

Q and A for
Go within to Change Your Life: A Hidden Wisdom Workbook
for Personal Transformation
by Carl Greer, PhD, PsyD

Q: You've written three books—*Change Your Story*, *Change Your Life*; *Change the Story of Your Health*; and *The Necktie and the Jaguar*, which is both a memoir and a self-help book.

What inspired you to write a workbook?

A: I'm always asking readers of my books and my blogs to consider asking themselves questions that will help them gain insights, and some of my followers have asked if I were going to do a workbook. Also, I looked back at my blogs over the years and saw there were many I'd written that could be expanded upon and woven into a workbook. In *Go within to Change Your Life*, I explain some ideas I feel are important for anyone seeking change, like why we don't change when we feel sure we want to do so and we're trying to transform. I also offer journaling questions, but I combine them with hidden-wisdom techniques so readers can go within and access their hidden wisdom that lies beneath the awareness of the everyday mind. That combination of journaling questions with hidden-wisdom techniques and exercises can help readers overcome hidden obstacles blocking transformation.

You see, we can try to make changes to our habits but find ourselves falling back into the same old patterns. And while others might give us advice, often, it's our own hidden, inner wisdom that has the best advice for us. As a now-retired licensed clinical psychologist and Jungian analyst, I didn't tell people what to do even when they wanted advice. Instead, I guided them to find their own answers by checking in with themselves.

I believe the key to lasting transformation is to access wisdom that's hidden in our unconscious, away from the awareness of our everyday minds. That hidden, inner wisdom has much to teach us. What's more, we can not only gain insights from our hidden wisdom: We can also gain momentum for change.

Most of us have asked ourselves on occasion, "Why did I say that?" or "Why did I do that?" The answer is because some part of us wanted to. This workbook will help you identify and better understand these parts of yourself.

Q: How can we gain momentum for change when using hidden-wisdom techniques?

A: Carl Jung, one of the founders of psychoanalysis, believed that we all have access to what he called the collective unconscious, where archetypes reside. These archetypes can be thought of as themes with energy—so the warrior archetype has warrior energy, the healer archetype has healing energy, and so on. He believed, and Jungian analysts believe, that by engaging these archetypes, we can actually gain energy from them that will help us bring about the changes we seek. And we can learn from them, too, gaining insights. Finally, we can work with them so that we interact differently with these energies and they influence us in new ways that are helpful for us.

Q: How can we actually find it easier to change as a result of accessing our hidden wisdom that resides within us?

A: Using hidden-wisdom techniques, we can tap into an archetype, for example, the warrior energy. Then, we can work with it to fight for something we want instead of having it influence us negatively. It might be causing us to fight the part of ourselves that wants us to be honest

about our genuine desires. Now, it can be hard to admit to what we most want, especially when we feel pressure to want something else. So, we want to be open to working with any archetype we encounter. We might tap into childlike energy to lighten up and become more playful and creative so that we don't feel overwhelmed and scared. If we're afraid of playful, creative energy, and we think it will distract us from the serious business of life, we might be missing out on the ideas and insights that could come to us if we were to lighten up and work with the childlike archetypal energy.

Q: What are some of the ways we can access our hidden wisdom?

A: Many of us do it most nights because we dream. We encounter symbols, figures, and themes that might have important insights for us. We can also access our hidden wisdom using guided meditations or "journeys" that we do with the intent of having specific experiences, such as discovering something we need to know, something we need to let go of, and something we need to bring in if we're going to be able to bring about the transformation we seek. We can access our hidden wisdom through other ways, too, which I write about in the book.

Q: You write about a technique called dialoguing. What is it and how does it help us access our hidden wisdom?

A: Sometimes, what we encounter and engage using hidden-wisdom techniques like journeying or dreamwork gives us a clear insight that makes a big difference in our understanding of a problem that's troubling us. Often, that insight alone can lead to change. However, sometimes we want to know more. In *Go within to Change Your Life*, I teach readers how to use a dialoguing technique inspired by Jungian active imagination and gestalt therapy to ask questions of a figure

they encountered in a dream, a symbol that came to them in a guided meditation or journey, or their anxiety or anger, or the part of themselves that doesn't want to change. There are many things we can dialogue with. The dialogue can give us insights—and in the dialogue, we will ask a key question: *What insights do you have for me?* The dialogue can also help us feel an energetic exchange if we remember to ask two more key questions. The first is, *What do I need to let go of?* The second is, *What do I need to bring in?* We might actually feel ourselves letting go of our fear of change and bringing a transformative energy into the body, mind, and energy field. That energetic shift can help us achieve a breakthrough when we've been stuck.

Q. There are plenty of spaces to write answers to the questions and describe one's experiences using the hidden-wisdom techniques. There is also a way to write down your specific goals and hold yourself accountable. And unlike many workbooks, you even have places where people can draw their answers. Why is that?

