

A dramatic landscape with a road leading through a valley towards mountains under a golden, cloudy sky. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The clouds are thick and textured, with a bright glow breaking through in the center. The road is a two-lane asphalt road that curves gently through the valley. The mountains in the background are silhouetted against the bright sky. The overall mood is one of hope and journey.

UNIKONICS

A UNIQUE
GUIDE TO GETTING
THE MOST
LIFE OUT OF LIFE

TIPPY
GNU

UNIKONICS

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UNIKONICS

A Unique
Guide to Getting
the Most
Life Out of Life

Tippy Gnu

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Yep, you're on your own.

To Dad:
Your Uniqueness
Inspired Me

INTRODUCTION:

The Four Guiding Principles of Unikonics

UNIKONICS is a guide; a pointer to a path that leads to pleasure and away from pain. It's a formula for happiness and a dissolver of unhappiness. It teaches the meaning of life. It even redefines life. It redefines death also. And it illuminates escape routes away from death.

Unikonics is derived from the word *unique*. A detailed etymology can be found in the conclusion of this book.

There are four guiding principles of Unikonics. Each principle helps you to understand this concept from a different perspective. Learn each principle; and then, when you shine your light upon this path to getting the most life out of life, you'll have four different ways to recognize it.

The four guiding principles of Unikonics are as follows:

1. Pleasure is caused by focusing on uniqueness.
2. Pain is caused by excessive focus.
3. Pleasure is possible when uniqueness is discovered.
4. Pain can be avoided when excessive focus can be avoided.

Each of these four guiding principles is presented separately in this book, and examined in detail, beginning with chapter one.

1

THE FIRST GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF UNIKONICS

THE FIRST GUIDING PRINCIPLE of Unikonics states that pleasure is caused by focusing on uniqueness.

LIFE IS CHANGE

Life is change. This change can be measured. You measure change by its degree of uniqueness. The more unique an experience is to you, the more change you have experienced. And therefore, the more life you have experienced.

Life is change because nothing in life is permanent. Everything in this universe is constantly changing. Nothing stays the same. The weather changes. The seasons change. The earth beneath your feet is in a constant, though very subtle, state of flux. Populations change. New people are born and old people die. Politics change. Fashions change. Social trends change.

You even change. Your values, your knowledge, your circumstances in life. Your age. Your health. Your mood. They constantly change.

Nothing but nothing ever remains the same. Except change. Change is life, and life is change. And that is the only thing that will always be.

But change is a good thing. Change makes us feel pleasure. Pleasure makes us seek change. There's a cycle of life going on here. We experience change, and that makes us feel pleasure. We associate pleasure with change, so we seek more change in order to feel more pleasure.

This is important for survival. Change is life, so when pleasure motivates us to seek change, we are actually seeking life.

If we were motivated to try to keep things the same, then we would seek death, not life. Imagine if everything stayed the same. The world would be frozen. Nothing would happen. Everything would be like stone, fixed solidly in place.

And that is why change brings pleasure. You like to feel good, don't you? No one likes to sit around feeling bored all the time. Boredom occurs when life isn't changing much. There's no action. There's nothing going on to interest you. It leaves you wanting more out of life. It leaves you wanting change, and the pleasure you derive from it.

The amount of change you experience is directly proportional to the amount of uniqueness in the change. For instance, if you focus on the second hand going round and round on a clock, you'll be seeing lots of change and action. After all, that second hand will change once every second. But still, you will probably find yourself very bored. That's because the movement of a second hand on a clock is not very unique. You've seen such action many times before. This lack of uniqueness leaves you experiencing very little change and life.

However, if you looked outside your window and saw a monkey chase an elephant down the street, that would be very unique (unless you work in a circus). That sort of change would likely grab the focus of your attention and leave you feeling fascinated.

There are other things that tend to bring high levels of uniqueness, along with its accompanying pleasure. Things such as: Hearing unusual news; buying something novel and different at a store; getting a package delivered in the mail; and traveling to a place you've never been to before.

$$LIFE=CHANGE=PLEASURE$$

Life is change, and change brings pleasure. I know that some change seems to bring pain, but I'll be getting into that later. For now, please try to set any mental protesting aside, and bear with me on the idea that change brings pleasure.

In fact let's take it further and say that change and pleasure are the exact same thing. The more change you experience, the more pleasure you experience. Therefore, change is pleasure. Now, since change is pleasure, and since change is also life, then life, change, and pleasure are all the same thing. This can be written mathematically as follows:

Life=change=pleasure.

You can use logic and play with the above mathematical equation. If life=change=pleasure, then life=pleasure.

If life=pleasure, then that means that life is automatically enjoyed.

Therefore, it is impossible not to enjoy life.

"What?!" you say.

Now it may be getting almost impossible for you to set aside your protests. Because while this may seem logical on paper, you know the practical reality. There are times when you have not enjoyed life. And there are changes that have occurred that you haven't particularly found any pleasure with. In fact, some changes may have seemed downright miserable to you.

Indeed, change can be very painful at times. But this is covered under the second guiding principle of Unikronics, where you will see how change can sometimes lead to a decrease in your pleasure. I will be explaining that in more detail, in the next chapter.

For now, let's remain focused on the kind of change that brings an increase in pleasure. It is this sort of change and life that is automatically enjoyed.

RADIANT SPHERE OF JOY

I like to see the universe as a radiant sphere of joy. Everything, all matter, all that is perceived, all that is subtle, and all that is obvious, radiates with life. These rays of life are metaphors for all the tiny little details we perceive with our senses, including our senses of touch, taste, smell, sight, hearing, and thought. We perceive billions upon billions of these tiny little inputs with each passing moment of our existence. I say billions upon billions, because every ordinary thing we perceive in our environment consists of billions upon billions of tiny, fine details that come together into a whole. Therefore, each ray of life (input) is very, very small and possesses only a very small amount of uniqueness. So it only delivers a tiny, tiny piece of joy.

But all the billions upon billions of rays combine to fill us to capacity with joy and pleasure. Yes, though the amount of joy is low with each individual ray, it is made up for by the immense quantity of joy from all the many rays that constantly emanate from our universe.

Our awareness of the portion of the universe that immediately surrounds us, is responsible for the life and joy we experience with every passing moment. But this joy is not obvious. It is subtle.

If you experience the same emotion continuously, you grow inured to it. The emotion becomes background. It settles in your subconscious. It becomes the color of your life, and yet you grow blind to the color.

The joy you continually feel is this emotion. It is the background color of your life. It is caused by the continual bombardment of change, life, and joy from the universe that surrounds you. You have experienced this joy for such a long time, that you have become blind to it. It is as ordinary and transparent as the air you breathe.

Then why is it that you are sometimes unhappy? And why is it that you sometimes feel an obvious joy?

It is all relative. The background joy you constantly experience is not at a constant intensity. It wavers in its degree of uniqueness. When it wavers down, you experience unhappiness. When it wavers up, you experience an obvious joy.

Intensity determines the emotion. You may label an emotion as dissatisfaction, sadness, depression, anguish, etc., depending upon how far down your intensity of joy wavers. And conversely, you may label an emotion as happiness, satisfaction, delight, or ecstasy, depending upon how far up your intensity of joy wavers. The emotion you actually perceive is relative to the continuous joy you cannot perceive.

Neutral emotions occur when your background joy is not wavering, but remaining at about average intensity. This is the average pleasure you feel during ordinary moments.

Physical pain and pleasure work the same as emotions. Your body generates a continual feeling of pleasure. But because this feeling is continual, it has become background. You have grown blind to it. Therefore, when you experience physical pain or pleasure, it is only because the continual background pleasure has wavered in intensity downward or upward.

This is basic Unikronics. Unikronics provides a basic explanation for why you feel happiness and unhappiness, or pleasure and pain. It also provides a more advanced explanation, which you will learn as you read on.

FORMULAS FOR HAPPINESS

There are many things that can help you experience uniqueness and pleasure. In fact, by its very definition, uniqueness is infinite. To be unique is to be different from anything else in the universe. But there are an infinite amount of things in the universe, and all those things are different from each other to some degree, even when the difference is extremely slight. Therefore, uniqueness must be infinite.

Uniqueness is infinite, and encompasses infinite possibilities. There are an infinite variety of unique experiences that can add to your happiness and pleasure.

Because of this, there is no reliable formula for uniqueness and happiness. Sure, you can develop a formula, as many have. And it may work very well for you. At least for a little while. But when you employ a formula for happiness over a long period of time, it gradually loses its potency. This is because it gradually loses its uniqueness. And then it grows boring and tedious. Trying to bottle up uniqueness and happiness is like trying to bottle fresh air. It will stay fresh for a short while, but sooner or later the stoppered contents degrade and grow stale.

Someone may lay a happiness formula on you, such as:

“Don’t worry, be happy.”

“Be an optimist, not a pessimist.”

“Live in a state of healthy paranoia.”

“Dream big.”

“Keep it real.”

“Be a productive member of society.”

“Turn on, tune in, drop out.”

“Work hard.”

“Take it easy.”

“Love everyone.”
“Be nobody’s fool.”
“Turn the other cheek.”
“Be assertive.”
“Stay centered.”
“Dance.”
“Live in the present moment.”
“Plan ahead.”
“Live like today is the first day of the rest of your life.”
“Live like there is no tomorrow.”

And so forth . . .

Some of these formulas may strike a chord with you, or sound wonderful at first blush. If so, then use them. Use any formula that sounds wonderful. Use it until you’ve used it up. Because never forget, the novelty and uniqueness will eventually wear off, and you will grow bored with the formula. You *will* use it up. That’s life. Life is change. Uniqueness always has a limited life span. Therefore, uniqueness cannot be formulated. At least, not for very long.

No, you cannot keep uniqueness confined to a formula. Not for long. In reality, you can never really know what your next joy will be. Uniqueness and pleasure often come from the most unexpected corners. For that is the nature of uniqueness and pleasure. So, your best bet is to avoid clinging to any formula for very long. Let formulas go, as they wear out and prove their unreliability. Move on. Keep trying new things. Wait a second . . . that’s a formula. As such, that piece of advice will also be unreliable.

THE FORMULA OF BEING

But there is one formula that has a strong track record for reliability. I call this the formula of being. Just being will always bring you a certain level of pleasure. No matter what you’re doing or not doing, there is always an underlying pleasure that saturates the background of your mind.

I’ve already described this background pleasure, above, when I described our universe as a radiant sphere of joy. This background pleasure is so constant, and so ordinary, that you are blind to it. Well at least mostly blind to it. If you take a quiet moment, let go of all of your thoughts, and sit mindfully observing the inner workings of your mind and body, you will catch a sense of this pleasure. It is subtle, very subtle. But it is there. And it will always be there.

