



Take Back *Your Self!*

A GUIDED JOURNEY TO
RECLAIM WHO YOU ARE
AND HOW YOU LIVE

Chapter 1 Preview

BY KERRY PASTINE

AUTHOR OF
KNOW THYSELF



Take Back Your Self: **Chapter 1 Preview**

BY KERRY PASTINE

Take Back Your Self

A Guided Journey to Reclaim Who You Are and How You Live

Written by Kerry Pastine

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For you.

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CHAPTER 1

Discover *Your Self!* 8

Chapter One helps you to address whatever you are struggling with today. Your feelings become your guide, giving you insight into the thoughts that brought you to where you are right now. You will discover what has been running the show in your past and present life and how your thoughts, fears and beliefs have created outcomes, good and bad.

CHAPTER 2

Understand *Your Self!* 29

Chapter Two gives you a greater awareness about the kind of thoughts and mental self-talk that you have learned throughout your life, how this affects you and how you can redesign the way you see yourself. You will discover that you choose your thoughts. These thoughts determine how you feel, behave and the outcomes that you create in your life.

CHAPTER 3

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Chapter Three allows you to look at your story from childhood to adulthood. You will learn to love your story by acknowledging all of the challenges that you have overcome and the insights and capabilities that you have gained in your life. Being mindful of your accomplishments allows you to let go of past mistakes that you hold against yourself. Forgiveness gives way to healing.

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Chapter Four provides insight into achieving balance in your life gently and effectively. You will learn how to tend to the powerful garden that is your life. Through simple daily nurturing, you learn how to pull the weeds and water the flowers. Within weeks you will begin to see new growth. You will also gain a new respect for tending your own garden and allowing others to tend to theirs.

CHAPTER 5

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CHAPTER 6

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Chapter Six marks the very exciting transition into planning and designing the life of your dreams. The work that you have done in this book proves that you are in charge of the life that you want. Only you can create that life and the outcomes and happiness that you seek. You are now ready to create everything that you want in your life and you get to have fun while you do it!

Journal 124

Welcome home

Take Back *Your Self!*



Introduction

I see the journey to self as the ticket to freedom. The freedom to finally get to be who you really are without fear of what anyone else thinks of you. The freedom from your past, where those fears and insecurities were formed. And, of course, the freedom to dream and manifest as much as you want, whenever you want. As a child, I assumed that all adults knew exactly what they were doing in life. When I grew up, I realized that **most adults are actually longing for a life on their terms.**

I have done a lot of work to find my own ideas, my own beliefs, and ultimately how I want to live my life. Part of that journey was challenging what I was taught and discovering my own path. **Every great journey involves getting lost and finding your way again.** When you lose your way, you feel the chaos within. Knowing yourself takes time. When you make time for yourself, you learn to trust yourself. **You find your way back to the path.**



Your time is now.

Benny Pastore

My Oldest Friend: The Journal

In the beginning, there was always one thing for me: pen and paper. Before social media, before coaching, music, and painting. Before Lisbon. Pen and paper were the place where I met myself again and again. In joy, rage, confusion, I found clarity for the next step by writing. Journaling became my place of truth, tenderness, and transformation. It also became my compass. That's why this book was born, why it's still here, and why it is more important than ever.

We're All a Little Shaken

Our collective nervous system is worn thin. Too many of us are running on fear, comparison, disconnection, and performance. Our identities are shaped by algorithms, our choices by pressure, and our voices? Too often buried. This book needed to return not because the message changed: the urgency has.

Life, Interrupted (Again and Again)

After the initial release of *Know Thyself*, my band hit the road, consuming all of me. Then my daughter became seriously ill, and my world wanted to stop but couldn't. To cope, I began painting. It quickly grew into passion and massive expression. She healed, the music continued, the political ground shook, my mother left the planet, and COVID turned everything upside down. While life got louder, I turned again to pen and paper, staying connected to myself without letting the world shut me down. Nothing has been the same.

