

EVOLUTION OF THE ULTIMATE NARCO MINDSET

THAT WINS IN LIFE AND BUSINESS



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Evolution of the Ultimate Narco Mindset

That Wins in Life and Business

Have you ever wondered why this culture is so enamored with anything related to narcos? We have numerous movies such as *Scarface*, *Blow*, *American Made*, and the entire *Narcos* series. The Spanish series *Pablo Escobar Patron del Mal* is now subtitled and a great hit on Netflix.

As a founding member of the group that went on to become the Medellín Drug Cartel and having lived as a drug lord for eleven years, I have my theory as to why both men and women are obsessed with these shows. My theory is as follows, and please allow me to personalize it. When I was younger, even though there were no narcos featured on television, there were many gangster movies, in which the fascination was the same, yet we were more reserved back in the '50s and '60s, so no one talked about it.

As a young man, before I joined the cartel, I looked at gangsters as the ultimate men. They had power, people feared them, they lived a luxurious life, and it seemed that they had all the women. As an up-and-coming young executive with immense potential, I was fascinated by gangsters. Deep down inside, I wanted to be like them, so I found myself rooting for the bad guy even though I knew

they were horrible human beings that caused a lot of pain to a lot of people.

More than once, women told me that they were attracted to bad guys because the bad guys were the powerful, fearless men that would protect them from any evil they encountered, even if these men had to kill in order to do so. For women, the money, the cars, the jets, and the mansions were secondary to the power these bad boys presented. Their ultimate payout was to be with the guy who could have any woman, yet chose them. These women were gorgeous and vain; they knew they could manipulate a lot of men, except the bad guy.

Then, one day, I became one of them; I became the ultimate narco. Not only was I a narco, but at the age of twenty-one, I was the US head of the group that later became the Medellín Drug Cartel. It was amazing to me to see how suddenly everyone wanted to be like me. People who had an enormous amount of wealth drove the most expensive cars and could have any women they desired always wanted to hang out with me. These people bought me champagne and would give me anything I wanted, just to be with me.

You see, these men realized that all the wealth they possessed could not buy them the power I had, the fear people had of me. They wanted to be fearless; they wanted to know what it was like to be shot at and not care if you lived or died. What was it like to do whatever you wanted, no matter what the risk was?

Yes, we are fascinated with narcos, and we root for the bad guy, even though we know he is a despicable, immoral human being who does not care about who he kills or abuses. We root for the bad guy and are willing to ig-

nore the bad because deep down inside, we desire to be them. We tell ourselves, if I had that power and people feared me, I would not be as bad; I would simply be the ultimate man or woman.

In reality, what people wanted was to have the same mindset I had; a narco mindset that allowed me to face tortures, imprisonment in foreign and domestic prisons, create an empire at the age of twenty-one. The mindset that allowed me to forfeit millions at the age of thirty-six with the possibility of spending the rest of my life in jail, to face more challenges in my life than most human beings can conceive. With the Narco Mindset I developed, I was able to overcome all these challenges, put together a fantastic family, successful children, and an excellent marriage.

So how did I develop a Narco Mindset? To understand this, let me take you on a journey through my life as a Kid, as a Narco, and as a Man.

I. The Kid

Growing up in Cuba, I lived in the most beautiful and expensive house in the neighborhood. All the neighborhood children came to our home in the afternoon to watch the television show *Zorro*. I went to public school, as all Cuban children did, with my brother Juan Carlos, a year younger than me, and my sister María, who was five. After school, we played baseball in the street. We had a chauffeur at our service 24 hours a day. My mom was a cheerful and positive woman, full of spirit, a fighter, devoted to her children. What I liked most about her was that she believed her children could become whatever they wished to do. One day she asked me: "Jorge, what do you want to be?" "I want to make furniture, like dad." "Then do it!" she said, and she bought me wood and tools. When we got home, she moved all our costly furniture and made some space for me to create my furniture.

On October 11th, 1966, my mother abruptly woke me up at 5 a.m. "Don't say a word, Jorge. Get dressed; we are going to Miami." On my way to the airport, I was thinking about my neighborhood, my friends at school, and my teacher. I hadn't said goodbye to anyone. How could they possibly do this to me? I felt betrayed.

We got to the airport with nothing but the clothes we were wearing. When the authorities called our name to depart, I suddenly saw my mother crying, I did not know what was happening. An error in my mother's passport

prevented her from leaving the country. An emotional tsunami crashed over me with an impact that would last forever. These were the most traumatic minutes of my life. I was speechless. My mother, wiping her tears with the collar of her shirt, grabbed me by the shoulders and said to me: "Jorge, take your brother's and sister's hand. Take them to Miami. God will be with you. I'll see you again some day soon." "What do you mean you will see me again?" It was a great shock to me. I was only ten years old. Without turning around, I took them by the hand, and we followed my father toward the plane. My childhood and my faith were gone forever.

When we arrived in Miami, we went to live with an uncle, his wife, daughter, and mother. Eight of us in a one-bedroom, one-bathroom apartment. My father got a job as a janitor making 85 cents an hour, and we moved out three months later. We did not have enough to eat, so my brother and I had to work to help my father buy food. We delivered newspapers before school, then walked ten blocks to school, came home, and went to cut grass and wash cars.

