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## CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

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The big day was here. All morning Mrs. Green was bringing people through the oversized front doors. Each time she did, Jake's heart jumped as he wondered, with the enthusiasm of a child, who could it be? So far, every arrival was hired help for the big event...waiters and waitresses, musicians, dancers, artists.

This must have cost a couple of hundred thousand dollars, Jake thought, not sure if he was exaggerating to himself or not.

While watching the musicians carry in their equipment, Jake spotted Rico. The handsome man had a lot on his mind. He stood still and silent, slowly looking around. When he saw Jake, he walked over to him and asked him about Miss Annabelle.

"Hi Jake. Miss Annabelle and Mr. Melbourne are flying here from Australia; that's a long flight, and they'll be tired. When do they arrive?"

"Don't worry, sir—" Jake started to answer, but Rico put his hand up and told Jake to relax and call him Rico as always.

"Okay," Jake continued, taking a deep breath. "Miss Annabelle and Mr. Melbourne arrived yesterday in Philadelphia. They decided to stay there in a hotel to sleep off the jet lag. She told me that if she stayed here the first night, she'd stay up all night talking to you. And she wanted me to warn you

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that tonight she's staying here and that you'll be up all night visiting with her."

Rico laughed. He could not wait to see her again. He turned to walk away, then swung back around and said, "Last night I read the whole booklet *Miss Annabelle: The Beginning • The Reunion • The New Beginning*. I want you to know, I savored every line. I laughed; I cried, and I longed to be with these people again. You and Jasmine gave us a priceless gift. Every one of us involved with Miss Annabelle will feel the way I did last night reading your booklet. It's a treasure. Thank you."

Jake smiled. It was a powerful high to create a meaningful value for people of this caliber.

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At three o'clock Jake saw a dozen or so handsome men in black tuxedos line up on one side of the entryway and an equal number of beautiful women in black evening gowns line up on the other side of the entryway. They would escort the arrivals to the glass Reunion House.

Just past the entryway on the left, in the receiving room, gathered an ensemble of musicians with string instruments. They began playing Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*.

Jasmine squeezed Jake's arm. The college students never experienced anything like this before.

Then, all at once, it all began. In a space of fifteen minutes, nearly everyone arrived. The anticipation, then the sudden flurry of arrivals, reminded Jake of standing at the finish line of the Boston Marathon. The front door would open, and Mrs. Green would whisper a name to the gentleman in the tuxedo who, in turn, would turn around and loudly announce the arrival. He and one of the beautiful ladies would walk the arrivals to the back and outside again for a moment along a red carpet, under the magnificent arch and into the dreamland where Rico awaited them.

The first to arrive were Theodore and Cathy Winters. Jake was in awe of what filled his eyes. Here was the great Theodore Winters in person. He looked untouchable, radiating a power bigger than life. And on his arm was the most beautiful woman

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Jake had ever seen. Cathy, the little fat girl, had grown up to be an international supermodel. His power and her beauty mystified the room. Jake wondered, "Will I really talk to *them* tonight?"

As each arrival was announced, Jake mentally attached him or her to the child in Miss Annabelle's class. As he did this, he could see the innocence of the child still in the face of every one of these powerful people. Suddenly, there *she* was: Miss Annabelle. Jake could feel Jasmine shaking his arm gently, acknowledging the guest of honor. But he could not hear anything. He was wondering, "Does she look even more adorable in person now in her early 60s than she did in the photos he saw of her at Angie and Jessie's house taken twenty-seven years ago?" When her coat was removed, her bare shoulders and arms were small and defined. Her skin was supple and smooth above her breasts. She wore a white evening dress that women forty years younger would wear, but this petite body and beautiful face looked like a living Barbie doll. With one glance in her eyes as she walked by, Jake could feel mysteries and secrets that lay within, mysteries and secrets that she gave to her twelve little God-Men twenty-seven years ago. He wanted to see her longer so he followed Miss Annabelle and her handsome husband — known to the students as Mr. Melbourne — to the Reunion House.