It is an immutable part of your spirit, and it will never leave you. It is immutable because the universe possesses an endless supply of tiny rays of joy and uniqueness that constantly bombard you. These tiny rays of uniqueness add up to a very large supply of uniqueness.

You become aware of these tiny rays through your senses. Every slight small thing that you feel, taste, smell, see, hear, or think about is part of your awareness. Consider all of the fine detail in your current environment. Consider all of the things present and going on around you, right here and now. Consider everything around you that you are only slightly or subconsciously aware of. Reflect on this detail. All of this detail amounts to billions upon billions of slight, subtle sensations bombarding you, every second of your life.

These are the tiny rays of joy I have been referring to. They are rays of joy because each of these tiny sensations supplies a tiny amount of uniqueness. But when constellated together into one gestaltic whole, they add up to a significant amount of uniqueness. And this amount is significant enough for you to feel pleasure.

It is a baseline pleasure. A background pleasure. And it is a solid pleasure. So long as the universe exists, you will always feel this pleasure to some degree.

This immutable pleasure of just being, comes from a formula that requires only one action. Nothing. That is to say the action of nothing. And to explicate this into further detail, I mean that all you have to do is nothing. Nothing at all.

This *do nothing* formula supplies enough pleasure to keep you wanting life. It gives you your will to live. It can keep you going when other formulas fail.

Oh sure, there may be times when you seem to lose your will to live, and you wish yourself dead. These times tend to occur when you are in great pain. When you seem to have lost the pleasure of doing nothing and just being. But there's a deception here. You haven't really lost your will to live.

I stated earlier that this background joy you are so purblind to, has a way of wavering in intensity. It fluctuates. So sometimes you are experiencing less life, change, and pleasure than at other times.

During your deepest crisis and most intense pain, you may well wish that you were dead. But this wish is actually a wish for life. It is a wish to return to the baseline level of ordinary life, pleasure and joy you had from just being and doing nothing. And you are imagining that with the death of your body, your mind will be free to return to that level.

Thus, that wish reflects a love of life, not death.

Every cry of pain is a cry for life. Every agony is a reflection of your love for life. The more pain you feel, the less life you feel. And the harder you cry. The harder you cry, the more you give evidence of your love for life, and your wish to have more life than the amount you're currently experiencing.

Death is nothing more than pain. If life=change=pleasure, then death=sameness=pain. Death occurs when your mind focuses too much, by returning again and again to the same thing. This causes that same thing to quickly lose uniqueness. And this causes your experience of uniqueness to decline sharply. Death and pain result.

Death makes you wish for life. Death can be a strong motivator. It prompts you to seek relief from death by returning to a state of ordinary life, change, and pleasure. Without death, you could not have life. For you would never be motivated to seek the joy of just being. Without death, you would sink into oblivion. You would allow your experience of change and life to decrease to the point where you no longer exist.

TECHNICAL UNIKONICS

Unikonics does more than just tout the virtue of uniqueness. Unikonics also goes into technical detail, to show how your mind works. It explains how your mind becomes aware of uniqueness, and describes how your awareness focuses on uniqueness to enable you to feel pleasure.

This technical explanation can help you get a better grasp on why you are sometimes happy and sometimes unhappy. You don't have to know the technical aspects of Unikonics to experience uniqueness and pleasure. But when you do know it, you'll be able to do a better job at maximizing the amount of uniqueness and pleasure you experience. And you may even gain an insight into the meaning of life.

AWARENESS OF UNIKONS

The technical explanation of Unikonics begins with awareness. Your mind works, by using awareness. Awareness is a tiny point of consciousness. It is your soul. It is your spirit. It is a numinous flow that pumps life into your existence like the glow of a television screen.

Your awareness moves at lightning-fast speed. It constantly scans the environment around you, and the inner environs of your mind. Awareness detects everything in its path. And the things that it detects are what I call *unikons*.

Unikons are the stimuli that exist outside and inside your mind. Every stimulus in your outer and inner environment is unique. It is unique because every stimulus is constantly changing. From the word *unique* I derive the name, *unikon*. A unikon is simply a very tiny unit of uniqueness. It is a tiny ray of joy.

There are billions upon billions of unikons in your immediate environment. Probably more. Your awareness moves at lightning-fast speed, detecting all of these unikons in the tiniest trice of

time. Unikons come in many varieties. There are sights, sounds, tactile sensations, smells, tastes, thoughts, memories, and emotions. All of these are different kinds of unikons.

Your awareness moves so quickly, it gives you the illusion that you are aware of all these unikons at one time.

This can be compared to motion picture film. Film moves at 24 frames per second (fps). This means that when you're watching a movie, your eyes are actually detecting 24 still-frame images per second. However, this 24 fps speed is too fast for your mind to perceive the images as actually being still. Instead you fall under the illusion that you are viewing images in motion.

In the same way, your awareness moves at lightning-fast speed, detecting many different unikons within a short space of time. It happens so fast, that it gives you the illusion that you are aware of many things at once. And so, as you sit reading this book, you have the sense that you are aware of the words in the book, the sights within the periphery of your vision, sounds that are occurring around you, the feel of your body in the chair where you are seated, smells in the air, the tastes in your mouth, your wandering thoughts, your memories, and your emotions. And it seems to you as if you are aware of all these things at one time.

But you are not.

In reality, you can only be aware of one thing at a time. Your awareness does not have the power to be in two places at once. This is a fundamental law of awareness. Awareness cannot be in more than one place at one time.

Your awareness compensates for this limitation by being able to move very quickly. In fact, it moves much much faster than the 24 fps of a movie. It moves at least as fast as light. Your awareness detects billions upon billions of unikons every second. But it does so only one unikon at a time. It detects so many individual unikons within such a small fraction of time, that everything you are aware of seems to flow smoothly and to occur all at once.

And yet it is important to remember that it is all happening just one tiny unikon at a time.

LAW OF THE LEVEN

I have asserted that there are billions upon billions of unikons in your environment, and that you detect billions upon billions of them every second. I must qualify now that I do not actually know the exact number. I do not even know that the number is in the billions. It could just be in the thousands or millions. Or it could be in the trillions, quadrillions, or beyond. I do not know, and I doubt that anyone can know, what the exact number is. Science has no method for measuring how many unikons you become aware of over the course of one tick of the clock.

But I speculate that the number is in the billions. This seems reasonable to me. It is hard for our mind to grasp a number as high as one billion. Yet the number is not so far out of reach that we can't hold some conception of it with a little effort. I want to impress the reader with how

much life exists within the scope of our awareness. And yet I don't want the reader to be overwhelmed. So I have settled upon billion, as opposed to only a million, or as high as a trillion.

I take this a step further, by postulating that awareness can detect one-hundred billion unikons per second. As I've indicated, this number could actually be more or less than what I've postulated. But one-hundred billion is a nice, round number, and is fairly easy to comprehend with a little bit of mental effort. And I believe it treats awareness with enough awe and respect to impress us with its lightning-fast speed.

One-hundred billion is a 1 followed by eleven zeroes. From the word *eleven* I have derived the word *leven*. Leven is the word I use to describe one second of awareness. The Law of the Leven states that in one second of time, your awareness detects one-hundred billion unikons. This is a leven moment.

Awareness moves fast, but its speed is constant. It cannot detect more than one-hundred billion unikons per second, nor can it detect less. In other words, a one-second moment is always a leven moment. You cannot have a super-leven moment, nor can you have a sub-leven moment. Your moments are always and simply, leven moments. This is part of the Law of the Leven.

Although the speed of awareness is constant, awareness does not move in a straight line. In other words, your awareness does not sequentially and systematically move from one unikon to the next, to the next, to the next, while never repeating a unikon until it has detected all of the unikons in your environment. Oh no, your awareness is much more complicated than that.

Awareness can double back upon itself and return to a unikon that it finds attractive. This is because awareness is attracted to uniqueness, and every unikon comes with a different level of uniqueness. The higher the level, the more attractive a unikon is. The more attractive a unikon is, the more frequently awareness will want to return to it. This has the effect of maximizing your pleasure by allowing you to maximize the amount of uniqueness you are aware of.

But your awareness cannot loiter upon one unikon just because it finds it super-attractive. The Law of the Leven requires your awareness to detect one-hundred billion unikons per second. This law will not allow the point of your awareness to loiter upon the point of any one unikon, because if it could it would not have time to detect all one-hundred billion unikons it must detect within one second.

But the Law of the Leven does not require that all of the one-hundred billion unikons be different from each other. This is a loophole in the law. And your awareness takes full advantage of the loophole. When awareness finds an attractive unikon, it cannot loiter upon it. It must move on to a new unikon. But after it moves on to that new unikon, the loophole in the Law of the Leven allows it to return to the unikon it just left. Thus, many of the one-hundred billion unikons contained within a leven may be the selfsame, exact unikons, repeatedly scanned by your awareness.

No, they do not all have to be different unikons. And in fact, it is nearly impossible for them all to be different. The only way this could happen would be if all the unikons contained within a leven were equally unique and attractive, so that your awareness would not discriminate and not want to return to any unikons that are relatively more attractive. This sort of scenario is highly unlikely to occur.

We experience differences in uniqueness throughout the day, every day of the year. There are always some things in our environment that are more unique than other things in our environment. No environment is so bland and uniform as to prevent awareness from discriminating amongst unikons. And don't forget, it is not just our outer environment that we are aware of. We are also aware of the inner environment of our mind, with all of its multifarious variegations and uniquenesses.

Perhaps through deep meditation, awareness can be brought to a near non-discriminatory state. And in fact, this may account for the trance-like mind states that experienced meditators have reported. By consciously letting go of all they are aware of they may quiet their minds, and enter a state of uniform awareness of all the unikons in their environment.

However, such mind states are difficult to achieve, and even more difficult to sustain for very long. Awareness is like a wild bronco, and will resist confinement to a single, uniform mind-state. In fact, it will only tolerate it for as long as it finds that mind-state unique, before resistance begins. Awareness always tries to find and focus on uniqueness. Uniqueness is always the goal.

FOCUS ON UNIKONS

But awareness requires a tool before it can return again and again to an attractive unikon. The tool it uses is focus. This tool is the ability we have to focus our attention. Focus allows awareness to maximize our uniqueness and pleasure.

When you become aware of something unique, you have a tendency to focus your attention upon it. This is because you enjoy uniqueness, and want to maximize your pleasure.