When my mother arrived in Miami December 20 of 1966, we were so excited until we found out she was ill. My mother fought goiter, a thyroid problem that she would fight for years; yet it did not keep her from working in the tomato fields during the night so that she could be home when her children went to bed and woke up. After two years of struggling to survive in Miami, my mother's cousin found a job for my parents at a factory, so we packed our stuff and moved to New Jersey. Mom and dad worked from Monday to Saturday. I was 13. Once again, we had to live for one month with relatives that I had never seen before.

We moved to the ugliest neighborhood, where we found the cheapest apartment. The block was known as "Vietnam" because every night, there were shootings in the four corners. Inside, our apartment was a nightmare. They offered us three months free because there was human excrement on the walls. That's how we lived until I turned 15 and got a better job.

In school, as in life, I hated to finish second, even in a spitting contest. I always wanted to be the best. I believed that coming in second place simply meant you were the first loser. I was very talented, but being talented did not guarantee me the first place, so I developed the mindset to outwork anyone. I planned to earn a bachelor's degree in accounting by the age of 20 and a law degree by age 23. I would have seven years before I turned 30, when I wanted to be a millionaire. I had a clear vision of what it would take: hard work, perseverance, and sacrifice. My plan was ambitious but realistic. If I had the right mindset, I would succeed, and then I would be important.

We returned to Miami when I was 17, and I became the youngest employee in the history of the Federal Reserve Bank, where I worked full-time. At night, I attended the University of Miami full-time. I had the same routine for three years, work, eat, study, sleep four to five hours, and the next day the same. After three years, I left the Federal Reserve Bank to go work for my accounting professor, so that I could start my own business.

II. The Drug Lord

Jack Snay, my accounting professor and now business partner, asked me to come work with him. I was to work all his Spanish accounts, and in exchange he would provide me with an office, secretary, and all the office equipment for me to start my practice. This was the lucky break I had been waiting for, as I had always wanted to start my own business. The first client I went to visit was a small grocery store named "La Puerta del Sol," on Northwest 7 and 37. It was a small storefront neighborhood grocery store with shelves packed with cans and a cold meat fridge to the left of the entrance.

When I walked in, Álvaro, the owner, showed me the office where he had set up a desk for me to work. I would visit the store every Monday morning around 9:00 until approximately noon. They paid me a thousand dollars a month, which was an outrageous sum in 1975. At the bank, for example, I was paid 160 dollars a week, more or less what anybody earned in those years in Miami.

I arrived on my first Monday at 8:45 a.m. My theory was that it was better to be an hour early than one minute late. When I walked to the back office, I was surprised to find a brown grocery bag full of money on top of my desk. When I opened it and counted the money, I was shocked to see that there was \$125,000 in it. I did not think much of it, and I went about setting up all the ledger accounts.

Yet the following week I found another bag, this time with almost \$100,000. I began to wonder what was going on, but I quickly came to the conclusion that this was probably all the money Álvaro had been collecting all year long from their sales and that he had been waiting until he had an accountant to report it. I continued with my work, and finally, by the end of the day, I had set up all the accounting, registers, balance sheets, and reconciled all bank statements. After reconciling all bank statements, I was amazed that I had deposited over \$225,000 and had only registered less than \$3,000 in purchases. Still, again I just brushed it off as inadequate record-keeping. Yet, when I arrived on the third Monday, walked to my office, and saw another grocery bag, this time with over \$100,000, I could not resist it any longer, and I called Álvaro to the office to explain.

“Álvaro,” I said. “Look, let’s suppose you buy cans of soup and then sell these cans at twice their value. To sell soup cans for \$2,000, you must have bought those cans for a \$1,000, do you understand? All right. If you sell \$4,000, you have to buy for \$2,000, and so on. Your purchases for the last three weeks are less than \$3,800, but you make me declare an income of \$325,000. It doesn’t add up.”

Alvaro looked straight into my eyes and laughed in my face. “Jorge, we are not in the grocery business; we are drug dealers. We sell cocaine.” I was shocked, as I had never seen drugs in my life. I had never done anything that would jeopardize my future. Quickly, my mind began to race; I was working for drug dealers. I had just graduated as an accountant, and I was risking everything to become a millionaire before the age of 30.

That was what I thought in the twenty seconds after the guy told me they were drug dealers. In the twenty-first second, I had already put everything in place. I'm an accountant: numbers, income, expenses, balance sheets, and statements. I get paid to do that. It's not my business, and I don't care about whether my clients sell cans, books, or forbidden substances. I don't ask questions, and I don't want to know. As long as I do not break the law, they can do whatever pleases them.

Every week, as I did the books, Luis, one of the partners, would walk to the back and start a conversation. He was a nice guy, and I loved the BMW motorcycle he drove to work. One day I learned that Luis was married to Maria, the niece of Colombia's biggest drug dealer: Julia Orozco, a loaded, clever old lady. She was the owner of all the cocaine that came into Miami. She sent small quantities to Miami: 2 kilos, 3 kilos, etc. and customers went to "La Puerta del Sol" to look for 100, 200, or 300 grams.