Initiation in Portugal

Through my journaling during the pandemic, I discovered that I wanted a major life change. I followed my instinct and my husband and I moved abroad. New country. New soil. New chapter. What looked like a fresh start became a full-blown initiation. I fell into the grip of a narcissist, immigration was brutal, and money hemorrhaged. My nervous system unraveled. I couldn't sleep, I cried daily, I was depressed. Then came chronic fatigue, skin problems, and panic attacks. I told myself it was a speed bump, that I'd bounce

back quickly. I didn't. I felt exploited over and over, as if every childhood trigger was pounding at my door and I was standing on my last nerve.

Community Through Mutual Resilience

As I walked Lisbon's streets, I saw people navigating the same storms of inequality and uncertainty. I heard the stories, but I also saw resilience. I wanted to connect, to learn this difficult language, to belong. But I couldn't. Not yet.

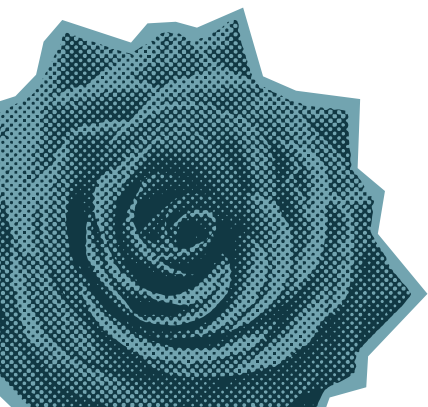
Through the Fire

Alone with my thoughts, I questioned why a lifetime of inner work wasn't working now. What I'd forgotten was that it was. The difference was the size of the challenge. Bigger growth asks for bigger fire. Transformation is born from pain. This is how revolution begins.

Now, looking back, I see that my healing came because I never abandoned myself. I journaled daily. I listened to my thoughts and feelings. I let fear play out in my body and walked myself through the fire with compassion and trust. Had I stopped showing up, I might not have found my way through. Today, I am gentler with my heart, more at peace with life, and more attuned to myself than ever.

You Are Exactly Where You Need To Be

We need to take ourselves back. Back to our truth, wisdom, and power. For those of you who are new, welcome. If you are repeating the work (because that is what it takes), welcome back. Let's take back what belongs to us. Our **self**.



CHAPTER 1

Discover Your Self

You Are Ready

You are here because you have outgrown something that no longer gives you what you need.

You are seeking change. Change asks you to release what you've grown comfortable with, like a child giving up a blanket. It also requires learning and developing new habits. Like learning to play a musical instrument, there is an initial phase of frustration and letting go of ego, but working through it leads to a lifetime of beautiful music.

You are here and reading this because **you are ready.**

My deepest desire is for you to know all of who you truly are: the beautiful dichotomy that merges your light and dark sides, accessing the love, fear, inspiration, aspirations, and pain from your past to unlock the wisdom to design your future.

Discovering self is the first step. Only then will your best self naturally spill into other parts of your life for you and others to enjoy. **Knowing yourself is your responsibility and your contribution to the planet.**

I have written the book I always searched for but never found. Give yourself plenty of time to journal with the questions at your own pace. I hope this book becomes a reference on rough days, giving you tools to discover your true self and leaving you enlightened and empowered.

It's time to design your life.



You Are Here

You are exactly where you are supposed to be. Even if you are struggling with something and you want to feel better. That's where you are. Stay here, be brave and write down the first words that enter your mind when you read these questions. There are no wrong answers. **Just pick up the pen and write.**

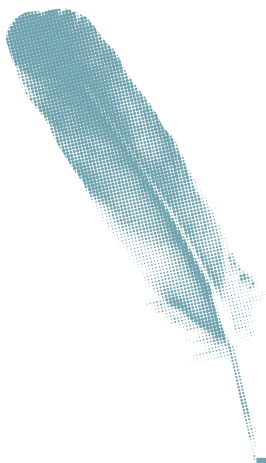
What are you struggling with today? Commit your struggle to words.

Name it without fixing it. Be real. It's not poetry. This is where it begins.

