

DO THE CLEARING

*A Step-by-Step Guide to Living a Happy Life
and Getting What You Want*

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*A Step-by-Step Guide to Living a Happy Life
and Getting What You Want*

BY

JOHN BENZ



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TULSA

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Many of my clients went out of their way to recount their experiences for this project, and their generosity has helped make this a better book. While there is tremendous value in these experiences for you, my reader, there is also tremendous value for my clients in moving on from them. With this in mind and to maintain anonymity, I've changed names and specific details for the client quotes and experiences. Any resemblance to persons living or deceased is entirely coincidental and unintentional.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE



The Clearing has two parts. Part 1 is Clearing your possessions. Part 2 is Clearing your residual thoughts. The parts follow a natural progression, so I recommend completing Part 1 before moving on to Part 2. You can read the entire book before you begin, or you can read Part 1 first, complete the steps for Clearing your possessions, and then read Part 2 and complete the steps for Clearing your residual thoughts. Whatever approach you use, the Clearing will be effective.

To Kara



CONTENTS



Introduction 1

PART I CLEARING YOUR POSSESSIONS



1. Finding the Secret to Weight Loss in My Clients' Homes 9

2. Doing What Your Possessions Are Telling You to Do 13

3. Introducing the Clearing to My Clients 17

4. Doing Part 1 of the Clearing with My Clients 23

5. No Matter What the Issue Is, It's About Power 29

6. Choosing from the Millions of Moments in Your Past 35

7. Your Possessions and the Current of Your Life 39

8. Resistance, Happiness, and the
 Craziness of Clearing Your Possessions 43

9. To Get What You Want, I Want You to Follow 49

10. The Seven Steps to Clearing Your Possessions 51

11. Outside Support Partners:
 Working with Others During Your Clearing 63

12. Being an Outside Support Partner 65

13. Working with an Outside Support Partner 67

14. Choosing Outside Support Partners 71

15. Clearing Your Possessions: The Do's 73

16. Clearing Your Possessions: The Don'ts 85

17. Q&A 101

18. Your Home After Your Clearing:
 Creating a House of Power 127

PART II CLEARING YOUR RESIDUAL THOUGHTS



19. Taking Care of What's Left Behind	137
20. The Seven Steps to Clearing Residual Thoughts	149
21. Doing the Seven Steps: Taking Action	189
22. Clearing Your Residual Thoughts: The Do's	233
23. Clearing Your Residual Thoughts: The Don'ts	249
24. Q&A	257
25. Your Clearing and After	287
26. Moving Forward, Setting Goals, and Taking Action	297
27. Conclusion	303

INTRODUCTION



I WENT TO my first Weight Watchers meeting when I was five years old. I can still picture it perfectly. Back then the center was set up like a church, with two rows of folding chairs and an aisle down the middle leading to an enormous old-fashioned scale. I remember the other women would smile and wave at me as my mother and I made our way to the front so she could weigh in. I'd wave back like I was a celebrity walking the red carpet. They loved it, and I guess in some way I did too. By the time I was ten, I had logged more hours there than most people do in a lifetime.

At home it was Diet Central. My mother would organize meetings and invite her friends over. Everyone sat in the living room, talking about their struggles and discussing what worked and what didn't. They went on different programs together, trying diet shakes and packaged meal plans. They bought books, watched videos, joined gyms, and attended seminars. Some would gain weight. Some would go up and down. Some would lose weight, go away for a while, and then come back twice as big as when they left.

It was always changing; the activities, the approaches, and the weight fluctuations never stopped. Outside of school, I was with my mother for much of the day, and for a good part of that time I was her sounding board, confidant, and partner during her daily pursuit of weight loss.

While I was growing up, this was all just a normal part of my life: diet centers and food stores, programs and plans, therapy and group meetings. That didn't change until I left for college.