In 1975, cocaine was virtually unknown to most people in Miami. The drugs commonly used by addicts were heroin and marijuana. Cocaine, the drug of choice of the rich and famous, was not even on the DEA's radar, as it wasn't a problem at the time. The reason? The price. One kilo of cocaine imported from Colombia and taken to Miami was typically sold in Miami to the local distributor for anything between \$40,000 and \$42,000. And it could then be sold to the dealers for approximately \$55,000, the equivalent today of \$220,000. Later on, we would sell it in California for \$70,000. Who could buy it? The rich and famous.

After six months had passed, Luis, who knew I worked for the Federal Reserve Bank, assumed that I knew how to

open foreign accounts. One day he asked me if I could open accounts for his bosses. I said that I could, and then he made me an offer I could not refuse. He told me that his three bosses in Medellín, Colombia, who were very powerful and wealthy, wanted to open three accounts. They allegedly had various legal businesses in the United States and could not send dollars into Colombia because of currency control.

The minute I told him yes, I threw up a wild number, not giving it much thought as I did not know how to open the first account. "Luis, it's going to cost you \$10,000 for each account plus all my travel expenses." "That sounds good; my bosses want to open three accounts." I immediately began to salivate. Each account opening cost me \$750; that's what bankers from abroad charged me. I could roughly make \$9,250 of profit for every account I opened!

The first time I met Luis' bosses was in January 1977. They arrived at my office together with Luis. I immediately understood who the boss was. Manuel Garcés was everything I wanted to be: a real gentleman, educated, wealthy, and charming.

Everything about him exuded power. At Manuel's side was Felipe Arango and Julio Armando. Their fourth partner, Jorge Ordoñez, had not been able to travel. They were all between 30 and 40 years of age, except for Julio Armando, who was younger than 30.

After introductions, I told them that I had done a feasibility study to open a sawmill in Nicaragua and that I had helped an Arab in his imports and exports of ginger from the Dominican Republic to London. They smiled and asked me about my lifestyle. What did I do when I was not working? "I get up every day at 5:00 a.m., go to the bank

until 3:30 p.m., drive home, eat dinner, drive to school for 5:00 p.m. class, go back at 10:00 p.m., study, sleep four to five hours. I don't drink nor smoke, and I do not go to clubs. All I care about is success, no matter what price I have to pay."

When I finished, Manuel went straight to the point. He told me that they were interested in incorporating a business to import bananas from Colombia to the United States. "Are you interested in setting up the company and buying a refrigerated boat to move the cargo?" They did not tell me that their real intention was to smuggle cocaine in the banana boxes, but from then on, suggestions and hints began to be recurrent. I spent the whole year looking the other way.

I told them that I would do it, but if I had to take care of putting the whole project together, I wanted to participate as a partner, receive a salary of \$6,000, and I had no money for capital. "All right, Jorge. You are the President of the company, and your participation is 20 percent of the business." To be 20 years old and able to participate in business with these people was a fascinating experience. Money was my only motivation, and they knew how to get it. I would do anything to guarantee that they hadn't been wrong in choosing me. We set up the Euro Hold Corporation, I was appointed President, and they gave me \$10,000 to travel to Europe to look for the ship.

A few weeks later, I traveled to Germany, Spain, and the Netherlands. I did not see anything worth buying. When I returned to Miami, I found out about an old navy landing craft moored in California worth \$400,000. With a little more capital and a few months of work, we could convert it into a refrigerated ship for the banana business. I called

my partners, and they agreed. We decided to travel to San Francisco all together to inspect it personally.

During the flight, I sat next to Manuel. I told him that I wanted to be successful and that I was willing to work super hard and sacrifice everything to be a millionaire before the age of 30. Manuel told me he was the owner of one of the largest construction companies in Colombia; he owned airlines, coal, and emeralds mines. He was mighty. "You know, Jorge. I think you're the right person to represent me in the United States. There is something else that I will tell you in due time." I looked out the window, and I asked myself. *Why does he need me? Can't he and his partners do it alone? Why share their money with a kid?*

I did not give it a second thought as I knew my partners were busy with their other businesses in Colombia. On the other hand, since 1975, Miami had become controlled by Cubans, so a Colombian walking the streets of Miami attracted a lot of attention and needed to keep a low profile. Additionally, they did not speak English and did not have contacts in the United States. I, on the other hand, was like a fish in water and had a small but exciting network of contacts that included academics, bankers, and lawyers.

In San Francisco, all I did was observe them. Everywhere we went, the wives spent thousands of dollars on designer jewelry, clothing, and shoes, all paid with cash. To them, spending all that money was like buying ice cream on the go. How many thousands of dollars had they spent on designer garments? I felt upset. On the one hand, I felt an absolute refusal to witness such a waste of money. On the other, I wanted with all my heart to be in their shoes, buying without asking the price.

Later, at the hotel, I could not fall asleep. I felt that the paradigms on which I stood were crumbling. I grew up lis-

tening to my father, who always said that the road to success was through academic excellence and hard work. But there they were, my millionaire partners: relaxed people, without formal education, except for Manuel. I did not want to think about the matter anymore. I went back to concentrate on my dream: to sacrifice myself until I made \$100,000, bought my parents a house, and saved the rest to start a business. I fell asleep thinking about how I would feel about all that. Within months of this experience, I would be spending \$100,000 a day without looking at the check.

Trying to calculate the profitability of each shipment of fruit, I asked the partners how many tons we could bring per trip. They laughed until they cried. *While I was counting bananas, they measured the business in tons of cocaine.* Between one joke and another, there was always a hint.

