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—Vaughn Taylor, three-time PGA Tour Winner

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TRAIN YOUR MIND FOR
EXTRAORDINARY PERFORMANCE
AND THE BEST POSSIBLE LIFE

REVISED EDITION

JIM MURPHY

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Praise for *Inner Excellence*

“***Inner Excellence*** changed how I see the world, how I think, and how I play golf.”

—Vaughn Taylor, Three-time PGA Tour winner

“***Inner Excellence*** transformed my life—as a caddie, a father, and husband.

This book is a masterpiece.”

—Brandon Parsons, PGA Tour veteran caddie

“***Inner Excellence*** has had a dramatic impact on how I approach my life and how I play hockey.”

—Kevin Connauton, Defenseman, Arizona Coyotes

“***Inner Excellence*** is an instruction manual that will teach you how to perform under pressure and live the best possible life. It’s something I’ll refer to the rest of my life.”

—Teddy Scott, 20-year PGA Tour golf caddie, 14 years with Bubba Watson

“I read the first edition of ***Inner Excellence*** ten times. I’ve practically memorized it. Incredibly, this revised edition is even better.”

—Jonathan Michael, Adjunct Professor, Trinity Western University, Governor General's Gold Medal award winner

“Inner Excellence changed my life.”

—Ryan Dodd, World No. 1 ranked water ski jumper and current world record holder

“Jim is an expert in his field. ***Inner Excellence*** transcends athletics and will have a profound effect on everyone who applies these methods in their life.”

—John Kehoe, author of *Mind Power into the 21st Century*

“Inner Excellence has profoundly influenced every area of my life.”

—David Bentall, President, *Next Step Advisors*, Adjunct Professor, University of British Columbia

“And now here is my secret, a very simple secret: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.”

—**Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince***

“Above all else, watch over your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”

—**Solomon, 3rd King of the United Monarchy**

For my father, Donald C. Murphy

To the one who greatly influenced me to

think deeply about what to love

and what to let go of.

I love you. See you soon.

For my mother, Michiko M. Murphy (nee Koyama)

To my role model. I love you.

For Naomi T. Murphy

My sister, my inspiration

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Preface

Koyama Bunpachiro had a difficult decision. Was he prepared to die? Was he ready to sacrifice comfort and pleasure and devote everything he had to the selfless way of the warrior? Would he honor the code?

To be a samurai in feudal Japan was to command honor and respect, embodied from a lifetime of training in moral leadership, duty and grace.

Bunpachiro's life, like every other samurai, included daily training for battle and swordsmanship as well as calligraphy, poetry, art and tea ceremony.

The code of the samurai required total commitment. It would involve putting his country and master above himself, to the extent of imagining he was already dead. It meant waking up every day ready to die.

Bunpachiro chose the samurai way of life—and the acceptance of death that came with it. But in 1867, his entire lifestyle came to an abrupt halt.

When two and a half centuries of samurai rule ended during his lifetime, he went from having incredible power to feeling powerless. His elite status, and everything he'd sacrificed for, was gone. His heart was crushed.

Without a purpose for his life, the bottle became his unsympathetic friend.

If only Bunpachiro had learned what I've discovered, which is that every human heart has the potential for deep contentment, joy and confidence, and training it is the most important thing you'll ever do. Your heart is where all your hopes and dreams, fears and anxieties fade or flourish. It's the source of mental toughness and inner strength. If your heart is built around something temporary that you cannot control, your life will be unstable. Bunpachiro's self-worth was attached to his role as samurai and when he lost it, he lost everything.

As you read this book and examine your heart, what you'll find is that your greatest dream is not realized in having millions of dollars or perhaps a house overlooking the ocean. Your dream is how you think these things will make you feel. Perhaps those things will bring happiness as you imagine people complimenting you on your success, or will bring great experiences as you have your friends over to enjoy your waterfront home. But maybe they won't. Besides, money and material possessions aren't actually what you're *really* after.

