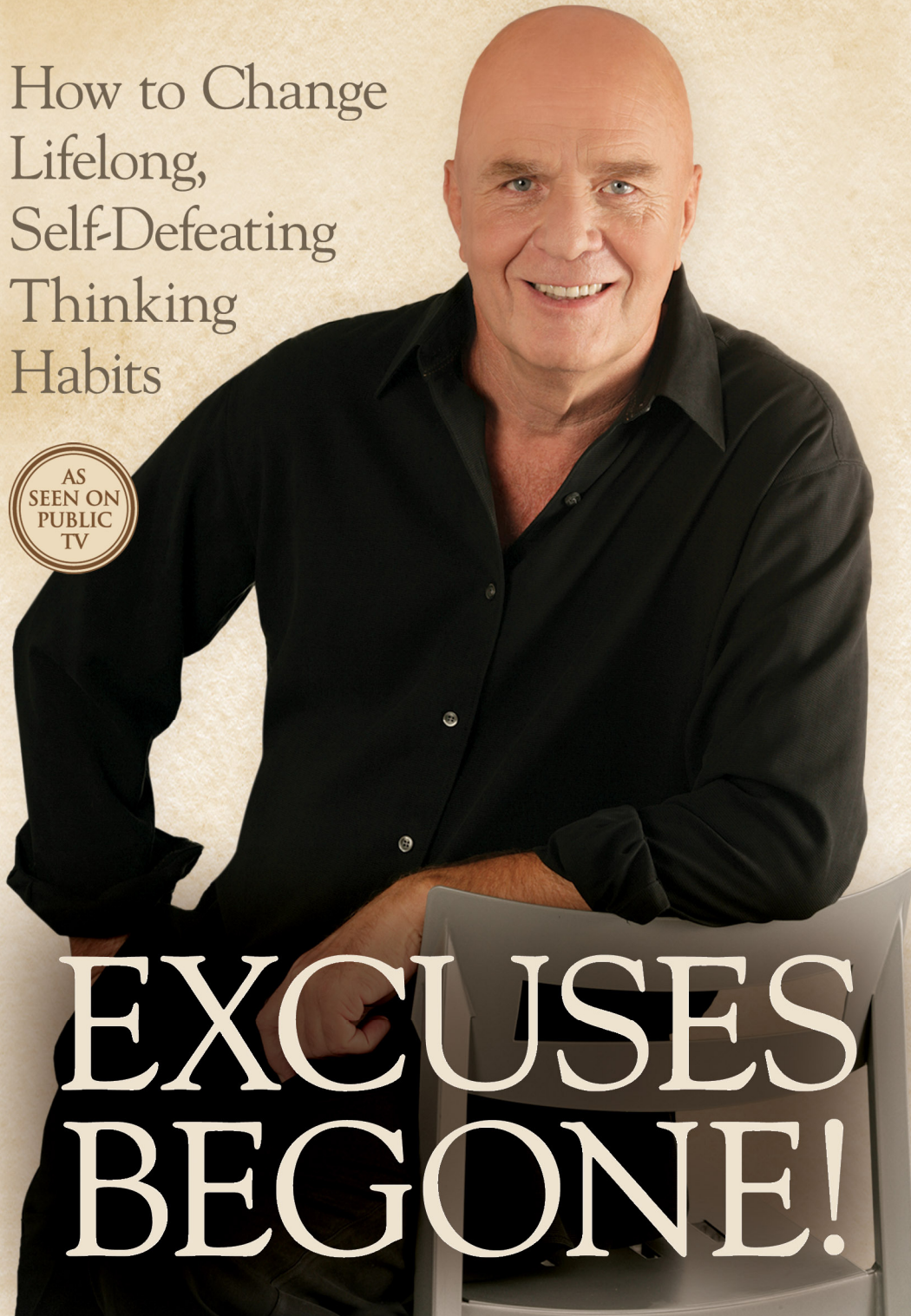


The #1 *New York Times* best-selling author of *Change Your Thoughts—Change Your Life*

DR. WAYNE W. DYER

How to Change  
Lifelong,  
Self-Defeating  
Thinking  
Habits



EXCUSES  
BEGONE!

