

CODE TO JOY

The Four-Step Solution to
Unlocking Your Natural
State of Happiness

George Pratt, Ph.D., and Peter Lambrou, Ph.D.
with John David Mann



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FOREWORD

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY HAD its share of medical miracles. I should know. When you've survived a heart attack, had quintuple bypass surgery, and you're still going strong a quarter-century later, it gives you a pretty healthy appreciation for modern medicine.

Still, there are some aspects of the human condition medicine can't touch. Or at least it couldn't until now. Modern medicine has made us a lot healthier—but what about *happier*? That may be where the frontier of medicine lies in this still young century. And one of the undisputed masters of that new frontier is a clinical psychologist named George Pratt.

The first time I met Dr. Pratt he was a guest on *Larry King Live*, talking about a fascinating approach to healing our emotions and creating lasting improvements in our productivity and sense of fulfillment.

“Whether it's an unresolved hurt, persistent low self-esteem, or vague sense of anxious unease,” said Dr. Pratt, “most of us struggle with some version of what we call *the fog of distress*. It clouds our lives, interfering with our relationships, our careers, even our health. And no matter how many hours you spend on the couch, talking it through just doesn't always do it.”

Why not?

“Because there's typically a disconnect,” he explained, “between what we logically know about ourselves and the place in the brain where our emotions live. Sometimes you just can't get there from here. You have to find alternative ways to get that information to click.”

Alternative ways like what? Like *energy psychology*.

If you've never heard the term before, you're not alone. Neither had I, before that show. But in the years to come, you and I will be hearing about it plenty. It refers to innovative techniques that affect the body's energy systems, almost like a 60,000-mile tune-up of the thoughts and emotions. Using these techniques, as my distinguished guest explained it, you can clear out the past traumas and events that created those disconnects in the first place. The result? It's something like what happens when a fresh wind blows away the clouds: *the sun comes out*.

"Actually," he added, "it's a pretty easy thing to do. And it works."

Dr. Pratt has helped pro golfers and ballplayers improve their game, jilted young men and women get over heartbreak, estranged couples get their groove back. He has helped people get past the trauma of terrible accidents, restart faltering careers, recover lost self-confidence, and move past irrational fears.

He has even helped one talk show host I know—me.

Even before we had him on the show that first time, I knew a little bit about the good doctor. He had worked with two people on the *Larry King Live* staff, and they had gotten fabulous results from those sessions. Soon I had him on as a guest again, and this time he talked about "creating your own joy."

Now I was *really* intrigued.

We set up a time when he could give me a private demonstration of the approach you're about to explore in this book. So we'd have something to work with, I described an emotional issue in my own life. What he did with it in the fifteen minutes we spent together blew my mind. To say it was impressive would be a crime of understatement. It was *remarkable*. When he says it's a simple and easy process, he's not kidding. When he says *it works*, he's not kidding there either.

George Pratt is a true modern-day healer, and what he and his colleague, Dr. Peter Lambrou, have created in the pages you're about to read is a brilliant formula for tapping into our highest potential. I predict it will change many people's lives for the better.

Including yours.

Whatever is going on in your life, whatever is keeping you from being as successful, as productive, as flat-out *joyful* as you'd like to be, there's a path that will take you there. I know, because I've experienced it firsthand.

Larry King



INTRODUCTION

Stefanie's Question

Something is not right.

—Miss Clavel, in the middle of the night, in *Madeline*

A FEW YEARS AGO a woman named Stefanie came to our office seeking treatment. In the course of our first visit, she asked us a question she had been trying to answer for decades. It's a question millions of people have asked throughout history. Maybe you have asked it yourself.

Stefanie's history, we soon learned, was a rags-to-riches success story. Growing up in a poor family, she took a job in her teens as an office assistant for an advertising company. Working her way up through the ranks, she eventually reached the top, so that by her mid-forties she had become CEO and majority owner of the firm. Stefanie also had a rich personal life. A kind and generous woman, she was active in the community where she lived with her husband, proud parents of two healthy, thriving kids.

In fact, Stefanie appeared to have been living a charmed life in every way—except for one thing: she was deeply unhappy.

Stefanie's unhappiness was practically tangible. When she entered the room, it was as if a dark cloud entered with her. As she began describing her situation, it became clear that this dark cloud followed her into every corner of her life.