But you don't have to focus on it. You can direct your attention elsewhere. Focus is voluntary when it comes to focusing on pleasurable uniqueness.

The more unique something is, the easier it is to focus on it. Awareness assists your focus, and can make it seem almost automatic, when you are focusing on something that is very pleasurable. Sometimes you have to actively resist focusing on a pleasure, if you'd rather put your mind on something different instead. The more unique a unikon is, the stronger is the pull of your awareness upon your focus, and the harder you have to resist if you want to avoid the pleasure that accompanies it.

Physical pleasure is similar to mental pleasure. But it occurs when your focus is drawn toward physical sensations that are very unique.

For example, when you eat a delicious meal, the unikons associated with the taste will be very unique. Also, your nervous system will respond by making the nerves of your tongue, mouth, head, and stomach more sensitive. This increased sensitivity produces more unikons. Thus, your awareness has more territory to scan, and more highly unique unikons to find within that territory. Your awareness then draws your focus toward your tongue, and also draws it into the rest of this new, sensitive territory. As you relax and allow your focus to be drawn in this direction, you experience uniqueness and pleasure from the taste of the food.

Mental pleasure occurs when your focus is drawn toward a unique thought or emotion. In this case, the unikons associated with the thought or emotion will be so unique that they will draw the focus of your attention to them. Unique physical sensations may also be stimulated by a unique thought or emotion. This may lead to psychosomatic physical sensations of excitement or warmth. But here again, what is happening is that new territory has been opened up for your awareness to scan, and an abundance of highly unique unikons within that territory are produced and found by your awareness.

And so, physical and mental pleasure occur when your awareness focuses on highly unique unikons within your body and mind. These highly unique unikons may be the product of highly unique unikons in your outside environment, or they may arise by themselves from within. For instance, if you feel something that is highly unique, it may stimulate a unique physical sensation. If you see something that is highly unique, it may stimulate a unique thought. Uniqueness has a way of spreading from one unikon to another, and from one sense to another. Uniqueness is life, and life has a tendency to grow and propagate. Therefore, physical and mental pleasures have a tendency to grow and propagate.

DOING-NOTHING PLEASURE

But pleasure does not always require highly unique unikons. Even in a fairly bland environment, devoid of anything highly unique, you can feel pleasure. You'll remember that I call this the pleasure of doing nothing. I also call it the pleasure of just being.

Every unikon contains uniqueness to some degree. Unikons are so small, that only a tiny amount of uniqueness exists within any one unikon. But remember, there are 100 billion unikons in a leven. This means that you are aware of 100 billion tiny bits of uniqueness every second. All of these tiny bits of uniqueness added together produce a sum total of a tremendous amount of uniqueness. What each unikon lacks in quality, is made up for in quantity, by combining its uniqueness with the uniqueness of all the other unikons in a leven. And this combined

uniqueness can be sufficient to make you feel pleasure, even when you are not exposed to anything that is highly unique.

In other words, you can feel pleasure by being lazy and doing absolutely nothing in particular.

This pleasure from laziness can last for as long as you are unaware of any opportunity for more uniqueness. But suppose you are being lazy and just sitting in a soft easy-chair, when along comes a unique thought that inspires you to pursue and cultivate it. For instance, suppose you become fascinated with the idea of working in your garden. When this happens you may be tempted to break your reverie in the chair and get up and go to work in your garden. And if you resist the temptation, you may start to feel fidgety. You may start to feel like you're going stir crazy. And you may start to feel bored.

And thus, pleasure from doing nothing can turn into pain from doing nothing.

RECAP

Let's recapitulate. A quick review will help you as you proceed to the next chapter.

Pleasure comes in an infinite variety of packages. Whether you are doing nothing, or chasing after your most fanciful ambitions, there is potential for pleasure in anything. You can't bottle pleasure up into a formula, because uniqueness cannot be confined to any strictures. At least, not for very long. Uniqueness fades with time, but your awareness will alert you to new uniqueness as it happens to come your way, and will pull you naturally toward it.

The more unique the unikons are, the easier it will be for you to focus on them, and enjoy the pleasure they produce. But you can resist the pull of uniqueness, and forgo pleasure whenever you want. Pleasure is voluntary.

However pain, to the contrary, can be involuntary; as you will discover in the next chapter.

2

THE SECOND GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF UNIKONICS

THE SECOND GUIDING PRINCIPLE of Unikronics states that pain is caused by excessive focus.

Excessive focus means, a level of focus that is so strong, it leaves you feeling pain rather than pleasure. This level of focus may sometimes be very necessary for your survival. In that context, of course it is not “excessive”. But whether it’s necessary or not, the end product of such a level of focus is pain.

HOW FOCUS LEADS TO PAIN

Uniqueness comes in many forms. A new car is something you’d probably find unique. Other nice, unique things might be: watching a movie you’ve never seen before, wearing a new suit, visiting an exotic land, or hearing a juicy piece of gossip.

But some unique things are not so nice. If your house catches on fire, that would be unique, but not so nice. Not nearly so nice as if it were someone else’s house, such as a neighbor’s. You have more chance of enjoying watching your neighbor’s house burn down than of watching your own burn down. And yet they are both unique events.

Why might you feel pleasure with one, but pain with the other, if they both make you aware of uniqueness?

The reason for this apparent anomaly is because awareness of uniqueness is dependent upon what your mind does with uniqueness. If your house catches on fire, there is no question that this would be a unique event (unless your house tends to burn down frequently). But it would be hard for you to enjoy such uniqueness when your mind remains strongly focused on how worried you feel over the loss of your property.

When your mind focuses strongly and narrowly on one thing, and remains focused upon that one thing, uniqueness is quickly lost. This is quite natural and very expected, because the longer you remain focused upon anything, the more familiar it becomes to you. And the more familiar something becomes, the less unique it becomes.

Strong negative emotions such as worry, fear, anger, and sadness, can force our minds into involuntary focus. Such involuntary focus can be useful and necessary, because it helps us to concentrate on an urgent task. It helps us to handle an emergency. For instance, if your house was on fire, the strong emotion of worry would force you to focus intently on things that must be accomplished immediately. You would immediately do things such as evacuate loved ones from your house, call 9-1-1, grab a fire extinguisher, and locate prized possessions and set them out in the front yard.

There's no time during such a situation to relax your mind and allow it to absorb all the unique things associated with a fire raging throughout the structure of your house.

And even if you couldn't do anything about the fire, except stand outside and watch your house burn down, it would be very difficult for you to use your idle time to relax and enjoy the uniqueness of the conflagration. This is because your mind would still be overpowered by the strong negative emotion of worry. And this worry would force a narrow focusing of your mind upon the catastrophic losses you'd be currently experiencing.

Again, this strong, narrow focus would rob you of your ability to enjoy the uniqueness of the fire, or the uniqueness of anything else. Instead you would feel emotional pain. This emotional pain would be caused by excessive focus. A strong focus on the thought of your catastrophic losses would cause that thought to become very familiar. This familiarity would decrease the uniqueness of the thought. And this decreased uniqueness would be felt as emotional pain.

Your mind would be oblivious to the life, change, and uniqueness swirling about in the fiery maelstrom surrounding you. In your own mind you would instead be experiencing "death", sameness, and pain, due to the narrow focus of your mind, thinking the same type of thought, over and over again.

INVOLUNTARY FOCUS

A narrow focus of mind always causes pain when it happens involuntarily. When you voluntarily focus your mind narrowly upon something, you can regulate the focus to avoid pain. As familiarity grows and uniqueness is lost, you can relax the focus and allow more awareness of other things. This allows more uniqueness of other things into your awareness, and eases the pain of hard concentration.

But when the focus is involuntary, you cannot regulate it. In this case, familiarity grows exponentially, while uniqueness dies just as quickly. The less uniqueness you are aware of, the less pleasure you feel. The less pleasure you feel, the more pain you feel. And thus, you find yourself in a situation of growing and inescapable pain.

You can psych yourself into feeling pain. For instance, you can tell yourself that a terrible thing will happen if you don't perform a certain action. If you tell yourself this over and over,

pretty soon you will start to believe it. And then your fear of the terrible thing happening will force your mind to involuntarily focus upon the consequences of not taking action. This involuntary focus will cause you to feel mental pain that lasts until such time as you perform the action that you think will prevent the terrible thing from happening.

Others can help you to feel pain. For instance, you can watch campaign ads on TV until you are convinced that bad things will happen if a certain candidate gets elected. This can leave you feeling worried, with involuntary focus upon the bad things you fear will happen. This can also leave you motivated to vote against the candidate, as a means of alleviating some of your involuntary focus and fear.

Involuntary focus is involved with physical pain, also. Physical pain occurs when nerves are stimulated that send strong signals to the brain. For example, this might happen if a doctor pokes you in the arm with a hypodermic needle. Your brain will receive strong signals from nerves in your arm. The signals will be so strong that your awareness will involuntarily focus on those signals. This will force the familiarity your mind has with the pain signals, to grow very rapidly. In fact, it will grow so rapidly that maximum familiarity will seem to occur instantaneously. This will be accompanied by an equally fast loss of uniqueness from your awareness. And thus, you will instantly feel physical pain.

UNIKONS WITH STRONG SIGNALS

A technical explanation of Unikronics can help you get a better grasp on the concept of pain. In the above example, someone has poked you in the arm with a hypodermic needle. This poking has produced strong signals that travel up from the nerves in your arm, and into your brain. These strong signals are from unikons, just like the signals that come from any other stimulus. But these unikons have signals that are so strong, your mind's awareness is forced to focus upon them.

You learned in the last chapter that unikons with high values of uniqueness tend to attract the awareness of your mind, and allow you to easily focus upon them. But it isn't just the value of uniqueness that makes a unikon attractive to your awareness. The signal strength of the unikon also determines its level of attractiveness.

Unikons with high signal strengths are more attractive than those with low signal strengths. Therefore, the stronger the signal strength, the easier it becomes for your awareness to focus on it. This focus is involuntary. It is unlike the focus that comes from a high quality of uniqueness. That focus is voluntary.

Involuntary focus produces pain when the amount of focus causes your overall awareness of uniqueness to drop below your baseline level of pleasure. This baseline level of pleasure is the background joy that you always experience. You learned about it in the last chapter.

So when you are poked in the arm with a needle, unikons with strong signals are detected by your awareness. Your awareness is then forced to focus upon these unikons. The focus is so strong that the unikons quickly lose much of their uniqueness value. This quickly drops your overall pleasure below your baseline level of pleasure. In an instant, you feel pain.

