
LIFESEMIOTICS - MINDSET & PERSONAL GROWTH
THE LITTLE BOOK FOR YOU

YOU FIRST

**THE POWER OF CHOOSING YOURSELF
AND CREATE THE LIFE YOU DESIRE**

G I O V A N N I C I S M O N D I

**A GIFT TO YOU
SOME SHORT REFLECTIONS
TAKEN FROM BOOK
YOU FIRST**

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G I O V A N N I C I S M O N D I

I want you to be happy!

Giovanni Cismondi

FOREWORD

This is a book for determined and curious people, it is a small practical manual, useful for those who really want to improve their lives.

The author does not offer us miraculous methods, he simply urges us to learn to listen, to observe ourselves and the world around us from other points of view.

Giovanni is a Mindset Consultant and Semiologist, which makes his professional profile unique. His experience combines semiotics with mindset, and this combination allows him to offer a deeper and more analytical approach to personal growth than that typically found in generic coaches.

What is good to underline now, is that everything originates in our mind, in that precious treasure chest where our identity, our ego, our thoughts reside.

For this reason the author strongly emphasizes that each of us is already equipped with the energy and skills necessary to improve our lives.

There is no need to invent new things, just look inside ourselves.

The role of Giovanni Cismondi, therefore, is basically to turn on a light inside each of us to make us see the potential that we already possess and that, perhaps, we underestimate.

This little book, honest, simple, precise and lovable, contains thoughts, notes and useful advice that are the basis of personal growth.

A few essential chapters and sentences, clear and functional, important to awaken the desire to change and look at today and tomorrow with a smile on lips.

The author, whom I met one sunny morning on the Caddebostan seafront, urges us to be happy. What better invitation?

Happy reading.

P. J. Heller (Istanbul, 2025)

Entrepreneur

*“You don't have to be great to start,
but you have to start to be great.”*

Zig Ziglar

INTRODUCTION

There are two quotes that I admire; they can serve as an excellent introduction to this text. The first is by George Orwell, who states, “The best books are precisely those that tell us what we already know.” The second is by Marcel Proust, who somewhat affirms the previous quote: “Every reader, when he reads, reads himself. The writer's work is merely an optical instrument offered to the reader to enable him to discern what, without a book, he perhaps would not have seen in himself.”

So, we are talking about something we already know is present in our unconscious: our potential. It is nothing extraordinary or magical. Nature has already considered it for us, and we should consider it more carefully and then concretely experience it in everyday life.

When I started writing these chapters, I let my words flow freely on the pages and finished them in a few months.

If you are reading this now, dear reader, it means you still have some aspects of your life that you want to overcome or improve.

So we understand why we are here together. You have probably already read numerous other books that are both challenging and substantial.

By addressing these beneficial issues, you have consequently become an expert. Therefore, out of respect for those who start reading a book, I must clarify that I do not promise miracles or anything extraordinary that might only serve to frustrate your expectations. Promises are inherently risky, even when they are easy to make.

This straightforward manual seeks to motivate readers to improve their lives, as it is within reach and exactly what we all need.

This brief essay can encourage readers to reflect on and reawaken their desire to be the protagonists of their own lives.

How?

With a positive MINDSET, or *Forma Mentis*, we shape our mental framework.

There are fundamentally two mindsets: the “*fixed mindset*” or fixed mentality, and the “*growth mindset*” or growth mentality. These represent two essential approaches that individuals adopt in assessing their self-image and potential.

Merely two perspectives on seeing things.

A fixed mindset is the belief that one's talents, abilities, and intelligence are inherent and unchangeable and, therefore, cannot be developed.

A dynamic or growth mindset encourages individuals to believe that intelligence and talent can be developed, enhanced, and enriched.

But beyond mentality, there is a very important discipline, which is my specialty, that I use: Semiotics, which we could also call Semiology.

Through Semiotics, we can interpret the meaning of the signs that every human being produces daily, and obtain a complete picture of the person as a whole.

We can transform our habitual mindset and perceive everything from a different perspective, thus revealing countless new possibilities.

Improving oneself is not merely a hope but a responsibility. As we all recognise, this is attainable for anyone who desires it.

In these initial pages, before delving into more specific aspects, I would like to share some significant events from my life, as it feels appropriate to begin by providing some insight into myself.

Each of us has a personal story and a particular path.

If you know the author of a text, you can better understand the book itself.

Giovanni Cismondi (Portsmouth, 2025)

LET'S GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER

I was born in Italy in a so-called “middle-class” family.

