most significant struggles I've experienced so far in my life are ...

The most important accomplishments I've experienced so far in my life are ...

I'm becoming a person who ...

The gift I most want to give myself is ...

When you've finished this letter, date it and put it in a sealed, self-addressed, stamped envelope. Include some extra postage for good measure. Then give the letter to a trusted friend. Ask her to send it back to you in 15 months. Another option is to hide the letter and make a note in your calendar to retrieve it in 15 months.



Write your testimonial

This exercise includes an unusual request: Write a testimonial for this book. And do this now—even before you read the rest of the book.

Writing your own testimonial is based on a simple idea: You don't need to wait until you're finished reading this book to find out whether it's going to be valuable. You can choose up front—right now.

While the content of this book is important, what you choose to *do* with the content plays a far larger role in creating the quality of your life. Commitment is more important than content. Nothing that's written on these pages can equal your commitment to create value from the suggestions in this book. Writing a testimonial is one way to further your commitment.

Right now, on a separate sheet of paper write what you want to be able to say about this book once you've finished reading it.

After you have written several testimonials of your own, read the following sample testimonials to stimulate your imagination. (Note: These testimonials are pure fiction, but you, as a reader, can make them come true.)

The ideas in this book made significant life changes easy and joyful.

When reading this book, I discovered that I can be happy no matter what is going on in my life.

I saw for the first time that even when I feel sad or sick I can have a wonderful and joyous life.

Life is just wonderful! It always has been great, but I didn't realize it until I read this book.

Every hour of every day, I can make the choices to have my life continue to be outstanding.

Several years ago I read this book and made remarkable changes in my life. I haven't forgotten what I learned, and I continue to use the Success Strategies every day.

After reading this book, I transformed the quality of my life—dramatically—in just a few days.

I'm a skeptic, but the book showed me how to be happy almost every minute—and the ideas work, even though I still don't agree with all of them.

I've read dozens of self-help books, many of which were extremely helpful. This book did more than all of those books combined.

Like most people, I was doing pretty well and thought life couldn't get much better. Then I read this book and my life took an unbelievable leap forward. Now I realize that I didn't even need to read the book; I can just choose moment-to-moment happiness.

I thought I knew what transformation meant, then I read this book and realized that transformation means more than just improving. My life shifted dramatically for the better.

Unbelievable! I've never experienced anything like this book. It is possible to be happy no matter what happens in my life. And happiness is not equal to complacency.

Now that you've read the preceding examples, you might want to revise your testimonials. Taking a few minutes to do this now can make your experience of this book even more valuable.



Choose your way to use this book

Be specific about how you will use *Falling Awake* to produce the results you described in your testimonials from the previous exercise.

8. Read through the following list of statements and circle the one that best describes how you will participate with this book:
1. I will begin this book with an open mind. After I have some experience with it, I will choose my level of commitment to the book.
 2. I will skim the book and consider using a suggestion or two.
 3. I will read most of the book and apply some of its suggestions to my life.
 4. I will read most of the book and apply many of its suggestions to my life.
 5. I will read the entire book but I don't plan to do any of the exercises or journal entries.
 6. I will read the entire book and will do some of the exercises and journal entries.
 7. I will read the entire book and do a majority of the exercises and journal entries.
 8. I will read the entire book and do all of the exercises and journal entries.
 9. I will read the entire book, do all of the exercises and journal entries, and constantly search for ways to use its suggestions.
 10. I will read the entire book and do all of the exercises and journal entries more than once, each time searching for new ways to use the ideas.
 11. I will read this book and do all of the exercises and journal entries many times—as if the quality of my life depended on it.
 12. I will read this book and do all of the exercises and journal entries many times—as if the quality of my life depended on it. And when I find an idea or an exercise or journal entry that I don't find valuable, I will rewrite that part of the book so that I can use it to create the life of my dreams.

An alternative is to write a statement that expresses your level of commitment in your own words. If you choose this option, please write your statement now in the space below.

To get even more from this exercise, share your statement of commitment with at least one person. Making your commitment public allows others to support you and strengthens your intentions to act in ways that create the life of your dreams.

GETTING THE MOST FROM THIS BOOK

My fundamental premise is that you are brilliant and can create dramatic new results in your life by using this book. Following are suggestions that you can use to maximize the value you create from *Falling Awake*.

Focus on purpose

The purpose of *Falling Awake* is to provide an opportunity for you to learn and adopt methods and ways of being that assist you in creating the life of your dreams.

Examining key words in the above sentence will help you make the purpose of this book come to life:

The purpose of this book is to *provide an opportunity*

(set the stage, enable, give a chance, not to force or guarantee)

for *you*

(this book is designed to be a personal experience)

to *learn*

(to acquire new skills and experiment with new ideas)

and *adopt*

(use, apply, put into practice, make part of your daily routine)

methods

(plans or actions based on plans)

and *ways of being*

(values, attitudes, basic principles of living, who you *are* beyond what you have and what you do)

that *assist* you

(this book can only offer suggestions; it's up to you to use them)

in *creating the life of your dreams*

(getting what *you* want, achieving levels of happiness, health, love, wealth, or whatever else *you* choose).