VOLUNTARY PAIN

Some pain is voluntary. This pain occurs when you force yourself to concentrate. For instance, when you are trying to learn something, you might have to concentrate on the words of a book. The focus from the concentration results in a loss of uniqueness, and a feeling of mental pain. There could also be associated physical pain, which would probably be a headache.

Voluntary pain can be useful, because it can help you to solve a problem, or accomplish a task. Voluntary pain is usually less intense than involuntary pain. This is because you have control over it, and you can regulate the level of pain.

But voluntary pain is not always useful. For instance, when you neurotically worry about remote dangers, you rob yourself of pleasure, and experience unnecessary pain. When you anger easily, much unnecessary pain can result. And when you allow yourself to be careless you can unexpectedly find yourself in a painful situation.

It's common for people to get less pleasure out of life than is possible, by causing themselves unnecessary pain. Some of this unnecessary pain is voluntary, and some is involuntary. But pain is no fun, regardless of its nature. Pleasure is what life is all about.

There are things you can do to increase your pleasure and reduce your pain. You've already learned a lot of these things through trial-and-error, life experience, and the advice of others. But Unikronics can also provide you with guidance.

The next two guiding principles of Unikronics will help you with this issue.

3

THE THIRD GUIDING

PRINCIPLE OF UNIKONICS

THE THIRD GUIDING PRINCIPLE of Unikronics states that pleasure is possible when uniqueness is discovered.

BLUEPRINT LIMITATIONS

In other words, variety is the spice of life. The trick to enjoying life to the fullest is to discover unique experiences. Then live those experiences out. Live them out until you wear them out. Then, when the novelty wears off and the uniqueness fades, discard them for a new discovery. And keep discovering. It's our eternal mission in life. We must discover the novel and live out the new.

Uniqueness is as infinite as the universe. And the universe is made out of nothing but unikons. Therefore, newness is infinite. You will never run out of new things to do. You will always be able to discover unique experiences. Your biggest challenge is in the choosing.

Predicting which course of action will bring you the greatest uniqueness and pleasure can be tough to do. It's often guesswork. Trial-and-error is our main mode for exploring the possibilities of the unknown. But this is not such a bad thing. Half the fun is in the guessing.

I could try to lay out a blueprint for uniqueness and happiness, that would help you to be happy in all situations. But if I did I'd be wrong. Uniqueness cannot be confined to a blueprint. At least, not for very long. It might work superbly for you in the short-run. You might perceive yourself as being "born again" into a brand new kind of world you had never encountered before. The novelty of your new way of looking at things might leave you feeling thrilled with the uniqueness of my plan, and lead you to expound upon the wonders of my teachings to anyone who would listen.

But after a while, the born-again spirit grows old. As uniqueness wears off, fervor cools down. Those who follow teachers eventually grow disenchanted with their teachings. Or they grow disenchanted with themselves and conclude that they must be doing something wrong. After all, their new lifestyle brought so much ecstasy at first. In their minds that proves the validity of the teaching. And in their minds, the fading of the ecstasy proves the weakness in themselves.

Unfortunately, some teachers like to encourage that line of thinking. And they provide all sorts of gimmicks for their weary followers to try, in order to restore their born-again spirit and revivify the teaching. These gimmicks might work well for a short while, but they too eventually fail and leave disappointment in their wakes.

Do not blame the teacher. Do not blame the student.

Blame ignorance.

Both teacher and student are ignorant of the power of Unikonics. They are ignorant of the ephemeral nature of mind-methods and formulas. They have failed to grasp the essential changing nature of the universe, and remain blind to its infinite rays of joy.

So if I laid out a blueprint for uniqueness; a blueprint for your happiness; I would be wrong. I would be as wrong as any other blueprint designers of nirvana who have ever taught a path to salvation and enlightenment. I would be as wrong as Zoroaster, Siddhartha Gautama, Lao-Tzu, Confucius, Jesus Christ, Saint Peter, Mohammed, Hotei, Rumi, and all the other prophets, popes, preachers, and other teachers, who've ever walked the earth. Because my teaching would be as unreliable as theirs.

Yes, I'd be wrong.

But guess what?

In all my wrongness, I'm going to draw a blueprint, anyway.

THE UNIKONICS BLUEPRINT FOR HAPPINESS

And why would I deign to draw up a blueprint after dishing out such disparaging treatment on blueprints? Because the illuminati I've named drew up blueprints. And I realize that they had no other alternative when it came to teaching a path to salvation and enlightenment. And neither do I, nor any other teacher, whether they be renowned or reclusive, exalted or ignominious, followed or ignored. The reality is, that salvation and enlightenment, in and of themselves, can't really be taught. The best any teacher, guru, prophet, or savior can do is point out a path to salvation and enlightenment, and hope people find it.

I too can point out a path. There's nothing special about me. Everyone is enlightened to some degree, so everyone can point out some sort of path to enlightenment. But most people don't write books, or otherwise do as much pointing as I have.

I can do my best to describe the path I have in mind, so that you might recognize it and start walking down it. But even my most elegant words must fall far short of capturing its subtle milestones and flexuous flows.

In fact, if you were to describe a path that you have discovered, to someone else who has found a similar path, he would have a difficult time recognizing its true reality from your words. For that person is as limited as you. He might catch a glimpse of its reality in the depth of your eyes,

or trace it from the lines of your face. He might see it in your circumspect demeanor; or to the contrary, he might capture it in the confidence of your aplomb. The freedom of your speech might color his mind with it. Or perhaps your silence would convey its gravity. Your habits would remind him of it. Your caprice would remind him more. A gesture, a word, an electric glance. These would tell him more than a thousand books. You would know each other; while helpless to speak what you really know.

And so, in my helpless, hindered, human way, I will draw a blueprint; a pathway to uniqueness and happiness. I'll make a sincere effort to be as clear as possible. I'll bathe my words in as much moonlight as I can muster, cognizant that such ablutions are poor substitute for the sun.

Do not take my blueprint too seriously. Study it, understand it, try to follow it as best you can. Trying to follow it can help you find it, through trial-and-error. But when my blueprint reaches the point of overwhelming you with boredom, crumple it up and toss it in the trash. For then, the time will have come for you to find your own way, the rest of the way.

And now, here is the blueprint I have drawn:

→ **Do nothing** ←

I described this blueprint in the first chapter, where I called it the formula of being. Just being. This formula for happiness has the best track record for reliability. Doing nothing is often all you need do to be happy. I don't necessarily mean sitting still or lying in bed all day, although this sort of doing nothing does make some people happy. What I mean is doing nothing in particular. Being wayless. Having no direction. Dropping realistic ambitions and chasing the will-o'-the-wisp. Following a whim. Dissipating down a primrose path of hedonistic pleasure. Engaging in a vapid sort of do-nothingness where happy-go-lucky is king, and rules the wit and wisdom of the day.

Relaxing and doing nothing enables you to clear your mind. It's a way of returning to zero and gathering your bearings. It's a default mode of living, for times when nothing else interests you, or fatigue has buried your ambitions.

Zen meditators sit for the sake of sitting. The unambitious lie down for the sake of lying down. Productivity is not required to find happiness. All you have to do is be.

Just be.

The formula of being relies upon the bulk effect of the hundred-billion unikons contained within every leaven of awareness. It relies upon addition, and the sum total of uniqueness. Each unikon is only a tiny ray of joy. It possesses only a minute trace of uniqueness. But the sum total of a hundred-billion unikons per second is often enough to provide you with sufficient

pleasure to feel satisfied with life. It enables you to enjoy life while doing nothing. While just being, and doing nothing in particular.

Doing nothing generally brings a baseline level of pleasure. However, this baseline level has a way of fluctuating up and down. When it fluctuates down, it leaves you wanting more out of life. Therefore, doing nothing is not always sufficient. Like any other formula for happiness, you can grow bored if you stick with it too long.

Doing nothing also lends itself to quiet moments of repose. During these moments, you may be stirred by the spontaneous rise of exciting ideas. And then you may grow restive. You'll want to abandon the strategy of being, and strike out on a path of ambitious action, seeking a bountiful harvest of high-quality uniqueness. And then the limited life-span of doing nothing will come to an end. You will want to abandon such a path. At least for a little while.

ABANDONING THE PATH

Where do you go when you abandon the path of being? Anywhere. Anywhere at all. The possibilities are infinite. You'll know where to go. The direction will occur to you while you're sitting still and doing nothing. That's one great value of doing nothing. It eventually gives you direction.

I can't possibly describe in detail all the many directions you could go and formulas you could try, because they are infinite. And they are constantly changing. Besides, it might be redux. So many other teachers have found many wonderful formulas that they have touted to the world. There's a surfeit of formulas out there for you to discover.

Peruse the shelves of any library or bookstore and you'll find volumes upon volumes of self-help books, and written works of inspiration, chock full of formulas for happiness. Go to any temple, church or synagogue, and seek instruction from the masters of salvation. There are plenty of such masters around, and they each have plenty of instructions. And they give it all out for free (although they do accept donations).

Ask a family member, friend, or co-worker, for the secret to happiness. They'll fill your ears with all kinds of different ideas. You'll receive more advice than you could follow in a thousand years.

Or just stay at home. Sooner or later someone with sacred literature is bound to knock on your door and offer you handfuls of tracts and blads full of helpful homilies.

If you don't like to answer the door, then turn on the TV. Just about every news show, sit-com, or drama is loaded with words for the wise on how to live your life. You'll be entertained and schooled, all at the same time, and all in the leisure of your own home.

If you are the self-sufficient type, and don't like to rely on others for advice on living, this is also no problem. The human mind instinctively comes up with ideas on a very frequent basis, on

how to live life. Ideas will arise naturally in your mind, and you'll never want for a direction to go or a formula to try. Your own mind can direct you. You can be your own savior.

Yes, it's virtually raining formulas for happiness and ideas for ideal living. It's raining outside. It's raining inside. It's even raining and flooding in your own mind.

So when you tire of doing nothing, worry not. A deluvium of delightful deeds is filling an ocean of happiness for you. All you have to do is go swimming. Wait for an inspiration, and then pursue it. You won't have to wait long. There is so much out there. Uniqueness is as infinite as the sky and as vast as the universe. The formulas available are too many to number, and too much to name. I would be foolish to try to enumerate them all for you. Besides, they're always changing.

But I can come up with a limited list, just in case you're feeling a little confused right now. If you're wondering what I'm talking about when I say that the formulas for pleasure and happiness are infinite, then maybe it would help if I gave you some examples of formulas for pleasure and happiness.