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# EXCUSES BEGONE!

## How to Change Lifelong, Self-Defeating Thinking Habits

Dr. Wayne W. Dyer

*“I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor.”*

— from *Walden*, by Henry David Thoreau

There are four words in Thoreau’s quote that I want to highlight—*encouraging*, *unquestionable*, *elevate*, and *conscious*.

1. *Excuses Begone!* is *encouraging* you to challenge patterns and feel inspired by a newfound awareness of the life hidden beneath your excuses. Invite yourself to move out of established thought patterns, and realize that there is nothing standing in your way of living at your highest levels.

2. You have an *unquestionable* ability to eliminate excuses—they’ll get up and go when they’re revealed as the false beliefs that they are. There’s simply no question about this!

3. You *elevate* your life by taking responsibility for who you are and what you’re choosing to become. You can transcend the ordinary, mundane, and average with thoughts of greater joy and meaning; you can decide to elevate your life, rather than have it stagnate or deteriorate with excuses. Go beyond where you presently are.

4. You can bring your desires to consciousness by disconnecting the power from your subconscious so that it can’t continue to run your life. Your subconscious (habitual) mind is accessible, so unearth the excuses buried deep within you. Become *conscious!*

## *A Catalog of Some Common Excuses*

In my role as a counselor, teacher, and parent, I've heard many reasons that people use to explain an unhappy existence . . . and almost all of them inevitably fall into one huge category, which I call "excuses." This chapter will introduce you to 18 of the most commonly used ones, along with a brief commentary about each of them. This will give you a brief primer before you go on to learn the *Excuses Begone!* method that's detailed in the rest of the book.

Here [are 4 of the 18], in no particular order:

### **I Can't Afford It**

It's a rare day when I don't hear some variation of this excuse, including: "I didn't go to college because it was too expensive," "I haven't been able to travel because I never had the funds," and "I couldn't go into the business I wanted because I had to stay where I was and earn money to pay the bills." I call this belief lame and a cop-out, yet there seems to be almost universal agreement for its existence.

You originated in a world of abundance, which you unquestionably have the ability to access. Whenever you discourage yourself with thoughts that your financial situation is preventing anything from appearing, that's an excuse. If you instead decide to bring abundance awareness into your consciousness, you'll shift your thoughts from *I can't afford it* to *Whatever I need in the form of assistance to guide me in the direction of my life is not only available, but is on its way*. You'll then consciously watch for the necessary funding to show up, but you'll also be reminding yourself to believe that you have the ability to use abundance to elevate your life.

Encourage yourself by realizing that you have the capacity to create a space within you that's filled with peace and joy, an inner island of contentment that has nothing to do with money. Practice gratitude for the essentials of life, which are yours to enjoy virtually free of charge. These include air, water, fire, the sun, and the moon; the very ground you walk on; the continuous beating of your heart; the inhaling and exhaling of your lungs; your food digesting; your eyes and ears; and so on. Be utterly grateful for all that you have naturally, which is beyond the scope of what's "affordable." As that endeavor strengthens, assess what you'd truly like to do, where you'd like to live, and what creature comforts you desire.

When I made the decision to attend college after spending four years in the military, for instance, I knew in my heart that money wasn't going to be the thing that prevented me from reaching my goals. I understood the costs involved, and I didn't act on my fear of shortage or what I couldn't afford—I acted on my internal knowing that I indeed was going to attend the university. This knowing prompted me to investigate financial assistance from the government as a veteran, open a savings account designated for tuition and books, talk with the financial-aid people at the university, and make alternative plans to attend community college, if plan A were not to materialize. I had a certainty inside of me that the "I can't afford it" reasoning is an excuse that many people who aren't considered wealthy employ as a means for exonerating themselves when they need a rationalization for why they're stuck where they are in life.