If you search your heart, beyond the desire for any measure of success, you'll discover, I believe, that what you really want is to feel truly alive, filled with vitality, purpose and meaning—absolute fullness of life. For most of us, perhaps unknowingly, life has been one long search for this fullness. We want deep, enriching experiences and meaningful relationships, a life where we're not constantly shrinking back in fear. We want to live courageously, learning and growing, fueling a fearlessness that awakens the lives of others.

That life is available to all of us, but we so easily get caught up chasing symbols of success rather than the real thing, sidetracked in busyness, losing sight of what we truly want. Rather than seeking fearless authenticity and personal growth directly, we pursue an illusion and get emptiness instead.

The direct pursuit means developing a new mindset and new skills, ones that lead to inner strength, peace, and confidence, independent of circumstances. Your heart may need to re-orient its bearings and redefine success by prizing something that's more stable and powerful than your feelings or status, letting go of how society measures your life.

You can learn how to perform extraordinarily, under extreme pressure,

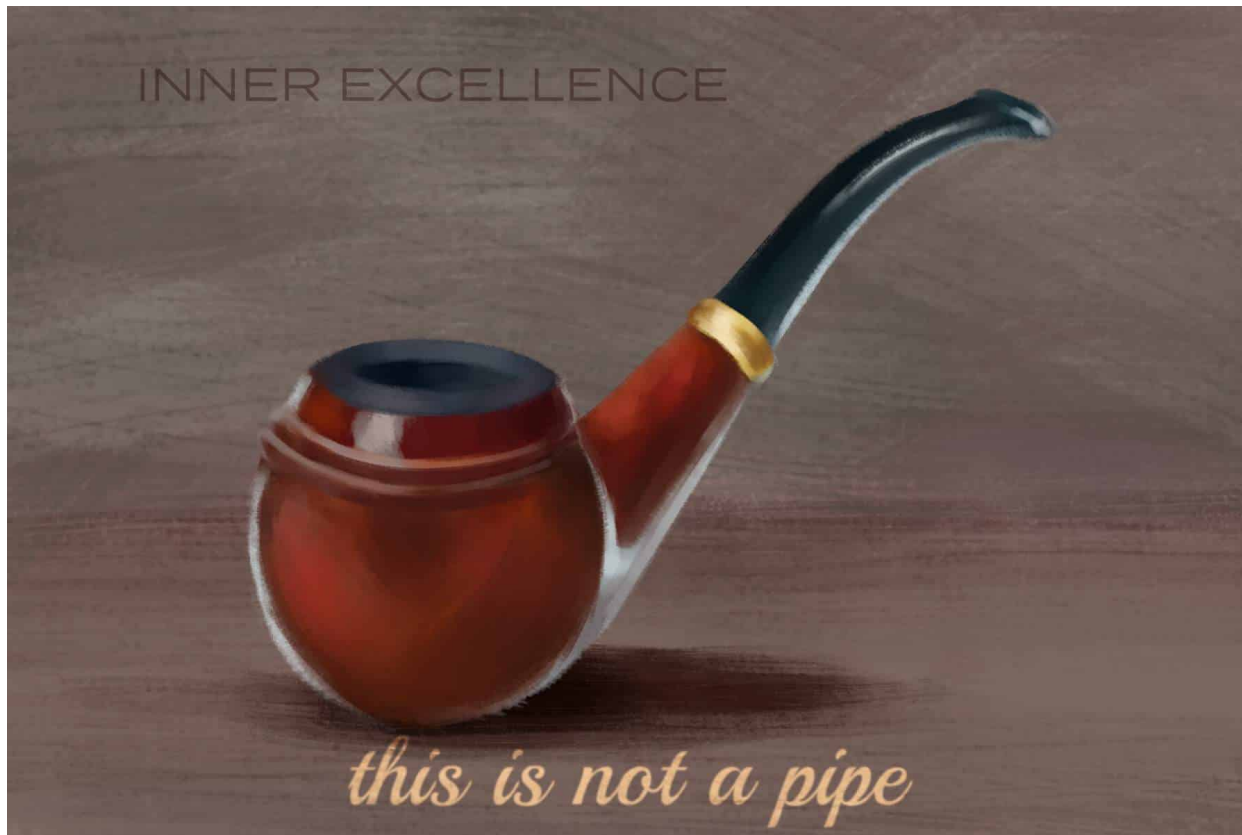
and live a life of deep contentment, joy and confidence. In fact, you'll find that this re-orientation of the heart is the most efficient and powerful way to do so.

