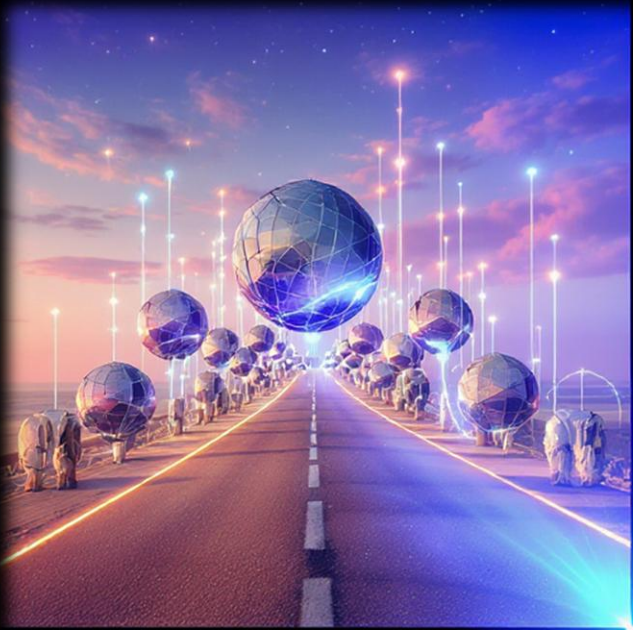


Really?!

Why Your Perception Isn't Reality



Andreas Ulrich

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Lifeinion


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Introduction

Imagine this: you're at the movies with a friend. After the film, he turns to you, eyes shining, and says: "Wow, did you see that scene where the main actor drives that crazy car?"

You frown. "What car?"

You both watched the same film, yet you noticed completely different things. While he was absorbed by the action, you were caught up in the dialogue.

Same reality, two different versions.

Most of us walk through life as if there's one single "objective reality" out there. But here's the truth: what we call reality is, for the most part, a movie playing in our heads.

Your brain is constantly filtering, judging, and interpreting. From the millions of bits of information bombarding you every second, it creates a neat, bite-sized version—like Netflix reducing a blockbuster into a 30-second trailer.

That means you're not reacting to reality itself—you're reacting to the **version of reality** your brain serves up.

And that's exactly why arguments, misunderstandings, and completely different emotional reactions can happen in the very same situation.

If reality depends so heavily on perception, then we must ask a provocative question:

How much of what you take as solid, undeniable reality is just your point of view?

Or to put it differently:

- *What if your "problems" are just filters?*
- *What if your "limitations" are nothing more than a pair of glasses you happen to be wearing?*
- *What if you could shift your reality—simply by shifting your focus?*

The purpose of this book

This book is here to show you that you can **test**, **shift**, and even **choose** your reality.

Not through wishful thinking or vague esotericism—but through concrete principles backed by both psychology and neuroscience.

Together, we'll explore four major "Reality Checks":

1. **Your inner world vs. the outer world** – why your focus colors the world
2. **The identity factor** – why identity comes first
3. **Limits or Possibilities?** – how your brain builds new pathways
4. **Your environment & the media** – how the voices around you program your reality

Each Reality Check will give you:

- A practical impulse from science and real life
- A story or metaphor that sticks
- A small exercise you can apply right away

What you'll discover along the way

As you read, you'll reach moments where you think:

"Really?! That can't possibly be true..."

And that's exactly the point: reality isn't always what we assume it to be.

By the end of this book, you'll be holding a new kind of lens—a Reality Check that helps you consciously decide how you want to see the world.

You can't always change the world – but you can change how you see it.

And that changes everything.

Chapter 1 – Your inner world vs. the outer world

Think about the last time you had an argument. You were sure you were right. The other person was sure they were right. Looking back, though, maybe you both had a point... or maybe you were both completely off.

Here's the kicker: you lived through the same situation, but your version of it looked nothing like theirs.

So—what was “*real*”?

How your brain filters reality

Your brain isn't some neutral GoPro, faithfully recording life. It's more like a picky movie director who cuts 99% of the footage and only keeps the scenes it likes. Every second, millions of pieces of data crash into your senses.

If your brain didn't filter most of them out, you'd be fried within seconds.

That's why it has a bouncer at the door—something neuroscientists call the *reticular activating system* (RAS).

The bouncer's job?

- “Relevant? You're in.”
- “Boring? You're out.”

