

THE ART OF MEANINGFUL LIVING

Christopher F. Brown, LCSW, MBA
Art by John Palmer

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Psychotherapist, coach, speaker, and teacher Christopher F. Brown has collaborated with renowned Houston-based artist and friend John Palmer on **The Art of Meaningful Living**, a rich and engaging self-help-workbook-meets-coffee-table-collectible. Brown encourages readers to consider alternate ways of thinking about their lives, commit to a process of life-changing exercises, and experience a highly rewarding life filled with passionate pursuits.

The Art of Meaningful Living text is thoughtfully illustrated with specially commissioned Palmer paintings. Palmer's signature art style – a bold mix of expressive and dramatic creativity – is displayed in a series of compositions that complement specific elements of **The Art of Meaningful Living**, as well as self reflection, mindfulness, and understanding.

Design your meaningful life.



theartofmeaningfulliving

This book – **The Art of Meaningful Living** – incorporates all the things learned during a period when my life was filled with quiet desperation and personal struggle, and the insights I gained preparing for my second career in psychotherapy. I discovered a number of practical tools, tips, and techniques for living a more meaningful life along the way, and today, part of my greatest reward is helping others discover this same framework for changing their lives for so much the better. In my professional practice, during seminars, and now, through this book I help people build the lives they have always wanted. **The Art of Meaningful Living** is more than the book title, it's really the process I teach in workshops and use with patients and clients – the process of change, acceptance,

reflection, heightened focus, decision making, and moving toward what is truly valuable.

Turn each page – and find the focus to live your meaningful life.

When readers open the cover of **The Art of Meaningful Living** they find tangible tools they can use to make their lives better today – and a roadmap to follow as they see the change process through. Brown begins **The Art of Meaningful Living** exercises with hope and commitment.

Hope is the emotion that says your life can be something valuable. Commitment is accepting that the art of meaningful living requires time, energy, effort, and taking responsibility for all of it.

From those building blocks I ask readers (and clients) to focus on a set

of critical mind management skills dealing with control, Brown adds. Focusing energy on things we can't control or influence leads to ineffectiveness, disappointment and frustration. As we learn the difference between what we can and cannot control, we can better focus our energy on making the appropriate decisions that support our uniquely meaningful lives.

There are things in your life that you can control, others that you can only influence, and even more that you are powerless over. Focus your efforts on what you can control or influence. Here, you have the power to be effective. Effectiveness builds positive selfesteem.

– Christopher Brown,

Q&A

with author **Christopher F. Brown**

Q What's the Christopher Brown story of meaningful living?

A The cocktail party story version of my career change goes like this: after graduating from college with a business degree, I went to work for my family business, and then checked myself into psychotherapy. I liked it so much I decided to do it for a living. Seriously though, I got to a point in my life where I admitted to myself I was miserable doing what I was doing. I was living a life of quiet desperation, doing what I was supposed to be doing rather than what I was passionate about. I got a wake-up call, and I started asking for help. The

process I went through – learning to be a person I'm happy with – required help from a lot of great people. I supplemented my personal experience with clinical training, and along the way decided to be of service to other people. In **The Art of Meaningful Living** book readers will see all aspects of the training I've been through...and the best of what I've learned along the way.

Q Was your concept for the book a type of memoir, or personal story?

A What I sat down to write didn't make it into the book. The original concept came to me while I was sitting in a seminar. We were exploring a type of therapy I really adore – one that invites people to play with life experiences and memories in new ways. I thought it was a perfect application for John Palmer's art. I called him from the seminar during a lunch break and asked him if he wanted to collaborate on a book idea. So, my concept was a book about Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, illustrated with John's art. What actually came out was my life experience, brilliantly illustrated with John's art.

A peek inside

The Art of Meaningful Living

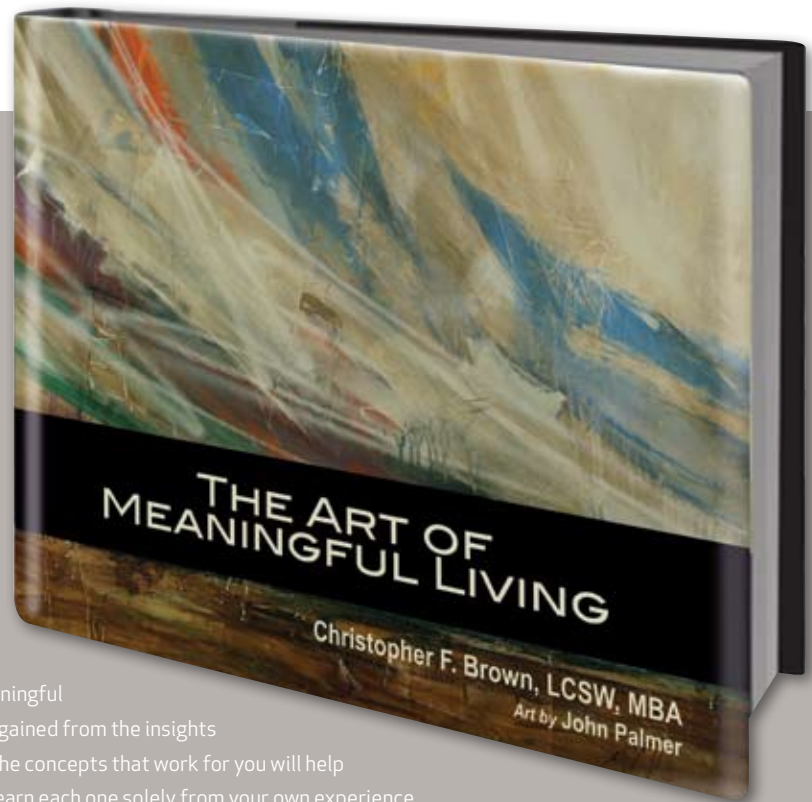
HOPE AND COMMITMENT Start the art of meaningful living with hope and commitment. Hope is the emotion that says your life can be something valuable. Commitment is accepting that the art of meaningful living requires time, energy, effort, and taking responsibility for all of it.

