

The Windshield: An Introduction to Clarity

RIGHT NOW, you're blind and you don't know it.

It's a selective blindness that only affects your ability to see yourself. You can't see just how unhappy you've become. How far your health or your relationships or your enthusiasm have fallen. That's why you know something's wrong but you can't articulate it: Your ability to clearly see your life is severely compromised.

Worse still, not only can you not see yourself in the present, but you can't see the future, either. You've lost the ability to dream about days and years to come, to envision a life that's different from the one you lead now, and to feel that sense of possibility that we all felt at one time in our lives.

You are, in effect, functionally blind.

Sure, you can still get around, do your job, and fulfill your responsibilities—in fact, you've probably become a master of “getting by.” But it's as if you're trying to do it while staring at the world through a dirty windshield. Your vision is so narrow and compromised that you're relying on habits, memories, and sheer dumb luck to get you from A to B.

Over time, our experiences—the millions of moments that pass through our lives—change the way we see things. Our relationships,

our emotions, the impressions of our childhood—all leave behind traces. They build up like dirt on a windshield, and they change how we see the world and, in turn, how we navigate through it.

Your parents' attitudes about money and the work they did changed your windshield, adding a layer through which you try to see the world.

Your most emotionally charged moments—the good and the bad—have tinted your vision.

Your daily habits limit the scope of your vision, narrowing it from the wide-open gaze of youth to the tunnel vision of the daily grind.

The people you spend your time with. The culture you grew up in. The books you read, the things you study, the content you watch—everything adds to the windshield.

A news article adds a speck here.

A comment from a friend adds a smear there.

A bankruptcy throws a wave of mud.

A betrayal leaves a layer of silt.

We try to clear those things away—we try to shake them off, hold to our own vision, make our own decisions. But no one gets through clean. The great gift—and the great curse—of life is that it changes you. And over time you begin to see the world differently.

You still catch glimpses of the “real” world through the tiny clear areas left on your windshield, but as you push ahead, you see less reality and more a view of the world that's distorted, blurred, and obstructed by the grime of life.

Most of these changes happen over time, beneath the level of conscious awareness—“life windshields” get dirty over decades, a gradual buildup that happens so slowly we don't even realize it. Just as you don't notice that your arteries are half clogged or that your weight is drifting up, the loss of clarity is so subtle you have no idea it's even happening.

But it is. And it has a profound impact on your life.

The dirtier your windshield becomes, the more you tend to run on autopilot. You rely on regular routines and habits to get through

the day. Up to 45 percent of our daily actions are habitual—we do them without any conscious thought. We get up at the same time. Eat the same thing. Drive the same routes. Do our work the same way. The result is that we live our lives almost completely unconsciously. Although we don't realize it, we're not actually thinking about what it is that we do or what it is that we want.

When your vision is blurred, it's difficult to get your bearings. You lose your sense of direction. The distant dreams and goals you once had become indistinct and eventually disappear from view. You may try occasionally to get reoriented, but by the time you realize that you've lost your way, you can't even tell which direction you're driving anymore. You are, in effect, lost.

Finally, at some point, you simply stop moving altogether. Like a basketball player who's stopped dribbling, you're no longer making any progress.

The first and most important challenge of your pivot is to clear your vision and rediscover clarity.

The first part of this book is about clearing the windshield of life. It's about removing the grime and dirt, polishing the scratches, and sealing the cracks left behind by a lifetime of . . . well, life . . . so that, perhaps for the first time, you can really see.

Because once you can see clearly, you can decide where you want to go and just go there.

Sure, it may be a long drive. There may be unexpected detours and breakdowns. But as long as you keep clearing the windshield—keep reaching for clarity—you can keep driving.

Because the one thing I've learned in working with thousands of people is this: *No clarity, no pivot.*

Getting Clear: Six Steps to Clarity

No clarity, no pivot. That's our mantra for Part I of this book and for the six chapters that follow. *You need to reach a new level of clarity before you can create a new type of life.*

► ● **PIVOT POINT:** You need to reach a new level of clarity before you can create a new type of life.

But how can you get there? How can you clear your windshield and find clarity?

There are six steps on the path to clarity. Think of each one as a way of removing another layer of vision-limiting grime on your windshield. In the following chapters, we'll travel those six steps and tackle the obstacles to clarity head-on.

Chapter 1: Un-believe. Most people can't even take the smallest of steps toward a new life because they believe they can't. Your first stop on the road to clarity is to un-believe the myths that are keeping you stuck right where you are.

Chapter 2: Let Go. To move past where you are now, you need to be able to release past hurts and detach from the need to know exactly how your pivot will unfold.

Chapter 3: Face Your Fear. Pivoting requires you to leave your comfort zone. To do that, you'll have to tackle your fear. You don't have to eliminate fear to pivot, but you do have to be able to take action in the face of it.

Chapter 4: Enter the Pivot Phone Booth. Changing your life means changing *yourself*. For that, you need the seeds of a new identity. You're going to enter the pivot phone booth as Clark Kent and emerge as not a new you but the *real* you.

Chapter 5: Envision Your Future: Finding Your Life's Purpose. Even a clear windshield won't help if you don't know where you're going. In this chapter, you'll develop a clear vision for your new direction and the life you want.

Chapter 6: Big-D Decide. This is the goal of Part I of *Pivot*: to reach a "Big-D" decision—a commitment to take action that's so powerful that you simply *must* take action.

Knowing Clarity When You See It

If I've done my job right, by the end of these six chapters you'll have a very different view of your past, your current life, and your choices for the path ahead. You'll become so clear and so committed that the next steps—the actual act of pivoting toward your new life—become simple. They may not be easy, but they will be clear.

Most important, the idea of pivoting is going to feel much different. With true clarity you'll find that:

- **You have a feeling of confidence and possibility.** Things will seem “obvious.” You'll find a new confidence in making the shifts toward your new life and a sense that more things seem possible than ever before.
- **Fear moves to the background.** I won't promise you that it will vanish—although it might—but most people discover that the fears holding them back are no longer in control.
- **You have more energy.** Your energy level will improve dramatically, and you will discover new capabilities and resources within you and around you that you never knew existed.
- **Your mood is better.** Clarity has a tendency to make you feel happier. The people around you may notice it before you do, but rest assured it's there.

Be forewarned: Those things combined may make you feel very different indeed. In fact, they're likely to release a sensation you may not have felt in a long time. It's called *hope*.

With clarity, the path ahead becomes clear. It becomes so obvious, so inspiring, and so empowering that taking action (see Part II) will transform your goals from something you could never do into something you *must*.

So let's get started.