

EXCERPT FROM CHAPTER TWO

Background

At this point in my journey, I was living an idyllic life in the mountains near Tahoe—that is until a visit to my eye doctor changed everything. He told me I had a serious eye disease and could lose vision in my right eye. To make sure I understood, he showed me photographs of advanced cases. I stared at them, horrified. *I'll look like a freak!* I left his office devastated. What follows is an excerpt from Chapter Two.

Paul's Gift

The next day, I invited Paul, an old friend I had a secret crush on, to dinner. I so much needed and wanted the comfort of an old friend and was secretly hoping for more. I hoped he would take me in his arms and tell me everything would be okay. The evening was pleasant and I finally got around to telling him about my eye diagnosis. Paul was kind and sympathetic, but he didn't take me in his arms and comfort me. Instead, after thanking me for a beautiful dinner and as he was leaving, he handed me a book.

"This might help you," he said. The book was *Dianetics, the Modern Science of Mental Health* by L. Ron Hubbard.

The Book I Almost Threw Away

I was puzzled by his gesture; plus, the cover was off-putting with its garish gold color and erupting volcano. My first impulse was to throw it in the trash. Mid-toss, I stopped myself. *Maybe I should at least see what it's about. I'll just give it a quick look.*

The Promise of Dianetics

Once I started, I couldn't put it down. The book was electrifying. Hubbard wrote with absolute certainty that he had discovered the single source of humanity's mental and physical problems, which was the *engram*. Hubbard described engrams as mental image pictures that recorded in detail moments of physical pain and partial or full unconsciousness. Engrams, he said, were stored in the reactive mind and explained many illnesses and irrational behavior.

Even more astounding, Hubbard claimed that his therapy, called *auditing*, could relieve or eliminate a vast array of physical and mental illnesses. He said many ailments were psychosomatic, caused by the reactive mind and claimed his therapy could cure arthritis, asthma, ulcers, allergies, and migraines. Hubbard seemed to have an answer for everything.

Could my eye disease be psychosomatic? The question opened a door I badly wanted to walk through. If Hubbard was right, maybe my hidden engrams were causing this illness. Maybe there was something I could do about it. I was hooked; I desperately wanted to give his therapy a try.

Hubbard's certainty was exactly what I wanted to hear. I did not know whether Dianetics was the answer. I only knew that, in my frightened state, I needed it to be and was willing to give it a try.