Examples: "I'm tired of pretending I'm okay." / "I'm overwhelmed with uncertainty about everything."

How does your struggle make you feel emotionally?

Let the words come through your heart, not your head. No judgment. Just name it. Examples: "I feel anxious and behind." / "I feel invisible, like no one really sees me."



IT'S OK

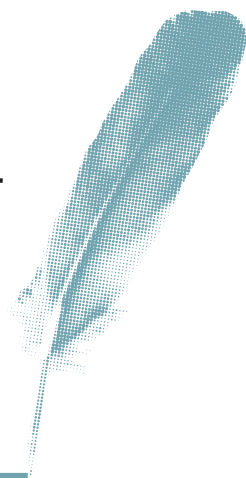
It's OK to feel negative right now. Negative emotions are the gateway to solutions.

How do these emotions make you feel physically?

Where do you feel it in your body? What changes when the feelings show up? Examples: "I feel heat rise in my face and neck, like my body is screaming even if I'm silent." / "My limbs go heavy, and all I want to do is crawl back into bed."

Emotions are what make you human. And perfectly imperfect.

The uniquely human ability to look at these emotions is a built-in compass, a course-correction tool that works almost instantly. It's just a matter of showing up for yourself, writing it down and taking a minute to spend time with what you wrote. **Observe through the pen.**



Who do you become when you are in a rough emotional place?

Notice your tendencies. This is where clarity unfolds.

Examples: “I become a people-pleaser” / “I become cold and unreachable” / “I become a fixer, even when I’m falling apart.”



How do these emotions show up in your behavior?

What do you do — or stop doing — when these feelings take over? Examples: “I cancel plans, avoid eye contact, scroll for hours, lash out, or micromanage everything.”



Your body knows, it just needs quiet so you can tune in and listen.

In a world wired for quick-fixes, it’s easy to forget that your physical well-being is deeply connected to your emotional state. But the body knows as much (or more) than your mind and it’s always trying to speak to you.

Before reaching for a prescription or pushing through the pain, try pausing here. Write down your answers to the questions that follow. **Often, just naming what’s going on inside brings relief.**

Have you ever noticed your stomach tighten when you’re upset? Or the back pain, shallow breath, or headaches that show up on your hardest days? That is your body communicating important information to you. **Keep listening.**

IT'S OK

Acting out of control is just a byproduct of feeling out-of-control.

These might seem like strange questions at first, but the truth is:

- Who you are can shift radically depending on how you feel.
- We often call it a “mood,” as if that fully explains it. I believe it goes deeper than that.
- Pay attention to your feelings, you will see they are a doorway, a pattern, a signal.
- Your emotions shape your identity in the moment.
- And if you don’t catch it, your behavior starts writing the story for you.



Discover

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, leaving small margins at the top and bottom. There are no vertical margin lines, text, or other markings on the page.

Be Mindful

Running from one problem usually leads to more. Don't sweep your pain under the rug, you'll just trip over it later. And the fall? Always harder than the effort it takes to keep the room clean.

Swept Under the Rug

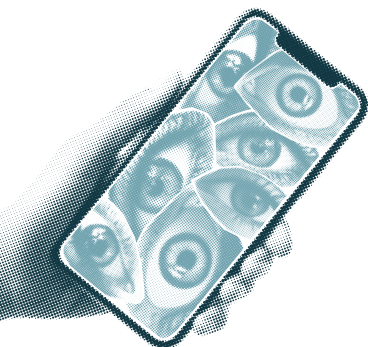
There's a domino effect that comes with unprocessed emotions. And the first instinct is usually to avoid them.

When you feel bad, it's easy to reach for a diversion:

- Overeat and feel momentarily full
- Oversleep and escape
- Drink too much and go numb.
- Scroll endlessly and lose time.

Pick Your Poison

Avoiding the feeling often feels easier than facing it. But is it really easier than sitting still, grabbing a pen, and getting honest? Only you can answer that.



