

The Truth Will Set You Free

Acquire the happiness
you wish for yourself

Steve
Bennett

Part 1 – How Did You Get Here?



The Truth Will Set You Free

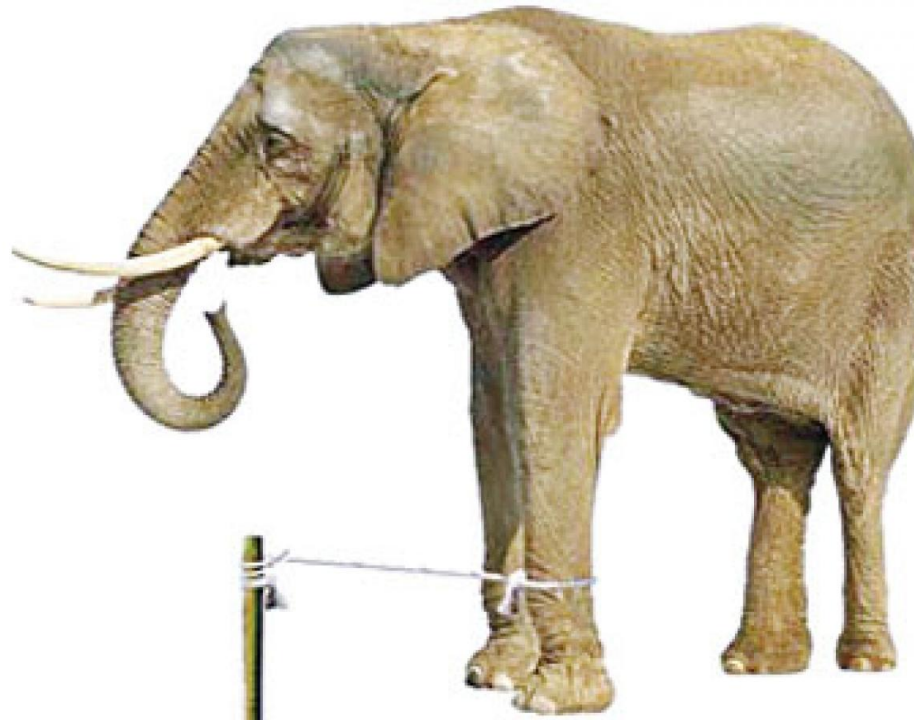
How to move from where you are, to where you want to be



The Elephant & The Rope

At the circus ground, a man was passing the elephants. He suddenly stopped, confused by the fact that these huge creatures were being held by only a small thin rope tied to their front leg. No chains, no cages. It was obvious that the elephants could, at any time break away from their bonds but for some reason, they did not. He saw a trainer nearby and asked why these animals just stood there and made no attempt to get away. “Well,” the trainer said, “when they are very young and much smaller, we use the same size rope to tie them and, at that age, it’s enough to hold them. As they grow up, they are conditioned to believe they cannot break away. They believe the rope can still hold them, so they never try to break free.” The man was amazed. These animals could at any time break free from their bonds but because they believed they couldn’t, they were stuck right where they were.

Like the elephants, how many of us go through life hanging onto a belief that we cannot do something?
How many beliefs have you inherited that no longer serve you? Your beliefs can imprison or empower you
Break the chains that hold you back from the life you deserve.



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This work is dedicated to my wonderful children,

Jo and James,

*And a few close friends, colleagues and advisors
without whom, this project would not have been possible.*

Thank You.

My Promise To You – To Keep It Real

I started the research for this project twenty one years ago in 1999.

Devouring hundreds of personal development publications, articles, DVD's and CD's, I found many of them contained a great deal of useful information. However, for every useful nugget, there were many more unrealistic promises of eternal happiness and fulfilment.

The biggest challenge in the ever growing industry of personal development and growth was sorting the wheat from the chaff. There is a lot of page stuffing "overkill" and hype generated about the subject, but approached with balance and discernment there are - in my direct personal experience - some very good, practical resources that really can make a difference to our lives, by helping us deal with a particular issue or aspect of our personal spiritual development and growth.

My aim? To consolidate all the practical and valuable elements presenting them in a simple format, so the reader may prioritise the order each element is digested. I wanted to bring all I had learned together in one piece of work, saving readers the time of having to repeat the exercise.

Part 1 details how we arrived at our present state of happiness and fulfilment. Part 2 reveals the Powers at your disposal to take you from where you are now, to where you want to be.

My promise to you is to keep it real about what you can expect this work to do for you. Whilst many of the ideas and concepts are not new, they are presented in my words and format.

You are the architect of your own destiny, the driver on your own journey. The work across these pages is one source of fuel and navigation. I hope it will help you find your own truths to set you free to claim the quality of life you wish for yourself.



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In this chapter we learn about the basic human needs we all must satisfy to allow true happiness to return to our lives. We will explore the key roles you occupy within the main areas of your life that combine to influence your levels of happiness. Discover how to assess your overall level of happiness in roles and areas of your life, pinpointing specific areas to change that will bring you increased happiness.

HOW DID I GET HERE?

Learn about the eight stages of human development and how your childhood conditioning and emotional programming could be affecting your happiness quotient. We will identify the influential events, choices and people in your life up to this point, that had a positive or negative effect on your happiness now.

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Discover how the beliefs that reside in your mind dramatically improve or impair your experience of happiness. We will learn how to improve our belief systems and how to eliminate self limiting, destructive and negative beliefs.



Preface

For almost ten years, I was a police officer in the inner city of Birmingham, one of the most cosmopolitan and challenging cities for policing in the UK. It was Margaret Thatcher's Britain in the eighties, so I saw close-up, the community at its most stressed, through the coal miners strikes and two lots of inner-city riots. I saw thousands of people at their peak of stress, in depths of despair, and desperately unhappy. Later, as a detective officer, I witnessed many more individuals and experiences of the human condition in its saddest state.

I thought I was happy and committed in my career, until I became profoundly aware of a growing sense of discontent that I couldn't explain. It was as if I was receiving a message from some "inner voice" that life had something different in store for me, that I had more to offer. I couldn't define the message any clearer than that, or even pinpoint its source. Later in the project, you will see as clearly as I have now come to see, where it came from.

Lacking in direction and purpose for a while, I stumbled into careers that neither satisfied my yearning for creative fulfilment nor brought me any great degree of success or happiness.

Believing that my personal happiness lay in achievement of business success and the accumulation of great wealth, I accepted an invitation to become involved in a new business, pioneering a new service concept.

Later, I formed a new business, learning from the experiences of the first. As Chief Executive of the business and Chairman of the trade association for an industry that now collectively generated in excess of £300 million annual sales, I gained the respect of my peers and a comfortable life.

I had married young, at 19 to a lovely girl who was to support me through all the years of traumatic change, growth, and re-growth. We have two incredibly bright and intelligent children, who have grown into exceptional young adults. I love them dearly and I am extremely proud of them.

With a successful business, two lovely children and a comfortable home and lifestyle, from an outside perspective, many would say that I should have been happy.

My inner voice had guided me throughout the years and it became clear that everything that had happened and would ever happen to me was for a good reason, and would bring with it, valuable lessons for my growth.

By my mid thirties, I found myself asking searching questions, seeking answers where I could. I sought solutions in inspirational personal development material by highly regarded people such as Napoleon Hill, Norman Vincent Peale, Brian Tracy and Jack Black here in the UK. I soaked up the wise words of the great philosophers like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Socrates and Plato, consumed biographies and became fascinated with the lives of the great pioneers such as Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Walt Disney and Andrew Carnegie.