We went to see the ship, liked it, and negotiated the price down to \$300,000. According to our calculations, we would need another \$100,000 to refrigerate it.

In the minds of my partners, the refrigerated ship would be perfect for keeping all the bananas in good condition, while hiding the cocaine. I did not suspect anything. If I had smelled it, I would not have exposed myself as President of the company. *Did I know that they were drug dealers?* Yes, I knew they were entering cocaine into the United States; they had told me so. And I could guess that the profits from drug trafficking were financing all the legal businesses. But I considered that to be their problem.

My partners had different styles to pressure me, but as a group, they were becoming annoying. Luis would constantly tell me: "I imagine all these movie stars having to come to Miami to buy cocaine. If someone could figure

out how to take it there and sell it, that person would make millions. Manuel and Felipe used to refer to “the millions” I could make if I agreed to attend to their “interests” in the United States. I did not ask anything. I did not want to delve into details or give them room to reveal their real intentions.

During my trips to California, I hired a guy named Rick to install the refrigeration of the ship. He was friendly and invited me to dinner at his house with his wife every evening. During one of those meetings, he told me that he knew the ship was meant to bring cocaine from Colombia and that he had friends interested in buying. I explained that he was wrong because that was what I believed.

One day I got tired of both Rick wanting cocaine and Manuel wanting me to distribute it, and I told myself that I had to put a stop to this madness. I decided to do two things to get them to leave me alone. I would find out the retail price per kilo of cocaine. I still did not know it. With that information, I could tell Rick a ridiculously high, prohibitive cost, arguing that we only sold quality merchandise. The guy would give up, at least with me, and stop pushing me to sell it to him. And I would use the same tactic with Manuel, I would tell him that I would handle all distribution, but I wanted an equal share as with the banana business. Surely this time, they would laugh me out of Colombia.

I first proposed to Rick, who, after consulting with his partners, informed me that they wanted three kilos to test and then order much more. I was shocked. When I made the same proposal to Manuel, he agreed and made me the US head of all operations. This group would go on to become the Medellín Drug Cartel. I was shocked. I did not even know what cocaine looked like and how I would get

it, transport it, and collect the money. I had just turned 21 years old, but by using the *mindset* that I was developing, within six to nine months, I was making over a million dollars a month and lived a very lavish lifestyle, with mansions, jets, yachts, and tons of women. In a couple of years, I went from being an honest young man working for the Federal Reserve Bank and attending the University of Miami to being one of the most powerful men in Miami.

In 1979, while taking a flight back to the United States from South America on one of our shipments, the plane I was on crashed in the jungles of Panama. I was arrested, tortured, and sent to the United States, charged with heading the most significant drug conspiracy in the history of America, given \$2,000,000 bail, and sentenced to 15 years in Federal Prison, all at the age of 23.

In prison, I had more money and power than any other inmates and lived a lavish lifestyle. After my release, five years later, I went back to the same lifestyle, except this time it was different. I had married my second wife Sheryl in prison, and shortly after my release, we had our first baby girl Krystle. We would go on and have two more beautiful children.

During this time, I could not figure out why I was feeling so miserable; I had finally achieved all my dreams and more. I was a multi-millionaire not by the age of 30 but by the age of 21. I had everything every human being wanted, and looking back, all I wanted was to die. My life had no purpose, no meaning. I cheated on my beautiful wife and lost my family. But through a series of painful events, I walked away from the Cartel one day to live the life of a millionaire playboy, except the Federal Government had decided on a different plan for my life.

III. The Man

Shortly after walking away from the cartel, I moved to my multi-million-dollar ranch to breed quarter horses. I began to make a million dollars a year legitimately and hired a karate instructor to teach me karate. He was different, and in my opinion, lived an inferior life, with no money, a small house, an old car, and having been married to the same women for twenty-five years. But there was something that really bothered me. He was happy, full of joy, and I could not understand how someone in such a little world was happy. When I asked him, he simply said he had a personal relationship with God, something that was mindboggling for me, as I was an atheist.

After three years of frustration trying to find the source of a joy I longed for, I gave my life to God, not knowing if He was real or not, but I had nothing to lose. Three months later, after being away from the drug world for four years, I was arrested. I forfeited all my millions and pleaded guilty, not knowing if I would get a life sentence, but it did not matter. If this God was real and was going to change my life, I had to come clean and start my life all over.

I spent almost five more years in prison. This time, I continued to develop my *Narco Mindset*, one that would help me not focus on my present pain, anger, and depression, but on who I would become. I had overcome tortures, plane crashes, loss of fortune. I needed a mindset that did

not focus on the past and its failures, but on the wins of the past to illuminate the present and future. I told myself I was in a monastery and studied day and night. I would be the best theologian in the world and walk out of prison with a bachelor's degree in religious studies.

My identity was in progress. I was getting closer to my objective of becoming the best theologian in the world, but I still couldn't define what true happiness meant. I knew it wasn't about money or power, but I started to look for it in academic prestige and public recognition. I wanted people to admire me for my intellectual skills and to call me "Doctor Valdés." I hadn't yet understood the path. I was looking for happiness based on my interests, without thinking about other people. Selfishness, the root of all evil, was still embedded in my soul.