Make a list of your top 3 diversions.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

”
**You can't
outrun what
you refuse
to face.**

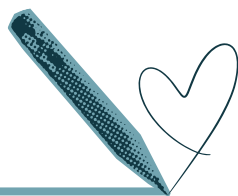
**But you can
reclaim your
power the
moment you
stop running.**



Diversions =
Distraction

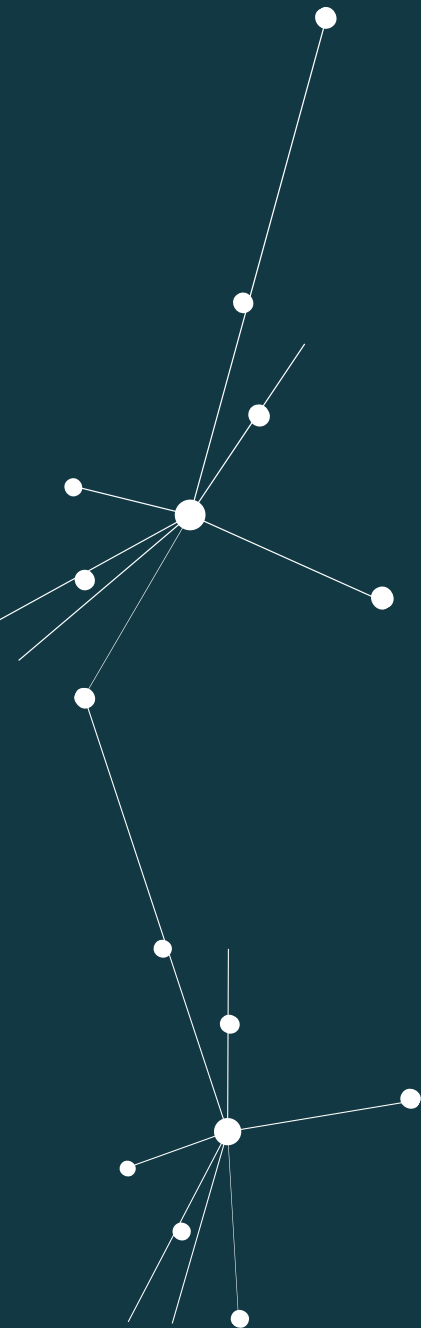
Diversions feel good at first, but quick fixes just leave you feeling worse. They train you to avoid your problems, not face them. That creates a cycle: **same emotions, no tools, more pain.**

How do you feel when you turn to your diversions?



The Good News

Your emotions are speaking. They're showing you what's not working. If you listen, they can become your greatest allies. Like a best friend, they're not here to shame you. They're here to guide you.



Connect the Dots

By facing your feelings instead of turning to a diversion, you create something real, a true connection with yourself and what you actually need.

When you let yourself pause, feel, and be still, something shifts. Your awareness sharpens. Insight rises. Answers begin to appear. Not from outside distractions, but directly from within. You're no longer ruled by old emotions. You're no longer reaching outside yourself to feel okay. **You're moving forward just by being honest with yourself.**

This is how healing begins. We often expect one big revelation. But healing actually happens by noticing small threads that run through your patterns. By naming what hurts, you untangle it. By seeing it clearly, you start to think clearly. You no longer need to control or avoid your feelings. You're connecting them, and coming home to yourself.

IT'S OK

You find clarity when you start connecting.

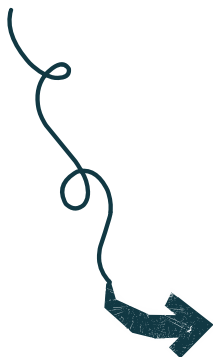
Sit With It

Sitting with your feelings isn't always easy. They don't arrive in perfect order. They don't always make sense. Sometimes they come fast, like a flood. Other times, they hide in the background until **something stirs them awake.**

But the moment you stop avoiding them and start writing them down, you begin to meet yourself in the most powerful way. You see patterns and threads. You hear truths. You reclaim clarity that was buried under noise. The process is very subtle. Slowly, piece by piece, breath by breath **you begin to come back to you.**

What are the excuses that keep you from sitting down with your feelings?

