



# THE PRESENT

SPENCER  
JOHNSON

TRANSWORLD  
BOOKS

## About the Book

### **A Timely Gift From the Author of *Who Moved My Cheese?* Spencer Johnson, M.D.**

Dr. Spencer Johnson's stories of timeless, simple truths have changed the work and lives of millions of readers around the world. Now comes an insightful new tale of inspiration and practical guidance for these turbulent times.



#### The Present

*The Present* is the best gift you can receive because it makes you happy and successful!

*Whether it means . . .*

- *Having peace of mind and feeling more alive; or*
- *Being more productive and more prosperous; or*
- *Finding whatever is important to you and to those you work and live with.*

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Also by Spencer Johnson

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The  
**Present**

*The Secret to Enjoying Your  
Work And Life, Now!*

Spencer  
Johnson, M.D.

Dedicated to all of the people who are a part of this book,  
especially my family.

## *Before The Story*

LATE ONE AFTERNOON, Bill Green received an urgent phone call from Liz Michaels, who he used to work with.

She had heard Bill was experiencing great success, and she got right to the point. "Could I meet with you soon?" she asked. He thought he heard a strain in her voice.

Bill said yes and rearranged his schedule so they could meet for lunch the next day. When Liz entered the restaurant, he noticed how tired she looked.

After some small talk and ordering their meals, Liz told him, "I have Harrison's job now."

"Congratulations," Bill said. "I'm not surprised you've been promoted."

"Thanks, but the problems are mounting," she admitted.

"A lot has changed since you were with us. We have fewer people, but more work. It's harder to try to get everything done.

"And I'm just not enjoying my work and life as much as I'd like to.

"By the way, Bill," she added, changing the subject, "you look good."

"I *am* good," he said. "I'm *enjoying* my work and life! It's a nice change for me!"

"Oh?" she said. "Did your job change?"

Bill laughed. "No, but it feels like it. It all came together about a year ago."

"What happened?" Liz wanted to know.

Bill began, "Remember how hard I used to push myself and others to get good results? And how much time and effort it took us to get things done?"

Liz laughed. "I remember all too well."

Bill smiled, as though amused by his old behavior. "Well I've learned a few things. And so have many other people in my department. We're getting better results, faster and with less stress.

"And to top it off, I'm enjoying life more."

"What's happened?" Liz asked.

"If I told you, you probably wouldn't believe it."

"Try me," she replied.

He paused and then said, "I heard a story from a good friend of mine. It turned out to be a real gift. In fact, the story is called *The Present*."

"What is it about?" Liz inquired.

"It's a story about a young man who discovers a way to make his work and life more enjoyable each day!"

"*Each day?*" Liz asked.

"Yes. That is the heart of the story.

"After I heard it, I thought a lot about the story and how I could benefit from using it. I started using what I learned, first at work and then later in my personal life. It had a big impact on me, and others began to notice.

"Like the young man in the story, I'm happier now, and I'm doing a lot better."

"How?" Liz asked. "In what way?"

"Well, I now concentrate better on what I am doing. I learn more from what happens, and I'm able to plan better. I can focus now on getting the more important things done, without taking so long to do them."

"You got all that out of one story?" Liz seemed amazed.

"Well, that's what I got out of the story. Different people get different things from *The Present*, depending on where they are in their work or life when they hear it. Of course, some people just don't get it at all.

"The story is a practical parable," Bill continued. "So it's not just what's *in* the story. It's what you take *out* of it that gives it value."

Liz asked, "Can you tell it to me?"

Bill sipped his glass of water and then said slowly, "Liz, I hesitate because you've always seemed to be so skeptical. And this is the type of story you might dismiss too easily."

At that point, Liz let her guard down. She confessed that she was under a great deal of stress, in her job and personal life, and had come to lunch hoping to get some help.

Bill remembered when he felt that way.

Liz said, "I really want to hear the story."

Bill had always liked and respected Liz. So he said, "I'd be happy to tell it to you, if you agree that what you get and use from the story is up to you.

"And," he added, "if you find it useful, that you will share it with others."

Liz agreed and Bill continued. "When I first heard it, I realized at some point in the story that there was a great deal more to it than I had anticipated.

"I found myself taking notes throughout the story to help me remember the insights I might want to use later."

Liz wondered what she might find useful for herself. She took out a small notepad and said, "I'm ready to listen."

Then Bill began to tell the story of *The Present*.