

Reviewed by Nancy Eichhorn

Drew Gerald kindly sent me a reviewer's copy of his book, *Why You're Still Stuck: How to Break Through and Awaken to Your True Self*, way too long ago. I started to read it and appreciated what he had to say but the depth of the detail was too much for me in my then current emotional state. I realize the content was designed for just such moments, but I didn't have the wherewithal to confront the internal intensity and take care of my mom's rapidly declining health.

Drew writes on the front jacket:

"If you're confused and frustrated despite all you know and achieved, or how much you've worked on yourself, this book offers 18 unconventional approaches that reveal how you got stuck, how to finally break through, and awaken to your True Self."

His words mirrored my experience of myself at that time. I did make my way through the book, slowly. Because I didn't do all of the exercises, I will speak to the presentation and materials available for readers. I can honestly say I recommend this book, and I don't take my recommendation lightly. If I don't think a book contributes to our literature, if I find the writing outlandish or boring, I simply say nothing. I truly appreciated Drew's book and his approach to helping people first look at themselves with an understanding of where they are and how they got there. And then the extensive tools offered to transform past patterns into healthier ways of being.

The book is divided into two sections: How You Got Here and Moving Forward. He focuses on the stories we tell ourselves starting with his own. He shares his vulnerabilities and his failed attempts to improve himself and his life. He draws parallels and connects his experiences to those readers might be having such as why we're here reading this book and how we might gain from his knowledge. He is clear that he isn't offering an easy fix, he sets the stage for challenges that will come and support he offers to move toward them and through them.

I appreciated his perspective and his request that readers progress through the text in sequence: chapter 1 to chapter 2 and so forth. He is creating an inner pathway with concepts building on one another. He also recommends taking time to absorb and reflect on the practices/exercises.

Being a writer and knowing how stories impact our lives, I resonated with his work. He talks about archetypal stories and the manifestations within our personal stories, the interpretations we make, and how we weave in specific details and memories to substantiate our beliefs.





He addresses what he means by “stuck”. He writes: “You’re stuck because you decided that’s what’s happening. Being stuck is only one perception. You are the one that defines it as ‘Stuck’. You labeled it, gave it a name, made it mean something.”

Adding in a Buddhist tone, he notes that “much of our suffering comes from our added meanings and projections that we superimpose upon what’s real” (pg. 15).

Stopping the stories doesn’t negate their existence, but it does examine what is real and what is not. It’s one step toward looking at what is fact, what is interpretation, what is assumption. Readers learn to see what is there without judgment, exaggeration, distortion, dramatization and more. Within our stories, our feelings arise from a bodily sense. Learning to leave one’s head (thoughts about feelings and projections) and sit with one’s bodily experience offers an avenue for change. It’s not simple, however, as sitting in one’s silence can be a trigger for people who are addicted to the ‘noise’ in their head: all the fantasies and inflated ideas that work us into a stupor. Basically, our stories exist because we keep telling them. When we keep the past alive, we can’t see what’s happening in the present moment.

