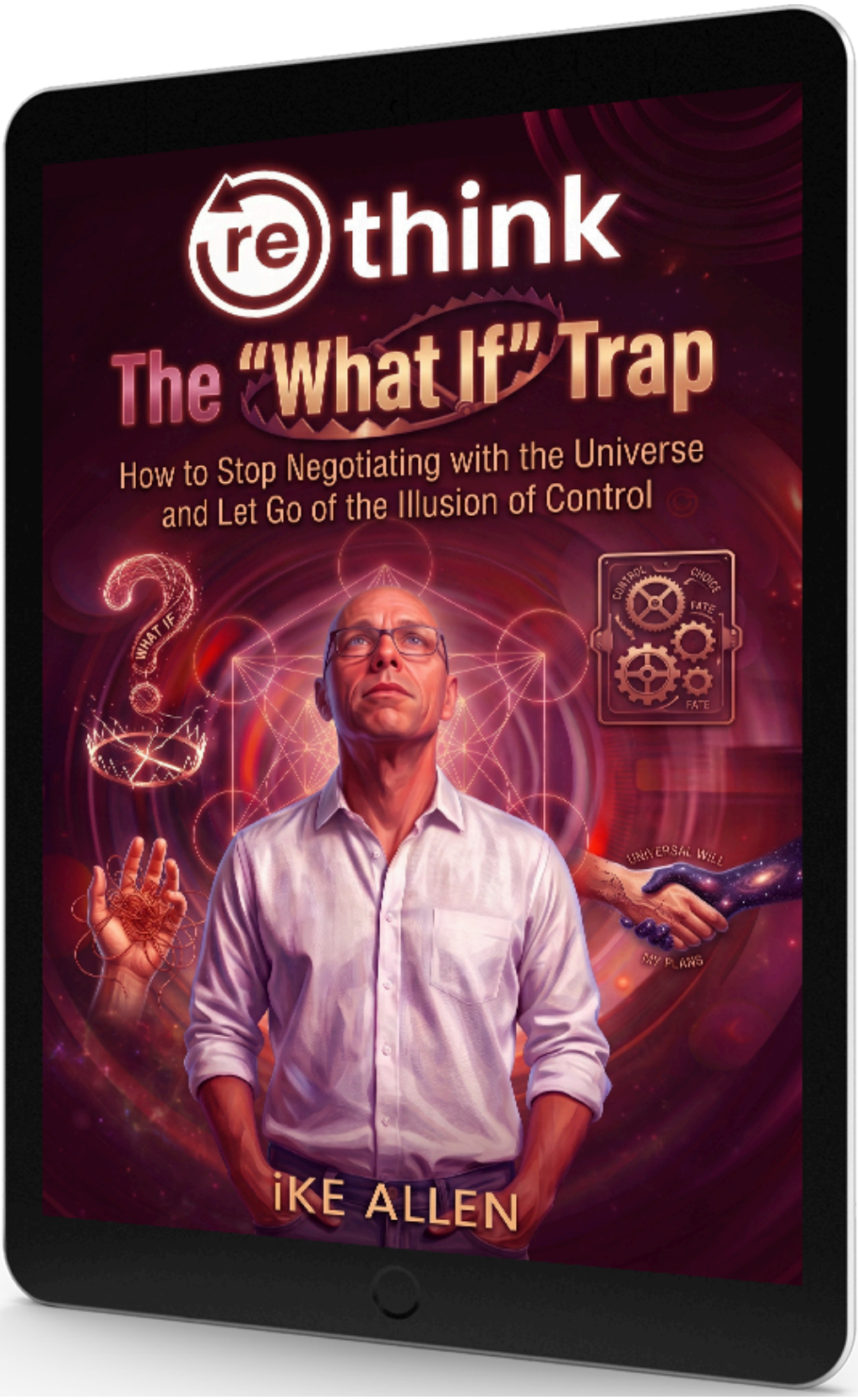

rethink
The "What If" Trap
How to Stop Negotiating with the Universe and Let Go of the Illusion of Control
WHAT IF
CONTROL
CHOICE
FATE
FATE
UNIVERSAL WILL
MY PLANS
iKE ALLEN

ReThink The "What If" Trap

How to Stop Negotiating with the Universe and Let Go of the Illusion of Control

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 3 of our deep dive series: **ReThink Grief (The 5 Stages of Healing)**.

As a reminder, we're broadening the definition of grief in this series.

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.

In Book 1, we tackled the urge to escape. In Book 2, we dropped the armor of anger. Today, we're moving into Stage 3: **The "What If" Trap** (what psychologists traditionally call Bargaining).

This ReThink tool is for the person whose brain is currently spinning like a hamster on a wheel.