Examples: "I'm too busy." "I don't know where to start."
"It feels self-indulgent." "I'm afraid of what I'll find."



What scares you about connecting with yourself?

Examples: "I'm afraid I'll fall apart." "What if I've been wrong?" "I won't like what I see."



Ignoring yourself is a form of self-neglect. You deserve more.

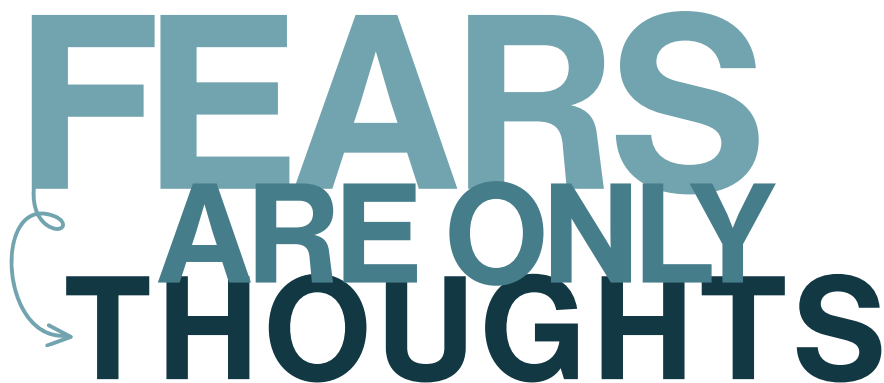
What's Running the Show?

"I am afraid." That simple statement is the root of human suffering. Fear. In all of my years of coaching and being coached, I have found that **fear is the reason that you seek help.**

Painful experiences from your past create fears that are meant to protect you from experiencing the pain again. When you burn yourself on a hot stove, you learn to not touch the hot stove again. But that doesn't mean that you won't ever cook again.

The same is true for emotional pain. If you have been hurt, rather than staying stuck and alone in the pain of your past, you now take inventory of the experience in order to redesign a new experience that allows you to love again. **Without connecting the fears, you will continue to repeat old painful experiences, never fulfilling your life.**

You now understand a very valuable concept. Fear. Whether real or not, fear can make you feel emotionally distraught, physically paralyzed and behaviorally inappropriate or childlike, even if you don't recognize it. These characteristics are not your true self and they can take over your life if left unchecked. **Luckily, fears are easy to spot** and by looking at them, you can easily determine the behaviors and outcomes that are not working for you.



FEARS
ARE ONLY
THOUGHTS

Flip the thoughts. Eliminate the fears.

Fear Starts Early

You were born into a world that taught you what to do and what to fear for your own survival. “Don’t touch the stove, you’ll get burned!” That’s real. That’s useful. **But not all fear is truth.** And not all the lessons you learned came with love or wisdom. **You got the childhood you got.**

The people who raised you, your parents, caregivers, and teachers were shaped by their own unhealed pasts. Maybe they taught you how to survive. But they also passed along their fears, rules, and beliefs. Some of them may still live inside you, even if they don’t belong to you.

The Origin of Fear

When we’re young, we’re taught with guilt, shame, or fear-based consequences. “Good girls don’t act like that.” Or, “If you fail, you’ll disappoint me.”

Eventually, that **fear takes on a life of its own**, even when there’s no threat. You second-guess yourself. You fear judgment. You shrink instead of speak. You wait for the worst to happen. And you wonder why you can’t sleep.

Is It Truthful?

Most of what you fear now isn’t actually fear. It’s unresolved shame. It’s outdated guilt. It’s a story from childhood still trying to protect you, even if it’s keeping you stuck. **Let’s go to the source.** This is a place to name it, face it and start freeing yourself. Without judgment, without performance. Just honest reflection.



Fear loses its power when you bring it into the light. Naming the old stories doesn’t make you weak, it makes you free. As you uncover these patterns, treat yourself with compassion. Even if you feel broken right now, just remember that you can grow beyond the limits that were handed to you when you were young.