Like all children born in the last century, I grew up in a much simpler society than the one we have today. There wasn't much discussion of pollution, unemployment, or crime. Life was simpler and more prosperous, characterised by healthy physical labour akin to that of a farmer working in the field, under the sun, with a spade in hand and sweat on his brow. Such toil helps you understand what work truly is and appreciate everything, even a brief respite or a simple glass of water—a breath of fresh air that revitalises you, a gentle pat on the shoulder. A good morning expressed with sincerity. Even the language was more straightforward, precise, and free.

In our modern and advanced world today, however, language is often mandatory, one-way, especially for specific social communities where the so-called standards are imposed that you cannot escape.

Anyone kind enough to read these reflections will recognise how language and communication are the central themes that have always characterised me. These very words are a form of communication.

Communication has always been fundamental. Without language, we cannot express our thoughts and emotions; we would be prisoners of our own minds.

Instead, we know that humans have always sought different ways to communicate with each other.

But is it possible to speak openly with our family members? Is it feasible to communicate freely with colleagues at work? Or is dialogue often sidestepped because it feels impossible to express our true thoughts? Wouldn't they comprehend us regardless?

Let's go step by step.

The period in which I was born and raised, the last century, was markedly different from today. There were no computers, cell phones, internet or social media, and people had a very different relationship with everyday life. They were freer. Or rather, were we freer to use our imagination? Yes.

Of course, there was no shortage of wars and international tensions. The threat of conflict between Western and Eastern countries was genuine. China was also getting ready to establish itself as a significant economic and military power.

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SEMIOLOGY

I am a semiologist.

What is it?

Don't worry. It's common for many people not to know what this is, and this chapter will address that question.

The definition found in dictionaries or encyclopaedias states that semiology, from the Greek *σημειον*, meaning "sign," is the *general science of signs, including their production, transmission, and interpretation*.

We are surrounded by signs and continuously generate them, both consciously and unconsciously.

Umberto Eco, one of the foremost experts on the subject, informs us that "It has been at least two thousand years since the Greeks that people have been contemplating a discipline that studies the variety of signs used by mankind, and that Semiotics or Semiology, terms of Greek origin, appeared etymologically for the first time among the scholars of the Hellenistic period, interested in understanding the origins of certain diseases or the manifestations of certain ailments through the signs on the face and skin. In 1600 in England, where research of this nature flourished, the terms semiology and semiotics were employed. A great thinker like John Locke proclaimed that there must be a science, semiotics, that addresses logic and all related issues. Recently, two strands of research have emerged: one of Latin origin, stemming from linguists such as Ferdinand de Saussure, and the other of a more philosophical nature, originating from American scholars. At a certain point, we realised that we could not make overly rigid distinctions, so let us say that, today, Semiology and Semiotics are synonymous."

Signs (signs, signals, symbols, numbers, notices, etc.) are ingrained in our habits, and like all habitual things, they do not always receive adequate attention. We encounter signs constantly, yet we do not always notice them. Signs are not self-evident or natural; rather, they are symbols created by their producers. Anything can serve as a sign, from an actor's facial expressions to a packet of spaghetti to telephone numbers.

"Semiology – Eco continues – is not a discipline, but a department, or a faculty, where various disciplinary approaches can converge. ... The only way to continue philosophizing is to reflect on the human being as an animal that interprets the world. The fundamental point, precisely from the philosophical point of view of the semiotic approach, is that the human being can think and communicate even what is absent; that is, a man can talk about the United States or the Moon, while the United States and the Moon are not there, while the animal, a dog for example, is fundamentally indexical, that is, it points its nose at the smell that is present and not at the absent smell. This defines humanity, that is, this possibility of "personifying" absence or even unreality, that is, of telling stories. I do not know that snakes tell stories. The root of all semiotics lies in understanding what happens in this space of absence".

Semiology is, therefore, an extraordinary tool because, as Eco states, viewing it as a field where numerous disciplines converge, such as medicine, sociology, psychology, cultural anthropology, and so forth, it becomes clear that semiology can also employ these disciplines for a broader and deeper analysis of phenomena related to human beings. As human beings exist amidst signs and create signs that reflect their experiences, semiology proves to be an exceptional tool that can explore the depths of humanity in the most comprehensive manner.

Semiology, therefore, delves deeply into the analysis of every human activity. It helps us understand and interpret the subconscious and emotional elements to dismantle and recombine any communication object. It enables us to analyse every aspect of our language and behaviour. When we speak, we employ language or the symbolic communication system through which information flows. It is a form of social interaction between two or more subjects with shared meanings. A source emits a message-signifier which, passing through a channel, is received by the recipient.

The semiological approach I employ to investigate human beings encompasses all the described

elements. It represents a comprehensive method as it utilises various tools to provide an overall view of the individual and their needs, consequently enabling the identification of a precise strategy to overcome any obstacles or difficulties.

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