I went to film school at NYU, and while I was there, my life was very different. I was going to concerts and galleries. I was out at night, dancing in the clubs, smoking joints in the back of taxis on the way to movies, and going to fashion shows and art openings with my friends. I did an internship at Universal Studios in Los Angeles one summer. I worked on films, and I was busy creating a portfolio of my paintings. At that point it seemed like dieting, weight loss, and that whole part of my life was over. Then one day during my senior year, a voice spoke to me.

I know how that sounds, and I spent some time debating whether even to mention it, but this is what happened: I was standing on the sidewalk near my dorm on the corner of 15th St. and Union Square, and I saw this woman. She was fifty-to-sixty pounds overweight, just like my mother had been for most of her life. I wasn't thinking about anything in particular while I was looking at her. I was just noticing her, and that's when the voice popped in my head and started talking to me. It told me I was going to write a book that would help people, especially people like her. Right out of the blue, just like that, and I thought it was the most ridiculous thing I'd ever heard. Forget for a moment that a voice was talking to me in my head; I wanted to paint and make films. Writing a book that was going to help people, especially with their weight, seemed insane.

I wasn't crazy. I knew the voice was my own, but it was different somehow. I guess that's why I never discussed it with anyone. That, and writing a book like this was just about the last thing I wanted to do. Even with the way I grew up, I never thought of it as a possibility. Still, the voice was talking like it was a done deal, and as crazy as I thought it was I remember agreeing to it. Before I was even conscious of the words forming in my mind, I heard them come out of my mouth: "OK, I'll do it, but not now."

It happened so quickly that it felt as if it were all going on without me. I was about to finish film school and there I was, committing to

write some kind of self-help book. What twenty-one-year-old has a voice telling him to do something like this anyway? What would I even write about if I did?

After that day I moved on with my life. I told myself that it was just me talking, that there was no voice, and the whole thing was silly. The years went by. I showed my art, had a design company in New York, and eventually opened a second office in Los Angeles. I played guitar and sang in a band that performed in the clubs downtown, and I was busy having fun with my life. I tried to forget about the book, and what had happened on the street that day, but it was always there in the back of my mind. Eventually I had to admit that this was what I thought about the most.

I like helping people with their problems. I knew that those who were struggling with their weight could have different lives and that making the changes they needed to make wasn't as awful as they might believe. From watching my mother and her friends all those years, I knew the torture they were going through. I knew that somehow I could help, and it was almost painful not to. Once I accepted what was really going on inside me, things began to fall into place.

I discovered a school about fifteen minutes away from where I lived in Los Angeles founded by Dr. John Kappas, a renowned therapist many would consider one of the fathers of hypnotherapy. They had a one-year clinical hypnotherapy program, and I was completely intrigued. I had no idea a school like this even existed. I signed up, started going to classes, and I loved it. The teachers, the students, the curriculum: I enjoyed every part, and it ended up being one of the best times in my life.

Dr. Kappas' techniques went well beyond hypnosis, and at school we learned all of them. We did dream interpretation and handwriting analysis. We studied Milton Ericson, Virginia Satir, Fritz Pearls, and others. Mornings and evenings, I watched hours of Dr. Kappas' taped therapy sessions. In the afternoons I attended classes and practiced what I learned with my classmates, and on the weekends I went to any seminar I could that would help me master

my new skills. By the end of the year I could hypnotize a room full of people in seconds. I could look at a sentence or two of handwriting and have a good idea of what was going on in someone's life, and using the skills I had developed through my many hours of practice and studying the masters, I could figure out the best way to help someone before any mention was even made of what was wrong.

Before I finished the program, I opened my office. Not long after, the Clearing came to me, and my life changed forever.

More than twenty years have passed since the day I heard that voice, and when I look back now I can see how my life experiences all have led to this book. The voice was right about me. I did want to help. I think I've felt that way ever since I was a little kid going to those Weight Watchers meetings. I wanted an answer, and I knew that I would never feel like I had done what I was meant to do until I found it.

This book is about weight loss, but it's also about something bigger. In the chapters that follow, you will see that the Clearing doesn't affect just one thing; it affects everything. By helping to free you from the negative thoughts and feelings from your past that are hindering your life today, the Clearing can create changes in a very short period of time, not only with your weight, but in all areas of your life.

