

Book Summary

SHAKE BEFORE USE: A Basic Guide For How Life Works By Penelope Morcillo

Life can get complicated, but understanding how life works doesn't have to be. It is an adventurous journey, full of ups and downs, and twists in between, some of which can really bring us down and cause us to feel lost, disappointed, hurt, resentful or angry. But, the good news is that being able to instantly recognize and navigate life's bumps and challenges along the way can make all the difference in one's sense of fulfillment, happiness and overall well-being. And the best part of that: **We** can create our own path forward. We just have to be taught how to do so.

It is why this book, ***Shake Before Use***, is so timely and so needed.

As explained in the book, life is composed of moments and experiences, and yet little do we realize just how much they are defined by our own perceptions, interpretations and responses. This is largely because most of us are not taught growing up how to be in tune with our own thoughts, feelings, emotions and behaviors. We are neither encouraged nor empowered to make mistakes. We do not have the freedom to create our own life path that might be contrary to those of others. Instead, we are conditioned to adhere to both a societal and educational system of rigid rules, policies and procedures. We're typically taught to *react* before we plan, and *do* before we think, and often from a base of fear of punishment instead of a motivation of love.

And over time, we subconsciously learn to compartmentalize our feelings and our actions. We isolate certain parts of our personality in order to please or influence others, not realizing we're essentially hiding other aspects of ourselves. We suppress our own emotions, passions and uniqueness in order to conform to what we're told is expected of us. In doing so, we mute our own voice. We lose our power... and ultimately, our self-identity.

Without deliberately taking time and effort to look within us and how we impact those around us, we become lost in terms of our motivations, passions, relationships, and even our zest for life. This inability to be truly conscious of our entire being—mind, body and soul—prevents us from fully receiving all the

benefits, intimate relationships and love that life can offer. We start to feel stuck. Lost. Powerless.

I know, because I used to feel exactly that same way.

So, I found a solution, and it is one of empowerment. Improving our life depends on us opening our eyes and our mind to the role we play in the world around us. The more we consciously learn from our experiences (good AND bad), the more we can grow mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually. The more enlightened we are, the more powerful we become. When we realize that we can be in control of our own lives, instead of believing that life's situations control us, we move towards a better and more meaningful life.

In order to learn, though, we must first recognize and reflect on those experiences and opportunities. It is a conscious decision, one we must train ourselves to make every day. And so, this book, *Shake Before Use*, provides a way to do just that: to help all of us live and learn consciously.

Finding the Light

This book was inspired by my own story. After suffering through years of feeling lost about my purpose in life and experiencing the severe pain of guilt, resentment and regret, I began a journey of self-discovery – one that eventually showed me there was a better way. And that way was a path forward towards enlightenment and empowerment, always with the common thread of seeking higher levels of consciousness. I learned how to recognize and interpret my thoughts, feelings and behaviors, so that I could positively change them. I had to look for them, listen to them. After all, one cannot change what one cannot see.

It was a personal journey, and over time, I began to understand the causes of why I felt and behaved the way I did—and why I had suffered so much. I learned how to connect most of life's dots and eventually discover (and pursue!) my overall meaning and purpose.

And you can, too.

This book provides a simple and practical method that enables anybody to live consciously in order to enjoy a more pleasant and satisfying life full of happiness, love, peace and serenity. The principles and real-life experiences set forth are

designed to present both an educational framework as well as a spiritual one in order to empower and inspire all of us – mind, body and soul.

The Starting Point – Get Ready to Climb!

The most important awareness for anybody to have when starting this journey towards developing our minds is recognizing a metaphorical structure called the “Pyramid of Consciousness” or POC. It was developed as a result of observation, experimentation and analysis of the process to increase consciousness, and it is the basis for understanding all the principles and learning exercises laid out in the book.

Think of the POC as a series of life levels stacked on each other, starting from the beginner base up to the most advanced step at the top. The structure represents the different states of consciousness (from ignorance to eventual enlightenment) where one can identify his level of self-development. The goal then is to ascend the POC. The higher up the pyramid, the more insight gained about how life works – and the greater likelihood to feel better, independent of situations or circumstance.

This book walks readers through each level and provides insight and tips for how to ‘pass’ one level and move up to the next.

Understanding Our Motivations

As we become more conscious individuals, it is important to also recognize our motivations for why we think or behave in certain ways. This book identifies the two primary motivations: love and fear. They are polar opposites from each other, and they are each very influential in how we interact with the world around us.

Part of us becoming more enlightened individuals is being able to identify the consequences and responses of living in either love or fear. It means being honest with ourselves and asking hard questions about what motivates us. It also means understanding why we currently think and behave the way we do – and the role that our childhood and education system played in that. Gaining insight into how and why these motivations affected our lives over the years will help us to flip our lens and set goals for self-improvement.

This book includes practical lessons for enabling us to clarify and better understand which behaviors lead us to love, such as supporting others' personal growth, or towards fear, such as criticizing or sabotaging others. It reveals the powerful influence of factors such as one's pride and ego, for it is often one's internal struggles that can be the most challenging to overcome.

To live consciously includes being able to improve our ability of introspection and asking, as explained in this book, three main questions: *What, Why, and What For*. By learning how to observe, analyze, discern and reflect, we will gain more wisdom and be better able to comprehend the law of cause and effect. We will see more clearly how our thoughts and actions not only influence our relationships with others, but define our view of ourselves.

The goal of this book: to enlighten and empower you to live purposely and move from fear to love so that you can daily experience the benefits of living a happier, more fulfilling life – on your own terms and in your own way.

The More You Practice, the More You Learn and Grow

Progression and metamorphosis come through practice, and so interweaved into this book are principles and techniques that are based on the POC and that each correspond to the evolutionary phases of the person. It will challenge us to ask difficult questions, reassess our current attitudes and behaviors, and explore and reflect on parts of ourselves that we have long overlooked or dismissed.

The teachings in this book will guide you in being able to answer questions like:

- *How do I feel in this difficult moment?*
- *How has my life path been so far?*
- *Do I feel that I've found what I am looking for? Or, am I still searching for something – and, if so, what is that something?*
- *Knowing what I know now, how can I then help others?*

As you learn to ascend the POC, you will find yourself beginning to accept and even embrace all parts of you so that you can truly (and consistently) be your authentic self. The tools and techniques presented in this book will help you shed the excess layers of yourself that prevented you from blossoming into the person you were meant to be.

Over time—and with focused effort, hard work and a lot of determination and perseverance—you will discover how to integrate your mind, body and soul so that you can ultimately create a better version of yourself. This will unlock your true potential. And just like a Phoenix, you will rise from the ashes into your stronger self and experience a rebirth of both mind and body, as well as a reinvigoration for life.