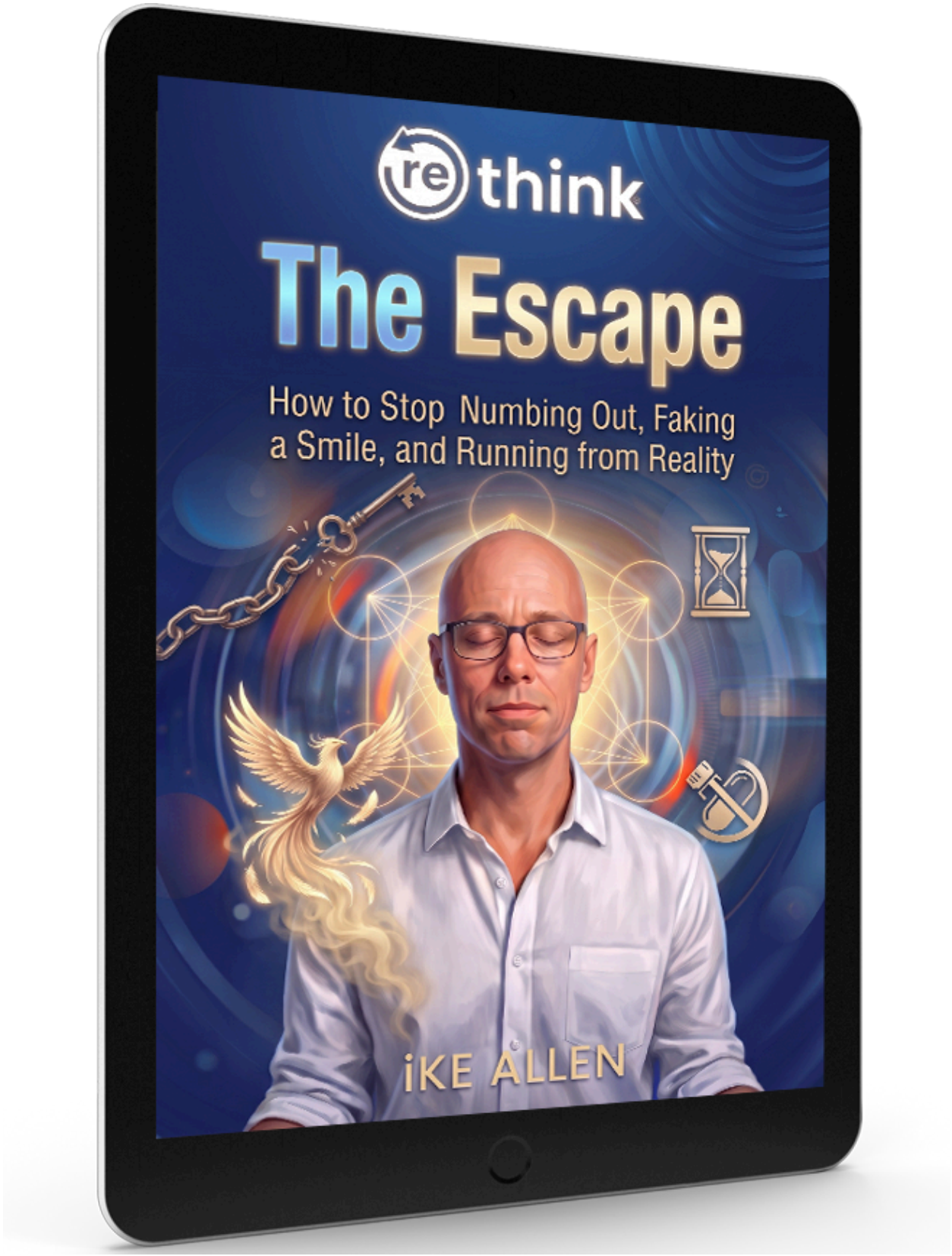

rethink
The Escape
How to Stop Numbing Out, Faking a Smile, and Running from Reality
IKE ALLEN

ReThink The Escape

How to Stop Numbing Out, Faking a Smile, and Running from Reality

Hi, it's iKE ALLEN, Founder of AVAIYA and Creator of ReThink & Somatic ReThink™.

My passion is to help you rewire your mind and body. I hope these tools guide you toward a deeply enriching, peaceful life you love waking up to.

Welcome to Book 1 of our deep dive series: **ReThink Grief (The 5 Stages of Healing)**.

When we hear the word "grief," we almost always think of someone passing away. But I want to broaden that definition for you today. As human beings, we grieve *everything*. We grieve the end of a relationship, the loss of a job, a sudden health diagnosis, getting older, or even the childhood we never got to have.

Grief is simply the emotional response to any significant loss or change in your life. And over this series, we're going to walk through the five stages of healing together.

We're starting today with Stage 1: **The Escape** (what psychologists traditionally call Denial).

This ReThink tool is for the person who is currently refusing to accept that a chapter has closed. If you're staying constantly busy so you don't have to think, ignoring massive red flags in a toxic relationship, or pretending you aren't completely burned out, you're running an old safety loop.

This workbook is going to help you **ReThink** **The Escape**—giving equal power to pulling your body out of the "freeze" response *and* actively rewiring the faulty stories in your mind that tell you to look the other way. We're going to help you stop avoiding the truth so you can actually begin to heal.

The Escape Glitch

The Escape rarely looks like standing in a room and shouting, "This isn't happening!" It's usually much quieter. It shows up as toxic positivity, overworking, numbing out with endless scrolling, or making excuses for someone else's terrible behavior.