The realm of the Clearing is a wonderful world, and you are standing at its threshold. I believe in what it can do. I've seen it many times, and I've felt it for myself. You are about to discover what you're truly capable of and just how powerful you actually are. Understand that the Clearing should not be entered into lightly. If you commit to this, you are going to have to accept some changes. You will have to accept being thinner and happier than you've ever been in your life. You will have to accept your relationships working out and getting promotions at work. You will have to accept the respect and love of your family and friends, feeling good about yourself, and having a truly wonderful life. If you devote yourself to the Clearing and make it a part of how you live each day, there will be no way around these changes.

I decided to call this book *Do the Clearing* because the Clearing is about taking action. It's not about talking about changing or contemplating the idea of change. By doing the Clearing, you actually are changing. You have the choice to lie down and accept the things that are happening in your life that you wish were different or to recognize the power inside of you to have what you want and to move toward it. You have to do something different for your life to be different. Welcome to something different.

PART I

CLEARING YOUR POSSESSIONS



FINDING THE SECRET TO WEIGHT LOSS IN MY CLIENTS' HOMES



FROM THE START, people came to see me for help with a full range of issues, but no matter what those issues were, almost everyone wanted to lose weight. What I was doing at the time to help my clients shed their extra pounds was working, but it was harder and slower than I felt it had to be, and I was frustrated. I wanted more for my clients. I wanted bigger changes. I wanted them to feel confident and in full command of their bodies, and I was determined to find a way to make that happen.

I knew something was missing, and whatever it was, I started to think that I wasn't going to find it in my office. There, I was taking people out of their lives and out of their normal environment. While this worked great for some issues, for weight loss it didn't seem to fit. I knew I had to do something different. I got the idea to meet with my clients in their homes, and that's when things really started to change.

At first, my plan was to talk in the kitchen. I thought that if we spoke where they prepared their food, my clients would remember the things we talked about when it came time to eat. That was the idea at least, but as it turns out many times during these sessions we never actually made it to the kitchen. In fact, things ended up going in a very different direction.

When I arrived for these appointments, my clients usually offered to show me around. As we stopped off in various rooms, they

would tell me about their homes, their families, their lives, and they would also tell me about their possessions: a crystal vase from a favorite aunt, a Persian rug bought at an estate sale in Santa Barbara, a bureau from the in-laws, a porcelain weenie dog from a neighbor who was transferred to Colorado.

As they spoke about their things, I started to notice some of my clients were having strong emotional reactions. I remember one client bursting into tears when I asked about a jewelry box she had on her nightstand. Another appeared shaken after I complimented a sculpture that stood on top of her fireplace mantel. Some showed genuine anger when they recalled the memories their possessions inspired. Even items as innocuous and mundane as a coffee mug or an old blanket seemed to hold tremendous emotional weight.

I followed my instincts to hold back on my plans to talk about food in the kitchen, and as I walked through my clients' homes, I took my time, I began asking more questions, and when I did, I started to realize that not only were my clients keeping possessions in their homes that were making them feel bad, but that these possessions all called to mind situations where like with their weight, they felt powerless.

A book from a business associate reminded one client of a missed financial opportunity. An old jacket brought on feelings of regret and sadness over a recent divorce. A family photo triggered memories of a close relative who had died of diabetes. As my clients spoke about their things, I noticed that their facial expressions mirrored those they had back at my office when they told me about the issues they were having in their lives. I started to wonder: Could my clients' possessions be influencing them to feel powerless? Could the things they kept in their homes be contributing to an image they had of themselves that was holding them back? Is this why my clients thought they couldn't do what others with half their skills and experience could? Were they coming up short because of who their possessions were telling them they were?

From what I saw, it made sense. The emotions matched up. Incredible as it seemed, the feelings my clients were experiencing

while talking to me about their possessions were the same feelings they had come to see me about, the same feelings they wanted my help removing from their lives.