I became consciously aware of my spirituality around this time too, fascinated by the works of Neale Donald Walsch, James Redfield, Eckhart Tolle and Deepak Chopra. Over a fifteen year period, I absorbed the information in hundreds of enlightening books, voraciously read many more articles and what little time I had left, was spent listening to hundreds of personal development cd's.

Within close proximity to one another, I faced the extremes of business pressure, suffered near financial ruin and experienced the loss of my parents, who died within eighteen months of one another. The pretty young wife of a friend was tragically lost to cancer and then my brother was arrested and imprisoned for an offence he did not commit. He strenuously denied the allegation and was subsequently found completely innocent of all charges. The complainant later admitted the allegation had been fabricated. With all credit to my brother, he has met up with his accuser and expressed complete forgiveness.

The biggest test of emotional, spiritual and mental strength was yet to come.

My 23 year marriage came to an end. I was responsible. I was so absorbed by the business that I neglected my marriage to the point where I damaged the relationship beyond repair, and at that time, I felt there was nothing I could do about it. She was the innocent party in it all, having provided support and encouragement throughout the good and the bad times. The separation was painful, but thankfully, our wonderful children have not been deprived of the nurturing love and attention of both of us.

Clearly, something had to change if I was ever to find the happiness I felt had eluded me down the years.

The end of my marriage was the catalyst of change for me. This was to become my turning point. Having already travelled some way along my journey of self discovery, I set out with the deliberate intention of finding out as much as I could about the happiness I believed had eluded me all these years, purely for my own use. This led me to discover wonderful yet simple processes which have transformed my life.

Many times I had read and heard wonderful promises of how changing my thoughts could change my life. I wanted to believe them, but the natural sceptic, and perhaps a residual bit of the policeman in me, wanted evidence.

For many years, I harboured a secret desire to create a piece of work that could help others like me, who had spent much of their lives in a fruitless search for happiness and fulfilment. However, I felt I could not commit to such a project until I was absolutely convinced of the validity of its content. Much of the information I had absorbed promised wonderful potential but seemed to lack persuasive evidence to support and validate it.

So, I went in search of that evidence. What I discovered amazed me so much, I realised it was now my obligation to share my new knowledge with everyone.

My life has changed dramatically as a result of these discoveries. Of course, the process hasn't been an easy one, facing the truth about ourselves and life rarely is, but I have found an inner strength, confidence and happiness that have made all the difference. I have learned that almost everything worthwhile that we accomplish or acquire is preceded by difficulties, disappointments and temporary failures, leaving in their wake the emotional turmoil of fear, anxiety, worry and heartache.

There is nothing new in the techniques and processes I am presenting. They have existed separately for centuries in many different forms. Perhaps the way I have put them together is different, but that's all. I am neither a doctor nor a psychologist nor do I profess to be.

The information I present here has proved invaluable to me and I hope it will prove useful for you.

There are so many concepts and factors affecting happiness, often presented brilliantly by excellent people. However, I struggled to find one source that captured the most important elements of happiness in one place. This was to become my driving purpose for *The Truth Will Set You Free*, to present a definitive piece of work that explores the key elements of happiness, in one place.

There will never be a universal solution to happiness because happiness means something different to every one of us. What I hope to achieve though, is to present a piece of work that will provide you with quality information drawn from the principle areas that affect your daily experiences of happiness.

What you do with that knowledge contained in these pages, is of course entirely up to you. If one chapter, paragraph or sentence brings light to a darkened area of your life, that brings you closer to the happiness you are seeking, then I will consider the effort worthwhile.

You will read about concepts and processes that will require you to suspend your disbelief whilst the evidence is presented. Then it will be up to you to make up your own mind about the usefulness of the content. My intention is simply to present tools that can improve the quality of your life and bring you closer to the happiness and fulfilment you truly deserve.

As I enter my sixth decade of life on this planet, all of my thoughts and experiences have led me to where I am today, just as your thoughts and experiences have led you to where you are right at this moment.

May your road to discovery be fruitful, may your own personal “truths” set you free and bring you all the happiness that is your birth right.

I sincerely hope you enjoy the journey!

Love and best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a slight shadow effect.

Steve Bennett

INTRODUCTION

Why is it that some people seem to enjoy more happiness, success and fulfilment than others? Why do some people enjoy better health, happier relationships, financial and career success, and others do not?

How is it that some people accomplish remarkable feats and enjoy wonderful happy lives of inner peace and contentment, while so many others suffer frustration and disappointment, leading lives, of silent desperation? Do you ever feel there are parts of your life where you are just going through the motions or you are close to arriving at a crossroad that feels like a no entry sign?

- Perhaps a relationship you once thought would be fulfilling and last forever, is ailing and you fear the prospect of being alone.
- Or is it a career you thought would stimulate you for years to come, that has turned into something you are utterly bored with, drained by, or worse, that you now dread?
- Is your previous good health, or that of a loved one, threatened by illness or disease?
- Perhaps events in your life threaten to destroy your financial security?
- Or do you have a general feeling of dissatisfaction and disappointment with life as a whole?
- Does your life seem to lack purpose or direction?
- Maybe you feel as if you wake up each day as a stranger in your own life?

If any of these apply to you, if you're not living the life you want right now, the content of these pages is for you.

What is happening? Why do we feel this way? How did we get here? Even the most successful people, who, in theory, should enjoy the greatest degree of happiness and fulfilment, experience dissatisfaction with their lives that they can't explain.

Whether it is a relationship, a career, financial circumstances, health or our general wellbeing, the problem is the same. Perhaps the most excruciating pain we will endure comes from something that can best be described as the gap – in some instances it would be more appropriately described as a gaping chasm, between what we really value and want and what we are doing and getting. Dissatisfaction is caused when we experience a negative difference between the expectations we hoped for and what we actually receive, between the life we planned and the life we get.

Part 1 explores the history of your happiness up to this point, in other words, the elements that got you where you are now. Part 2 reveals the Powers you can utilise to get you from where you are now to the level of happiness where you really want and deserve to be.

This project is about the gap between where you are and where you want to be and will help you to close that gap. It is about finding your own inner power to transform your life and your relationships, for the better. True happiness is achieved when we successfully close the gap. Wake up every day asking yourself, “What can I do today to close the gap between what I am doing and getting and what really matters most to me?” It is about recognising and understanding yourself and others as you face these significant cross roads on your life journey, so that you can face them with less fear, disappointment and guilt, and more confidence, renewed hope and clarity.

Perhaps most importantly, it is a project about facing the truths of your life, truths you may have chosen to ignore or disguise for reasons you thought were right at the time. It is a project about asking and answering truthfully, the important questions that will release you from past fear, confusion and grief, enabling you to move with freedom into a life with more purpose, passion, joy, contentment and happiness.

I make no apologies for the fact that this project will pull no punches, after all your happiness may depend on it. Page by page, this project will cause you to ask the questions that we spend so much energy avoiding or disguising. The process will at times feel uncomfortable, that is why we avoid them or disguise them, **because** they are so uncomfortable. Your reward lies beyond the pain of the question, in the very truth of the answers. **The Truth Will Set You Free.**

So, what can you expect? The questions will be your own, provoked by the material in the pages of this project. The quality of our lives has a direct relationship to the quality of questions we find the courage to ask ourselves and the truthfulness we apply when answering them. What you get from the material in this project will depend largely on you. When you find yourself asking a tough question, the greatest rewards lie in digging deep for the truth of your answer. This will test your true desire for change and improvement of your circumstances, it’s very much up to you. The project will provide the fuel, you have to decide if you want or need to use it.

As you read each section, you will experience a familiarity with the content, after all, it’s about life and living, something you already know about. Keep a notepad and pen nearby as you are reminded of events and people in your life. Make notes as you go, there will be lots of thought provoking topics that will inspire your own set of questions.