I studied hard day and night. Nothing would stop my success. I knew the *mindset* well: sacrifice all, work harder than your competitor, and, if someone has achieved something, I can do it too. In December 1995, six months after being released from prison, I earned my master's degree from Wheaton College. The joy I saw in both of my parents as they sat next to me, while my name was called out, was most likely the greatest gift I could have given them. They sacrificed it all to give my brother and me an excellent education. I had thrown it out the window. A few years before that, they must have thought that all their hard hours at the factory, and my mom picking tomatoes in the fields of South Florida, had been fruitless, but now they realized that they had given me a "true north" to return to, and that I had found strength in my mother's faith that her God was big and never wavered.

I loved learning about theology as much as teaching it, so I started to work for a Greek professor as his assistant. I

began to talk to the students during lunch. They didn't know about my past. My path was clearly defined. I would finish my master's degree, and in January, I would start a Ph.D. program at a university, most likely far from Wheaton. So, in my mind, I would only be at Wheaton for a few months and then move on.

As was customary with many of the professors at Wheaton College, I started to invite a group of my students over to my home for some deep theological conversations. I always made sure that there were at least four students and that they would go home before 9:00 p.m. One of the students I met was Sujey, a 20-year-old girl who was a fantastic harmony of beauty, intelligence, and purity. She spoke fluent Spanish. That was the first thing that caught my eye.

One day, I asked Sujey where she was born. She looked at me and said: "Medellín, Colombia. Have you ever been there?" I almost fainted as I did not ever want to hear that name again, nor meet anyone from there. Sadly, I had been part of the ruin of a city I loved so much.

We started to spend more time together, talking, biking, and making sure that we were never alone. We had fun. Sujey was a woman from a humble background, but she showed me that it's possible to be happy with very little. One day, six months after I'd first met her, she called me and asked me if we could meet as she needed to talk. By then, she already knew everything about me. We met, and she said, "I've been praying a lot, and I believe that you are the man God created for me." I was stunned, as I wasn't expecting that. I had never thought that a woman could be interested in me as a person, not expecting anything in return.

With Sujey, I learned to value women for their virtues, not for their beauty. I liked her because she was honest, frank, happy, and positive. She was brilliant. I enjoyed talking to her. Time stopped when we were together – talking, studying, or working. While women had not been part of my plans, I agreed to pray over our feelings for each other, separately, to see what God told us. We would then meet again to talk. If one of us thought that this was not right, the other one would accept that with no sadness. She prayed, and God told her it was right. I prayed, and I blocked the answer, thinking that it was not fair for her. I had a stormy past. I had crossed all lines and reached a high level of perversion. Could I have a relationship with only one woman, a virgin, young and religious? I had only had affairs with very liberal women. I did not believe that this relationship could be possible.

Upon arriving at Wheaton, I was not sure how to make decisions about my life, and the challenges that I knew would come. To address this, I agreed with my professor, Dr. Walter Elwell, that I would not make any critical decision without his approval, and God knew this was a tough decision. I had to humble myself to allow a person who had lived a squeaky-clean life to coach me, Jorge Valdes, previously one of the most powerful drug lords of our time. Therefore, with great fear, I went to see Dr. Elwell to talk about Sujey.

Before I could say anything, he said, "I've been thinking, Jorge. I think you should consider getting to know this young woman, Sujey, better." I was shocked to hear him say this. I had assumed that Dr. Elwell, a culturally conservative, older Anglo, would be shocked and immediately say no when I told him that I might have feelings for a young, Christian woman 20 years younger than me.

Dr. Elwell had never hesitated to say no. I desperately needed his coaching. For example, when I arrived at Wheaton, I needed to make money to buy simple items, such as food. When many churches found out my story, they asked me to come share, and they would give me a gift offering of 500 dollars, yet I made a pact to ask my coach for his permission. Every single time, he said no. His rationale was simple. "Jorge, I do not want you to share your story until you have a new one to tell." I was willing to be humbled and, through his coaching, things began to fall in place.

The day finally came when Sujey became my wife. We had waited for two years. Faithful to our vows, we built a relationship not based on sex but on purity, learning what we shared, and trusting each other during challenging times. It was so foreign to me, but it gave me a joy I had never experienced.

A few months after we returned to Wheaton to finish our studies, one day, while I was taking a shower, a sudden feeling of distress overtook me. My father's fight with cancer had ended and he had died in my arms fifteen days before my wedding. He never saw me marry the only woman in my life he had ever approved of. With tears in my eyes, I wondered: Why do I miss him so much? He hadn't given me any material things, but on that day I realized he had given me something much more valuable than money, something all the money in the world cannot buy: his presence, his time, and his wisdom. The way he looked at me attentively and trustingly, his simplicity, his detachment from anything material, his love for all people, his belief that I could achieve anything I wanted. I missed his presence in my life. My father had become my hero and my best friend.

While I was thinking about my father, suddenly, I thought about my four children from my prior marriage. They lived in Georgia, twelve hours away by car. They only got to see me during the summers. I was an absent father. When Sujey got home, I told her that we needed to move to Georgia to be close to my children full-time. How would they remember me when I died? As the man who had divorced their mother and sent a check every month? What would be more important to them, that their father was a great theologian or present in their lives? We packed our bags and moved to Georgia.