That's why you can sit in a noisy café and suddenly snap to attention the moment someone says your name—even though you tuned out every other voice around you.

Der Gorilla you didn't see

There's a classic psychology experiment that nails this point: the “Invisible Gorilla” (Simons & Chabris, 1999).

Participants watched a video of people passing a basketball. Their task was to count the passes. Simple enough.

Then, right in the middle of the scene, a guy in a gorilla suit strolls in, beats his chest, and casually walks off.

And here's the wild part: about half of the viewers don't notice the gorilla *at all*.

Why? Their attention was locked on counting passes. The brain decided the gorilla was "irrelevant" and threw it out.

Translation: a gorilla can literally dance across your screen, and you might not even see it. *Really?!*

If a gorilla can slip past your awareness, imagine how much else you miss in a single day. The world you think of as "reality" is actually just the slice your focus chooses for you.

Try this quick test:

1. Look around the room for 10 seconds.
2. Count everything you see that's red.
3. Done? Okay.
4. Now answer instantly: how many *blue* things did you notice?

Not many, right? Because your brain ignored them.

Reality isn't what's "out there." It's what your mind pays attention to.

The glasses you don't realize you're wearing

Picture yourself putting on sunglasses with red lenses. Suddenly, everything looks tinted red. Swap them out of the blue, and the world instantly changes. Of course, the world itself hasn't changed—it's just your lenses.

That's how your thoughts work. Your beliefs, moods, and experiences are the filters you wear.

- When you're stressed, all you see are problems.
- When you're in love, the world looks full of opportunities.
- When you're suspicious, you find evidence of betrayal everywhere.

Here's the good news: you can swap lenses anytime.

Same situation, different realities

Take this real-life scenario. Two coworkers hear the exact same feedback from their boss: "The project was good, but there's still room for improvement."

- **Coworker A** hears: *“I’m not good enough.”* He goes home discouraged, maybe even thinking about quitting.
- **Coworker B** hears: *“Great, I’m on the right track—and now I know where to level up.”* He leaves fired up and ready to improve.

Same words. Same meeting. Completely different realities.

Your first reality check

- ✓ The outer world (facts, events, circumstances) is just the stage.
- ✓ Your inner world (focus, beliefs, emotions) decides what play gets performed.

Pause & reflect

What glasses are you wearing right now? Are they tinting everything in shades of grey—or are they letting in color and possibility?

Mini-Challenge:

Today, experiment with swapping lenses.

The next time something annoys you, pause and ask:

- “What else could this mean?”
- “What if this is happening for me—not against me?”

Watch how quickly your version of reality shifts.



Reality isn’t what’s “out there” but what your mind chooses to focus on—change your focus, and your reality changes.

Chapter 2 – The identity factor

The backwards formula everyone believes

Ask most people how success, happiness, or fulfillment works, and you'll hear a common script:

Having → Doing → Being

- “Once I **have** more money, I can live the life I want—and then I'll **be** happy.”
- “Once I **have** more confidence, I'll finally give that presentation—and then I'll **be** successful.”
- “Once I **have** more free time, I'll start working out—and then I'll **be** healthy.”

Sound familiar?

This logic runs the world. And yet—it doesn't really work. Why? Because it traps us in a waiting game. We sit around waiting to have something first before we do anything... and we never actually get to be.

The truth that flips it all around

In reality, the order works like this:

Being → Doing → Having

- First comes **Being** (identity, mindset, self-image).
- Then comes **Doing** (your actions and decisions).
- And only then comes **Having** (the results: success, fulfillment, health, wealth).

It sounds simple, but it's radical—because it overturns what most of us have been taught to believe.

The science behind it

Psychology has known this for decades. Carl Rogers, one of the most influential psychologists of the 20th century, described it as *self-congruence*: people act in line with their self-image.

In other words, your behavior always matches your inner “*I am ...*” story.

- If deep down you believe, “*I’m not athletic,*” no workout plan will stick.
- If you believe, “*I’m reliable,*” you’ll naturally show up on time and follow through—without forcing yourself.

Behavioral research backs this up: change lasts longer when it’s tied to identity, not just action.

- “*I want to quit smoking*” → behavior level.
- “*I am a non-smoker*” → identity level.

Guess which one sticks? Exactly.

Athletes already know this

Top athletes don’t just train their bodies—they train their self-image.