WISDOM There are concepts you must understand before you can effectively build your meaningful life. Wisdom is your accumulated life knowledge. It is gained from the insights of other people and personal experience. Mastering the concepts that work for you will help you reach meaningful living faster than if you had to learn each one solely from your own experience.

ACTION Action is essential to building your meaningful life. While developing wisdom is an internal process, action is behavior that other people can see or notice. After you have gotten ready to change, it is time to move.

RESILIENCE Resilience is the ability to recover quickly from a setback, and meaningful living requires that you have it. There will be obstacles to your meaningful life within you and around you. This is expected. You will have setbacks. What matters is only how effectively you deal with them when they occur.

To read an excerpt from **The Art of Meaningful Living** visit:
www.theartofmeaningfulliving.com



Q The collaboration really produced a powerful message, didn't it?

A I hope readers agree. Putting selfhelp and art together seemed a really good idea to us, and we thoroughly enjoyed the process of putting **The Art of Meaningful Living** together. Art really gives people the means to move toward meaning. I'm fortunate to know John...and be able to use his work extensively in my coaching and therapy practice..

Q Why is your work, and **The Art of Meaningful Living**, so important to us now?

A Now is a great time to engage in our lives in new and significant ways. Now is a great time to make life better. Our economic challenges present the ideal circumstance to think about and apply our control mechanism. How can I eliminate distractions from things that are really out of my control? How can I focus energy on things I can control? How can I focus on the key component in my life today? How am I going to pay bills? Re-plan for the retirement I want?

Stay in my home? Get my family through this money crisis? The process we outline in **The Art of Meaningful Living** helps people make tough decisions as they need to. The process helps people build better relationships. The process helps people find clarity, and set priorities. It also helps people rediscover the power of hope...and commitment to living a life that's right for them.

Pre-order a personalized copy of **The Art of Meaningful Living** today! (Release date: May 2009/Publication date: September 1st)
Visit www.theartofmeanin gfulliving.com for complete details.
The Art of Meaningful Living – Christopher F. Brown and John Palmer, (Synergy Books and ISBN-13: 978-0-9821601-7-6 ISBN-10: 0-9821601-7-8) is also available through your favorite local and online booksellers.

“Meaningful living is choosing your passions over your fears.
It is accepting what you cannot control and focusing on what is in your power!”

– Christopher Brown



Christopher F. Brown

LCSW, MBA

Christopher F. Brown is a native Louisianan and adopted Texan working in private practice as a psychotherapist in the Houston, Texas, area. Christopher answered a calling to enter the helping profession of clinical social work after spending six years working as a human resources director and operations manager for his third-generation family business. Christopher believes that each person is wonderfully unique and that any helping process should begin in a respectful and nonjudgmental fashion. To Christopher, psychotherapy and coaching are collaborative processes whose outcomes are ultimately driven by his clients. With this belief, it is fitting that Christopher's first book, **The Art of Meaningful Living**, is a collaboration with artist John Palmer. “There is no simple answer,” says Brown to the existential pain that he sees in his office on a daily basis, but “hope is essential. I have hope and the deep belief that we can all find meaning in our lives every day.” In his work, Christopher starts where his clients are in their lives, and he partners with them to reach their goals.



John Palmer

John Palmer John Palmer (b. 1974), Houston painter and fifth-generation Texan, is living his dream and his purpose as he continues to create the life he wants to have. He is quite literally making history in his own life, one painting at a time. He is also making quite a name for himself as a fine artist. While he continues on this path, he will be one of the most dynamic artists of the twenty-first century. John studied art at Santa Reparata International School of Art in Florence, Italy. He also studied in Cadaques, Spain (former home of Salvador Dali) near Barcelona. He will spend the summer of 2004 working with Master Painter Philip Rudinov Jacobson in the Austrian Alps, just outside of Vienna, studied printmaking in Skopelos, Greece, and also studied printmaking techniques with Linda Goodman. John describes his work in more emotional than technical terms. He sees his art as free form, full of energy, life and movement. He sees it as Escapism, which is the title of this book. His first book, *Deliverance and More Than Words*. While he loves the sense of freedom and fun, He approaches his work quite seriously. John's preferred medium is a mix including oils, pastels, graphite and oil sticks. He also likes to paint in the old masters technique that involves the use of an egg emulsion that actually absorbs the light. John still cannot believe the genius of this technique that was used hundreds of years ago and still looks great today. John's exuberance and energy continue to flow through him and onto the canvas. He paints with many vibrant hues, always experimenting with bold colors. John loves the way people react to the feelings in his work. He continues to grow, realizing that his paintings are ever changing and always evolving, just as he is. This is in large part what creates the excitement for John as well as his many clients. John's work has been featured in many places, publications and homes around the country, Features have appeared in the Houston Chronicle, Inside Houston, The Voice, Outsmart and Fox News. John was selected as the featured Artist of The Periwinkle Foundation's “Making a Mark”, in partnership with Texas Children's Hospital. John worked with wonderful children, most of whom have life-threatening illnesses, who wish to enrich their lives with their talents. John says they enriched his life and I am sure that he also made a mark on theirs. John is pure energy, and it's when that energy is translated onto canvas the real magic occurs. John uses lines and color to describe the indescribable, and perhaps to escape the inescapable. The work is sometimes fractured and segmented, but still retains a certain wholeness and balance. His paintings are bold, expressive and dramatic. Subtlety is not part of John's repertoire.