Let Go So That You Can Move Forward

Guilt and shame are unhelpful emotions with no grounding in truth. Revisiting your past may reveal hidden fears, secrets, or realities that have kept you afraid or held back. You might also see that **those very fears are what stop you from returning to face them.**



Allowing yourself to face old fears empowers you as an adult, releasing the past and setting you free.

You can trust your emotional compass, so you should have no fear in filling in the blanks below. Just write down the first things that pop into your mind. You can come back to this section and revisit these questions as often as you like.

As a child, I learned to be afraid of:

At the time, these fears kept me from:

Be Mindful

You are not responsible for any negative conditioning that you received as a child. However, as an adult, you are totally responsible for changing it.

Right now, these fears are keeping me from:



This makes me feel _____ about myself:



Did I Say That?!

Take a look at your answers to the last set of questions. Some of them are pretty harsh, huh? The point of these prompts has been to reveal on paper, just how tough you can be on yourself. **The messages of self-doubt and shame you heard growing up often become the self-talk of adulthood.**

Imagine your inner self as a small child. Now imagine speaking to that child the same way you've been speaking to yourself. Unsettling, isn't it?

What would you like to say to her now?



The Friendship Within

You are your own closest ally. Your best friend. Your one constant companion. You wouldn't knowingly speak to a friend with the same harshness, would you? So why talk to yourself that way? **Let's take a closer look.**

What are some things you say to yourself that make you feel bad?

Examples: "I'm so stupid." "I'll never figure this out." "What's wrong with me?"

The Truth Is In Your Own Words

As you journal over the next few days, notice what you say to yourself. You might begin to see a pattern of negative self-talk. Once you see it, you can catch it. **When you catch it, you can flip it.**

IT'S OK

Children are naturally forgiving. And so is your inner child. The simple act of writing something down and re-reading it can be eye-opening.

How can you become more patient, accepting, and compassionate with yourself?

Example: “By speaking to myself like I would a dear friend.”

What is your new self-talk for this week?

Example: “I’m doing my best.” “I deserve kindness, too.” “It’s okay to not have it all figured out.”

How can you apply this new self-talk to different areas of your life?

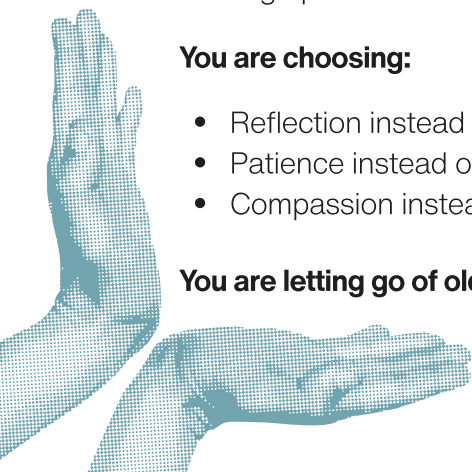
Example: “When I mess up at work, I’ll pause and speak kindly to myself instead of spiraling.”

What a beautiful gift you’ve given yourself. Like an attentive parent, you are showing up with love.

You are choosing:

- Reflection instead of reaction.
- Patience instead of punishment.
- Compassion instead of criticism.

You are letting go of old patterns and choosing a new way forward.





Your words can
wound, or they
can heal.

Every
thought
you
rewrite is
a doorway
back to
yourself.

