

PREFACE

In one of the first jobs I held after graduate school, my boss, John, took me aside and asked, “Why are you so angry?”

Angry? His question surprised me. “John, you’ve got to be kidding. I’m the fun guy!”

“Fun guy?” John countered. “I call it sarcasm and it is caustic.”

In spite of or maybe because of that exchange, John became a treasured mentor to me. It did take me ten years to figure out what John meant; ten years to realize that I used sarcasm as a defense mechanism to shield my feelings of low self-esteem and unworthiness.

I always saw myself as a funny guy, the guy who was quick with a quip and could make people laugh. Then I began to listen to that laughter and it sounded forced, hollow. What I thought was humor, others experienced as sarcasm – painful sarcasm – especially to those it was targeted towards.

I worked to keep my sarcasm under control and found I could not let it go completely. If I weren’t the “funny guy,” then who would I be? After all, this was my identity. But fewer people laughed, and those who did, well, their laughter sounded shallow.

I wrote this book about and out of my own experience in discovering my true self-identity. In the journey, I learned that one’s true identity is not about one’s job or one’s relationships. Neither is it about the myriad activities we engage in, nor our talents, skills or professional life - although we tend to believe that our identity is wrapped up in all of this stuff.

I came to realize that the identity we think we present to the world, the identity the world sees and experiences is not the real and authentic me. In fact, the “i” who I think I am is a far cry from my authentic “I.” My little “i” is the “me” who has been influenced, “programmed” and conditioned by “humans.” I have learned that how we show up in the world, that little “i,” is a composite of thoughts, beliefs, assumptions, stories, emotions and feelings that 1) we inherited from our parents or primary caregivers, and other authority figures we grew up around and 2) we created in order to feel safe and secure, and which would get us mommy’s, daddy’s and others’ acknowledgement, recognition and love.

So, much of who we are today is a conditioned, programmed “i” in search of an “I” - my Essential, authentic, true and real “I” - before we became conditioned and programmed. *Becoming a Better You* supports you as you learn the truth about who you are — who you really are — and why you are the way you are in how you perceive and relate to your world. I wrote this book to support you as you explore the discomfort in your life and how you contribute to your own discomfort. *Becoming a Better You* takes you on a journey into, through and beyond your discomfort and leads you on a journey to become a better you, the authentic you.

My hope is that *Becoming a Better You* will be one of the last self-help books you will ever read because if you engage in the practices in this book — honestly, sincerely and self-responsibly — you will get to the core of your truth about what keeps you from being a better you. It will show

you how to discern the barriers and obstacles that keep you from being a better you, Then it will show you how to coach yourself to overcome the barriers and move toward being a better you.

The book is not theoretical. It drips with practicality. It is based upon my own journey and the journeys of my clients over the years.

It is not necessarily an easy journey - true growth and change never are. But the outcome — the discovering of the authentic you — makes it all worthwhile.