Sujey did not ask me how I was going to support our family. I had just abandoned my dream job as a college professor. My *mindset* always surprised her. She knew that no matter what the challenge or obstacle was, I would overcome; yet I knew she was worried. One day while having breakfast, I looked at her and said:

"Sujey, all the experiences I have lived through, I faced them. I overcame because I had the *mindset* that assured me that I would overcome. That there was no obstacle big enough. My *mindset* assured me that if someone was able to achieve something, I could, too. My *mindset* never questioned the outcome; it merely allows me to believe in myself."

In Georgia, we started a small company with zero from zero, but in ten years, we turned it into a multi-million dollar national and international company. We owned jets, yachts, mansions, and fancy cars again. Until one day, I said enough was enough and retired at the age of 56. My family and I moved to Mexico so I could show my children that there was a whole different world than the white suburban upper-class world they lived in. Today, I spend my

Jorge L. Valdés, Ph.D.

time coaching wealthy individuals who do not have the leisure to trust anyone. Individuals who, according to society, have it all but who struggle with the same issues we all do: children, marriages, families, decision-making. I write books, and I am a podcaster and YouTuber.

Why Write the Narco Mindset Journal

For the last twenty years, I have coached numerous individuals with a high net worth, C-level executives, and professional athletes, among others. I have coached diverse people from a variety of backgrounds, demographics, creeds, and philosophies. As a result, I have learned that for the majority of them, challenges, related to business, family, or personal matters, appear to be insurmountable. No matter how successful these individuals are, some become severely depressed or even consider suicide.

At first, this reality was very difficult for me to comprehend, coming from a background where people were dying every day just to survive. Then I realized that I viewed challenges so differently in life because of the Narco Mindset I developed over the last fifty years of my life. This mindset has no obstacle which is insurmountable; it is a mindset that never says, "I cannot" but instead asks "how can I?"

As the years have passed, I've realized that I can only coach a limited number of people who have the means to pay for one-on-one personal and executive coaching. And as I thought about the legacy I wanted to leave, I began to dream of one day creating a tool in the form of a journal that could be accessible to all, so that they too could

achieve the results that so many of my coachees have achieved. Every day, whether affluent or not, people are working hard to figure out how to see the world differently and how to face their own challenges with a winning mindset.

Today, I want to share my dream with you, The Narco Mindset Journal. With this journal, you will be on your way to develop the ultimate mindset. If you follow my step-by-step program, you will begin to see the world through different lenses; lenses of joy, lenses of understanding, lenses of self-confidence, as well as lenses of love for yourself and others. Things that seem impossible to overcome will become a mere stepping stone on your path to success.

The Narco Mindset Journal is a tool that, in the next 90 days, will help you acquire the principles to transform your old mindset, which is usually filled with negative ideas, and instead develop the same mindset that has allowed me to not only survive the many obstacles that I faced, but to thrive and reach the extreme levels of success in my personal, professional, and family life. You too will develop a mindset to achieve whatever you put your mind to. No obstacle will be big enough – with this mindset you will begin to see the world through different lenses. What you considered insurmountable, will now seem doable. This is the mindset that will help you refocus your life and take you from stagnation to success!

In 90 days, you will develop a mindset that you will overcome, no matter what your social or financial status is; no matter what your obstacles or challenges are; whether they are personal, professional, or family-related. When the world said I was a twice-convicted drug dealer and no

one would hire me at the age of forty, that mindset helped me to say "no" and achieve a Ph.D., the highest scholarly title there is, in record time. And ultimately, it is that mindset that helped me start a company with no money and turn it into a multi-million-dollar national and international company. It is the mindset that allowed me to successfully sell my company and retire at the age of 56 as a millionaire. This is the same mindset I will help you build to overcome all obstacles and achieve the levels of success you've only dreamt of before!

What is Coming Clean?

“For the last 14 years, I’ve consistently heard the statement: if Pete Rose *came clean*, all would be forgiven,” said Pete Rose, the legendary baseball player. “Well, I’ve done what you ask. The rest is up to the commissioner and the Big Umpire in the sky.”

Johnny Bench, another legendary baseball player, always wanted Pete Rose to *come clean*. “It is all predicated on his *mea culpa*,” Bench said. “He’s got to do it.”

Yet, in his book, *Prison Without Bars*, Pete responded, “I’m sure that I’m supposed to act all sorry or sad or guilty, now that I have accepted that I’ve done something wrong... But you see, I’m just not built that way... I refuse to beg your forgiveness like a TV preacher; I do not want your sympathy.”

Baseball fans love Pete Rose as a hero, and we all love heroes. But when society degrades due to moral relativity, it does not matter what Pete Rose does or says. It does not matter if he really means what he is saying, or, as sportswriter Bob Padecky declared, “Admission won’t mean Rose is clean.” Pete Rose... reinstated to baseball? Life goes on.

As a little boy, I was convinced that one day I would play in the major leagues, and I idolized Pete Rose. He ran to first like no one else. He stayed with the same team forever, and you could always count on Pete to come

through. He was Mr. Baseball to me. He was that person I always wanted to be like, and he could do no wrong.

World leaders, including the U.S. President, lead our world for what I thought was the ultimate calling of public service. Athletes played for love of the game, and money did not dictate in what city they played. Our religious leaders molded our morals and ethics, and my father was always home before 6 p.m. to answer any questions that challenged my paradoxically small, yet "big" world. Life was great. There were so many people I wished I could have emulated. I could not wait to grow up and help change the world. Today, when I see my children, Estevan and Isabela, and realize how different their world is, I cry.