This project will provide you with help to find or regain your path to happiness, success and fulfilment, but it will not do the work for you, only you can do that. Take the information presented here and use it to discover your own truths that will ultimately lead you to the happiness you are entitled to.

With so many of us having to work forty or more hours each week, juggling family, social and personal commitments, most of the reading we do is “on the run” during coffee breaks, lunchtimes and precious “you” moments. The books we can read quickly are the ones we most enjoy and get most benefit from, so with that in mind, I would like to spend a moment explaining how I have structured the project with your precious time in mind. Treat each chapter as a taster for the detailed book on that subject yet to come.

Whilst I sincerely hope you will find all of the information useful and absorbing, we are all different, and as such, some topics will appeal more to you than

others. The book topics are presented in a logical chain like sequence that I considered to be most beneficial with each topic leading into the next. However, this is your project now, and I would heartily encourage you to read it in what ever order you feel is best for you.

Throughout the project, you will see one of three icons appearing alongside text or significant points of interest. If you find yourself short of time, and want to grasp the gist of each chapter, scan the chapter for the icons that will provide you with a short cut to your preferred style of reading and enjoyment.



Detailed information contained in these sections.



Key points of valuable information, memorable quotes and sayings. See also, the summaries at the end of each chapter.



Where a sentence or paragraph is accompanied by this icon, the point being made is considered of relevance to the Perception Cycle Process of thinking, where the use of this process is considered valuable.

As you travel through these pages, you will discover that Happiness need not be the elusive trophy reserved for the privileged few. Every single moment and experience you have been through up to this point, has led you to where you are now, prepared as you are, to welcome happiness into your life, like an old and trusted friend. Everything you need to acquire the happiness that is your entitlement is already there inside of you.

Fulfilment in life and the work we do is a right and not a privilege for the chosen few. Every single one of us is entitled to feel fulfilled by the lives we live, to wake up feeling inspired and impassioned to go about our day, returning home with a sense that we are contributing to something larger than ourselves. Fulfilment is not a lottery reserved for a lucky few who get to say, "I love what I do" and mean it wholeheartedly.

Up until now, you may consider, rightly or wrongly, that you have been the author of your own misfortune. The truths contained in these pages can truly set you free to be, have and do anything you want, so that you may become the architect of your own destiny.

Life and Living



Live this day as if it will be your last. Remember that you will only find "tomorrow" on the calendars of fools. Forget yesterday's defeats and ignore the problems of tomorrow. This is it. Doomsday. All you have. Make it the best day of your year. The saddest words you can ever utter are, "If I had my life to live over again. "Take the baton, now. Run with it! This is your day! Beginning today, treat everyone you meet, friend or foe, loved one or stranger, as if they were going to be dead at midnight. Extend to each person, no matter how trivial the contact, all the care and kindness and understanding and love that you can muster and do it with no thought of any reward. Your life will never be the same again.

Og Mandino 1923-1996, American Motivational Author, Speaker

The Perception Cycle (Cycle of Truth)

From all the research into the subject of happiness, my most significant discovery was that the perceptions or beliefs we allow to reside in our minds, have the most dramatic effect on whether we are happy or unhappy. Whether the subject is a person, an event, or a set of circumstances, the degree of happiness or unhappiness we experience, depends largely upon the belief or perception we have formed about that subject. If I were asked ***“What is the most valuable lesson learned from your research that you have applied successfully with multiple positive outcomes?”*** My answer is what appears on this page!



As I prepared the material for this project, it became abundantly clear that the thought process was relevant to every aspect of happiness.

The perception we have about something creates the thoughts we have about it. Those thoughts internalise and create our emotional feelings. Those emotions lead to our views which in turn lead to the actions we take. The actions we take generate the result of our perceptions.

So, if you are unhappy with the results you are getting, try looking at your perceptions, see things from other angles, from the other persons viewpoint. Provided you do not hang on to unreasonable, biased or unrealistic perceptions, you can change your perception and achieve happier outcomes.

I have found this exercise, implemented in daily life of work and relationships dramatically increases my state of happiness.

The Perception Cycle will help you to challenge your beliefs on any subject, by analysing your results to date in that area, both positive and otherwise.

Throughout the course of these pages, you will come across the symbol:
When reading paragraphs marked with this symbol it will be useful to consider the paragraph in terms of your perceptions about that statement.



The perceptions or beliefs we have about absolutely everything can affect our happiness positively or negatively, dependent upon whether our chosen perception is the one that best serves us in any given situation. At the end of each chapter you are invited to consider you perceptions about the subject matter you have read, to determine if you are clinging to perceptions and beliefs about that subject that are potentially obstructing your happiness.



Coming up in the next section

WHAT IS HAPPINESS?

Happiness is the primary goal of all human beings, but how can we hope to uncover it if we haven't defined what happiness means to each of us? In this opening chapter we explore what happiness means, different levels of happiness and its universal meaning.

WHAT IS HAPPINESS

- Happiness is a mental state of well-being defined by positive or pleasant emotions ranging from contentment to joy.
- Philosophers and religious thinkers often define happiness in terms of living a good life, or flourishing, rather than simply as an emotion.
- Various research groups, including positive psychology, are employing the scientific method to research questions about what 'happiness' is, and how it might be attained.



1 – What is Happiness?

The Science of Happiness



Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence. ~ Aristotle

Happiness

Happiness is a primary goal of all humans. Every religion and philosophy has offered its supposed pathway to happiness, and there are many. Here we will not try to offer instant solutions but will help you to find your own paths to becoming happier. There are common fundamentals to sustained happiness as well as there are common causes of unhappiness. These exist regardless of gender, age or race. Happiness depends partly on external circumstances and partly on oneself. The following pages will help you clarify your thinking and work out your own path to becoming happier.

What is Happiness



The dictionary definition is "feelings of joy and pleasure mingled together". A feeling of happiness is more than just an experience of joy or pleasure. It is a state of mind where the individual feels that "life is good".

To take the dictionary definition further, there is a third element or level of happiness, contentment. So, what is the difference between them?

Pleasure is happiness of the body. It can be warm, thrilling, misty, physical, sensual and arousing. As such, pleasure is dependent upon an external stimulus such as a sound, a touch, a smell, a visual to exist, it cannot exist on its own. Pleasure quickly comes and just as quickly goes.

Contentment is happiness of the world. It is all about satisfaction with life. Contentment requires "Content" of some description to enable it to exist, for example "I am happy because the work on my house is completed" or "I'm content with my body right now". Contentment needs a "because". Because your house is completed, you are content. As such it is fragile, as contentment can come and go with changes in circumstances.


Joy is happiness of the spirit. This is the highest level of true happiness the human spirit can attain. When you have it, it accompanies you wherever you go. Physical pleasures and worldly contentment may come and go, joy is everlasting and never dies. Joy is the most natural form of happiness, totally unconditional and non-judgemental

In medical circles, the experience of being happy can be described as having an abundance of the chemical neurotransmitter serotonin in your brain. When the levels of serotonin in your brain are too low, you can expect to experience a decrease in well-being and "happiness". Many anti-depressant medications work

either by increasing the amount of serotonin in your brain, or by increasing your brain's receptivity to serotonin. However, too much serotonin in your brain can also create feelings of sadness and unhappiness. Therefore, "chemical happiness" alone can be quite a challenging balancing act in the long-term.

There are as many definitions of happiness as there are people on the planet, each of us having our own personal interpretation of what happiness means to us. For each and every one of us though, one universal interpretation of happiness seems to apply to us all.