Yoshitaka Koyama, (Bunpachiro's son), watched his father, once a great warrior, lose his prominence and become an alcoholic. He saw that his father's identity was wrapped up in status and things he could not control.

Yoshitaka began to think deeply about his own life, about what he truly wanted, and what was most important. He realized that what he craved was not power or prestige—he wanted fullness of life. As a result, Yoshitaka

changed the course of his life, from one focused on power over others, to one focused on empowering others. Through this shift he gained deep contentment, joy and confidence and lived an extraordinary life.

This book was written by his great grandson.



Presuppositions (Assumptions)

The quality of your *life* is based on three elements:

1. Your inner world of thoughts and feelings, beliefs and desires.
2. Your frame of reference (mindset) from which you see the world.
3. Your relationships.

How you think and feel is the result of the assumptions and beliefs that have formed in your heart (and subconscious, which we'll get into later).

These assumptions and beliefs create a certain mindset that impacts how you relate to yourself, to others, and to everything in your life.

The quality of your *performance* is also based on three elements:

1. Your *belief* about who you are and what's possible for you.
2. Your ability to *focus* and be fully engaged in the moment: heart, mind and body (note: heart and spirit will be used interchangeably).
3. Your *freedom* to play like a kid, curiously exploring possibilities, excited for challenges that may arise.

The three elements that determine your quality of life, and three elements that determine the quality of your performance, are deeply interwoven.

I started writing the first version of this book in 2004 after moving to the Sonoran Desert in Arizona to live a life of relative solitude. I got rid of my television and over half my possessions, with Winston Churchill's words endlessly floating across my laptop's screensaver:

Those destined for greatness must first walk alone in the desert.

I went to the desert to live deliberately, in solitude, so I could live out Churchill's words. Words that also penetrated my heart were from Henry David Thoreau, who went into nature as well. Like Thoreau, I wanted to...

...front only the essential facts of life and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when it came time to die, discover that I had not truly lived. I

did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms.

I ended up spending five years in full-time research, interviews, and writing, two and a half years of it in the desert. I was obsessed with learning

how the best in the world performed with confidence and poise under the most pressure. The main question I studied—and posed to sport psychologists all over North America—was this: How can an Olympic athlete train for four years, for an event that may last less than a minute, and have peace and confidence under that kind of pressure?

As I dove into research, I realized that helping athletes win a world championship or Olympic gold medal would be meaningless unless it improved their quality of life—their inner life. So I started to study two main concepts:

How to have extraordinary poise and mental toughness under extreme pressure.

1. How to live the best possible life, one with deep contentment, joy and confidence.
2. In the desert I had an astonishing insight. I realized that the pursuit of extraordinary performance and the pursuit of the best possible life are the same path.

This realization changed my life.

I only wish I had learned it when I was playing in the Chicago Cubs organization. I could have performed with so much more freedom and confidence. I was playing the wrong game, but didn't know it.

Most of us have been playing the wrong game our entire lives. We've been focusing on short-term wins, temporary happiness, and surface-level achievements, when we were created for so much more. We've been playing a zero-sum, finite game, with a winner and a loser, a beginning and an end, when it's really an infinite one. Life is meant to be a journey

connecting with others, growing together, discovering new and amazing things, rather than a game of constant comparison and competition, always trying to fit in or be successful. We've been setting our sights too low, going for the low-hanging fruit on a single bush, when entire orchards await.

Which game have *you* been playing?

The best possible life—absolute fullness of life—is one with extraordinary experiences, deep, meaningful relationships, and, most of all: love, joy and peace. These three “resources” lead to an abundance of fruit that multiplies into so much more: peace becomes patience, patience becomes kindness, then goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and, ultimately, self-control.