I don't know if Pete Rose is really *coming clean* or, as I suspect, this is his only hope of being reinstated in baseball and to benefit financially. But what does *coming clean* mean to us as individuals seeking to be all that we have been created to be? What does it mean for us fathers and mothers seeking to lead our families in righteous living in a non-righteous world? And how can *coming clean* provide our children with a "safe" place to engage the enormous challenges they face, including a society that is desperate to take their lives?

I will never forget that day: September 21, 1990, in the Mobile County Jail in Mobile, Alabama when my attorney Alan Ross came to me and said, "Jorge, do not worry. You will walk out of here shortly. The government has no evidence against you. All you have to do is go in there and plead not guilty. Jorge, if you admit your guilt, these people are going to give you a life sentence; you will die in a federal prison."

I looked at him and uttered the most difficult words I have ever spoken in my life. "Alan, I know one thing; I have

to come clean. And if coming clean means that I will die in a federal prison, let it be. You see, my friend, I believed that I had power, wealth, and prestige, I would be complete. Yet, I had it all. Enormous wealth, power, women, and everything most human beings desire. And I was miserable. So, unless I come clean about the past that created the horrific human being I was, I will never find healing, meaning, and be the person I truly want to be."

I do not know if Pete Rose has the same urgency as I did in *coming clean*. That is up to Pete and, like he says, "the Big Umpire in the sky." But this I know, that day when I came clean, no bells went off. My thinking did not change overnight. Neither did all my lustful and evil desires. What did change was that now there was something inside of me guiding me in a new direction.

I wish I could tell you that there is this perfect formula for *coming clean* and that, if you follow it carefully, your life will immediately be changed. What I can tell you is that until you come clean, you will never be able to have a solid foundation upon which to build the ultimate Narco Mindset.

It is ironic that the title of Pete Rose's book is *Prison Without Bars*. Pete equates the punishment that he received for lying, cheating, and violating baseball's unpardonable sin to being incarcerated. Pete Rose went to prison for four months. I spent over ten years in a federal prison. To me, the true prison without bars is that hidden secret that keeps us in bondage. It was the life of deception and the hurt I was causing millions daily. All the skeletons in my closet were my real prison.

The consequences of my choices still burden me daily. Yet, because one day I decided that I had to *come clean*, I

am no longer incarcerated by those consequences. I hurt and rightfully so, but I am not bound. The day I came clean, I was set free. The road was very difficult, but I was no longer in the prison I had created for myself.

The process of *coming clean* is not a quantum leap that makes everything okay. I define *coming clean* as a process of liberation by which we are delivered, restored, and healed as we become transparent before family, business associates, our creator, and those we love.

As we look at our lives, we need to come to grips with exactly what *coming clean* means to each and every one of us. The message of *Coming Clean* is clear: *coming clean* evolves as a process of liberation by which a person is delivered, restored, and healed based on transparency towards family, loved ones, and those affected by our actions. By choosing to *come clean*, we opt to live a life of transparency before all.

Yet, before we are able to let others see the real us, we must become transparent and contrite. This process is only set in motion as we first *come clean* with those whom we love and have hurt. To do this, *coming clean* must become a process with no hold or claim on any exclusive formula, with the exception of the presupposition that it holds as its underlying premise an act of contrition and transparency. These terms "transparency" and "contrition" are not words to debate. They are outcomes of *coming clean*.

If we look at all the criticism that Pete Rose has received, even from some of his strongest advocates such as Joe Morgan, we observe that they all boil down to these two aforementioned presuppositions: contrition and transparency. According to the ex-baseball commissioner

Fay Vincent, Pete has not come totally clean. "Pete has only come partially clean about the transgressions, which has marred an amazing athletic career." According to many, his *coming clean* is not because he is genuinely sorry, but it is just another hustle by Pete to gain financially and maybe, just maybe, make it to that elite hall. Sports columnist Bob Padecky posits that "admission won't mean Rose is clean. Rose was supposed to clean himself up, beat his addiction, and show everyone he was a changed man. Yet, this has not happened." (The Press Democrat, January 4, 2004)

Contrition and transparency set the foundation for truly *coming clean*. In understanding these terms, we find the tools that aid us in defining *coming clean* as an action that can liberate not a few, but all, and, in fact, cleanse us from ugly secrets. Holding on to ugly secrets, as if we have just fallen in a deep pit full of mud and are so covered by it that we cannot be identified until we clean up, has the same effect on us all. The secrets may be different, but the chains it places around our heart and soul are the same.

What does it mean to be contrite? What does it mean to have a contrite heart? The Encarta dictionary defines contrition as a deep and genuine feeling of guilt and remorse; a deep sense of shame over past sins and a firm resolve not to sin in the future. What did it mean for me to have a contrite heart? How did I know that without a contrite heart I would remain in bondage and be unable to be transparent? For me, it was a process, by which I was convicted that the daily choices I made in search of some mysterious meaning to life were merely the satisfaction of personal selfish desires. It was the moment when I began

to realize that these choices were creating a deeper void within me, and most importantly, were separating me more and more from those I loved so much. It was the feeling that something was deeply wrong, and I had to fix it or die, yet I was not able to.