Universal Happiness

 *Happiness is being your self, the real authentic you. Not the limited self you pretend to be most of the time, but the real you under the layers of pretence, behind the masks you are forced to wear to protect yourself and others from hurt, pain and criticism. We all want to be loved, liked or admired for the authentic people we really are. We may wear a mask of courage, or false knowledge and experience to suit the circumstances, we may even receive recognition and praise for what we achieve whilst wearing the mask, but any such recognition feels hollow because it is directed at the mask we wear, not the real person behind it.*

Becoming Happier

Happiness is a state of mind which can be induced by many means – some result in short term happiness while others result in long lasting happiness. For a busy person, a practical way to becoming happier is to make steady progress towards meaningful goals. Even though this seems simple, it really is a very powerful technique to acquire long lasting happiness. Goals may vary from individual to individual, but for everyone, happiness comes from merely making steady progress towards goals that are meaningful to them. The key is that goals have to be meaningful to YOU. Progress towards someone else's goals will not bring your happiness, unless you genuinely desire the same goals. Your goals must align with your values, not those of others.

Happiness is a state of mind which we must take control of for ourselves, and deciding to be happy can be as simple as flipping a coin and saying “Heads I’ll be happy, tails I’ll be unhappy!”

Any unhappiness we experience is often not as deep rooted as we might think, but simply the flip-side of the coin of happiness. We must allow ourselves the freedom to accept and experience, that unhappiness and happiness can reside quite contentedly side by side. The thoughts contained in these pages will hopefully provide you with inspiration for you to make the positive decision to choose happiness.

There is so much suffering in this world; many people don't seem to be as happy as they'd like to be. Those who don't have enough are struggling just to survive, while those who have all the comforts of life may find themselves becoming self-absorbed, spoiled, or worried about losing what they have.

Many people are living frantic lives, with little time available for simpler pleasures, such as appreciating the beauty of nature, sharing blessed moments with loved ones, or quietly appreciating the joy of being alive.

Instead, large multitudes of unhappy people rush through cities and towns, getting themselves in all kinds of messes. Some are trying to dig their way out of financial debt, while others are making arrangements for a marriage or a divorce - or perhaps a second or third marriage or divorce. Parents are speeding home so they can get the kids to drama class on time, in between the football and dance practice - driving here and there, and perhaps picking up some bags of shopping and speeding tickets on the way home. Many find themselves barely making it through each day in time to get a few hours of sleep before getting up to do it all again. Most people fill their daily lives with “activity” in the belief that it will somehow bring happiness. With so much to do, who has time to find happiness?

The Pursuit of Happiness

The pursuit of happiness can be very much like chasing a butterfly, frantically chasing it here and there only to find that it escapes our grasp as we approach it. When we sit quietly at peace with ourselves, happiness, like the elusive butterfly appears on our shoulder.

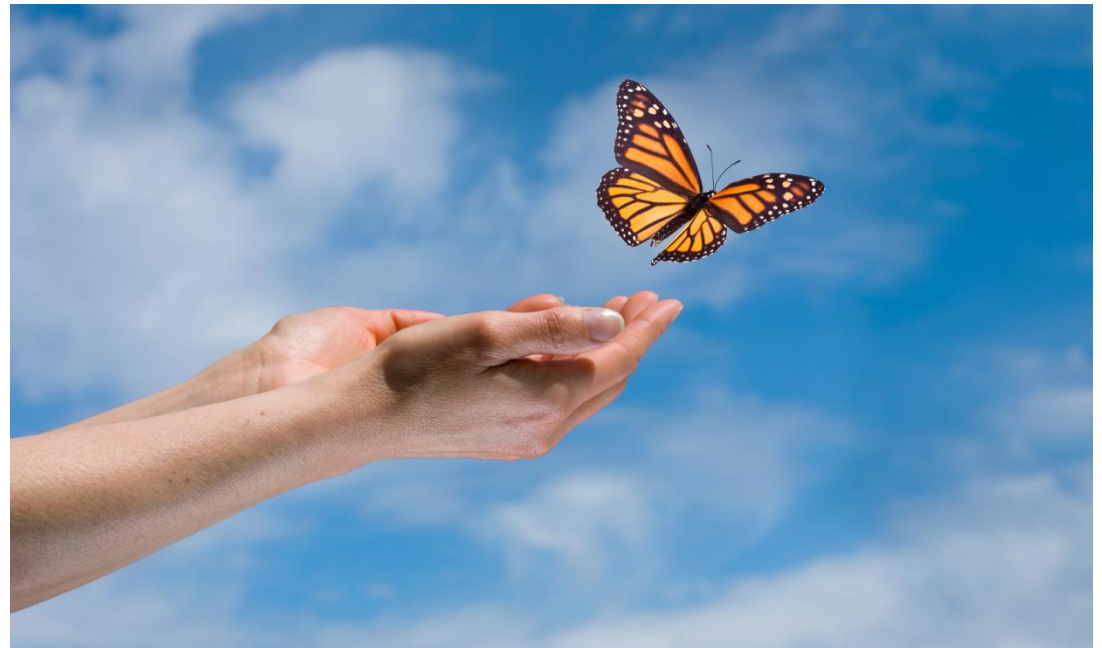
We were born in a state of happiness. That is our natural state, our basic nature. Happiness is our pure state before we found it necessary, in the adult world, to apply our masks and limitations.

Every person in this world of ours is looking for the same thing. What is it we are all searching so desperately for? A continuous state of happiness without sorrow. The freedom to do or not to do anything and everything – this is our natural state of happiness.

The aim of this project is to help you discover your inner truth of happiness, what exactly will make you happy, how to remove the masks and limitations adult life has imposed upon you and how to attract the happiness that is your birth right.

The pursuit of happiness seems to be a big deal. Bookshelves and magazines fill volumes with the topic. It is part of our natural instinct to pursue happiness. The same way we seek to experience physical pleasure and avoid physical pain, we seek emotional pleasure, and attempt to avoid emotional pain. Our emotional enjoyment, or what we can call happiness, is simply part of human nature.

The pursuit of happiness and emotional well being is one of the all encompassing motivations that people have once they meet their survival needs. When a person is physically comfortable and no longer driven by fear of starving or freezing to death, emotional pleasure becomes a primary pursuit. Happiness may take many forms but it is the underlying motivator in most our decisions.



Even with a natural instinct and our best efforts, it seems all too easy to create emotional chaos and unhappiness instead. How does this pursuit of happiness get so distorted and take us in the wrong direction at times?

While it is easy to distinguish between the physical sensations of pleasure and pain, emotions are not always so readily identified. We often have a layer of beliefs in the mind that tend to complicate our sense of enjoyment and pursuit of happiness.

The pursuit of happiness, or feeling emotionally good about the choice, is the principle motivator that is met with different means. Each person has different assumptions and beliefs to get to that emotion. For these people it isn't the choice of a nice car or clothes that makes them happy. They feel better because they have satisfied the beliefs in the mind. If they can meet the basis in their mind they will reward themselves with pleasurable emotions, at least in the short term. Later, their beliefs may change and then they have to go looking again.



A large part of feeling good in the mind is about avoiding what we believe feels painful, or potentially painful. This includes using compensating strategies like buying a large car to keep emotionally painful fears and beliefs at a distance. Compensating strategies don't eliminate fear based beliefs, but people rely on them a lot to keep their fears managed.

Where do most people go to satisfy their pursuit of happiness?

They try to satisfy the question in their mind that asks them what they have to do in order to feel good. That might also mean doing things to compensate for fears and beliefs of something painful happening. The end goal is happiness and all the beliefs, fears, assumptions, and perceptions in the mind dictate the path. You can find these beliefs hiding behind thoughts or comments like, "I'll be happy when..." or, "I would feel much better if.."