Oscar Wilde made this wry observation in 1891: "There is only one class in the community that thinks more about money than the rich, and that is the poor. The poor can think of nothing else." I'd add that such thinking includes lamenting the fact that they'll *never* have money. I advise tossing out this meme, and instead rewiring thoughts to connect with what's *intended* to manifest, regardless of your current financial status.

Whatever you feel is your *dharma*, and no matter how hard that calling seems to be pulling you, if you maintain the belief that you can't manage to pull it off, I can assure you that you're right. To paraphrase Henry Ford, whether you believe you can afford to do a thing or not, you're right.

## **It Will Be Difficult**

While this may seem like a supportable reason, it's clearly an excuse designed to discourage you. If you're honest with yourself about the difficulty you're experiencing with addiction, obesity, depression, shyness, low self-esteem, loneliness, or any other life aspect, you'll recognize the *useless suffering* you're hanging on to. If it's going to be difficult anyway, why not opt for some *useful* suffering? Still, the fact is that you have absolutely no incontrovertible evidence that what you'd like to change is in fact going to be challenging. It's just as likely to be easy for you to change your thinking as it is to be hard.

Decades ago when I decided to give up smoking, for example, I used *Excuses Begone!* beliefs. It was encouraging for me to realize how much more difficult it was to smoke than not to smoke. The smoker part of me always had to have a pack of cigarettes and an ashtray within easy reach, carry matches or lighters, dispose of ashes, deal with smelly fingers and stained teeth, earn money to pay for this disgusting habit, be careful exhaling noxious fumes, cough up nicotine residue from my lungs, buy lighter fluid and flints, and on and on. The truth was that continuing to smoke was the real difficulty, and changing my habit involved one simple thing: not smoking.

This is true for virtually all of your habits. The belief that they're going to be hard to change is only a belief! Making something difficult in your mind before you even undertake the effort is an excuse. *Nothing in the world is difficult for those who set their mind to it*, as an ancient Taoist master concluded.

## **It Will Take a Long Time**

Is this a valid reason, or an excuse not to proceed? If you wish to elevate your life, it really doesn't matter how long it takes, does it? And this is particularly true when you're conscious that *you live your life, every single bit of it, in the present moment and only in the present moment*. All you ever get is now. Every thought occurs in the present moment, and every change has a defining moment. Often it takes something or someone outside of you to help you realize that.

An entertaining psychiatrist named Dr. Murray Banks does just that with the following little exchange between himself and a woman who has decided not to return to school because she'd be too old when she finished.

"How old would you be in five years if you got that degree by starting now?" he asks her.

"Forty-nine," she replies.

"And how old will you be in five years if you don't go back to school?"

"Forty-nine," she answers, with the bewildered confusion of becoming conscious of making an excuse for not elevating her life.

However long it took you to create any self-defeating habit, you did it all one day, one moment at a time. There's absolutely no proof that anything will take a long time, since even the idea of "a long time" is an illusion—there is only now. Make this awareness a part of your consciousness. The Tao Te Ching reinforces this in perhaps the most famous line in that masterful work: "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." Elevate or move on in your life, not by thinking big and in long time periods, but with consciousness focused on the present moment.

## **I'm Too Busy**

Prior to writing this excuse catalog, I invited visitors to my Website to e-mail me their excuses for not living at the highest levels. In essence, I was interested in the excuses *they* have used in their lives. "I'm too busy" easily topped the list.

If you're overextended, know that you've chosen to be in this position. All of the activities of your life, including those that take up huge portions of your time, are simply the result of the

choices you make. If your family responsibilities are problematic, you've opted to prioritize your life in this way. If your calendar is crammed, you've decided to live with a full schedule. If there are way too many small details that only you can handle, then this, again, is a choice you've made.