Take Back *Yourself*

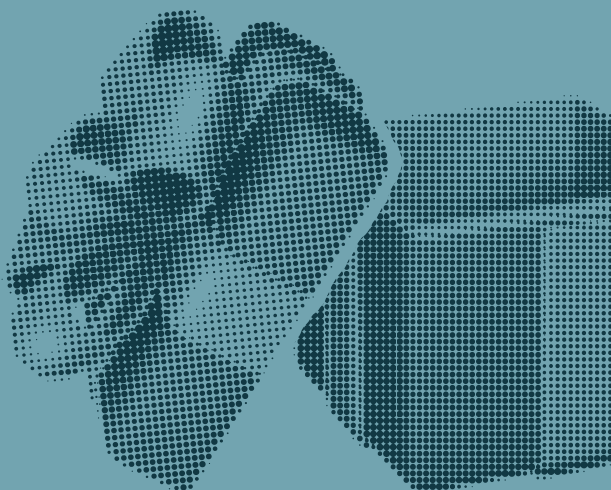
Discover

Take time to **design some new compassionate thoughts** for yourself.

[illegible]

What to walk away with

1. You are here, so be here.
2. Writing gives you clarity.
3. Emotions are messages. Listen.
4. Emotional health = physical health.
5. Diversions are self avoidance.
6. Your thoughts are designing your life.
7. Fears are only thoughts. Flip them.
8. Notice how you speak to your self.



What a great
start!

**You just did something most people avoid
for a lifetime.**

You looked at yourself. You sat with what's uncomfortable. You put words to feelings you've been carrying around like luggage you forgot to set down.

Chapter 1 opened one door. Five more are waiting.

In the pages ahead, you'll trace those feelings back to where they started. You'll meet the stories you've been telling yourself since childhood and learn to rewrite them. You'll look at your whole life and find power in places you thought only held pain. You'll learn to tend to yourself the way you'd tend to something you love. And you'll start building a life that actually fits who you are.

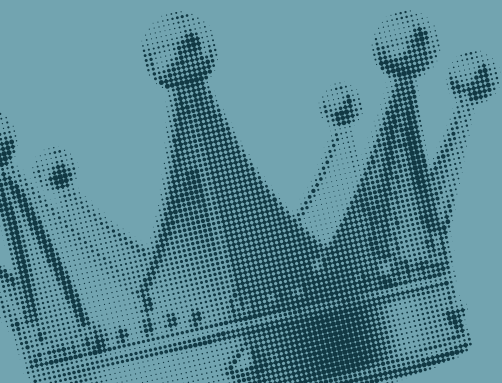
Understand your story. **Accept** it. **Nurture** what matters. **Be** who you are. **Design** a life that proves it.

This book will walk with you through all of it. Every chapter has the same honesty you just experienced, the same journaling prompts, the same space to do the real work. No filler. No fluff. Just you, a pen, and the kind of clarity that changes everything about how you move through the world.

You've already started. Keep going.

Get the full book at **KerryPastine.com**

With love,



Take Back *Yourself!*

BY KERRY PASTINE

A GUIDED JOURNEY TO
RECLAIM WHO YOU ARE
AND HOW YOU LIVE

Taking back your true self allows you to uncover the happiness, dreams and endless possibilities that everyone seeks, but rarely find. You hold the key.

Take Back Your Self is a guided journey to discovering the power that lies hidden within your own life story. The straightforward and interactive approach of this book allows you to explore your past, present, and future and lets your truth flow onto the written page one step at a time, one question at a time. Once you tap into your story, you will start to see immediate changes in your life, attitude, and behavior. You will discover the powerful energy of the truth, as only you can tell it. With that truth uncovered, you gain the clarity and confidence to shape a life that truly reflects who you are.

Design your life. It's time for you to **take it back!**

CHAPTER 1

Discover *Yourself!*

CHAPTER 2

Understand *Yourself!*

CHAPTER 3

Accept *Yourself!*

CHAPTER 4

Nurture *Yourself!*

CHAPTER 5

Be *Yourself!*

CHAPTER 6

Design *Yourself!*



Kerry Pastine is an artist, author, musician, and life guide who helps people quiet the noise, face their fears, and reclaim their power. Her journey, from fronting rock bands to exhibiting art internationally and creating the acclaimed **Take Back** journal series, proves bold reinvention is possible. She invites you to turn pain into wisdom, resistance into growth, and live unapologetically on your own terms.

FROM THE AUTHOR OF

KNOWTHYSELF

Buy the full book at KerryPastine.com