In the pursuit of physical enjoyment we get direct feedback. With emotional enjoyment we often have a barrier of beliefs and assumptions that filter our efforts.

Is there a problem in seeking happiness according to assumptions and beliefs? Not really, unless you have followed the criteria in the mind and your pursuit led to unhappiness. Is it possible that what our mind assumes will make us happy isn't 100% accurate? Disillusioned career choices, broken hearted relationships, and mid-life crisis indicate that our assumptions about happiness often miss the mark. Most of what we have embedded in our mind about what makes us happy and unhappy comes from other people or marketing agencies and doesn't address our individual inspirations.

There are other problems with the approach of chasing the mental assumptions of what will make us happy. What happens when our mind tells us what we have to do to be happy but we haven't met the mental criteria yet? Suppose we believe we will be so much happier if we lose 15 lbs.

Our mind can set up the thought to be less happy with our body because we haven't met the requirements for being happy yet. When we let our belief system determine the criteria for being happy, we also unconsciously define more reasons to be unhappy.

A silhouette of a person stands on a large rock in the foreground. The background is a sunset or sunrise sky, transitioning from orange at the bottom to blue at the top. The word "HAPPINESS" is written in large, white, stylized letters across the middle of the image. The person's silhouette is positioned between the 'P' and 'I' of the word. Several birds are flying in the sky, some in the upper half and some in the lower half. The overall mood is peaceful and aspirational.

HAPPINESS

What if the mind's criteria for feeling better emotionally are dependent on things we can't control? Perhaps we want a promotion, or recognition at work. We can certainly do things to help our case but we can't force promotion or appreciation. Our mind now uses these external factors as justifications to conclude that we are not as happy as we could be. We end up unhappy because we can't change external circumstances. If we don't change the criteria in our mind we miss our opportunity for happiness.

The pursuit of happiness has turned into a struggle to get recognized and promoted. Not because it will really make us happier directly, but because our belief system has set this as the means to an emotional end. We might very well get the promotion, a raise, and recognition only to find out we are not filled with joy. Our pursuit of happiness has turned into a pursuit of assumptions in our belief system. The problem here is that we accepted our false beliefs as being true.

If we aren't aware of how belief structures limit happiness we are likely to try and change external factors in order to be happy. Trying to change factors we can't control can lead to us feeling frustrated and powerless.

The pursuit of happiness is real. It is an authentic and natural desire of our nature. For those that feel a deep emotional yearning, simply meeting the criteria of beliefs about what is supposed to make us feel good doesn't satisfy this yearning. At a deeper level it becomes about the heart's desire, or satisfying something at the level of the soul. Answering these desires is much more meaningful and emotionally fulfilling than satisfying the beliefs in the mind.

To create, and live in authentic happiness, you will need to learn not to blindly chase the false beliefs in the mind. You will have to pay closer attention to the end goal of emotion and not jump after the first idea the mind offers as a means to get there. When we pursue happiness by satisfying the belief system, we have taken our eye off the goal and become attached to assumptions and beliefs in the mind.

A new car, new clothes, or losing 15 lbs is just a means to an emotion based on a belief. A belief can change and then the emotion shifts. When you don't have an understanding of your beliefs, becoming happy is a moving target that is likely to get away from you.

Fulfilment in life and our work is a right and not a privilege for the chosen few. Every single one of us is entitled to feel fulfilled by the lives we lead and the work we do, to wake up feeling inspired and impassioned to go to live and work, returning home with a sense that we are contributing to something larger than ourselves. Fulfilment is not a lottery reserved for a lucky few who get to say, "I love what I do" and mean it wholeheartedly.

The pursuit of happiness is a part of our personal constitution and make up as a living being. It is every human's birth right and it is within every person's possibility to achieve. To be successful in your pursuit of happiness you will need to dissolve the assumptions and validate the beliefs in your mind that may interfere with your authentic happiness.



Coming up in the next section

STEPS TO HAPPINESS

Ten key areas where you can dramatically improve the levels of your happiness, how to create happiness in one step, where to look for happiness, choosing happiness, what happiness is and what obstructs it.

2 – Steps To Happiness

10 Ingredients of happiness



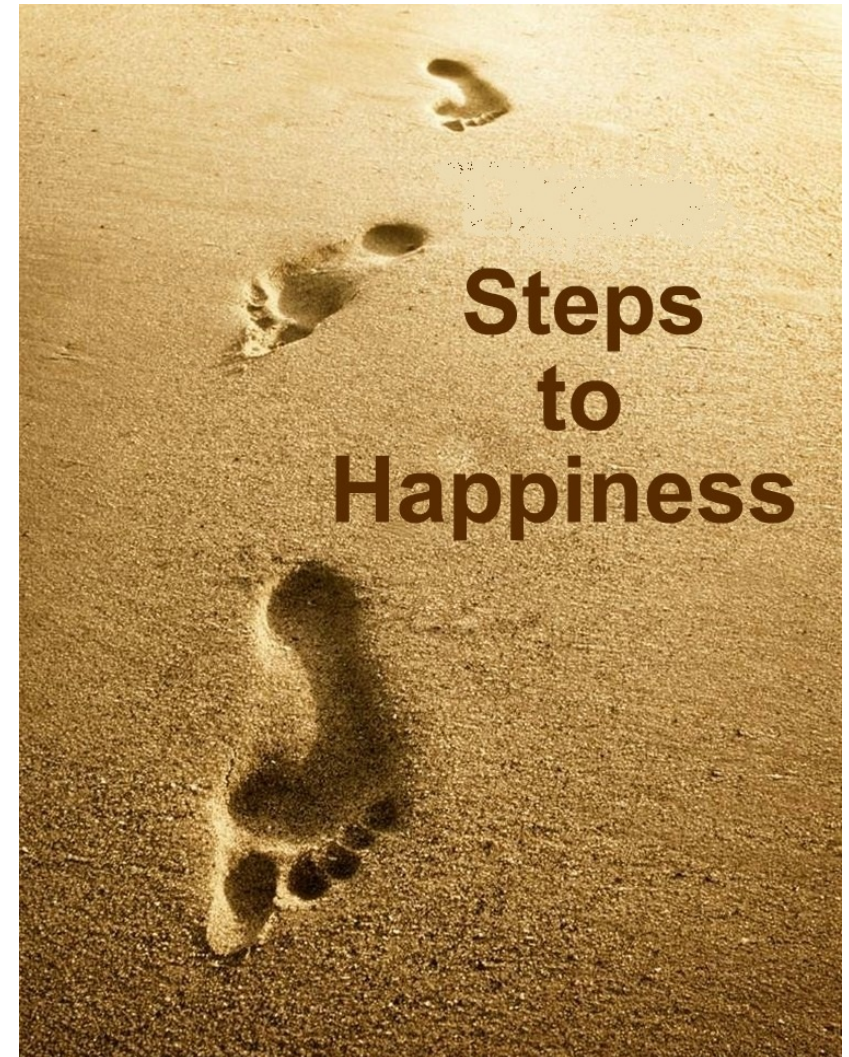
Anything that you could ever desire, any aspect you might deem contributory to your happiness, can be found in one of ten categories. These ten categories of Happiness are congruent with everything ever associated with success and happiness. They typify the life and accomplishments of all successful and happy men and women and include everything you might ever want.

Incorporating these ten ingredients in your efforts will maximise your chances of securing happiness in your life. By clarifying your requirements of success and happiness relative to one or more of these elements will create a clearer target for you to aim at. You will then be able to measure your performance and identify the areas where changes will bring about improvement in your life.