A runner who sees themselves as a *champion* laces up even when it’s cold, rainy, and they’re exhausted. They don’t do it because they “should.” They do it because it’s who they are.

The same is true in business. Entrepreneurs who see themselves as *problem-solvers* spot opportunities where others only see roadblocks. Their actions flow directly out of their identity.

Die tree metaphor

Picture a tree:

- The **roots** = your Being (identity, beliefs, self-image).
- The **trunk** = your Doing (daily actions).
- The **fruit** = your Having (results).

If you only chase the fruit—money, recognition, success—but your roots are weak, you’ll always be disappointed.

Want different fruit? Strengthen the roots first.

Same goal different identity

Two people decide to start jogging:

- **Person A** says: *“I want to try running regularly.”* (action level)
- **Person B** says: *“I am a runner.”* (identity level)

A few weeks later, it's a cold, rainy evening.

- Person A stays on the couch: *“Not today. I'll try again later.”*
- Person B laces up: *“I'm a runner—and runners run, even in the rain.”*

The difference? **Identity beats motivation.**

Your second reality check

- ✓ The real order is *Being → Doing → Having*.
- ✓ Who you are shapes what you do.
- ✓ What you do creates what you have.

Mini-exercise

Write a present-tense statement beginning with **“I am ...”**

Examples:

- *“I am someone who spots opportunities.”*
- *“I am the creator of my future.”*

Write it down. Say it out loud. Not as a wish, but as a fact.

Pause & reflect

Who would I need to *be* in order to reach my goal?

Chapter takeaways

- ✓ Stop waiting until you have.
- ✓ Don't wait for more time, money, or courage.
- ✓ Decide who you are first—and act from that identity.
- ✓ The fruit always comes at the end.
- ✓ The beginning is always in the roots.



Identity comes first—who you believe you are shapes what you do, and what you do creates what you have.

Chapter 3 – Limits or possibilities?

„That’s Impossible.“

How many times have you heard that phrase—or said it yourself?

- *“That won’t work.”*
- *“That’s impossible.”*
- *“I could never do that.”*

Our brains are world-class at setting limits. We tell ourselves stories about what we *can* do—and about what we supposedly *can’t*.

But here’s the good news: most of those limits aren’t real. They’re mental constructs.

The bumblebee that didn’t care

There’s a famous story (part myth, part science): According to the laws of aerodynamics, a bumblebee shouldn’t be able to fly. Its body is too heavy, its wings too small.

But—no one ever told the bumblebee. So it just... flies.

Whether or not the story is technically accurate doesn’t really matter. It’s a powerful metaphor: how many times have you held yourself back just because someone else told you it “couldn’t be done”?

Your brain can rewire itself

For a long time, scientists believed the brain stopped changing after childhood. Today we know that’s nonsense. Neuroscience calls it **neuroplasticity**: your brain is constantly building new connections.

One famous example? London taxi drivers. To earn their license, they must memorize thousands of streets and routes. Studies show their hippocampus—the brain’s navigation center—is measurably larger than average. Their brains literally reshaped themselves to meet the challenge.

***The takeaway:** your habits, your thoughts, your abilities are not fixed. You can carve new pathways at any time.*

The field in your mind

Imagine your brain as a grassy field.

- Every time you think the same thought—*“I’m not good enough”*—you’re walking the same trail. Over time, it becomes a beaten-down path. Easy to follow. Automatic.
- The first time you try a new thought—*“I’m capable and I can learn this”*—you’re forcing your way through tall grass. It’s hard work.

But the more often you walk that new path, the clearer it gets. Eventually, it becomes the easier way forward.

Thoughts are paths. Every step makes the trail stronger.

Same situation, different mindset

Meet Anna and Max. Both dream of starting a business.

- **Anna** thinks: *“I’m not the type. I don’t have the skills.”* So she stays in her safe job—unsatisfied, but “realistic.”
- **Max** thinks: *“I can learn what I need. There’s a way.”* He starts small, makes mistakes, learns, and grows.

Same starting point. Different futures. The difference? Max chose to step onto a new path in his mind.

Action step: Write your new sentence

Take one limiting belief you’ve been carrying. Rewrite it in the present tense as a possibility.

- From: *“I can’t do this.”*
- To: *“I’m learning how to do this.”*

Or:

- From: *“I’m not creative.”*
- To: *“I’m discovering my creativity step by step.”*

That sentence is like your first step through the tall grass. Repeat it often—and soon, it becomes a real path.