By all accounts she was a great mother, but she didn't *feel* like a great mother. She also felt deeply guilty about the collapse of a previous marriage many years earlier, and that guilt hovered over her like the gloom of an overcast sky. Her health was affected, too: now in her fifties, Stefanie was having severe stomach and digestive problems and had recently undergone back surgery for a bad disc. Despite all her successes, that dark cloud had also cast its shadow over her professional world. After a series of management mishaps, Stefanie's advertising company had recently slipped into bankruptcy.

For no apparent reason, Stefanie's life was unraveling.

"I've seen psychiatrists here in California," she said, "and in New York, and in London. I've been on every antidepressant. I've read all the books and articles about mood issues. I've read everything and tried everything, but that unhappiness still persists—and I don't know why. Everyone tells me I have nothing to complain about and everything to be grateful for. And I know they're right. But knowing that doesn't make it better."

And then Stefanie asked The Question:

"Why aren't I happy?"

Over the course of our sixty years of combined clinical practice, we have heard thousands of variations of Stefanie's question, from thousands of people:

Why am I anxious? nervous? insecure? always worried? Why can't I seem to find or sustain a fulfilling relationship? find work I enjoy? relax when I am at home with my family? Why do I have this irrational fear of crowds . . . of men . . . of women . . . of elevators . . . of food . . . of closed spaces . . . of open spaces . . . of being alone . . . of being with others? Why can't I get over that breakup? my compulsive behavior? my challenges with money? my feeling that I'm a fraud?

In a million different versions, Stefanie's question echoes throughout our society and within virtually everyone we know. You probably have your own version.

We are the healthiest, best nourished, and longest-living generation in history. By all rights, we ought to be the happiest, most purposeful, productive, and fulfilled generation in history, too. But for some reason, we're not.

Why not?

It's a puzzle we've been pursuing for decades—and the answer turns out to have something to do with how water turns into fog.

IMAGINE YOU ARE STANDING just outside your home, surrounded by a dense fog, so thick you can't see the other side of the street in front of you. You look to the right, then to the left, but you cannot see more than fifty feet in any direction. You are surrounded.

How much water do you suppose it takes to create that blanket of fog that has completely isolated you from your world?

Before you read on, think about this for a moment. Don't worry if you're not good at math or have no background in physics. Just take a commonsense guess. How much water do you think it took to create this fog that surrounds you?

Now, are you ready for the answer? *A few ounces.* The total volume of water in a blanket of fog one acre around and one meter deep would not quite fill an ordinary drinking glass.

How is this possible? First the water evaporates, and the resulting vapor then condenses into minuscule droplets that permeate the air. In that one-acre block of fog, one drinking glass's worth of water disperses as some *400 billion tiny droplets* suspended in the air, creating an impenetrable cloak that shuts out light and makes you shiver.

This is exactly what happens with certain painful or difficult experiences.

Human beings are remarkably adaptable. Most of the time, when negative events occur, we are able to learn from them, shrug them off, and go on with our lives. The experience simply evaporates, leaving us

a bit older and wiser. But not always. Sometimes, especially when we are very young, we have experiences that we cannot shake. Even if they seem insignificant, no more substantial than a glass of water, when these upsetting experiences evaporate, they then condense into billions of droplets of anger, fear, self-doubt, guilt, and other negative feelings, surrounding us with a suffocating blanket that suffuses every aspect of our lives for years to come.

We call this *the fog of distress*.

Typically, this vague sense of unease parks itself in the background, like the annoying hum of a refrigerator or air conditioner we have learned to block out from our conscious awareness. But whether we are aware of it or not, it pervades our existence like an insistent headache, interfering with our ability to have healthy relationships, to perform to our potential at work, or to have lives that are anywhere near as fulfilling as they could be. Over the years, that background hum can sabotage our careers, friendships, marriages. Sometimes, as with Stefanie, even our physical health starts to suffer.

What is this fog made of? It is part feelings and part beliefs, partly subconscious and partly bioelectrical. You can think of it as an interference pattern, like radio static, typically set up in the early years of childhood, when our defenses were still fairly unformed and we hadn't yet developed our adult, logical ways of thinking. In other words, it lies outside the domain of our conscious, logical, verbal thought process. It is like a computer program running in the background, shading our thoughts and feelings, reactions and behaviors, our view of ourselves and of our world—all largely without our conscious awareness that it is even there.

For some, this fog of distress shows up in very distinct and specific ways, such as an unshakable fear or irrational anxiety, a problem in one particular area of life. For others, like Stefanie, it is more vague and generalized. That is, it's not that any one specific thing is so terribly wrong. It's more that *nothing is quite right*.

