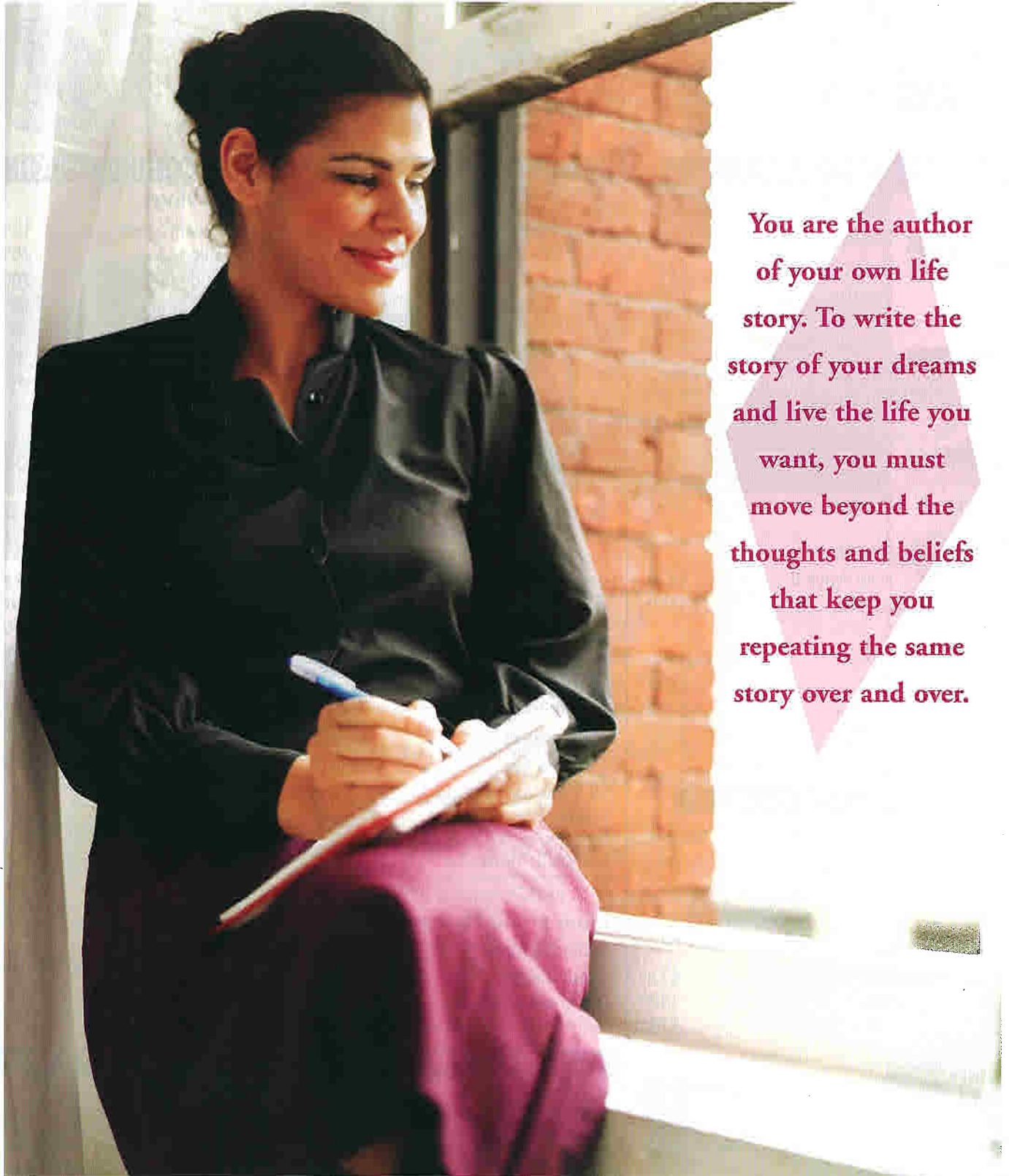


Create Your Life's Theme

by Kathy Pike



You are the author of your own life story. To write the story of your dreams and live the life you want, you must move beyond the thoughts and beliefs that keep you repeating the same story over and over.

Almost everyone experiences patterns, or themes, in life. These themes may show up in both personal and professional situations, and often remain in place until effort and focus is made to change them. By recognizing these themes, observing one's response to them, and consciously shifting your feelings and experience when these themes emerge, you begin to break the limiting patterns and beliefs that create your life. Once these patterns are broken, you can choose to engage in new behaviors and responses that will bring you new results.

Reoccurring themes and patterns can show up in many different ways. Perhaps you've experienced a client who does not pay you on time, a co-worker who undermines your plans, or a friend who did not include you in some social event. These experiences are unpleasant and cause discomfort. They may trigger strong reactions and emotions. You may declare that you are no longer going to allow the experience to reoccur in your life. You may decide that you have learned your lesson from the interaction and that you no longer wish to live that way. You may decide to try to rise above it all and not be affected by the whole dynamic.

Then, before you know it, the theme shows up again. Maybe it is not with the same person, in the same setting or about the same thing. But the theme is the same. The feeling that you experience in these situations is the underlying theme. The theme might be that no one ever values your work, people forget about you, people take advantage of you, or things never work out for you. The theme may be that you feel devalued or disrespected. You may feel betrayed by someone you thought you could trust. You might simply feel unworthy. The feeling stays the same. And the feeling usually makes you feel less than others in some way.