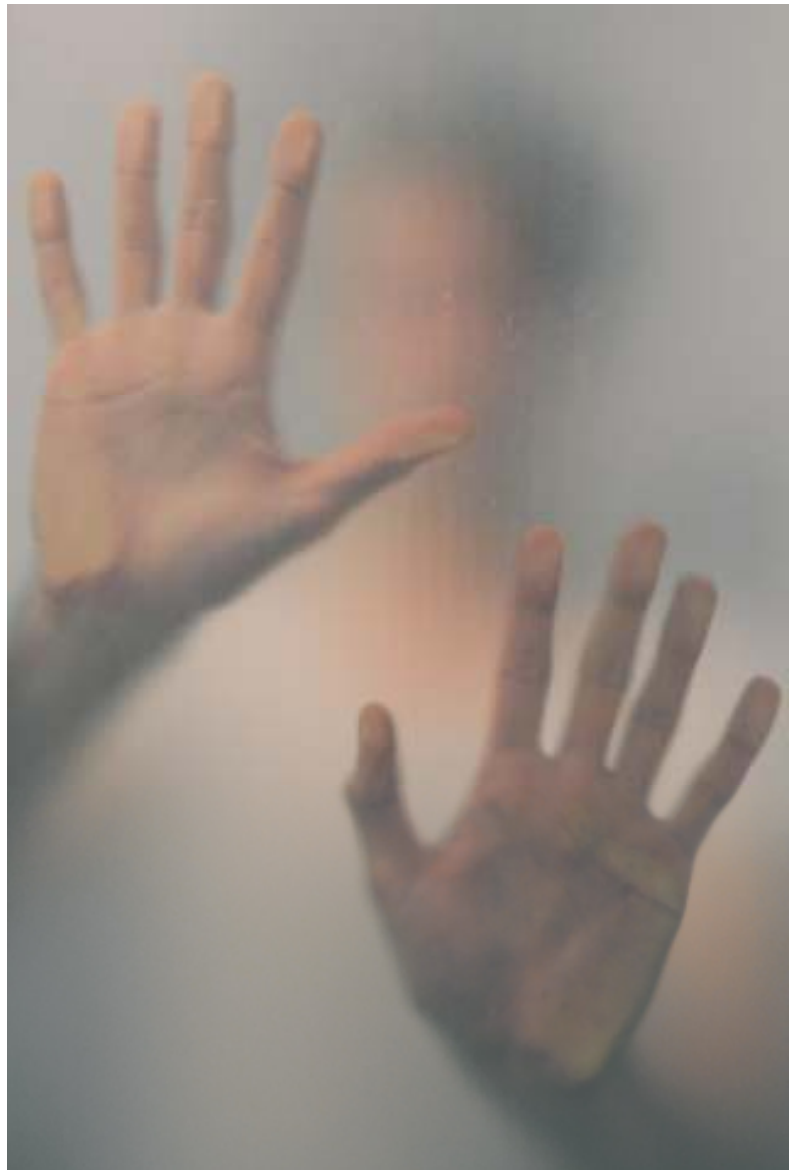
Early in the book, Drew offers a hierarchy of change (pg. 28):

1. Identity: Who I am
2. Feeling: How I feel
3. Belief: What is true
4. Attitude: Where I orient
5. Behavior: What I do

But he's clear that change isn't about seeking some alternative being or fixing something that is broken. Looking for a solution implies we have a problem and identifying with a problem becomes limiting in itself. He wants readers to feel their way rather than think their way to change. He even offers a new look at narcissism, helping readers to love their image and move from armoring and lacking to regain a relationship with their true self via a spiritual path.

Giving up, falling into a victim trap, blaming and so forth keeps our past stories alive. Drew is clear, "If you cannot accept that you are responsible for your life and what becomes of it, you will struggle" (pg. 114).

As you move through each chapter, I suggest taking time to journal your responses to the questions he poses and do the exercises. Once you have a sense of what has been, you can create a vision for



what you want in the here and now. Life can change simply by changing your story with awareness, self-compassion, and acceptance.

### **A Personal Aside**

My story was filled with an overarching tone of poor me. I mired myself in resentment and focused on all what was negative. I was stuck. Then I listened to a dear lifelong friend for three hours as she raged about her caretaking role with her elderly parents. I realized in those moments how fortunate, how richly blessed I was. While she lived with antagonism, anger, and attacks, I was surrounded with love, care, concern. Sure, it's not easy living with elderly parents with health concerns, with childhood stories rooted in the foundation of relationships that are not always happy, but the truth is that once I looked at my situation from a loving perspective my entire being shifted. My poor me dissipated and lucky me took over. Everything altered in that moment as if I were the Grinch and my heart swelled five times larger that day. The feeling remains. A new story started in that moment, and it is filled with all that is positive and fulfilling, with hope and faith, with patience and perseverance.



## In Conclusion

There is much to write about Drew's book. I offer this more general review to perhaps entice readers to check out his book for themselves. There's clearly material here for everyone to experience and explore.



**Drew Gerald** ([drewgerald.com](http://drewgerald.com)) is an entrepreneur, author, and director/founder at the Center for Cinesomatic Development ([cinesomatics.org](http://cinesomatics.org)), a healing technology leading the world in cinematic movement and diagnostics and graduate-level consciousness studies. He holds workshops internationally integrating embodiment, spirituality, video, shadow work, trauma therapy and feeling-based awareness.

In his early career, Drew coded a particle and physics engine by the age of

18, used by top Fortune 100 companies over the 7 years of his software business.

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