A: Many people are more comfortable expressing themselves by drawing rather than writing, so I wanted to give them an opportunity to do that as they work their way through the book. And some of the exercises might result in them seeing something in their mind's eye, like a symbol—something they might want to draw. I also have an exercise where you pose a question to your hidden wisdom, draw a circle on the ground outdoors in a natural space, and then let your intuition guide you as you pick up nearby objects and place them in the circle, making a “nature painting.” When you feel it's finished, you can ponder its meaning. Why did you place certain items where you did? What drew you to those items? Also, it can be helpful to take a photo you tape into the book or to recreate the image on the page.

Q: You suggest readers try to identify hidden aspects of their story that are holding them back from what they want to experience. Can you give some examples of hidden aspects of their stories that people might want to change?

A: Your story might include, “Every time I take a risk, I fall flat on my face, so I’m going to play it safe.” You might want to change that to, “Sometimes, when I take risks, I fall flat on my face, but I always learn something valuable if I stop to assess what went wrong. Knowing this, I’m going to take more risks and be more adventurous.” You could create a specific goal around that, like, “Every Sunday, I’m going to identify two things I’d like to do that will get me out of my comfort zone, and by Saturday, I’ll have accomplished at least one of those.”

Or you might have a story that includes, “I don’t want to look at my past because it’ll be too painful, so I’ll just ignore it and not think about how it’s influencing me today.” You might want to change that to, “It’s uncomfortable to look at my past, but I also know that if I don’t, it will influence me in ways I’m not aware of. Since I’d like to be more in control of my life, I’m going to take time here and there to explore my past in ways that don’t frighten me so much that I avoid thinking back on what I’ve experienced.” You might work with some of the hidden wisdom exercises in the book to gain insights about your past but also energy to do that. As you see yourself making changes, you might find it’s less scary to look at your past.

Q: Speaking of finding things less scary, some of the “journeys “in this book, which are like guided visualizations, involve asking an imaginary guardian if this is a good time to take the journey and, if not, what they might do to make it a good time for journeying. Can you explain why the journey has this element?

A: The guardian is an imaginary being that represents the part of ourselves that wants to protect us from being hurt. Sometimes, what we discover as a result of accessing our inner wisdom makes us sad, angry, or even somewhat scared. By talking with the guardian and negotiating with it, you're actually talking with an aspect of yourself that wants you to gain insights and energy for transformation but not do it in a way that upsets you too much. So, a guardian might say you should let go of your judgmentalism so you can be open to what you learn about yourself. The guardian will probably reassure you that doing this will help you make the changes you want to make and keep you from being overwhelmed by shame if you find out something about yourself that isn't as pleasant as you might like.

Q: You also write about establishing habits. But if we can gain momentum for change using hidden-wisdom techniques, why do we need to know about how to establish new habits?

Won't it just happen automatically?

A: In my work as a licensed clinical psychologist and a Jungian analyst, I've seen that people can feel they've experienced a big inner shift but then become distracted. You may have had a deep spiritual experience that you felt was life-changing only to find a year later that your life hasn't changed all that much. I think it's essential not to become distracted and fall back into old habits, so I've drawn on what research can tell us about establishing new habits and letting go of old ones to help readers follow through with changes in how they think, feel, and act.

Q: What are some of the ways to make habits stick?

A: One is to give yourself flexibility. Aim for doing some walking for exercise daily but reward yourself if you do it at least five times during a week. Otherwise, you can feel like you're failing

to meet your goal and you might give up when you're actually doing quite well at achieving it. Another is to hook a habit onto a habit. If you're already exercising almost every day but you want to do ten minutes of meditation a day, you could set a goal to do it after your daily exercise. If you think you'll squeeze meditation into your day somewhere because it's only ten minutes, you're likely not to do it.

Throughout the workbook, I have places where you can set tangible, specific goals and return later to hold yourself accountable for meeting them.

Q: Where can readers learn more about *Go within to Change Your Life: A Hidden Wisdom Workbook for Personal Transformation*?

A: Readers can learn more on my website, CarlGreer.com, where they can sign up for my newsletter and click through links to follow me on Facebook and X. They can also learn more on the Amazon or Barnes and Noble page for *Go within to Change Your Life*.

Carl Greer, PhD, PsyD, is a retired clinical psychologist and Jungian analyst, a businessman, and a shamanic practitioner, author, and philanthropist, funding over 60 charities and more than 2,000 past and current Greer scholars. He has taught at the C.G. Jung Institute of Chicago and been on staff at the Replogle Center for Counseling and Well-Being. His new book is *Go Within to Change Your Life: A Hidden Wisdom Workbook for Personal Transformation*. Learn more at CarlGreer.com