The separation from those I love was not a physical separation but a spiritual detachment between them and me. Looking back, I was always surrounded by many people, but when I looked deep within me, I was very lonely. We did a lot of things together, but they felt that every day we grew more distant. I came home most of the time, and we ate together as what I thought was a family, but it was obvious to all that it was "my" world – and not our world that we were all living in. I was lonely and desperate, and I had created an immense world around me, but there was no oneness and no connection.

All fathers need to have a solid understanding of something critical. We are great providers of material things, but when it comes to providing our soul for our family members, we are incapable and cannot seem to go there because we are distant and refuse to be transparent. The distance then inhibits the act of contrition and the evidence of transparency. Thus, we wonder why our children believe that we are not real.

It seems so hard to be able to explain to our children that we are weak, tender, and full of pain, doubts, emptiness, and loneliness. It is hard to utter phrases such as: "I am hurting" or "I am lonely" or "I am scared" or "I am weak." It is hard because society has taught us to be macho, to hide our need to be dependent, to be an individual, and when the load becomes too heavy to carry any longer, we just crumble and fall.

Finally, what does it mean to be transparent in order to demonstrate a contrite heart? Does it mean that we must confess to the entire world all of our ugly secrets? That might be the case for people like me, but, in reality, this is not the case for all. Therefore, if this is not the case for most, then are we saying that we only need to confess some sins to some people? Or are we saying that we only need to be transparent with some people and not others? If this is the case, then to whom and for what are we sorry?

No, what being transparent means is that we strive to be open, honest, and vulnerable in order to provide a safe place for our children and loved ones to enter. To achieve this, we must surrender to our fears that prohibit us from seeing our contrite heart, as we feel the pain in the schism of loneliness and desperation. We must repent and admit that we are helpless and cannot *come clean* without first engaging those demons that have created the hole in which we all swim.

Coming clean allowed me to find healing, and if I had a chance, my children also had a chance to find healing. And if we found that healing, then we could begin to build a stronger foundation for our lives and those of our loved ones. It was not until I was transparent that I was sorry with a contrite heart, not focusing on what could happen to me, but focusing on being liberated from those chains that held us all in bondage. Then healing began.

I am no longer in bondage. Indeed, *coming clean* has set me free from the chains that held me in bondage forever and separated me from those whom I loved the most and He who created me. It has given me a new life, a new mission and the opportunity to provide a safe place for my

children to *come clean* in. It set the foundation for me to develop the Ultimate Mindset, The Narco Mindset, which allowed me to see the world through lenses of victory and not defeat.

I do not know if Pete Rose has *come clean* or not. I do not know if the many sports writers and fans who believe this is just a scheme are right or not. I do know that, if Pete has not *come clean* with a contrite heart for the world to see transparently through him, he is still in bondage and in need of liberation. It is very difficult to be transparent to the world. Indeed, we expose ourselves to much pain. But the greatest pain is the pain that we cause ourselves and those whom we love most when we hold on to those chains that bind us all.

I am very excited to have created the Narco Mindset Journal, which helps you develop the ultimate mindset. It will allow you to see the world through different lenses; lenses of joy, lenses of understanding, lenses of self-confidence, as well as lenses of love for yourself and others. Things that seem impossible to overcome will become a mere stepping stone on your path to success.

The Narco Mindset Journal comes in a simple, easy-to-follow format where I share my struggles, how I overcame them, and most importantly, what you can do on a daily basis to transform your mindset and begin to develop a winning mindset that will help you achieve whatever you put your mind to. Sign up for the Narco Mindset today, and you will be on the road to victory.

Jorge Luis Valdés was 20 years old and dreamed of becoming a millionaire before he was 30 when a group of Colombian businessmen who, years later, became known as the Medellín Cartel recruited him as US head of all operations.

At 21, he was a drug lord and a millionaire playboy. He made between one and three million dollars a month. He had women, yachts, private jets, and mansions all over the world.

Evolution of the Ultimate Narco Mindset is a short book that gives the reader a glimpse of the incredible journey Dr. Jorge Valdes took in developing The Ultimate Narco Mindset.

The Ultimate Narco Mindset that allowed Dr. Valdes to face tortures, imprisonment in foreign and domestic prisons, and creates an empire at the age of twenty-one. The mindset that allowed him to forfeit millions at the age of thirty-six with the possibility of spending the rest of his life in jail, and to face more challenges in life than most human beings can conceive. With the Narco Mindset Dr. Valdes developed, he was able to overcome all these challenges, put together a fantastic family, successful children, an incredible marriage, and retire a millionaire at the age of fifty-six. Evolution of the Ultimate Narco Mindset is the compelling story of Dr. Valdes, the creator of the Ultimate Narco Mindset.



Told he would never be anything but a twice-convicted drug dealer, Dr. Jorge Valdés who holds a Master degree from Wheaton College and a PhD in New Testament studies from Loyola University in Chicago, is today a renowned a best-selling author and national and international speaker, who brings a message of forgiveness, hope and the power of a narco mindset. He has been featured in numerous magazine cover stories and has appeared on many national and international television and radio programs. He has spoken in front of members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Flag Officers at the Pentagon. He has also been keynote speaker for numerous national and international events.