Start with your vision of a perfect future. You will begin to unleash the powers contained in these pages, to clarify the important elements of your life and visualise them exactly as if they were already perfect for you. Your vision will act as a point of reference, against which you can measure and evaluate everything you do in the process of turning it into your reality of happiness.

1. PEACE OF MIND
2. POSITIVE PERCEPTION AND PERSPECTIVE
3. HIGH SELF ESTEEM & GOOD ATTITUDE
4. ENHANCED SELF KNOWLEDGE & AWARENESS
5. VIBRANT HEALTH AND ENERGY
6. LOVING CONNECTION FROM WARM RELATIONSHIPS
7. FINANCIAL FREEDOM
8. SATISFYING WORK
9. WORTHY GOALS & INSPIRING DREAMS
10. PERSONAL FULFILLMENT



1. Peace of mind

Without peace of mind, nothing else has much value and will adversely affect the performance you achieve in all other areas, including your relationships with loved ones and friends to your business associations. You will usually reflect on how well you are doing at any given time by how much inner peace you enjoy.

In its simplest terms, you experience happiness and peace of mind to the degree that you are living in sync with your values and free from the destructive emotions of fear, anger, doubt, guilt, resentment, anger and worry. The key to peace of mind and happiness minimise the parts of your life that cause you to feel you are comprising your values.

YOUR peace of mind is your normal, natural condition. If your time is spent solely making others happy, you are at the mercy of the feelings of those others, whoever they might be. Organising your life around making others happy is a never ending exercise in frustration and disappointment, because it just isn't possible. You can't give away what you don't have. You can't make someone else happy whilst being miserable yourself. You can't make others happy unless you can make yourself happy first.

2. Positive perception and perspective



This is the way we look at everything, filtered through a screen of the beliefs we hold about it in our minds. The beliefs we hold will affect the thoughts we have about anything. When mixed with emotion, those thoughts can dramatically affect the way we behave and act and will be reflected in the results we achieve. The perception we allow to reside in our belief system creates our perspective about that subject, person or experience. If follows that if the original belief is distorted, erroneous or out-of-date, this can have a dramatic effect, good or bad, on the happiness we experience. Your perceptions are such an important and influencing factor in your ultimate happiness that a whole chapter is devoted to it later in the project, where we will learn how to create improved perceptions to increase the amount of happiness you attract. (see the Perception Chapter later).

3. High self-esteem and good attitude

Adults with high self-esteem are characterised by considering themselves worthy to love and to be loved and respected by others. Their true perception of themselves is in harmony with the picture they portray to the outside world.

When you have healthy self-esteem you accept yourself for who you are, recognising and appreciating yourself for your high self-worth by acknowledging your competency, skills, intellect, talent, abilities and good qualities. The importance of high self-esteem should not be underestimated. It is the foundation of your happiness and positively or negatively affects every area of your human existence.

What is needed is a positive attitude - an attitude of being tolerant towards people, events and circumstances and not being a stickler or a perfectionist. It means not to getting upset just because the world is not the way you want it. Your approach to situations is more important than the situation itself.

4. Enhanced self-knowledge and awareness



Since time began self-knowledge and awareness has been synonymous with happiness and achievement. To perform at your optimum level, you will need to discover who you truly are beneath the masks you wear, and why you believe, think, feel and act the way you do. You need to identify and understand the influencing events, choices and people that have shaped your character from earliest days of childhood. You need to discover why you react and respond the way you do to people and situations around you. As you become more aware and accept yourself, you will begin moving toward more happiness in all the areas of your life.

5. Health and energy

Radiant health implies freedom from illnesses, pain or disease that can destroy our zest for life. Good health results in vitality which can make living much more enjoyable.

Your body is constructed in such a way that if you just stop doing certain things to it, it often recovers and becomes healthy and energetic all by itself.

Whatever achievements you may experience in the material world, if you lose your health or your peace of mind, you get little or no pleasure from your other accomplishments.

6. Loving and connecting relationships

As humans we are social animals. We need other people to communicate and share experiences with. We need other people who can help to make us feel we are OK. It is important to have at least one person whose affection you enjoy. This need not be a romantic relationship. A family member or a friend can also fill this need.

We are talking about the relationships with the people you love and care about, and the people who love and care about you. Most of our happiness and unhappiness in life comes from our relationships with others, and it is our relationships with others that make us truly human.

7. Financial freedom

Financial freedom means that having enough money so that you don't have to worry about money. Achieving financial independence or freedom is one of the most important goals and responsibilities of your life.

Basic needs vary from individual to individual. For somebody even an old car is a luxury while for another even a Mercedes is not enough. The minimum we would want to start with would be sufficient income to provide for reasonable food, shelter and clothing. What is reasonable will depend a lot upon attitude.

Having more wealth or income than this reasonable amount may improve the level of happiness for some people, but it is not a prerequisite for happiness. On the other hand, excessive wealth may cause problems of its own making.

An increasingly large percentage of the population are plagued with money problems. Many wind-up miserable and broke, having spent 40 years working long hard hours only to end up with insufficient money to keep them in their retirement. They worry about money when they wake up in the morning, while they're having breakfast and during the day. They become overwhelmed with it to the point where it severely impairs their happiness in all areas of their lives. This is an unhappy, unhealthy way to exist. This is not contributing to being the best you can be.

Peace of mind is affected by money. Most worry, stress and anxiety are caused by money worries. Money, or rather the lack of it is a cause of many health and relationship problems. One of the main causes for divorce is arguments over money. You therefore owe it to yourself to develop your talents and abilities to the point where you know that you can earn enough money so that you don't have to worry about it. For some people £10,000 will be right, for others £100,000 wouldn't be enough. You cannot be free until and unless you have enough money so that you are no longer preoccupied with it.

8. Satisfying and fulfilling work

When you cease to make a contribution, you begin to die.

Eleanor Roosevelt 1884-1962, American First Lady,

People need satisfying or fulfilling work to experience a feeling of being productive and of making a difference to the world. This should not be drudgery. Doing it should give the individual a sense of achievement and contributes towards high self esteem and self worth. It has been shown that an absence of fulfilling, rewarding work is a major factor affecting the long term self-worth of the individual.

Fulfilling work helps us feel we are moving towards realising our potential in life. A lack of work erodes our confidence, and makes us feel, even at a subconscious level, that we are making a valid contribution to our lives and the lives of those important to us.

A recent Japanese study of the relationship between work hours and heart attack risk revealed that men who worked less than 7 hours a day in an emotionally unfulfilling job, were at increased risk of heart attack, and those who, on average worked 11 hours or more a day had twice the risk of heart attack. The number of hours you are working might translate into poorer health over a long period of time. Clearly it's a matter of getting the balance right. If you are overworking, try to take steps to cut back or find time during the day for meaningful breaks.

As you will read in chapter 3, the five key needs of every human being are influenced by the existence or lack of satisfying work in the lives of us all.

The object of living is work, experience, and happiness. There is joy in work. All that money can do is buy us someone else's work in exchange for our own. There is no happiness except in the realization that we have accomplished something.

Henry Ford 1863-1947, American Industrialist, Founder of Ford Motor Company

9. Worthy goals and ideals

Concentration camp survivor, psychologist and author Dr Viktor E Frankl, (author of *Man's Search for Meaning*), said that our deepest subconscious drive is to identify and pursue our meaning and purpose in life. Frankl spent the war years confined to Auschwitz concentration camp where he observed that only 1 in 28 of the inmates survived the ordeal. Those that survived were no fitter, no healthier and no more intelligent than those that did not survive. What they did possess though was a strong and definite purpose in life, a reason to live. To be truly happy, you need a clear sense of purpose in life.