This is why Stefanie's efforts hadn't given her any relief. Psychothera-

peutic drugs, like antidepressants or anti-anxiety medications, cannot disperse that fog; at best, they can somewhat blunt its impact. Talking it over, whether with friends, counselors, or therapists, won't disperse it either, because it doesn't yield to reason and logical analysis. Trying to "talk it through" is like trying to reach an underwater cave by driving around the city streets. No matter how long you drive or which route you take, you won't get there. We have to get out of the car, get off the streets and into the water, and swim a different route altogether.

Fortunately, such a path exists. That's what this book is about.

THE WORST THING ABOUT this fog of distress is that it can be so persistent that we come to think of it as "normal." Yet it is *not* normal. We are designed with extraordinary capacities for growth, self-regulation, and self-healing. Our innate blueprint is beautifully crafted to produce a life of productivity, creativity, fulfillment, and joy. *We are meant to be happy.* Instinctively, we all know this, somewhere deep inside. We all know what it's like to feel a burst of delight. Every one of us has at some point in our lives experienced a sense of ecstatic joy, of euphoria at the sheer sensation of being alive.

Have you ever wondered why that experience has to be so rare and fleeting?

The answer is, *It doesn't.*

Our clinical experiences over the past few decades have shown us that it *is* possible to regain that sense of childlike delight at living and to live our lives to the fullest. As a result of this work, we have come to believe that we are all here on this earth to be happy and healthy, to experience joy, love, connection, and contribution. You *can* become a better, smarter, calmer, more focused, more powerful, and more deeply joyful *you*.

For that to happen, we need to address this pervasive fog of distress, understand where it comes from and how to dissipate it.

We have spent the past several decades unraveling this puzzle, using

the tools of conventional psychology along with new methods and insights from the latest findings at the cutting edge of a field of research and therapy called *energy psychology*. Since we began exploring this new frontier in the 1980s, in our practices, workshops, and public demonstrations, we have administered more than 45,000 individual treatments, with remarkable and consistently reliable results.

Over the past decade, we have adapted our approach into a simple protocol that you can administer yourself. It is powerfully simple and effective. We have seen thousands of people use it to clear away their own fog of distress.

This is exactly what happened with Stefanie. In that first visit, we took her through the four steps of this simple protocol:

Step 1: Identify. First, looking back through her life, we helped Stefanie identify an early painful event whose impact had cast its long shadow into her world, along with the self-limiting beliefs her young mind had formed as a result of that experience.

In chapter 1, we take you through a simple, step-by-step process for doing the same thing. (We also reveal what the event was that had such an impact on Stefanie.) In chapter 2, we look at the most common self-limiting beliefs and how to identify them in yourself. In chapter 3, we explore where these beliefs reside and why they have such a firm grip on us and learn a fascinating method for flushing them to the surface where we can deal with them.

Step 2: Clear. Next, we worked with Stefanie using special breathing exercises and neuromuscular techniques to realign her body's natural electrical polarity and help disperse that pervasive fog.

In chapter 4, we explore the body's *biofield* and what happens when our electrical polarities become reversed or disordered. We also learn

a set of techniques for realigning our electrical polarity, incorporating cognitive psychology together with elements from age-old disciplines, including yogic focus and acupressure.

Step 3: Repattern. Next, we helped Stefanie permanently release the self-limiting belief we identified in step 1 and then install an opposite, *empowering belief* into her being.

Chapter 5 explores the concept of *self-efficacy*, that is, the ability to step into the driver's seat and direct our own lives, together with fascinating new research findings on the power of mental imagery. In this chapter we also walk you through the *repattern* step, showing you how to create a new story for your life.

Step 4: Anchor. Finally, we showed Stefanie several powerful techniques for anchoring those new beliefs and thought patterns so they would become a permanent part of her and not simply a form of temporary relief.

In chapter 6 we show you how to complete this simple *anchoring* step and use it in the weeks and months ahead as a quick refresher, to ensure that the impact of the Four-Step Process stays with you. In chapter 7 we look at ways to use the Four-Step Process to unwrap further layers and tap into your full potential, and in chapter 8 we outline some additional simple, daily practices, drawn from our clinical experiences as well as the latest research, that will help you create the rich life you deserve.

These four steps—*identify, clear, repattern, anchor*—form the core of what you will learn in the pages of *Code to Joy*. In this book, we're going to show you what this process is, how and why it works, and how you can make it work for you.

By the time Stefanie left our office that day, the dark cloud was gone. That was several years ago. It has not returned.