Pause & reflect

- Which “limit” in my mind is really just an old trail I keep walking?
- What new thought could be my first step in a different direction?
- Where could I act like the bumblebee—and just fly, even if someone says it’s impossible?

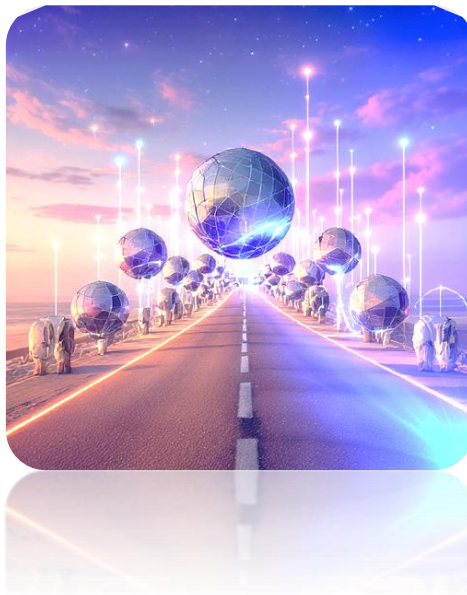
Chapter takeaways

Most limits aren’t real. They’re learned patterns.

Your brain is plastic. It reshapes itself based on what you think, feel, and do.

- *Think new thoughts. Walk new paths.*
- *Act as if it’s possible → and watch what unfolds.*

Because “impossible” is often just another word for: “*Not tried yet.*”



Most limits are just old thought patterns—walk a new path in your mind, and new possibilities open up in your life.

Chapter 4 – Your environment & the media

The invisible programmers of your reality

You’ve probably heard the quote:

“You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with.” – Jim Rohn

Whether you believe it or not, your environment is constantly shaping you—quietly, subtly, relentlessly. The same goes for the media you consume.

The people around you. The news you watch. The posts you scroll. The voices you let into your mind. All of them are co-writing the script of your reality.

Why bad news feels louder

Your brain comes preloaded with something called the **negativity bias**: negative information weighs more heavily than positive information.

- A compliment fades fast, but one criticism can echo for days.
- One bad headline burns into memory, while ten uplifting ones disappear.

This bias was once about survival—ignore danger, and you’re dead. Today, it makes us fixate on problems even when opportunities are right in front of us.

And the media knows this. Catastrophes, scandals, and crises generate more clicks than good news. Over time, constant exposure to doom and drama leads to what psychologists call the **Mean World Syndrome**: heavy news consumers start to see the world as far more dangerous and negative than it actually is.

Really?! Your “reality” can be dictated by a news app.

Die power of your circle

It’s not just the media. Your personal environment works like a filter too.

Surround yourself with complainers, cynics, and naysayers—and soon you’ll find yourself looking through their glasses.

Flip it, and the opposite happens: spend time with people who think in possibilities, who take bold action, who lift others up—and you’ll start to absorb their energy.

Two different worlds in the same city

Imagine two people living in the same city.

- **Person A** starts and ends each day with the news, chats about crises over lunch, and follows negative accounts on social media. Their worldview: *“Everything’s falling apart.”*
- **Person B** reads biographies of inspiring people, listens to empowering podcasts, and spends time with friends who talk about ideas. Their worldview: *“The world is full of opportunity.”*

Same city. Two completely different realities.

Your mental diet

Just like your body is shaped by the food you eat, your perception is shaped by your “mental diet.”

- **Junk food** = constant bad news, toxic conversations → anxious, distorted reality.
- **Healthy food** = inspiring people, uplifting content → stronger, clearer reality.

So the real question is: *“What diet are you feeding your mind every day?”*

Action step: The 7-day filter

For one week, put one negative input on pause.

- No news app.
- No mindless social media scrolling.
- No regular venting sessions with that one draining person.

Instead, fill the space with something nourishing:

- Read an inspiring book.
- Listen to a podcast that uplifts.
- Spend time with someone who energizes you.

After seven days, notice how your reality feels different.

Pause & reflect

- Which voices are feeding my reality right now?
- What “mental diet” have I been on lately?
- Which voices do I want to turn up—and which ones do I need to turn down?

Chapter takeaways

You are not neutral. Your reality is being shaped—day by day—by the voices, images, words, and people you let in.