When you experience a shock, a loss, or a sudden change, your nervous system gets overwhelmed. Your brain learns a specific survival strategy: *If I just ignore this, stay busy, and pretend everything is fine, the pain can't reach me, and I'll be safe.*

This is the "Escape Illusion." Your brain is using avoidance as an emotional shock absorber. It's pacing the amount of pain you let in so you don't collapse. But eventually, ignoring reality stops protecting you and starts trapping you. You can't heal what you refuse to acknowledge. Today, we're going to ReThink that protective reflex.

Step 1: The Somatic Pause (Clearing the Static)

You can't logic your way into facing reality if your nervous system is stuck in a state of shock or "freeze." The Somatic Pause gets your body grounded enough in the present moment that your brain feels safe enough to drop the escape act and look at the truth.

1. **The Escape Catch:** The exact second you catch yourself distracting yourself from a painful thought, making an excuse for a bad situation, or saying "It's fine" when you feel like crying—freeze. Catch the

thought: *"I'm staying busy and avoiding this because I'm afraid the truth will overwhelm me."*

2. **The Present Moment Anchor:** When we're running from reality, our energy is completely disconnected from the present moment. We need to pull it back. Place your feet flat on the floor. Tap your heels gently against the ground three times. Now, look around the room and name three objects you can physically see (e.g., *"I see a blue coffee mug. I see a green plant. I see a white door."*) Take a deep, slow breath. Naming physical objects pulls your brain out of the "freeze" state and signals to your nervous system that you're physically safe in the *here and now*.

Step 2: The ReThink Shift (Rewiring the Mind)

Now that the physical static is cleared and you're anchored in the present, it's time for the real work. Enter **The ReThink Shift**. The core of this method is rewiring your story, and that's exactly what creates lasting change. We have to challenge your urge to escape by putting it on trial.

- **The Core Concept: Fake Safety vs. Real Healing** Fear wants you to believe that ignoring the problem keeps you safe ("If I just stay busy and don't think about it, it'll eventually go away"). Grounded reality relies on radical honesty ("Ignoring this is exhausting; facing it is the only way through"). We have to ReThink the escape not as a permanent hiding place, but as a temporary waiting room. You're strong enough to walk out of that waiting room and face what is.



The ReThink Exercise:

- **The Old Story:** "I can't handle this reality right now. I just need to keep working, keep smiling, and pretend everything's fine so I don't fall apart."
- **The New Reality:** "I'm choosing to face the truth. Ignoring reality keeps me stuck, but acknowledging my loss allows me to heal. It's safe for me to feel this."

Your Turn: Identify your biggest "escape" trigger right now (e.g., ignoring your burnout, making excuses for a failing relationship, pretending you aren't heartbroken over a life change). What's the story your brain is telling you versus the indisputable reality of the situation?

Line 1 (My Escape Trigger):

_____

_____

_____

Line 2 (The "Everything is Fine" Story My Brain Made Up):

_____

_____

_____

Line 3 (The Grounded Reality I'm Avoiding):

_____
_____
_____

The Workbook: Stepping Out of the Waiting Room

Use this space to actively challenge your brain's escape reflex and practice stepping into reality.

Map Your Distractions. When you feel the pain of this loss or change creeping up, what is your go-to numbing behavior? (e.g., *I immediately open social media, I volunteer for extra projects at work, I drink a glass of wine, I start fixing other people's problems.*)

_____
_____
_____

The Cost of Pretending. Look at the facts. You might think your escape route is protecting you, but what's the physical and emotional cost of carrying this secret weight? Identify **three ways avoiding the truth is actively draining your energy**.

1. _____
   _____
   _____

2. _____
   _____
   _____

3. _____
   _____
   _____

Plan Your Reality Check. Write a clear, grounded sentence of radical honesty that you need to admit to yourself right now. Strip away the excuses and the toxic positivity. (e.g., *"My relationship is over and I'm heartbroken,"* or *"I'm deeply grieving the childhood I didn't get to have."*)

_____
_____
_____

iKE's Final Thought: Letting the Shock Absorber Go

The escape served a purpose. It kept you standing when the shock of the change first hit you. But you don't need it anymore.

Stepping out of the escape hatch is terrifying because it means you finally have to feel the weight of the loss. But feeling it is the only way to process it. You can't move to the next stage of healing until you stop arguing with the reality of this one. You're strong enough to face what is.

As always, I want to remind you that we're all on this ReThink Journey together.

We're all life explorers here, but we aren't always moving at the same speed. And you know what? That's completely okay.

Through ReThink and Somatic ReThink™, I believe we're all on our own individual journey, yet we're traveling side-by-side.

You're going to love the days when you're piloting a rocket ship, breaking barriers, and flying high. But there are also going to be days when you feel like a car stuck in traffic.

You might even have days where you break down on the side of the road and just need to sit there for a while, feeling a little frustrated or sad.

And hey, that's okay, too. Whenever you're finally ready, you just lace up your sneakers and walk the path—one step at a time—back toward your best life.

I'll Meet You Where You Are.

I don't care if you're speeding down the highway or taking the scenic route. I just want to make sure you have exactly what you need to keep moving.

Think of the ReThink tools as your roadside support and your launchpad all rolled into one:

- **When you're walking,** ReThink is the bridge to get you over the gap.
- **When you're driving,** ReThink is the premium fuel to keep your engine running.
- **And when you're finally ready to fly?** We're the runway.

How I Support You

Every single week, I send out supportive resources designed to meet you in the moment.

Keep an eye out for all my free Tuesday Tune-Ups.

No matter where you're trying to get to—or how long it takes you to get there—I am building new pathways to help you arrive.



Keep ReThinking,

iKE ALLEN Founder of AVAIYA and
Creator of ReThink & Somatic ReThink™

P.S. Visit us at AVAIYA and discover countless free resources **HERE.**

AVAIYA UNIVERSITY



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