You can find a long list of examples in the first chapter of this book, under the subheading *FORMULAS FOR HAPPINESS*. But the following are some more examples for ways to find uniqueness, pleasure and happiness. You don't have to follow any of these examples. But at least let them be an inspiration for you, to help you figure out how to find your own ways:

Take up a hobby. Be serious. Read a joke a day. Live a frivolous lifestyle. Be practical. Start a garden. Feed all the birds and squirrels in your neighborhood. Go hunting. Join the ASPCA. Be a survivalist. Protest against gun ownership. Run for political office. Learn Non-Violent Communication. Ignore the news and live under a rock. Invent something. Enjoy the inventions of others. Educate yourself. Be superstitious. Go to church. Go to an orgy. Be an atheist. Be spiritual. Be material. Meditate. Keep your mind busy. Be Christ-like. Be yourself. Dwell in the unborn Buddha-mind. Be different. Join a dating club. Join any club. Try to make as many friends as possible. Be a hermit. Join a team. Be a lone wolf. Buy a skateboard. Be a couch potato. Get physically fit. Have your head examined. Buy a new car. Go for a long bus ride. Travel to foreign lands. Enjoy your own backyard. Have a baby. Get a dog. Get a cat. Settle down and start a family. Stay single and wild. Be a pillar of your community. Be a rabble-rouser. Start a business and be your own boss. Work for a promotion. Join a union. Quit the rat race. Spange for money. Help the homeless. Join a charity. Invest your money for fun and profit. Be a philanthropist. Dress well. Dress shabby. Think for yourself. Go with the flow. Debate grand ideas. Mediate disputes. Be fashionable. Be a rebel. Give yourself a rest when you get tired.

And then, go back to doing nothing for a while.

GUESSWORK ISN'T EVERYTHING

Yes, there is much that you can do to be happy. Some of the things you try will make you happier than other things. Uniqueness, by its own nature, is very unpredictable. Trial-and-error is the proving ground for any formula for happiness.

But you don't have to rely entirely upon trial-and-error. Guesswork may be an unavoidable approach to choosing happiness formulas. But you can also apply some skill, and turn your guesses into educated guesses. This can improve your odds for success.

Yes, there are ways to increase your chances for success when choosing which formula for happiness to follow.

These ways will be explored in the next chapter.

4

THE FOURTH GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF UNIKONICS

THE FOURTH GUIDING PRINCIPLE of Unikronics states that pain can be avoided when excessive focus can be avoided.

SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS

The secret to getting the most life out of life, lies in avoiding self-inflicted wounds. When you can avoid excessive focus, but you don't, you incur a self-inflicted wound.

There are many benighted humans in this world, who spend every day shooting themselves in the foot. This causes most of the pain we experience in this world. We're reckless with our rifles, and aim them in the wrong direction. We shoot ourselves day in and day out. And so we limp along through life, wondering why it's so hard to make any progress.

A good understanding of Unikronics will help you to improve your aim. It will help you to choose those formulas for pleasure that keep your feet out of the line of fire.

You've learned with Unikronics that formulas for pleasure are infinite. But you've also learned that no formula for pleasure lasts forever. This is okay, because when one runs out of gas, you can simply return to the old standby formula of being (doing nothing), or find a different formula for the pursuit of pleasure.

FORBIDDEN FRUIT

But some formulas for pleasure are like poisonous fruit. Their appearance is shiny and colorful. Their aroma is pleasant. You can be lured by their beauty and scent into imagining how delicious they might taste, and how pleasing they might settle into your stomach.

The taste indeed, might be sumptuous, and the settling indeed, might please you much. At least initially. But then the poison takes effect. And then the enteritis and pain begins. And then you learn that not all formulas for pleasure end well.

We usually get plenty of warning about these tainted formulas before we poison ourselves. Our memento morus come from preachers, who pack our ears with homilies. Moral lessons are

handed down from on high from politicians, media figures, and the kinds of shows we watch and music we listen to. Friends and relatives caution us. And our own instincts send smoke signals to our brains.

But temptation gets the best of us and we bite the apple anyway.

There are quite a few forbidden fruits in our world. Go to any marketplace and you'll find many of them for sale. That's because some are forbidden by common sense but not by law. Some forbidden fruits are found in your workplace. Some in your neighborhood. Some in your own backyard. And some of them grow like potted plants in your own home.

They serve as alluring temptations, and reminders to our memories of old regrets. We love them and hate them. Sometimes we cultivate them. Sometimes we try to extirpate them from the soil. At times, we publish screeds against them. At other times, we secretly harvest them and hide them in our closets. We have a mercurial tendency to cultivate, ingurgitate, regurgitate, and deracinate these taboo temptations.

Now, all of this guilt-ridden sanctimonious activity can serve as an unfortunate diversion. It can leave us forgetting the true value of forbidden fruit. You see, many a potent medicine has been extracted from poisonous plants. And when ingested carefully, in proper quantity, such medicine can actually serve as remedies for our illnesses.

Usually the medicine is better left alone. But sometimes, rarely, it can be useful. For that is the nature of our world. Nothing but nothing is reliably beneficial or dangerous, all the time. There are exceptions to every rule. And there's a use for all things under the sun, including the poisonous things.

I have a garden. I'm going to give you a tour. It is a garden of poisonous plants that tantalize with beauty. I'm going to teach you the benefits and danger (mostly danger) of these forbidden fruits, so you can learn how to find happiness by avoiding excessive focus and pain. Come along for a botany course. Step into my garden . . .

THE FRUIT OF DESPERATION

Isn't this a lovely garden? Just look at all the beautiful fruit surrounding us! Let's start our tour by checking out the most common of poisonous fruit trees. It's that colorful one over there.

The fruit of desperation.

This common source of poison is related to many other forbidden fruits. So it's a good idea to become well-acquainted with it. If you only know the fruit of desperation, you'll be able to recognize other forbidden fruits, most of the time.

Desperation for happiness is the downfall of many a seeker. It can tempt you when you feel bored and crave some action. It deludes the successful manqué, who has fallen short of his ambitions, and who imagines he's been robbed by fate. It's thirst on the tongue of those who live

in common poverty. It's terror bred into the upper crust, who cannot bear any smudge upon their white shoes. It's the claw of fear of a parent for her children, of a saint for sinners, and of a leader for the lost. It is impatience. It is a high-boil fever. And it is a race against reason.

Desperation prevents a careful, rational approach to finding happiness. The desperate do not think ahead and calculate long-term consequences for their actions. They grab at straws, they run pell-mell down busy highways, and they hurl themselves Gadarene over cliffs.

Has the armed robber really thought out his crime? Does he truly comprehend the gravity of failure, or more importantly, the gravity of success? For if he succeeds, how will his past actions affect his current demeanor? Who will trust him? Who can he truly love? How much excessive focus will he have to expend in his effort to keep his story straight, and in his attempt to project a trustworthy image?

Then there are those who crave action. Their desperate effort to have fun often results in more action than they bargained for. They drink and do drugs. They gamble. They betray their mates. They pick fights. And they make other wildly fun but unwise decisions. The fun they find is soon vitiated by regrets for drunken behavior, financial ruin, embarrassment, injury, and sometimes even death.

Then there are those who worry desperately over the well-being of others. They eventually find themselves hated by the very people they love and worry about. Their controlling behavior leads to family feuds, revolts, and distancing. Each good intention becomes a flagstone that paves the way to hell.

Some well-intended people go political and start social movements. But sometimes they grow desperate when they meet obstacles. And then their ends begin to justify their means. The happiness they so much desired for others is commandeered by strategies of deception, persecution, and violence.

The fruit of desperation poisons our chances of accomplishing our goals. And when we succeed at our goals, it keeps our victories from being sweet. A desperate formula for happiness is a doomed formula for happiness. It lacks carefulness, it fails in foresight, and it leads down a precipitous path toward disaster.

And so it is best to avoid the fruit of desperation. At least, most of the time. But like all forbidden fruits, there are some exceptions to the rules. There are rare occasions when this fruit affords a useful medicine for remedying a situation. These tend to be actual desperate situations, where quick action and a jolt of adrenalin are necessary to repel an imminent danger. Desperation can be useful when desperate conditions actually exist.

But it is never safe to partake in the fruit of desperation, even when justifiable under desperate conditions. This is because this fruit always causes dangerous side-effects. But sometimes, under extreme circumstances, the medicinal benefits outweigh the side-effects, and it becomes more helpful than harmful to consume this fruit in spite of its dangers.

How odd it is that so many people pluck this fruit during the most halcyon times. They take the medicine when no illness manifests. And then they incur the side-effects, with no off-setting benefit. If you seek to get the most life out of life, avoid behaving like these people. Regard the fruit of desperation with the forewarning and caution it deserves.

THE FRUIT OF POOR HEALTH

No one is in perfect health. Reflect back. When was the last time you were in perfect health? Was there ever a time when you didn't have something physically wrong with you? Were you ever completely free of an ache, pain, or malady of some type?

It is impossible to completely avoid the fruit of poor health. This fruit finds its way into our diets in some form or another, every day of our lives. But in spite of its ubiquitous presence on our plates, there are ways to reduce our intake.

You need not look far, for ways to improve your health. The media is full of health-related stories, admonitions, and advertisements. The biggest challenge is in sorting out the salubrious from the snake-oil. There are also plenty of books, magazines, and internet websites devoted toward improving health. Health advice is everywhere. You probably learned a lot from school. You probably learn a lot every day. From word of mouth to written word, it is apparent that many people want you to be healthy.

Poor health increases your involuntary focus on the type of unkonos that are physical. This causes excessive focus and physical pain, and reduces your experience of uniqueness. And that reduces your level of happiness.

But Unikonicos can only provide you with limited protection from poor health. Enlightened people are just as prone to poor health as the unenlightened. And some enlightened people smoke cigarettes. And some eat too much. And some take unnecessary risks that lead to injury.

But enlightenment comes in degrees. I believe that the less you try to avoid poor health (within reason), the less enlightened you are. I believe this because trying to avoid poor health requires mental discipline. Mental discipline is required to resist that cigarette, put down that fork, and lace up your jogging shoes. Mental discipline is required to kick any poor health habit, and to develop any good health habit. And mental discipline is required to find formulas for happiness that avoid harm.

Those who are mentally disciplined find ways to avoid pain, by avoiding excessive focus. And so they engage in nonism, by abstaining from harmful health habits. They never find themselves in perfect health, because that is impossible. And sometimes they find themselves in perennial bad health. But this is through circumstances they are unable to control. Who can keep away cancer, heart disease, arthritis, or any other malady, when it is determined to take them over?