- ✓ *Be aware: what you consume also consumes you.*
- ✓ *Choose your information sources as carefully as you choose your food.*
- ✓ *Ask yourself regularly: “Which voices deserve a role in shaping my reality?”*

Because your reality isn’t just created by what you see—it’s created by what you allow yourself to see.



Your environment and media diet are programming your reality—so choose your inputs as carefully as you choose your food.

A new way of seeing reality

It's All About the Glasses You Wear

Throughout this book, you've explored four Reality Checks. Each one is like a new pair of glasses, showing you that reality isn't fixed—it's flexible.

- **Reality Check 1:** Your inner world determines what you even notice in the outer world. Focus is like a spotlight—it lights up only a small slice, and the rest stays in the dark.
- **Reality Check 2:** Being comes first. Identity beats motivation. Define who you are, and your actions naturally follow—and those actions create what you have.
- **Reality Check 3:** Your limits are flexible. The brain is plastic. Old paths can be abandoned, and new ones built.
- **Reality Check 4:** The voices around you help write your script. Your environment and your media diet shape your perception. What you consume, consumes you.

Your reality is not a prison. It's a construction. And you have a say in how it's built.

Your immediate next steps

Now it's time to move from reading to doing. You don't need a big ritual or perfect conditions—just small, conscious decisions:

- **Today:** Write a new present-tense sentence beginning with “*I am ...*” (e.g., “*I am someone who sees opportunities.*”). Write it down. Say it out loud. Own it.
- **This Week:** Put one negative input on pause. No news app. No doomscrolling. No draining conversations. Replace it with something that gives you energy.
- **From Now On:** Start each morning with three quick Reality Check questions:
 1. Who do I want to be today?
 2. Which reality do I choose?
 3. Which voices will I listen to?

These three questions are like a daily reset button. Two minutes. A whole new lens for the day.

The story of the two wolves

There's an old story that sums this up beautifully:

A grandfather tells his grandson, *"Inside me live two wolves. One is fearful, full of doubt, anger, and limitations. The other is brave, full of trust, joy, and possibilities. And these two wolves are constantly fighting."*

The boy asks, *"Which one wins?"*

The grandfather smiles: *"The one I feed."*

Your final reality check

Reality works the same way.

- The voices you feed shape your experience.
- The glasses you put on color your world.
- The identity you choose directs your actions.

The real question is not: "What is reality?"

The real question is: "Which reality do I want to choose?"



*Because you can't always change the world.
But you can always change the way you see it.
And that changes everything.*

Epilogue – A word to you

First of all: thank you.

Thank you for giving your time, your attention, and your curiosity to this book. In a world overflowing with noise, choosing to pause, reflect, and explore your own perception is no small thing.

If there's one message I hope stays with you, it's this: **you are not a passive spectator of reality—you are its co-creator.**

Every time you shift your focus, every time you choose a new identity, every time you feed the “right wolf,” you're reshaping the world you live in. Not someday. Not when conditions are perfect. But right now.

So as you close these pages, I'd encourage you not just to *think* about what you've read, but to *practice* it. Try on the glasses. Ask the questions. Take the small steps. That's where transformation happens.

And if you ever catch yourself wondering, “*Really?! Can it be that simple?*” – remember: it always starts with the lens you choose.

From here, the script of your reality is in your hands. Write it well.

With gratitude and encouragement,
Andreas Ulrich

For Further Exploration

This book was never meant to be the final word on reality, but rather a door opener. If you're excited to keep exploring, here are some directions you might enjoy:

Books to Dive Deeper

- **“Thinking, Fast and Slow” by Daniel Kahneman** – A classic on how our minds filter, distort, and decide.
- **“Atomic Habits” by James Clear** – Practical strategies on identity-based habits that stick.
- **“Mindset” by Carol Dweck** – The science of fixed vs. growth mindsets, and how they shape reality.

Practices to Try

- **Daily Journaling:** Spend 5 minutes each morning asking: *Who do I want to be today?*
- **Media Fasting:** Try one “no news / no scrolling” day per week. Notice how your mood shifts.
- **Reality Check Questions:** Use the three quick prompts:
 1. Who am I choosing to be?
 2. Which lens am I wearing?
 3. Which voices am I feeding?

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For courses, seminars, and personal coaching, visit: www.lifeinion.ch

Or reach out directly: andreas.ulrich@lifeinion.com