

BELIEF: ONE SUPERPOWER THAT CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING

Kevin D. Brown

Magic is believing in yourself, if you can do that, you can make anything happen.

~Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

On a frigid Michigan night, clear skies gave way to clouds hanging over me. It seemed unusually cold. Perhaps that was the hopelessness setting in.

I wanted to die.

There was nothing left in this life for me. I had reached bottom—drowning in the deep end, filled with self-destruction, self-loathing, and my own stupidity. Demons that had chased me since I was a teenager now had a death grip on me. I was living in my car. There was no place left to turn.

The only question on that night was whether to steal some food or just end things once and for all.

I wanted to end the pain. But the coward in me couldn't do it. I didn't have the courage to take my own life. I prayed a killer might come along in the darkness and do it for me.

Those prayers went unanswered.

If I couldn't end my life, I had to figure out how to change it. To stick around, I had to stop the downward spiral. But how? I wanted to believe a better life was possible for me.

As I drifted into an uneasy sleep, my mind went back to better days, before I'd lost my way.

If I couldn't end my life, I had to figure out how to change it. To stick around, I had to stop the downward spiral. But how?

When I was a boy, Saturday's were special. I would be up before the sun. Wide-eyed with anticipation and excitement that I never felt on school days.

Saturday was when the heroes would come.

They lived inside a 25-inch Quasar television set with rabbit ears wrapped in tinfoil for better reception. We only had three channels.

But that was enough.

It was 6AM when The Lone Ranger rode into our living room to the *William Tell* Overture, a cloud of dust and a hearty "hi yo silver!"

I galloped alongside back to the days of yesteryear, where a masked man was on the side of justice. Fighting the bad guys and keeping the townsfolk safe.

Then came my Super Friends, swooping in to save the day from villains and all manner of chaos and catastrophe.

I leaped tall buildings with Superman, raced through Gotham City in the Batmobile and was Wonder Woman's co-pilot in a plane that only we could see.

I was mesmerized. I was inspired. I believed.

I remembered those days with great fondness. The innocence of a child's imagination fueled by the power of believing in something larger than life. When a bath towel became a cape, a bicycle turned into a firetruck and a cardboard box would blast off to the heavens and back in a single afternoon. When we were kids we created our own stories. And we believed them.

It was a special time.

Until it wasn't.

At the age of thirteen, a real-life villain invaded my life and turned a bright future into a darkness that engulfed my mind and shattered my dreams. I was betrayed by adult that I trusted and life got complicated.

I quit school in the 9th grade. I have no college training.

In an instant my story changed. And once again, I believed it.

I awoke to the sound of a flashlight tapping against the window. A security guard telling me it was time to move on. I drove to a nearby hospital. The waiting rooms had free coffee and the bathrooms were clean and a good place to wash my face and brush my teeth.

I wanted things to be different. But how?

I didn't understand back then that a simple formula was controlling my life.

What formula?

It's quite simple actually. Your storyline determines what you believe. What you believe determines your choices. And your choices determine your outcomes.

What you believe determines everything in your life. Your choices. Your responses. Your results.

Among the few possessions I had at the time was a cassette tape that to this day I have no idea where it came from. Perhaps it belonged to my dad and got mixed up in my things when I ran away from home.

The title of the cassette was *The Strangest Secret*. It was a recording by a man named Earl Nightingale. A self-help program that started out by saying that we become what we think about all day long. In other words, what you believe becomes your reality. What we meditate on comes true.

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in your life. Your choices. Your responses.
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My mind raced back to that boy who believed in heroes. That kid who thought he could be a baseball star and a rock and roll singer.

And, I was reminded of something my dad used to tell me.

"It doesn't matter what anyone else thinks. All that matters, is what you believe."

He used to say *"Son, what you tell yourself is powerful. If YOU believe you can, then no one can stop you but YOU."*

I sat there thinking about his words. "If YOU believe you can, No one can stop you but you."

That's what Mr. Nightingale was saying. It's up to ME.

I felt a shift. In that tiny, little moment, I made the decision to change.

It was clumsy and awkward at first, but I started to move in a new direction. I realized that if my life was going to change, I had to change my story and what I believed. I had to make better choices about the people in my life, my habits and my actions.

I was determined. But I needed some help.

I needed some heroes.

Early on, heroes appeared in books and cassette tape programs. The likes of Les Brown, Jim Rohn and Zig Ziglar began to pour into my young mind. I read and listened over and over again. I spent time in the library instead of hospital waiting rooms.

And slowly, I started to believe that I could change.

It wasn't easy. I started and stopped more than I care to admit. My relationships floundered. I took dead end jobs that left me drained and wondering if I could actually find a way out the pit I was in. But I was determined and kept failing my way forward.

Then a real-life hero found me.

One thing I have learned is that when you begin to believe in a better life, when you begin to believe in yourself and search for solutions instead of wallowing in your problems, people will show up in your life to help you. They were probably always there, but mostly invisible until we are ready to receive their wisdom and guidance.

David was a crusty old sales guy from south Texas. A no nonsense leader who had a low tolerance for mediocrity and high expectations for the people on his team. He also had a soft spot for strays and lost causes.