Whatever dream you may have, I believe that in the end, what you really want is to be filled with love, joy and peace and all the other powerful resources that come with them. It's an extraordinary life and it's available to all of us, but the cost is high. It takes clear intention and devotion, and the willingness to be vulnerable in order to develop your inner world.

To develop your inner world is to transform your heart, so that what it loves most is powerful and meaningful. This enables you to grow in *belief*, *focus* and *freedom*, the three key elements of extraordinary performance. It enables

you to direct your thoughts and create mental patterns around extraordinary possibilities and what you're most passionate and excited about—what you were born for—rather than being caught up in worry, stress or anxiety.

Most of us have had it backwards, trying to be successful in order to be happy. If we focus on improving our inner world, however, we'll achieve far more. We can have joy and peace, purpose and power—which will maximize our performance as well. But we need to get the order right if we

want extraordinary performance over the long term—and an amazing life: heart first, performance second. Inner world first, outer world follows.

Besides, an extraordinary outer world is worthless without a meaningful inner one, is it not?

The journey toward the best possible life starts with adjusting the lens through which we see the world. According to Dr. Darrell Johnson, PhD, Teaching Fellow at Regent College:

Every human being has a vision of reality; every one of us looks out at life from a frame of reference. We all have deeply held presuppositions about the nature of reality. We may not be able to name those presuppositions but they're there. They're reflected in the way we treat people, the way we spend time and the way we spend our money. Or to put it more simply, every single one of us wears a set of glasses. These glasses were given to us by our families, by our childhood experiences, by the books we've read, by the experiences we've had, by the movies we've seen. These visions of reality affect the whole of our lives.

The most extraordinary performers and individuals who ever lived, perceived their circumstances in remarkably similar ways. They had a lens through

which they viewed the world that was similar to each other's but very different from everyone else's.

This book will help you understand how those amazing individuals trained their minds (and oriented their hearts) so that they were always learning and growing, and how you can train your mind and heart to do the same.

In order to have both sustained peak performance and fullness of life, we

must examine who we are, how we're put together, and what drives us. In my five years of full-time research (post-Master's degree) the same component stood out for both peak performance and having an extraordinary life: the heart. Learning that the heart (or spirit) is the key driver for both was the turning point in my research.

The heart is where we store our hopes and dreams, beliefs and assumptions. Out of the heart comes good or evil, love or fear. It's the source of our deepest motivations and greatest power. If we want to develop confidence and poise under pressure, as well as deep contentment and joy, we need to challenge the assumptions and beliefs we have in our hearts—to see if they are really true. We all have a story we've been telling ourselves over our entire lifetimes, based on assumptions and beliefs that have formed in our hearts. Some of these are empowering and true, some are not. We also have beliefs that allow us to see possibilities and beauty no one else can.

When your life is based on the Truth with a capital T, it expands every day—like the sun's rays filling a welcoming sky—revealing unknown beauties. On this powerful journey of *Inner Excellence*, we're going to direct what you think and how you think towards what's powerful and permanent.

First, however, we must let go of the assumptions (we'll call them presuppositions) that may have limited our lives without our knowing it. A

life with unlimited possibilities is only possible when the assumptions that guide our lives are also free from limits.

Here are some old presuppositions we're going to drop (and the reasons why):

I am my thoughts.

Sometimes terrible or shameful thoughts flash through our minds that are not true and have nothing to do with who we really are.

My value is based on my results.

You may have grown up in a culture or family that has instilled this in you, but your self-worth does not increase or decrease based on your performance.

The best performers were born that way.

Whatever abilities you were born with can be improved far beyond what you've imagined, largely through hard work, deliberate

practice on specific skills (that I will teach you), and learning to direct and control your desires.

Here are ten new empowering presuppositions that will form the basis of the mindset you'll develop as you read this book:

1. Every circumstance and every person you encounter is here to teach you and help you—it's all working for your good.

You were created for glory (infinite, inherent worth).