The key to any progress on the path to increased happiness is having a set of defined goals. These goals would be for all the major aspects of your life - health, financial, relationships etc. and would be for various time periods i.e. you need to have a goal about where you see yourself at the end of your life and then develop a set of intermediate goals. True happiness comes from steady progress towards your meaningful goals.

You need to feel that your life has purpose and meaning, that you are somehow making a valuable contribution to the world around you.

10. Personal fulfillment

This is the certain knowledge that you are moving your life towards the realisation of your full potential as a human being. This is called "self-actualisation" which is characterised as the primary attribute of the healthiest, happiest and most successful men and women.

A major benefit of studying yourself and your own path to success and happiness is that it will show you how to become your own psychologist. You will learn how to achieve and maintain a positive, optimistic and happy mental attitude and how to develop a fully performing, mature personality.

You can't hit a target you can't see. Defining the ten ingredients of happiness helps you identify what to aim for. Defining your life in ideal terms, you will develop the courage to decide exactly what you want and begin the process of removing the obstacles to your success and happiness. Later, you will learn a proven process of thought and planning to achieve whatever goals you want.

When you begin to practice what we will learn here, you should enjoy greater peace of mind, improve your perceptions, elevate your self-esteem, benefit from enhanced self-knowledge and increased awareness, enjoy better health and energy, more and better loving relationships, greater financial freedom through more fulfilling work, construct exciting goals and ideals to which you can commit yourself, and savour a wonderful feeling of personal fulfilment and personal achievement.

Create Happiness in One Step



One step in particular moves us toward happiness. That is, to express love. When you express the emotion of love you create happiness and joy within yourself.

“Happiness is a perfume which you cannot pour on someone without getting some on yourself”.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson 1803-1882, American Poet, Essayist



The study of happiness suggests it is a mysterious phenomenon. Suggestions like work in a meaningful career, spend time with friends, and take time to savour the day are put forward as a means to increase happiness. Why do these things show up as activities to do if you want to be happy? It's not because they actually make you happy. They cultivate happiness because people express love while doing them. They express love for their friends and family, they express love for work and activities they find meaningful. When people express love they are happy.

It is easy to overlook our expression of emotion in the creation of our happiness. We tend to think of our emotions as a response to people and things. How often have you found yourself using words such as “He/She makes me happy.” Even the phrase, “I’m so happy you came to visit me.” can have an implied mental assumption that our emotions are because of the other person or event.

Where did that emotion of love come from? You created it. Emotions are invisible to your eyes and so you overlook where they are coming from. Yet the truth is that we create them ourselves. We can witness other people’s emotions, but over 95% of what we feel emotionally is from what we create.

Happiness doesn’t depend on other people or events, we create our happiness in the emotions we generate.

What about all the things that seem to bring us happiness? If we enjoy music, it is not the music that makes us happy. It is the expression of our love for the music that creates our joy. If we are happy in our job or career, it is not the job that makes us happy. The expression of our love for what we do creates the experience of happiness. If we are enjoying a beautiful day, it is not the day that is flooding us with emotions. It is our love for the experience of the day that we are flooded with. The friend that visited us is a prompt for us to create and express love for them. We then experience joy from the love we express for people; not because of them. It is often easier for us to love some people more than others.

The one underlying act that determines your happiness is the expression of your love coming out of you.



Truly lasting happiness is yours when you develop the self-awareness to choose be aware of the emotion in your mind and change it at will. With help from the perception cycle you are able to choose the emotion you express in each moment. When you have this level of self-control the obvious choice is to express love.



We often associate this kind of mind control with spiritual people. But it is actually something that you can achieve without having to move to some far-off spiritual land, wearing orange habits and clinking hand-bells. When you expressed love for your children, a friend, spouse, or a pet, you have already exercised the necessary emotional muscles that it takes. All that is required is some practice and some shifting of the perceptions in the mind.

Spiritual traditions have been studying happiness, love, fear, and belief systems in the mind for thousands of years. Their studies have gleaned a great deal more insight into the unseen world of emotions and belief systems than recent academics.

Happiness is not a mystery to solve or secret to be revealed in order to be experienced. It is so simple that just about any child can model it even if they can't explain it.

Happiness created by expressing the love coming out of you

The emotions you experience are a mirror image of the emotions you express. When love is coming out of you, you are happy. If you express fear and anger, you will experience fear and anger. How you feel is determined by the emotions you create. The reasons you create different emotions at different times is because of beliefs in the mind that respond to different prompts. The Perception Cycle describes the process in some detail in Chapter 9. Those beliefs are the artificial criteria telling us not to love, or that it is not safe to love.



If you withhold the expression of love by the belief you have allowed to reside in your mind, you limit the happiness and joy in your life. Being aware that you alone create your emotions and that you can change the belief in your mind is a big shift in responsibility and power over your happiness.

Expressing love is a big step toward happiness. Your mind may have a lot of different conditions that have to be met before you allow yourself to be happy, but those can be changed. If you change those perceptions you can express love for any reason you choose, or even for no reason at all. You can express your love just because you enjoy the feeling of happiness it creates for you. This isn't being selfish; it is just doing for yourself what no one else can do for you.

Happiness is a choice

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. - **United States Declaration of Independence***



Happiness is a choice for each one of us to make, regardless of what blessings and tragedies have fallen upon our plate of life.

Choosing happiness helps us to think good thoughts, and thinking good thoughts helps to create even more happiness. Instead of waiting for all your desires to be met before you can feel happy, just choose to be happy right now – as things are, as you are. Simply decide, "I am going to be happy," regardless. Then, even if you're going through some discomforts or troubling times, you'll find that your spiritual happiness remains alive.

If you remain absorbed by your temporary feelings – consistently asking whether this event or that person is making you happy, you place the happiness of your life at the mercy of other external people or events that you may not always be able to control. Rather, if you make the choice to be happy, the control and responsibility for your happiness rests with you. Say to yourself, "I choose to be happy, right here and right now." Say it and mean it.

Making the conscious choice to be happy doesn't mean you have to compromise and stop making efforts to improve your circumstances, rather that you stop making them with stress and doubt. By choosing happiness, you'll be more likely to take clear-headed and clear-hearted decisions that can also help to bring your outer life into greater harmony with your authentic self.

Don't let fears, worries, or doubts obstruct your happiness. Fill your life with happy thoughts, and you'll attract a happy life.

When one goal appears, don't upset yourself by thinking, "Where is the other one?" Be grateful that one has materialised and let the positive energy of your gratitude feed back into the universe and create even more positive results.



Be content with what you have; rejoice in the way things are. When you realize that nothing is lacking, the whole world belongs to you! - Lao Tzu

Instead of waiting for something to make you happy, "I'll be happy if and when," . . . "Next time I'll be happier because" . . . "We'd be happier there" . . . you can choose to feel joy about anything NOW, not if and when not next time, not someplace else, RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW. Right now, there is something in your life that you can feel joy about. Just by feeling that joy, you will be putting out more "joy energy" into your world, and that same joy will reflect and come back to you even more abundantly.

As my research continued, I also began to recognise more clearly that happiness is, and has always been, right inside my heart and soul, as it most certainly also exists fully inside of you.

Happiness Comes From Within



The first step in finding happiness is to understand that happiness always comes from inside yourself. Even if your experience of happiness appears to be coming from an outer source or experience, the actual happiness is coming from within you.



Men and women are rushing hither and thither in the blind search for happiness, and cannot find it; nor ever will until they recognize that happiness is already within them and round about them, filling the universe, and that they, in their selfish searching, are shutting themselves out from it.