The young man in the tuxedo and the young woman in the black dress walked them to the back while carrying their coats. Just before stepping outside to go to the Reunion House, the escorts placed Miss Annabelle's and Mr. Melbourne's coats back over their shoulders, and they stepped outside. Miss Annabelle gasped and looked up at the glowing message woven through the glass arch: *Thank You, Miss Annabelle!*

Inside, the six or seven former students who had already arrived were gathered together, with Rico standing in the middle. The young man in the tuxedo loudly announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to introduce to you: Mr. and Mrs. Melbourne!"

Everyone stopped and turned. Jake was glad he was witnessing this moment. Faces turned red and eyes turned glassy. No one moved for a moment, as though allowing their pasts to

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collide with their present. Rico finally walked from the center of the crowd toward his childhood inspiration, his eyes fixed on her.

"I'm Rico," he said quietly, "and I've missed you."

Miss Annabelle looked at Rico as a mother would look at her long-lost son. Time reversed. She could still see, in his eyes, the nine-year-old boy the very last time she saw him, that sad day before leaving for prison over twenty-six years ago...her little Rico bursting into tears, running over and hugging her, crying in her arms for one precious moment before turning and running to his bike and riding away, looking back, looking back at her for one last glance before losing her for years to come. *I can never forget that moment*, she realized; I thought it was the last time I'd ever see him. Now that she saw Rico as a man before her, reality hit her hard: *I never got to watch my precious children grow up.*

"Oh, Rico, I've missed you so much," the beautiful lioness said. She walked over and hugged him. When she started talking again, Jake noticed she was crying. "I've missed all of you so very much," she cried, "and I felt *so bad* about leaving you!" Jake felt an eruption of emotion inside when he looked around and saw Rico and the other former students fighting back tears.

Yet, today was proof of what Miss Annabelle had known back then when she left for Australia, the only reason she was able to leave: the new way of thinking, *Neothink*, was in them. She had planted the seed; today she witnessed how that seed had grown in her twelve students.

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After the initial shock was over and things settled down, dinner was served. After dinner, each former student, Miss Annabelle, Mr. Melbourne, Salinski, Jessie and Angie, and Jake were each planning to stand up and give a five-minute talk about what they were doing in their adult lives. Before the five-minute talks began, they had an hour to mingle.

Jake first met Debra Kirkland. He remembered her — she was the daughter of the parents who owned the two hamburger

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restaurants called Kirkland Burgers. Since then, she built the family hamburger business into the famous national fast-food chain called Debbie's French Fry City. As Debra said a few nice things to Jake, expressing her appreciation for bringing the class together again, Jake remembered how it all started twenty-seven years ago when she noticed that good french fries were addicting and were the number-one reason for repeat customers. She talked her parents into putting emphasis on the french fries. Her parents purchased two big, stainless steel state-of-the-art french fry deep fryers and, upon Debbie's insistence, put them right out in the open behind the counter. Those state-of-the-art deep fryers were always working because they guaranteed french fries hot, fresh out of the fryer. They cooked smaller quantities to keep that policy of serving only hot french fries fresh out of the fryer. In the small town of her parent's original restaurants, Debbie was able to easily monitor the frequency of repeat customers. She suggested to her parents the bold move of *giving away* the delicious french fries for free with every order of a hamburger and a drink. That strategy introduced the "addictive" fries to everyone who walked in, and the *free* fries gave those who liked the fries a subconscious tug to come back whenever they were deciding where to go for fast food. Her parents tried her idea, and they started the free french fries to coincide with the name change to Debbie's French Fry City. The profits soared. The two original restaurants became so profitable, her parents opened two more in Buffalo. ...To this day, over twenty-five years later, french fries were still free with any hamburger and drink at Debbie's French Fry City all across America.

Next, Jake met Jeremiah Jones, an attractive man with a baritone voice. He was articulate with an impressive vocabulary. Each statement he made seemed to have profound thought behind it.