The trick to getting the most out of life, is in avoiding self-inflicted wounds, not those wounds that are inevitable.

May the fruit of poor health fall far from your plate. But when it finds your taste buds, may you console yourself in knowing you did everything reasonably possible to avoid it.

THE FRUIT OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The fruit of substance abuse is closely related to the fruit of poor health. But its poison is different enough to warrant special mention.

This poison is as much literal as metaphorical. It isn't just the substance that is poison; it is also the addiction. Alcohol and narcotics have been poisoning human beings since the birth of civilization. No wonder—they're the sweetest tasting fruits of all. And these fruits are also the most addictive.

I know of no more effective way to have a unique experience than to alter the function of the brain. And mind-altering substances provide the quickest way to do that. They are a short-cut to the effects of enlightenment. They provide a sneak-peek into the possibilities of the mind, while at the same time they make those possibilities less probable.

In the long-run they destroy your health. In the short-run they cloud your judgment. They lead to unintentional harm to yourself and others. They dissipate careers and ruin finances. They break up families. They provoke misunderstandings and prevent reconciliation. And they lead to actions that can irreversibly alter your course in life away from the fulfillment of your dreams.

When this fruit is eaten to its core, it is as bitter to its last bite as it is sweet to its first. How pitiful the grimace on those who finish this fruit. But how hard it is for them to stop eating before it is too late.

The glory that is sometimes heaped upon this poison is nothing but a melancholy mask of self-deception. Those who sing its praises are attempting to convince themselves, as much as anyone listening. It is hard for them to admit they've fell victim to something that seems as innocuous as a bottle of beer, or baggie of hash. And yet no matter how loudly they shout their paeans of praise, poison floods their veins and corrupts the foundations of their happiness.

If you are addicted to the fruit of substance abuse, you are suffering from deep, self-inflicted wounds. Your path to getting the most life out of life, lies in overcoming your addiction. You can do it. But even if you can't, you must try. If you do not try, then the wounds will remain self-inflicted.

And a fulfilled life will elude you.

THE FRUIT OF AUTHORITY

Everyone's an authority on something. And we've all been authorities over someone. The fruit of authority is only poisonous if you eat too much of it. Of course, the same could be said of other edible fruits. But this poison is easy to overdose on, and it can cause devastating harm.

The despots who run families, businesses, and countries are usually unaware that they've taken a poison. This is because their bellies never feel full when eating too much of this fruit. And so they behave as if they can never get too much of it.

Those poisoned with this fruit often see themselves as protectors, rather than perpetrators. Their excuse for swinging a cudgel is their concern for the well-being of innocent people, whom they imagine are being threatened by evil forces and conspiracies. Whether they believe this excuse or not, they see no harm in the authority they wield over those weaker than them. They may even see it as their duty to be such arbiters of cruel "justice".

But the silent poison of this fruit builds up in their livers. It makes them bilious and bumptious. It warps their relationships with others. The people they love grow to fear them. This fear turns into a secret hatred, and this hatred manifests in the form of distant subservience. They obey out of fear. They communicate out of necessity. But they hide their hearts.

Hidden hearts avoid true expression. They occlude the avenues of human connection, and cut off the soul that makes relationships enjoyable, rich and rewarding.

This is why the mighty tyrant sits alone on his throne. Nobody wants to sit with him. He cannot celebrate his victories with anyone who really cares. He cannot unbosom his vulnerabilities, lest he hand a weapon to a secret enemy. He cannot penetrate the colorful uniqueness of his subjects, and be intrigued by their exotic lifestyles. He commands the shallows only, and cannot know the depths of those whom he tries to rule.

He is alone. He is lonely. He is a tyrant. He has consumed too much of the fruit of authority.

Yes, loneliness is the bitter outcome of those who overindulge in authority. Two or more minds sharing the uniqueness of life create a carnival of love and pleasure that never closes and never ceases to amuse. But one mind alone can only howl at the moon, and wish longingly for someone to share the moonlight with.

Dine upon the fruit of authority when necessary or practical. But don't be fooled by the light feeling in your stomach. Avoid overeating. Have consideration for others who may want to taste this fruit. Don't hog it all. Consider its silent poison, and cautiously set it aside after you've taken what you need.

THE FRUIT OF DISTRUST

No one can be completely trusted, because we humans are slippery creatures. And yet trust is the keystone that holds human relationships together. When you inspire distrust in others, you harm your relationships with them. And you partake in the fruit of distrust.

Distrust is an inconvenient thing. It's the reason why we fumble with locks, guard secret information, and compose complicated contracts rather than simply shake hands. We spend a lot of time and effort protecting ourselves from each other.

When people don't trust you, you find yourself facing inconvenient barriers everywhere you go. Criminals are the least trusted. Their inconvenient barriers tend to be jailhouse bars and prison walls. Those who live legally but unethically face less severe barriers. But these barriers can still be inconvenient. When you ask someone for a favor and are refused, because past favors have gone unappreciated, that can be inconvenient. When you hit a dead end in your career because everywhere you go, your reputation has gone before, that can be inconvenient. When your spouse has learned from experience not to believe your stories about why you come home from work late, that can be inconvenient.

Inconvenience draws sweat from your life. You must apply extra focus and effort at accomplishing things, and this leads to discomfort and pain. It can also leave you dispirited, discouraged, and burnt out. When you feel demoralized, it's harder to make formulas for happiness work for you. And then you feel more and more tempted to partake in more and more forbidden fruits, such as the fruit of desperation, until you descend into a vicious cycle of self-poisoning and self-inflicted wounds.

The fruit of distrust can leave you ostracized from meaningful relationships. After all, who wants to open up to someone they can't trust? Like the fruit of authority, those who consume the fruit of distrust tend to be afflicted with the pain of loneliness. But this pain cuts deeper. When they've been dishonest with others, they've also had to be dishonest with themselves. For that's the only way they can keep their story straight. And when they've lied to themselves they've grown disconnected with their inner being. At least a tyrant has himself for company. But a fraud has no one to keep himself company.

But distrust is not confined to the con-artist. Everyone is distrusted to some degree. Nobody trusts a stranger, yet you are a stranger to most people you encounter. And even with people who know you well, there is always some level of distrust going on. Distrust acts like a barrier of static electricity that zaps us when we venture too close to each other.

Trust can be a hard thing to build. Especially when you're dealing with people who've been burned a lot. When dealing with the once-burnt and twice-shy, the task of building trust can exceed the complexity of a Rubik's cube. And yet trust is such an important thing to build. Trust is the highest virtue. Trust is love. The more someone trusts you, the more they love you. Love makes relationships enjoyable and rewarding. So does trust. To build love is to build trust. To build trust is to build love. These two virtues, trust and love, are identical. You can't have one without the other.

Trust requires other virtues, such as honesty, integrity, loyalty, and consideration. And these are great virtues. But how many times have you employed a ton of honesty, integrity, loyalty,

and consideration, only to find that you have gained very little trust from the person you're dealing with? This is very common, because human beings are such slippery creatures. Humans have often been known to employ complete honesty one minute, and two-faced deception in the next. We have a bad reputation, we humans. And that is why it can be so frustrating to try to build trust by utilizing honesty, integrity, loyalty, and consideration.

THE GIFT TOOL

But there is one tool we have at our disposal that can be a powerful trust-builder. This tool far surpasses honesty, integrity, loyalty, and consideration, in its effectiveness at gaining the confidence of others. It's a tool that requires a little bit of skill to master, but when you master it, you will open a door to a wonderland of amazing new relationships.

I call it the Gift Tool.

The Gift Tool employs a policy of receiving any request as if it were a wonderful gift. It also involves giving any request as if you were giving a wonderful gift. When the Gift Tool is used skillfully, you become Santa Claus, and so does everyone you meet. And who doesn't trust Santa Claus?

So let's say your next-door neighbor knocks on your door and asks you for a thousand dollar loan. And let's say that up until now, your only interactions with this neighbor for the past six years that you've known him has been an occasional:

"Hello!"

"How are you?"

"I'm fine."

"That's good."

"Nice weather, huh?"

"Yeah great!"

"See ya!"

In other words, you've both kept a polite distance from each other.

And now this distant polite stranger who lives so close to you has all the nerve to knock on your door and ask for a thousand dollar loan.

If you want to build trust with this person, you will want to employ the Gift Tool, and treat his request as if he had just given you a wonderful gift. And yet, he wants a thousand dollars. That is his request. How is it possible to treat such an imposing request as if it were a wonderful gift?

The answer lies in sincerity. You have to find your sincerity. It is not sufficient to employ the formula of "Don't worry, be happy." Because you will worry. You can't help it. You have a basic human need to protect your resources. And your worry will make sincerity impossible.

Unless you take the time and expend the effort to find it. Finding your sincerity is the effort that is required, to make the Gift Tool effective at building trust.

An important thing to remember when you look for your sincerity, is that the *request* is the gift, not necessarily the *fulfillment* of the request. Focus on the request. There is always a way to find something positive about any request. It may take some time. It may require mental effort. But you can always find a gold nugget hidden within the murky mud of anything that anyone asks of you. Remember, formulas for happiness are infinite. Requests are nothing more than a first step toward finding a new formula for happiness.

You may feel relieved to know that the Gift Tool does not require you to fulfill every request that comes your way. In fact, it does not require you to fulfill any request that anybody makes of you, ever. It only requires that you find ways to sincerely treat requests as wonderful gifts. And you do this by finding ways to turn requests into formulas for happiness.

It may take a few minutes for you to mentally process your neighbor's request for a thousand dollar loan, and find your sincerity. But with time and effort you will be able to find it. Invite your neighbor into your home for a drink. This will help to buy some time. Prevaricate. Temporize. Hem and haw out loud while excogitating deeply, as you try to locate that sincerity. If worse comes to worse, tell him he's come at a bad time, and ask if you can get back to him. Then later, once you've found your sincerity, get back to him quickly.

Finding your sincerity involves converting the request into a formula for happiness. I've had some time to think about the request for a thousand dollar loan, and here are some formulas for happiness that I've come up with:

- Reflect upon what an honor it is, to be chosen as someone who can help someone else out.
- Give your neighbor empathy, and get more acquainted with him by finding out why he wants money.
- Be better understood, and receive empathy, by explaining why you can't afford to loan money.
- Start a new business, by loaning money and charging interest.
- Counter-offer to buy your neighbor's boat for a thousand dollars, so you can enjoy a new unique form of recreation.
- Hire your neighbor for a thousand dollars and get that big project you've been dreaming about completed.
- Show your neighbor how resourceful you are, by directing him to someone you know, who has a money-lending business.
- Loan the money at no interest, and take a gamble at establishing a new, long-term friendship.