Everyone experiences reoccurring themes, in various ways, at one time or another. It is a part of the human experience, as past experiences are the foundation for one's life.

How the past impacts the present

Many individuals have experienced past events and situations that were unpleasant. It may have been a teacher who was overly critical, a parent who was not available at a time of need, or a friend or classmate who was dishonest or disloyal. These unresolved experiences and feelings from the past create the lens through which an individual sees his or her life. A child forms a belief about him- or herself and the world from a past experience. This belief continues to emerge even after the child has grown to adulthood, and the belief limits the adult's ability in some way. The limiting belief continues until the individual makes a conscious choice to shift and resolve his or her perspective.

The body holds the energy of our feelings and our experiences. Every tissue and cell vibrates and responds to the messages from our minds. Back and forth, the body and mind remain alert and ready for what life presents, and cells respond according to the memory of life experiences. This serves the body well in many ways; for example, it does not take long for an individual to learn that hot stoves are not to be touched or to look both ways before crossing a street. Our body remembers when it experiences pain or pleasure. The body then uses that memory to ensure survival within the world.

But not all body programming is beneficial. Often responses that may have protected the body and spirit during childhood will limit the body and spirit in later stages of life. For example, a child may learn to not speak up for herself, because if she does her parents will yell at her. This type of shut-down behavior won't serve her well as an adult.

When young, the body is primarily concerned with surviving. Once the body has reached adulthood the priorities shift. At that time, the mind demands more from life. In adulthood the primary concern is thriving. Thriving means we create the relationships and livelihood that feed our soul and bring us joy. By shifting the programming in the body that is no longer beneficial for the adult life, we can enter into a thriving state of existence.

When a limiting belief is triggered, it sends the adult into a reactionary state. The mind and body experience a reaction similar to what was created during an unpleasant past experience. The unpleasant past experience may have either not been dealt with or not fully released energetically from the body. The body did not have enough time to fully process the experience; therefore, the experience remains in the body as an incomplete experience, limiting a person's potential and ability to feel confident and powerful. The limiting belief continues to trigger the same reaction, over and over.

By learning to work with the body and mind together, you can recreate your life by deciding how you experience life. The secret is to explore the feeling of the undesirable situations that caused the original pain, observe the sensations associated with the feeling and become familiar with the sensations. By doing this, you gain understanding and the ability to shift the sensations. Recognizing these feelings and sensations can be a powerful experience. Often the experience can also be overwhelming, revealing a memory that may have been traumatic. At these times, professional help such as a counselor or therapist can provide the support and the structure for these feelings and sensations to be healed and released. Listen to your intuition and seek professional help as needed.

Exploring the world of emotion

The first step in exploring limiting beliefs is to recall the more difficult or challenging situations you repeatedly experience in your life. Maybe you consistently have a hard time dealing with group dynamics, one-on-one situations, taking instructions, collaborating with others, or receiving what you want in life. Remember the times when your “buttons got pushed,” or your negative emotions triggered. Think about those situations that are thematic in your life, repeatedly showing up at inconvenient times. Explore these undesirable themes.

Limiting beliefs become lodged in the body when an individual experiences a high degree of emotional reaction or response toward a situation that does not get released. Understanding and exploring the energy of a limiting belief within the body is the second step in this process. Let your whole body recall the experience.

Pay attention to the sensations that arise in your body. Observe these sensations as you recall the event. The sensations might include a tightness in the throat, a wave of heat flowing through the solar plexus, a contracting and tightening chest, a vibration around the head, or a tight stabbing sensation deep in the lower stomach. Notice what emotions and feelings you become aware of as you continue to observe the sensations. You may have felt worthlessness, frustration, shame, anger, or sadness. The key to understanding these sensations lies in your ability to explore the bottom-line feeling that you experience when situations or other people trigger you.

As you allow yourself to explore the sensations, ask yourself when you first experienced these feelings in your life. This step allows your memories to come to surface. You may be surprised to find that an event that occurred earlier in your life suddenly

pops into your head. This past experience is when you may have formulated a belief about the situation—and yourself. You quite likely drew a conclusion that has continued to stay with you for years. You developed your response program, or the lens to view life through.

Identify the core beliefs about yourself and/or others that you chose at the moment of your painful experience. These beliefs may have protected you in your family or in your early school years. Now, as an adult, these very same beliefs are the ones that hold you back from achieving your goals and having vital personal power.

The last step of this process is to make a conscious change in your behavior when feelings of limiting beliefs arise in your life. The next time the all-too-familiar theme and sensations emerge, choose to observe the feeling and sensation in the moment and elect to respond differently to the situation. This is the key to breaking the negative patterns. You are no longer resisting what your body wants to express; instead, you have awareness of your body sensations and you are actually using these sensations to reprogram your beliefs. You intentionally shift the pattern of the experience, which shifts the belief, which shifts the events in your outer life.

Repatterning responses

Jim had difficulty expressing his needs and boundaries. As a child he had learned that children were to be seen and not heard. He was often told what to do and that his feelings were not important. As an adult he had difficulty negotiating and setting boundaries with others. He often would become silent, avoiding conflict, and failed to speak up when he felt someone was not respecting him. As a child he experienced various situations where he felt shame for trying to speak up.

At these times he would feel heat rising in his belly, chest and over his face. He would become speechless and powerless to stand up for himself. As an adult he experienced the same sensations whenever he needed and wanted to. He believed he was not worthy enough to take a stand and voice his own opinions. This limited his ability to set strong boundaries in his business and personal life.