Please read the statement of purpose again while considering the definitions of the words in italics. A continuing awareness of your purpose keeps you on track and helps you achieve the results you desire.



Enjoy the benefits of a book

As a means of learning, books offer big advantages over a classroom, a workshop, or a television. You just experienced one of those advantages if you reread the purpose statement. With a book, you can review and reread that which you consider important.

If you didn't reread the purpose statement, then you experienced another advantage of a book: You have control. You get to choose what is interesting to you, what is helpful, and what is not. You can just scan the headlines—printed in bold type—to quickly get the main points of this book. Or you can slow down to study each word as you read. You can even take the time to look up key words in the dictionary. All these things are hard to do when you get information from another medium, such as a videotape or a lecture.

So take full advantage of this book. Skip around. Study what is useful. Reread what is unclear for you. Take the time to write about what you like. Ignore what you think is rubbish.

Be willing to change

It's been said that if you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always gotten.

Many people expect to get different results in their lives without changing any of their thoughts or behaviors. That's not very probable.

There are periods in our lives when we grow significantly. There are times when we push to a breakthrough. There are moments of dizzying change when we make a choice that alters our lives forever. Your experience with *Falling Awake* might be such an occasion—especially if you're willing to adopt new attitudes and new actions.

Get a partner

Find an individual or small group who will do this book with you. Meet regularly to discuss and apply the ideas. Do the exercises and journal entries together.

Others can help you find new ways to create the life of your dreams, and you can do the same for them.



Remember that these techniques work— except when they don't

None of the Success Strategies are absolutes. A technique that works like magic in one area of your life might fail in another. Even the same strategy applied consistently in the same way might lose its effectiveness over time.

Consider these examples: You can be happy regardless of circumstances—except when you aren't. (Sometimes you will feel unhappy, and it pays to fully accept and experience your unhappiness.) Choose the career of your dreams and the money will follow—except when it doesn't. (Have some savings in the bank.) Learn to listen well and your relationships will improve—except when they don't. (Sometimes people need more than a sympathetic ear.)

When it comes to creating the life of your dreams, there are no sure-fire formulas that work every time. When your chosen plan or strategy doesn't work, just choose another.

Also consider how the *opposite* of a suggestion might be useful. For example, instead of simply accepting the preceding suggestion to do this book with a partner, you can explore the possible benefits of working through this book alone.

Apply the ideas to yourself

The Success Strategies are most effective when you apply them to yourself instead of wishing that other people would use them. After reading an idea, it's easy to say, "Wow, that is a great idea. I wish my spouse (or my kids, or my friends, or my boss) would do that." This type of thinking can rob you of the chance to apply the idea to yourself. And by insisting that others change their thinking and behavior, you risk alienating them and appearing judgmental.

You have far more influence on your own life than you do on the lives of others. Applying a powerful suggestion to your own behavior can be the fastest road to creating the life of your dreams.

Give it time

Be prepared to take time with this book. Some of the exercises, if you do them thoroughly, could take hours spread over several days or weeks. Remember that every minute you spend with this book is time invested in creating the life *you* want.



Do it

We have a way that we usually relate to books. We call it *reading*. That is not the only way to interact with this book. This book is meant to be *done*, not just *read*.

As you read about the Success Strategies, you might find ideas and suggestions that sound familiar. You might swear that you've already seen these ideas in fortune cookies, on bumper stickers, or in other self-help books.

If you're tempted to stop reading for this reason, then consider that people often *know* but don't *do*. They neglect to practice what they've heard, read, and already know.

One of the most important functions of any book or speaker is to present familiar ideas in a new way. Authors and speakers can create value by reminding us of what we already know—and inviting us to take action.

My goal is to present ideas in such a way that you move from “I know” to “I will” and “I do.”

Don't do it

After giving thought to a particular idea or suggestion in this book, you might choose to do nothing about it right now. When this happens, you can write something in the margin like “No thanks—maybe later.”

This statement can be as valuable as anything else you write. Deliberately choosing to take no action is far more effective than letting a suggestion slip by unconsciously. You can make thoughtful choices about what you will and will not do with *Falling Awake*.



THIS BOOK IS NOT FOR EVERYONE

Human beings face a wide range of challenges. People deal with everything from short-term upsets and simple errors in communication to long-term problems and deep emotional wounds that cry to be healed.

Sometimes serious problems call for therapy, hospitalization, or medication. Such problems go far beyond the scope of this book.

Falling Awake is recommended for already successful people who want to be even more successful. This book is not intended to deal with mental disorders or to be a substitute for medical treatment. If you are severely depressed, overly anxious, or have suffered from poor physical or mental health for extended periods of time, please seek professional care.

People are unique, and books cannot fully take individual differences into account. Please view the content of this book solely as a starting point for creating your own options and solutions.