- Tell your neighbor that you need money also, and suggest combining your efforts to find ways to raise the cash.
- End your loneliness by inviting your neighbor over for free meals, to help him through his financial crisis.
- Start a charity, by organizing your community in helping your neighbor.

You may come up with different formulas. The point in the formulas is to find ways to feel sincere gratitude for the request that's been made of you.

You can do this with any request that's made of you. When you've found your sincerity, you can then treat the request as if you've received a wonderful gift. The person making the request will sense your sincerity. This will help convey to him that his life is valued by you. That he truly matters, and that you truly care about him. And when he senses this, he will trust you a lot more. It doesn't matter whether his request gets fulfilled or not, or whether he wants to participate in the formula for happiness that you've counter-proposed, or not. What matters to him is that you are treating his request sincerely and seriously, and are making an effort to find some way to help him get the most life out of life.

This is a very effective method for building trust, and for finding an antidote to the forbidden fruit of distrust.

Unlike the thousand dollar request, most requests people make of us are quite a bit smaller. They want us to do simple little things like, hold a door open, empty the trash, work a little overtime, visit for a few minutes, give directions, and so forth. But whether small or large, when we sincerely treat each request as if it were a wonderful gift, we build trust and make our relationships more friendly and rewarding.

But the Gift Tool has an additional use. You can also use it to make your own requests seem like wonderful gifts. Instead of wringing your hands and stuttering out the things you want, you can find ways to sincerely see how your requests add uniqueness and enjoyment to the lives of others. When your requests are made with this kind of sincerity, they tend to be received as gifts, rather than as burdens. And such requests tend to be granted far more often.

And more importantly you, the requester, tend to be regarded with trust, rather than distrust.

THE FRUIT OF RUNAWAY NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

I've divagated from our tour of my garden of poisonous plants. I wanted to share my Gift Tool with you, because I value this tool highly. But now let me set this tool down, and let's resume the tour. Let us get to know one more forbidden fruit.

I call this next fruit, the fruit of runaway negative emotions.

There's nothing wrong with negative emotions. In fact, negative emotions can actually be a lot of fun. For instance, take the emotion of fear. Go to an amusement park, and you'll find long queues of people waiting for the chance to be terrorized on a roller coaster that sends them hurtling along a narrow rail at breakneck speed, dropping them down steep inclines, looping them upside-down, and careening wildly around hairpin curves. What a thrill it is to be afraid!

Anger is invigorating. We love to get worked up into a froth by politicians who rail against jobbery, bureaucracy, taxes, oligarchs, and foreign countries. We wallow in the outrages of scandals. We flock to gossip and fan the flames of our fury with perceived peccadillos of our "misguided" peers. And we find relief by venting our frustrations with life's little injustices.

Sadness is a gas. Look at how people flock to movie theaters to watch tear-jerking tales about people who endure tragedy and meet up with a heartbreaking demise. These movies are judged by how much they make you cry; and the more you cry, the better the movie.

This may leave you wondering: Why do we label such emotions as *negative* when they can be so enjoyable? Wouldn't they actually be *positive*?

No, not always. I label an emotion as negative when it has significant potential to cause yourself or others a great amount of harm. Especially when you take it to an extreme, and allow the emotion to go runaway.

For instance, if you take fear too far, you'll lock yourself up in your house and never come out again. When anger reaches a boiling point, you can lose your temper and kill someone, or cause a great amount of destruction. And sadness taken to the extreme can leave you feeling so saturnine that you may commit suicide.

By contrast, positive emotions have much less potential for such drastic consequences. Emotions such as joy, delight, hope, peace, satisfaction, contentment, and gladness can on rare occasion lead you into disaster. But compared with the potential for disaster that negative emotions hold, positive emotions are much safer.

So the trick to enjoying negative emotions is to be watchful, and avoid taking them to an extreme. Don't let them run away with you. Avoid eating from the fruit of runaway negative emotions.

FEAR

Take fear, for instance. Fear can be either an immobilizer or a mobilizer.

For example, your fear of doing something beneficial can run away with you, and stop you from improving your life. In this case, it immobilizes. But your fear of avoiding danger can also run away with you, propelling you into an ill-advised action that sets your life back. In this case, fear mobilizes.

The trick is to keep either of these two fears from taking over your focus and running away with you. You can do this through mental engineering. You can set these two fears against each other, and cause a head-on collision. Here's how: Give serious and equal consideration to both fears, and make them clash with each other. This takes the impetus from both, and can help calm your mind enough to think rationally, and choose the best course of action.

This trick can be a reliable method for managing fear, but it doesn't always work well. Sometimes it backfires with the force of a bomb blast. And that is when fear turns to anger.

ANGER

It is said that anger is the flip-side of fear. It's the frustration that arises when you feel very vulnerable, and can't find any way to protect yourself. It occurs when your fear of action and your fear of inaction collide with explosive force.

For instance, let's say you're hammering a nail, and you hit your thumb instead. The resulting pain will leave you fearing the next action of hammering, lest you hit your thumb again. But the fear of inaction, and not finishing your project, may be strong enough to overcome your fear of action. It's a reasonable enough fear to lead you to continue hammering, even with a sore thumb. But after a few strokes, let's say you hit your thumb again. Now your fear of action grows stronger. But when you reflect again on the prospect of not finishing your project, the fear of inaction is still reasonable enough to keep you hammering; just with more care. But let's say that on the very next stroke, you strike your poor thumb for the third time.

Now you're faced with a dilemma. You become too afraid to continue hammering. And yet you are also too afraid to stop hammering. Both fears have grown so powerful, that you can't determine which fear is the most reasonable. Your mind clouds with confusion. Frustration sets in. You have absolutely no idea what to do, but you know you must do something immediately or you will hurt your thumb more. Your mind interprets this as an emergency that requires quick action with little time for rational thought. And so you seize upon the irrational idea that your pain is the fault of the hammer, and you fling the hammer blindly through the air, following it with a few invectives.

The amount of destruction that occurs at the landing spot of the hammer depends completely on chance. And this will also determine the amount of excessive focus and pain you will now have to endure.

But this excessive focus and pain could have been avoided. What has occurred is that your mind interpreted an emergency too soon. Being quick to temper is akin to calling 9-1-1 when no emergency has actually occurred. It's no emergency that you want to finish a project. But you have worked your mind up into a runaway belief that an emergency exists anyway, and have taken drastic, violent action, as your way of responding to this fictive emergency.

The poison of forbidden fruits can make good medicine for treating real emergencies. But this medicine has painful side effects because, don't forget, it is also poison. However, the benefits tend to outweigh the harm during a real emergency. But when the exigency that has arisen is not really an urgent matter, then the poison you take only comes with side effects. It has no medicinal value, and provides no benefits.

You can combat runaway anger by stopping yourself whenever you start metaphorically dialing 9-1-1. Ask yourself if this is really an emergency. Is drastic action really necessary? Whenever you feel the flames of your temper licking at your brain, it is best to stop for just a brief moment and ask yourself just how urgent is this matter? Is it worth burning precious adrenalin by engaging in violent action? Is it needed? Will it do more good than harm? Just get in the habit of stopping for a brief moment and asking yourself this. If the answer is anything but a completely resounding, 100% "yes," then apply all the force of your will into taking zero action and getting away from the situation. Do not accept answers like, "yes, probably," or "yes, maybe". Put down the 9-1-1 phone. Get away. Go somewhere. Calm down. Wait until you can think rationally.

This will help you to avoid excessive focus. It will save you from pain.

Runaway anger can occur in a more insidious manner than the above example. It can begin with a small judgment about someone or something. For instance, you may do a favor for someone, then imagine that they feel no gratitude for what you did, and have no appreciation for how hard you tried to please them. If you harbor this thought for very long, a slow burn of resentment will begin to smolder in your belly. This may lead you to add other judgmental thoughts. You may see other people as being ungrateful also. And the more you ruminate, the more you may begin to regard the whole world as ungrateful. In the meantime, the slow burn in your belly will grow hotter and hotter, silently scorching a hole in your guts.

It may take a long time before this kind of anger finds expression in your actions. But over time it will accrete to the point of reaching a critical mass. Some event will trigger it. And then, suddenly, you may find yourself metaphorically picking up the phone to call 9-1-1, when no real emergency actually exists. You will lose your temper. Perhaps you will lash out and vent at someone, and destroy a relationship. And all over an emergency you created in your mind. You've lost your temper and partaken in the forbidden fruit of runaway negative emotions, and now you've done something you regret. Now you are excessively focusing on the loss of a valued relationship, and you're living in avoidable pain.

The beauty of this can be found when you have developed the habit of recognizing your temper the moment before it erupts, and stopping and asking yourself the crucial question, "Is this really an emergency?" When the answer is anything but a resounding "yes" you know that you must get away, calm down, and reflect. And when you do reflect you will find something beautiful. You will find the cause of the cark that has been eating away at your stomach for such

a long time. You will discover that you've been making judgments and worrying about something, without completely understanding what you've been worrying about. This can help you to find a more clear understanding of reality.

And gaining a more clear understanding of reality is what enlightenment is all about. Such understanding helps you to find rational, effective solutions to your problems. And it protects you from self-inflicted wounds, prevents avoidable pain, and helps you to get the most life out of life.

SADNESS

Sadness left running too long drains you into a sump of depression. Your focus fixates on everything that is wrong with yourself and the world, and uniqueness is obnubilated like shuttered blinds on a picture window. Silver linings fade to black, and lights at the ends of tunnels turn into trains.

Sustained sadness is suicide. At first this suicide is metaphorical. But it has the potential for becoming literal.

It's hard work, though, to commit metaphorical or literal suicide. After all, you have a very powerful survival instinct to overcome before you can commit suicide. This survival instinct comes from the radiant sphere of joy, which I described in the first chapter. To partake of this particular forbidden fruit, you must develop your skill at sustaining sadness.

The way you can sustain sadness and wallow in it long-term, is by turning sadness upon yourself. It's not enough to see what's wrong with the world. That may only enliven your spirit, and inspire you to find solutions to all the world's problems. If you really want to sustain sadness, you must get good at also seeing what's wrong with yourself. In effect, you must kill yourself mentally. For when you have killed yourself mentally, you can no longer help the world.

Therefore, the way to avoid consuming the poison of this forbidden fruit is, to avoid going through all the effort required to kill yourself mentally. This may seem like a good plan, at first flush, because it's easy to be lazy and to avoid hard effort.