He took me under his wing. Even though I didn't have any formal education or training, he was willing to take a chance on a struggling street kid. Maybe he saw potential in me. Or perhaps he liked a challenge. Either way, he gave me a shot.

I told him my story. All of it. And he said something to me that I will never forget.

He said *“son, the past is a place of reference, not a place of residence.”* He was the first person to take the storyline that life had given a thirteen-year-old kid and helped me re-write it. He painted a compelling vision for my future and planted a seed in my young mind of what was possible for my future.

He used to say that *your storyline affects your finish line, your bottom line and the through line for your life.*

Working with David made me realize that I had been dragging my past around, wearing it like a badge of honor. Dumping it on everyone in my path. Using that thirteen-year-old kid as an excuse for not doing better in life.

I was content to play the victim.

But David wasn't interested in playing that game. He didn't let me get by with garbage thinking. He believed what my friend and mentor Keith Harrell used to say *“Garbage in. Garbage stays.”* And, not only does it stay, it multiplies.

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David pushed me to let go of the past. He was intense. He pressed me to focus on the future instead of clinging to the past.

You cannot grab what the future holds if you have a death grip on your past.

David helped to believe in myself. He loaned me his confidence in me, while I developed my own. That's what heroic leaders do. They pick you up and push you forward. They aren't concerned with being popular, they are keenly focused on the potential of those they lead.

The vision that David helped me create became like a magnet. It pulled me in and kept me on track when things got hard. It gave me something to run toward instead of running from the darkness that had descended all those years ago.

Because of David and other heroes, I built a career I am proud of. I spent more than 30 years in the franchise world. Twenty of those years as a marketing executive that helped build a little-known family business into a multi-billion-dollar brand. Today, I am blessed to be a best-selling author and keynote speaker with a story that has literally taken me around the world helping people to discover the heroes around them and more importantly, the one within them.

I share my resume not to impress you, but because I want you to understand the life-changing power of belief. To believe in someone and something is to unleash one of the greatest superpowers of all. Belief builds confidence and creates momentum. So, how do we create new beliefs that move us from where we are to someplace new?

Here are four things you can do right now to create new beliefs.

- 1. Guard your mind:** The first step in changing your beliefs is to change your input. When I was at rock bottom in my life my mind had an open door. I allowed anything and everything, mostly negative influences, to invade the storehouse of my mind. I believed I was a loser. I believed I had no chance of making a good life for myself. I believed that I would fail. Nothing got better until I began to control what I allowed into my mind. It was as if I had stationed a guard outside the gate to my brain that had very strict instructions to not let anything negative get through the gate. The guard protected my eye gate, my ear gate and my heart gate. Controlling what goes into your mind is critical. Remember what my friend Keith Harrell said "Garbage in, garbage stays." The reverse is also true "Good stuff in, good stuff stays." And it multiplies. When you win, embrace the lessons. When you lose, EMBRACE the lessons. Most people hang onto the failure and completely forget what they learned in the process. Good judgment is always the product of bad judgment. If you repeatedly make the same mistakes, you are not learning the lessons.
- 2. Change the Storyline:** Most people never realize that they control the story of their life. The pen is always in their hand. Sadly, most people simply take what life gives them and accept it as their truth. Walking it out and making it real. A compelling vision can take you places you never dreamed of. And not only will it move you, it will attract the resources and people you need to help it become a reality. Create a picture of what you want and hold it in your mind's eye. Begin to act as if it were already a reality. Carry yourself in such a way that it communicates to the universe you are moving toward something big. Own it. If you want success and happiness then picture that and move toward that vision every day.

3. Create an Advisory Council: Jim Rohn used to say that you become the average of your five closest friends. It has most certainly been true in my life. Every time I moved to the next level, I had to let go of some relationships and create new ones. The people you surround yourself with will have a tremendous impact on your achievements or lack thereof. Carefully consider who you want on your advisory council. People with great relationships are a good start. Those who are financially successful. Find people who are already achieving the level of success you desire and become a student. Observe, listen, engage. It is also important to note that members of your advisory council don't have to know they are part of your team. They can be authors, speakers, leaders whom you may never meet personally. They can mentor you through books, videos, courses, etc. There are people everywhere who can help you get where you want to go. My final thought on this is something I heard my dad say. "Only take advice from people qualified to give it."

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4. Mind Your Mouth: The loudest voice in your head is your own. Be careful what you say to yourself because if you say it, you believe it. When I lived in Smallville, I was repeating everything everyone else was telling me. If they said I couldn't do it, I would repeat that over and over. I took every negative experience and turned it into a track on my mental playlist. Telling myself that I was no good, couldn't be successful and would never have anything. And I believed every word of it. The greatest strides in my life came when I started talking to myself in a more positive tone. Call it affirmations, self-talk or whatever you choose, but the inner dialogue is key to changing your life for the better. You should be your greatest cheerleader. You are the head coach, equipment manager and janitor. It is your job to call the plays, execute and cleanup your messes. Be kind to yourself. Cut yourself some slack when you fail. Celebrate when you win. Love yourself. And, believe that you can.

These are the things that I did to change my life for the better. I challenge you right now to harness the power of belief in your life. **I believe there is a hero in you with talents, gifts and abilities that can change the world. And once you believe that too, I can't wait to see the greatness you will unleash in our world. I know it will be amazing.** 📌



Info



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