Jeremiah orchestrated the fastest-growing church in the country called the Church of God-Man. But of course, Jake thought, I remember Jeremiah's piece in *Breakthrough News* written over twenty-six years ago. The underlying message of his church was based on Ian's scientific work about abundant conscious civilizations existing throughout the Universe, nearly

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all of which obsoleted conscious death. Jeremiah's Church rested on a scientifically based idea system *for living* versus a mystically based idea system *for dying*. He explained that the Church of God-Man, also referred to as the Church of Life, was the first and only church that viewed human death as an anomaly among the Civilization of the Universe. "People should not die," he told Jake, "but since we still do on Earth, we must lift ourselves to the next level of thinking that Mr. Melbourne calls Neothink. When enough people do, then the technology to achieve immortality will come quickly, and that is my motivation behind my Church."

His Church called for self-improvement, particularly for what it called "fully integrated honesty". Fully integrated honesty meant that within one's scope of knowledge, he or she act only with honesty. Jake remembered, from something he had heard while listening to the tapes of Miss Annabelle's lectures, that fully integrated honesty led to integrated thinking and puzzle-building Neothink.

The idea of pure honesty sounded easy enough, but Jeremiah explained that our minds constantly go through rationalizations and tricks in order to not be consistently honest with what is best for the individual. "The matrix of illusions we grow up in helps deflect our minds away from pure honesty," Jeremiah told Jake and Jasmine. "As we learn to detect and end those subtle dishonesties, we begin to see *what is* and can start building mental puzzles of Neothink to evolve toward the God-Man."

Recognizing the discipline such a church would put on the average person, Jake asked, "How did your church become the fastest growing church in the country?"

"The glue that holds this together," Jeremiah explained, "and causes new people to stay with us, is the extraordinary emphasis we put on business and social advantages. In fact, those *life advantages* are the secret why all religions are successful. The majority of people subconsciously attend church because of the personal and business advantages they get by networking with others. We honed in on and explicitly emphasized business and social advantages to outcompete other religions at their own game. In fact, we take those life advantages to the next level, which I'll explain in my little speech later."

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Jake could not wait for those five-minute speeches. Everywhere he turned here, he realized that something spectacular opened before him. In the middle of that thought, he turned around and listened to Robert Chapman talking to Natasha Stokov Kemp. "Oh yes," Jake quietly muttered, "this is Bobby and Nattie."

Bobby owned the international phenom called: Thank God It's Friday (TGIF) Employment Placement. Jake listened in fascination as Robert Chapman told how one person in thousands lives the life he or she was meant to live. Natasha agreed, saying she learned from her workshops that, of the thousands of different jobs that exist, one deepest motivational root exists in each person, making the odds thousands to one against a person living the life he or she was meant to live. As they talked, Robert and Natasha realized their businesses had great affinity. They could cross reference customers. She could refer her workshop attendees to Robert to land their dream jobs, and he could refer his clients to Natasha to find true love and complete the person they were meant to be.

Robert's specially trained counselors would get each person who comes to his company to uncover, through a series of techniques, what that person had always been drawn to, perhaps unknowingly. Natasha's workshop did something very similar. Jake listened in fascination as they compared their techniques on how to get down to a person's deep, motivational root.

Robert's company helped his clients make the self-discovery of something he called their "Friday-Night Essence", which is something productive that person would enjoy doing on a Friday night. Robert pointed out that if one's job were his Friday-Night Essence, he would naturally come back to and focus on or do research on his "Friday-Night Essence", even in the evenings and some on the weekends. That kind of "downstream focus" for one's livelihood, instead of the usual "upstream battle", was necessary to get into the top 1% in any field. ...Jake felt a strong chemistry between Natasha's workshops and Robert's employment agency.

Once Robert's company discovered a client's Friday-Night Essence, releasing his or her "downstream focus", his company would place his client in a related job. His company searched