This laziness method would usually work just fine, if it wasn't for one thing. And that is all the help that some people willingly provide, at committing suicide. These people are what we sometimes call bullies. Bullies have a way of trying to control you through intimidation. And one of the ways they try to intimidate, is to point out everything they think is wrong with you.

When you start to believe them, then you start to sink into a sump of depression. You begin making an effort at examining all of your so-called defects. Your intentions are pure. You're just trying to change yourself so that you can become more tolerable to the bullies who are oppressing you. But the more you make an effort at examining the things that others say are

wrong with you, the more your sadness grows, and the more your spirit weakens. The hard effort you are making, and the deft skills you are developing at self-examination of “wrongness,” moves you closer and closer to metaphorical and literal suicide.

This works out well for your oppressors, because the lower your self-esteem slides, the more tractable you become to them. They gain control.

The bullies get what they want out of you, and you are left not caring. This is because the only scraps of self-worth you can find are made from the occasional crumbs of praise the bullies throw your way, after they get their way. Eventually the bullies leave your life. But they take the key to your dungeon with them. You are left stuck in the darkness of your depression.

What the bullies don’t realize, and what you may not realize yourself, is that there is more than one set of keys. There is always a set of keys lying on your dungeon floor, that will help you to escape the darkness. All you have to do is grapple in the darkness long enough until you find them.

The key to escaping the runaway negative emotion of sustained sadness is your ability to appreciate your self-worth. You will always have this ability, no matter how dark your mind becomes. Self-esteem, by its very nature, can only come from the self. And its potential is always there, lying and waiting inside you. Inside your dungeon.

You must open your eyes and see the silver linings in life. Not just outside, but also inside—in your inner self. You must come to appreciate the power you have to make yourself happy.

Unikonics can help with this. Unikonics teaches that the formula of just being and doing nothing is often a unique enough experience to feel pleasure. Recognize how it works within you. See the innate power you have, to be happy without making any effort at all.

Recognize that there are an infinite variety of formulas for happiness. When you try one and it wears out after a little while, do not take this as a reflection of your own weakness and low worth. Rather, regard this as a reflection of the beauty of life. Life is change. It’s an opportunity for you to move on to something new and unique and fun and exciting.

Keep moving on, and keep moving on, and you will slowly, gradually fight your way back into the light, and escape the dungeon of depression.

You will emerge from your sustained sadness into an iridescent world of color and light. You will find uniqueness. You will find billions of rays of joy.

You will find life, and make the most of it.

WILDINGS

I’ve now finished showing you my garden of forbidden fruits. The botany tour is over. You’ve studied some of the poisons that tempt you and me in our journey through life.

But mine is not a comprehensive botanical collection. There are wildings of many hybrids and varieties growing outside my orchard walls, of both poisonous fruit and healthy fruit. You encounter them every day, in the uncontrolled habitat of our universe. The wildings that poison are as infinite as the wildings that please.

And remember, formulas for pleasure can also be formulas for pain, if you take them to extreme. Be careful what you dine on. Be moderate. Be circumspect. Recognize the boundaries that enclose painful jurisdictions, then run free and wild in the remaining infinite territory.

Uniqueness will never leave you wanting. It fills the forest of life with abundant fruit, and supplies endless varieties of succulent tastes. There is no need to pluck forbidden fruits when so many safe fruits hang low on the limbs. Except in those rare circumstances when you need a touch of medicine, avoid these dangerous foods, and let your focus rest easy upon the beneficial sources of happiness.

Seek unique. Choose wisely. And may your harvests always be healthy.

CONCLUSION:

Etymology of Unikonics,

& Unicorniks

THE TERM *UNIKONICS* gives life to this concept of how pleasure and pain arises within us. This word makes the concept easy to remember. It also makes it easy to communicate. It's serves as a catch-all that contains all the little technical details that go into the production of our happiness and suffering.

The letter *k* in *Unikonics* forces a hard *q* pronunciation. This recalls to mind the word *unique*, while avoiding a “kwa” mispronunciation, had the letters “qu” been retained.

Unikonics combines the concept of uniqueness with the suffixes *-on* and *-ics*.

The suffix *-on* is often used in sciences such as biology, chemistry, and physics to form the name of a fundamental substance (such as *carbon*, *silicon*, or *electron*). In *Unikonics* the fundamental substance is a psychological substance called a *unikon*.

The suffix *-ics* is often used in epistemology to indicate a matter relating to a particular subject (such as *economics*, *mathematics*, or *physics*).

Therefore, the word *Unikonics* is defined as the subject of how uniqueness from unikons relates to the production of pleasure and pain.

I've also created the term *Unicorniks*. *Unicorniks* is a play on the word *Unikonics*. It brings to mind unicorns, which are very unique and fanciful creatures. These mythical animals are fit symbols of uniqueness. And their singular, sharp horns represent the potential danger of unique experiences.

The terms *Unicorniks* and *Unikonics* are interchangeable.

In a sense, we spend much of our lives chasing unicorns. That's because the pursuit of happiness involves seeking and finding unique experiences.

The unicorns of lore are elusive and difficult to hunt. One never knows when or where they may appear. And when they do appear, they are sometimes camouflaged and hard to recognize.

And they're even harder to hold onto. A unique experience cannot remain unique for very long. Sooner or later it grows old and fades away. Just like a unicorn disappearing into a forest.

So stay alert. Learn the habits of the unicorn, and learn how to quickly recognize these one-horned creatures. Their horns have sharp tips, so be careful! But miss no opportunity to bag your game. Catch them as often as you can.

And then you will get the most life out of life.

More information on *Unikonics* can be found at my *Chasing Unicorns* website: www.Unicorniks.com.

GLOSSARY

Awareness A tiny point of consciousness. The soul or spirit. It moves at lightning-fast speed, and scans a hundred billion unikons per second. It can be focused, so that it repeatedly shifts back to the same unikons, over and over again.

Death Sameness. Pain. $\text{Death}=\text{Sameness}=\text{Pain}$.

Focus The shifting of awareness repeatedly back to the same unikons, over and over again. Focus can be voluntary or involuntary. Pain tends to result when focus is involuntary.

Formula of Being A formula for doing nothing. The most reliable formula for happiness. However it is not 100% reliable.

Gift Tool A method for building trust, by treating requests we receive from others as wonderful gifts, and by also treating the requests we make of others as wonderful gifts. The gift is in the request, and not necessarily in the fulfillment of the request. To make this tool work, one must make the effort to find one's sincerity.

Law of the Leven A psychological law that states that in one second of time, awareness detects one-hundred billion unikons. These unikons do not all have to be different. Some of them can be repeated unikons, that have been focused upon by awareness. One-hundred billion is a 1 followed by eleven zeroes. From the word *eleven* the word *leven* is derived.

Leven Moment One second of time, which is the amount of time required for awareness to scan one-hundred billion unikons. One-hundred billion is a fixed, unchangeable amount. There are no super-leven moments, nor sub-leven moments.

Life Change. Pleasure. $\text{Life}=\text{Change}=\text{Pleasure}$.

Negative Emotion An emotion that has significant potential to cause harm to oneself or others, when the emotion is taken to an extreme. Fear, anger, and sadness are examples of negative emotions.

Pain Occurs when awareness focuses excessively on unikons that have powerfully strong signals. The signals are so strong that focus can become involuntary. Familiarity with the

unikons increases rapidly, due to the excessive focus on them, while their uniqueness value decreases rapidly. This rapid decline in uniqueness results in pain.

Pleasure Occurs when awareness focuses on highly unique unikons. This focus is voluntary. But the more unique the unikons, and the louder the signal, the stronger the pull they will have upon awareness; and the harder it will be to break focus and resist pleasure.

Radiant Sphere of Joy The universe. All stimuli that exist in the universe, and all the unikons that arise from the stimuli. This can also refer to the portion of the universe that is in your immediate environment.

Unikon A fundamental substance of uniqueness. The smallest unit of uniqueness possible. A tiny ray of joy. Unikons arise from the stimuli that exist outside and inside our minds. A unikon is a psychological substance, and not a material substance.

Unikonics The subject of how uniqueness from unikons relates to the production of pleasure and pain.

Unicorniks A term that's interchangeable with the term *Unikonics*. It uses unicorns to symbolize uniqueness, and compares chasing unicorns to the hunt for unique experiences.

Uniqueness A measure of the amount of change that has occurred.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR,

TIPPY GNU

The best education is a self-education. But formal education can be useful too, now and then. Like when you want to convince someone that you're smarter than you really are. To that end, I hold a baccalaureate from Regents College (now Excelsior College), University of the State of New York, where I majored in Psychology and Sociology.

I received my degree in 1998. But instead of going on to graduate school and becoming a psychologist, I continued my career as a letter carrier and union steward. The pay was better.

I applied my knowledge of psychology toward protecting myself and others from abusive postal managers. It didn't help much. Not without some good old-fashioned street fighting, to go along with it. As a union steward, I gouged eyes and kicked balls when I had to, but used diplomacy whenever I could. And this kept those cocksuckers barely at bay, like circling sharks, until such time as I was able to retire.

I'm now enjoying a peaceful, low-stress retirement, and all those postal managers can suck my dick.

I'm married to a dog-lover, and she is married to her dogs. We sleep in separate beds and bedrooms, because of the dogs. But somehow we can't stop loving each other. Same-bed sleeping is overrated. I think it's the cause of many divorces.

I've spent more than half my life braving the elements of the Mojave Desert. I've been chased by rapacious roadrunners, gored by a horny toad, and single-handedly fended off a pride of hungry ant lions. I wage constant battles keeping coon-tailed rattlers from raiding my trash cans. I chum for chuckwallas during flash-flood season, and sustain myself through droughts by chewing the fruit of the prickly pear, and spitting out the thorns.

I find the time to write whenever nature leaves me alone.

I've been writing since my high school days, when I attended a creative writing class. Day after day, assignment after assignment, I tortured my creative writing teacher with nonsensical short stories that deviated far from the assignments' guidelines. I figured, you can't be creative if you stay within a box.

She didn't figure it that way though, and always docked my grades. Even after she kind of indirectly and grudgingly told me I had a talent for writing. Or maybe I imagined she said that. But it didn't matter. You see, talent won't get you good grades. Doing as you're told, and acting normal, is what it takes to win recognition from authorities.

But talent or no, I continued to write. At one time I wrote for fun and profit. But when I found that, like good grades, there wasn't much profit, I decided to just write for fun. It's simpler that way, and it frustrates the IRS. And that's why this book is free.

You can read other ex gratia scrivenings of mine at my blog, www.unicorniks.com.

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