If you find yourself constantly replaying the past, obsessing over how you could have prevented a loss, or promising to completely change your personality if things will just go back to normal, you're running an old safety loop.

This workbook is going to help you **ReThink The "What If" Trap**—giving equal power to pulling your body out of its frantic, spinning energy *and* actively rewiring the faulty stories in your mind that tell you this is somehow all your fault. We're going to help you stop trying to life-hack the past so you can finally find peace in the present.

The Bargaining Glitch

Bargaining is your brain's desperate attempt to regain control when your life feels like it's in freefall. It shows up as relentless guilt and negotiation: *"If only I had worked harder, they wouldn't have fired me." "If I can just be a perfect partner from now on, maybe they'll come back." "What if I had just left five minutes earlier?"*

When you experience a massive loss or change, the reality of it feels too painful to accept. Your brain learns a specific survival strategy: *If I can just figure out what I did wrong and fix it, I can magically undo the pain and gain control of the situation.*

This is the "Illusion of Control." Your brain is using the "what ifs" as a distraction from the reality of the loss. It feels safer to blame yourself and pretend you have a time machine than it does to accept that some things are simply out of your hands.

But eventually, carrying the weight of the universe exhausts you. Today, we're going to ReThink that protective reflex.

Step 1: The Somatic Pause (Clearing the Static)

You can't logic your way out of the "what if" loop if your nervous system is trapped in frantic, spinning, anxious energy. The Somatic Pause helps pull your energy out of your racing thoughts and back down into your physical body, so your brain feels safe enough to drop the illusion of control.

1. **The "What If" Catch:** The exact second you catch yourself going down a mental rabbit hole of "if only" or "what if"—freeze. Catch the thought: *"I'm trying to negotiate with reality right now because I'm terrified of feeling out of control."*

2. **The Gravity Drop (The Anchor):** When your mind is spinning in the past or the future, your physical energy actually moves up into your chest and head, causing shallow breathing and anxiety. You have to bring gravity back. Sit down and press your back firmly against a chair. Place both hands heavily on top of your head and gently press down for a count of three. Then, slide your hands down to rest heavily on your thighs. Take a long, slow breath out. This physical pressure physically guides your nervous system back down into the solid, unchangeable reality of the present moment.



Step 2: The ReThink Shift (Rewiring the Mind)

Now that the physical static is cleared and your energy is grounded, 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 illusion of control by putting it on trial.

- **The Core Concept: False Control vs. Radical Surrender** Fear wants you to believe that if you just analyze the past enough, you can fix it ("If I can figure out what I did wrong, I can change the outcome").

  Grounded reality relies on radical surrender ("I cannot change the past, and carrying the blame will not undo the loss"). We have to ReThink bargaining not as a way to fix the unfixable, but as a sign that you are deeply hurting and need compassion, not a time machine.

The ReThink Exercise:

- **The Old Story:** “If only I had done things differently, this wouldn't have happened. I have to figure out how to fix this so I don't feel this terrible pain.”
- **The New Reality:** “I am letting go of the illusion of control. I cannot negotiate with the past. It is safe for me to surrender to what is, and I refuse to punish myself for being human.”

Your Turn: Identify your biggest "what if" trigger right now (e.g., replaying a breakup conversation, obsessing over a mistake at work, bargaining with your health). What's the story your brain is telling you versus the indisputable reality of the situation?

Line 1 (My Bargaining Trigger):

_____

_____

_____

Line 2 (The "If Only I Did This" Story My Brain Made Up):

_____

_____

_____

Line 3 (The Grounded Reality of My Surrender):

_____
_____
_____

The Workbook: Dropping the Illusion of Control

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

Map Your "What Ifs." What is the specific scenario your brain keeps looping on? Write down the exact "if only" or "what if" thoughts that are currently keeping you up at night.

_____
_____
_____

The Cost of Control. Look at the facts. You might think replaying the past is helping you solve a problem, but what's the emotional cost of carrying all this false guilt? Identify **three ways the illusion of control is actively draining your energy**.

1. _____
   _____
   _____

2. _____
   _____
   _____

3. _____
   _____
   _____

Plan Your Surrender. Write down one clear, grounded mantra you can say out loud the next time you catch your brain trying to negotiate with the past. (e.g., *"I did the best I could with the tools I had,"* or *"I am releasing my grip on what I cannot change."*)

_____
_____
_____

iKE's Final Thought: You Can't Life-Hack a Broken Heart

Bargaining isn't a sign that you failed; it's just your brain's way of trying to protect you from the intense vulnerability of a loss. But you can't life-hack your way out of a broken heart.

Dropping the "what ifs" is terrifying because it means you have to finally accept that the loss is real and it is outside of your control. But holding onto false guilt is only delaying your healing. Put down the time machine. You are safe enough now to surrender to 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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