The more homes I went into, the more I saw that it was true. Whether it was experiences from childhood, events that took place in high school or at work, my clients were surrounding themselves with reminders of the past that were keeping them from having what they wanted and being happy. Not all of their possessions were causing them problems. Some possessions helped them and made them feel good. But others reinforced feelings of powerlessness that were holding them back. My clients felt powerless to make more money, to get better jobs, to lose weight, to move on from bad relationships, or to simply be happy. Inside their homes, I found they had possessions that were influencing them to feel this way. This wasn't something I noticed every once in a while — this was something I saw happening in every home I went into.

DOING WHAT YOUR POSSESSIONS ARE TELLING YOU TO DO



HOW COULD MY clients' possessions have such a strong influence? After all, they weren't necessarily looking at their things and then saying to themselves, "I'm overweight. I don't get things done. I'm not someone with a lot of money. This is as far as I'm going to go in life." But if the memories associated with their possessions reinforced that identity, that's exactly what they thought and what ultimately became true.

My clients' possessions spoke to them. They were influencing them to move in certain directions and sometimes leading them to take actions they didn't really want to take. Some of their possessions told them they would give up at work when things got hard or that they were someone who would have a bunch of crummy relationships with people who would treat them badly. Some possessions told them they would always be forty pounds overweight and fail every time they tried to do something about it. Some kept them from reaching their goals or from even having any goals to reach for in the first place.

In my clients' homes, I discovered that possessions are more than just things and that the moments of the past they keep alive are helping to shape your identity. *Your possessions have power because they tell you who you are, how you should feel, and what you can do. They do this with the memories, thoughts, and emotions that are attached to them.*

It can be hard to imagine that your possessions could be playing such an important role in your life or that they could actually be causing problems for you, but they can and they are. The things you see in your home every day, or simply know are there, influence your thoughts and feelings. You may tell yourself that they are just things: just a sofa, a beach towel, a picture, or a scarf, just some odds and ends, but the truth is, they are much more.

Right now, in your closets, under your couches, and on your shelves, there could be possessions that are telling you that you don't have what it takes and that having a better life just isn't in the cards for you. You could have objects that are reinforcing an identity that limits you, that doesn't reflect who you truly are or what you're really capable of doing.

Maybe you're not quite sure what I'm talking about. Maybe you're looking around at what you have in your home right now and thinking, "What's the big deal? How could these things be having any impact on my life?"

Well, maybe for instance you have an old magazine rack sitting next to your sofa. Maybe it was a wedding gift from your first marriage, and the relationship ended badly. Maybe you bought it when you lived in a place you didn't like or at a time in your life when things weren't going so well. Maybe you broke your toe when you rammed your foot into it one night while you were feeling around in the dark for the light switch, and now when you see it, a part of your mind thinks "pain, injury, hidden danger, accident, fear."

Remembering breaking your toe or being reminded of your marriage falling apart or some other event from your past that wasn't particularly positive doesn't give you the kinds of feelings that you want influencing you, and neither do associations like pain and fear. While your magazine rack may not make you feel so depressed you want to jump off a bridge, if it has negative memories and emotions attached to it, it's steering you toward those things and away from how you want to feel. It's influencing the way you see yourself, and this ends up influencing the things you do in your life.

If you haven't already, go ahead and look around your home. Pick out a possession. What memories come to you when you think about it? Who gave it to you? Where did you get it? What was going on in your life at the time? How do those memories and associations make you feel? Who were you as a person when you first owned this possession, and is this truly who you are now?

The things in my clients' homes were influencing them, just as what you have in your home is influencing you right now. Without the reminders of the parts of the past that are slowing you down, I believe that you can lose weight, you can achieve your goals, and you can have a different life. Thanks to some very brave clients, I discovered that what I believe is true.

*One of my greatest joys is helping people with their Clearings.
If you are interested in scheduling a Clearing,
please contact me through my website at
www.johnbenz.com*