Surely, one of the major purposes of life is to be happy. If you're using the excuse that you're too busy to be happy, you've made a choice to be busy, and in the process, you've copped out on living your life on purpose. If you've substituted being busy for actively and happily fulfilling your destiny, you need to reexamine your priorities. Here is my mentor, Thoreau, on unexamined priorities: "Most men [or women] are engaged in business the greater part of their lives, because the soul abhors a vacuum, and they have not discovered any continuous employment for man's nobler faculties."

Don't let your soul languish in an unfulfilled vacuum. Instead, begin to examine just how you prioritize your life. All the details that occupy it keep you from a destiny that you're aware wants your attention. Contemplate these encouraging ideas to counter the "I'm too busy" excuse:

- *I know that I'm not a bad parent if I don't arrange my life to be available to chauffeur the children every day until they're adults.*
- *I'm allowed to say no to requests that keep me from having time to pursue my life purpose.*
- *There's no such thing as "a place for everything and everything in its place."*
- *There's no right way to do anything.*
- *I can have it my way because there are no absolute universal rules.*

It isn't my purpose to delineate all of the ways in which you can unload this excuse category. Practicing delegating, getting others to help out, and taking time for yourself are all possibilities as well. Thoreau is right in that there are nobler faculties you need to pay attention to, in addition to all of those other details that occupy your life. If you fear the part of your soul that's calling you to a higher place, then you'll probably continue to haul out this particular excuse.

Change this pattern by never saying or implying that you're too busy. Just drop it, and replace it with the following affirmation: *I intend to take time for myself to live the life that I came here to live, and to do it without ignoring my responsibilities as a parent, spouse, or employee.*

I learned this valuable technique from the great Vietnamese spiritual bodhisattva Thich Nhat Hanh in his book *Peace Is Every Step*. Recite these two lines anytime you can steal a few minutes from your daily schedule: "Breathing in, I calm my body. Breathing out, I smile." As Hanh writes: "'Breathing in, I calm my body.' Reciting this line is like drinking a glass of cool lemonade on a hot day—you can feel the coolness permeate your body. . . . 'Breathing out, I smile.' . . . Wearing a smile on your face is a sign that you are master of yourself." This simple exercise helps you prioritize your life with a sense of peace. Then you can look at precisely what it is you need to do in order to discard the busyness excuse.

There's a wonderful cartoon posted on the bulletin board of the yoga studio I frequent that summarizes the importance of saying "Begone!" to this popular excuse. Underneath the depiction of a doctor talking to an overweight patient, the caption reads: "What fits your busy schedule better, exercising 1 hour a day or being dead 24 hours a day?" That sums up my approach to this particular excuse. Practice elevating your thoughts every day, no matter how busy and important you are. Rather than insisting that you're too busy to exercise, for instance, think, *I exercise because I'm way too busy to take time for being sick.*

## **BACK COVER COPY**

From *Excuses Begone!*

*This paradigm works! . . . I've seen men and women give up a lifetime of being overweight or addicted to all manner of substances by simply applying the principles that are inherent in the Excuses Begone! approach to life. If you're truly serious about changing any long-established habits of thought that have led you to use excuses as your rationale for staying the same, then I encourage you to follow the practices presented in these pages.*

*The seven questions that make up this new set of beliefs are:*

- 1. Is it true?*
- 2. Where did the excuses come from?*
- 3. What's the payoff?*
- 4. What would my life look like if I couldn't use these excuses?*
- 5. Can I create a rational reason to change?*
- 6. Can I access universal cooperation in shedding old habits?*
- 7. How do I continuously reinforce this new way of being?*

*Closely—and honestly—examining these questions will lead you to shift into an excuse-free life!*

— Dr. Wayne W. Dyer

*For further reading, please look for **Excuses Begone! How to Change Lifelong, Self-Defeating Thinking Habits**, by Dr. Wayne W Dyer, at online bookstores, at bookstores nationwide, or at [www.hayhouse.com](http://www.hayhouse.com).*