--James Allen "As A man Thinketh"

That happiness comes from within and not from exterior events or other people, becomes clear when we discover that certain situations that had once brought great happiness no longer create the same effect. Time and time again, each of us is given opportunities to learn and remember that it is not outer things that bring happiness, but the attachment of our inner thoughts and feelings with those things. Our inner thoughts and feelings are the basis of both our happiness and our unhappiness.

Because happiness comes from within, even when things don't appear to be going perfectly well outwardly, it is still possible to experience sincere happiness. It is our inner feeling that creates happiness, along with how we interpret the events of life. When you start to realise that lasting happiness is not “attached” to other people, material things or events, you are freed from the mental ties that bound you to the mistaken belief that your happiness or unhappiness was out of your control.

Are You Already Happy?

One of my favourite films from my childhood was the Wizard of Oz. Remember the college diploma the Wizard of Oz gave to the scarecrow and the medal of honour that made the lion recognize his own true courage? Perhaps all we need is a diploma of happiness to declare that : “Congratulations, you are now officially a happy person!”. Did you ever stop to think that you might already be happy and not know it?

You can be happy while enjoying whatever you are experiencing – in full flow and growing while being who you are, however you are, and wherever you are. Some people may even find happiness in being somewhat of a killjoy. There is even a word to describe it – “Schadenfreude”: meaning 'pleasure taken from someone else's misfortune'.

What would it feel like to simply accept and believe that you are already, automatically, authentically, deeply and profoundly happy, and to know that you will always be happy, regardless of what does or doesn't happen in your life?

Sometimes happiness can boil down to whether we think we are happy, so please don't confuse your overall happiness with things that may or may not be causing you concern or anxiety. Every day, life will have its ups and downs. With this awareness, let the waves of your life ebb and flow, and seek to maintain a happy heart through it all.

When you start with the assumption that you will be happy regardless, you'll have taken a powerful step to being happy. By accepting that you're already happy, you'll be relieving yourself of a great burden - that of always seeking and desiring to find happiness in other people, places and things. You'll breath a sigh with relief, as you become relaxed in your own natural state of happiness.

Being too needy for happiness can have the same effect on your happiness that being needy about money can have on your finances and being too needy in relationships - it weakens your sense of self-empowerment and lowers your self-worth. If you use all your energy seeking happiness, it may elude you and the very act of desperately seeking it may keep you from being happy. The more you constantly ask yourself if you are happy, the less happy you may become.

While admiring or helping others, our focus is on appreciating and serving, instead of on monitoring our own personal, momentary experiences of happiness. Provided you achieve the right balance of selfless giving and selfish taking, by putting effort into helping others, happiness will appear in your life.

Types of Happiness

Whilst there are as many descriptions of happiness as there are people on the planet, happiness itself falls into one of six broad categories :-

Physical Happiness: Physical happiness means having the basics that will allow you to survive and thrive, such as food, water, shelter, and air.

Emotional Happiness: Emotional happiness comes from feelings of love, belonging, and having a sense of family or community.

Mental Happiness: Mental happiness comes with a positive self-image, and includes making good use of your mind's ability to continually improve and grow in your understanding and appreciation of life.

Creative Happiness: Creative happiness blossoms forth when you are expressing your excellence as whatever you are meant to be - being the best artist, manager, cook, friend, mother, or worker that you can be - offering your creative efforts to benefit society and those you love.

Spiritual Happiness: Spiritual happiness fills you with the peacefulness of unshakable faith, as you rest in your higher self -- while giving and serving with universal love and a vision of the bigger picture of your soul's journey.

Eternal Bliss: Eternal bliss is a realm of unearthly ecstasy and oneness with all. We'll know it when we see it!

There is a direct comparison with the structure of the types of happiness and the human needs hierarchy described in chapter 3.

Happiness is a state of mind

What an amazing instrument the mind is!

When we truly learn to make full use of our mind's potential, we can harness the tremendous power of our thoughts and intentions to inspire and empower all of our actions, and to create ongoing happiness in our lives.

You will know that the entire universe is made up of energy. Everything you can see, touch, hear, taste, sense and imagine is represented by energy vibrating at different frequencies. Our minds affect the world around us because thoughts have energy too. Our minds affect the world through our thoughts, feelings, and actions, in obvious and subtle ways. To state it simply: Happy thoughts equal a happy world; sad thoughts equal a sad world. Fearful thoughts equal a

fearsome world; angry thoughts equal an angry world. Benevolent thoughts equal a benevolent world; generous thoughts equal a generous world. Simply, the more we give of something, the more of it we will receive.

What we think literally reflects in the world around us because of certain logical, scientific, and philosophical connections that may not be fully described or studied in today's school classrooms, but which are nevertheless fundamental elements of this experience we call human life.



Ultimately, our happiness depends not on what we have, but on how we think and feel about what we have. Although this is an obvious fact of life, few people truly harness the power of their minds to practice intentional happiness.

Once you understand that your mind is the source of happiness, you have an opportunity to consciously take back the control of your experience of life. You can look at anything that happens, and think, "How can I grow from this? How can I interpret this in a positive way? How can I love, embrace, and make the best of this situation?" You can enjoy the many benefits that come from intelligent, intentional optimism, including the wonder of spiritual happiness. With the miracle of your mind, you can approach life with excitement, willingness, inspiration, and joy. Happiness will then follow you automatically.

"A person will be just about as happy as they make up their minds to be".
Abraham Lincoln - 1809-1865, Sixteenth President of the USA

Happiness is acceptance

All issues, all turmoil, all conflicts can be handled by understanding what the problem is and accepting it, then changing it. We are either part of the problem or part of the solution. When we are disturbed about something or someone, it is because we do not understand on a higher level but view it through our personality which is attached to our need to control things and see ourselves in a positive light.

"Nobody can make you feel inferior without your consent". – Eleanor Roosevelt - 1884-1962, American First Lady, Columnist, Lecturer, Humanitarian




"Be willing to have it so. Acceptance of what has happened is the first step to overcoming the consequence of misfortune".
William James -

If some part of our life is unacceptable, and we have been unsuccessful in dealing with it, sometimes the only way through is to accept that this is so. We cannot find serenity when we are at war with someone or with ourselves. Nothing happens in this wonderful Universe by mistake or accident. Unless we accept our situation and learn from it, we cannot be happy. If we learn from it, then we need not suffer unnecessarily.

Nor do we need to hurt others with words of blame. We need only concentrate on our part of the situation; what needs to be changed is our way of thinking and having done so, happiness will follow.

Happiness and self-acceptance

 A little bit of pleasure, an occasional sixty seconds of joy, is for most of us, quite acceptable and very much appreciated. It goes some way to making up for the work, the stress, the suffering and the sacrifice that came before it. Whilst we may be comfortable with life's little pleasures; our conditioning makes us feel less comfortable with prolonged happiness, full blown JOY and everlasting bliss.

Ask yourself.. how much happiness can you really handle? One hour? A week? A month? A year? A lifetime? How long can you live with happiness and joy before you begin to question and doubt what is happening? How long can you accept being peaceful, or blissfully happy before you become restless and anxious? How long can you enjoy someone's love and attention, accept their genuine affection, appreciation and admiration before you grow uncomfortable or even guilty, believing that you are receiving more bliss than you deserve? How long can you accept and trust the feeling of complete freedom a person or an experience offers, before you sabotage it?

Acceptance rather than time is the real issue, and in particular, self-acceptance.

Happiness and self-acceptance go hand in hand. In fact :



“Your level of happiness is directly determined by your level of self acceptance”

The more self acceptance you have, the more happiness you will allow yourself to accept, receive and enjoy. In other words:



“You enjoy as much happiness as you believe you are worthy of”.

Happiness comes easily when your level of self-acceptance level is high, but happiness seems so distant when your self acceptance is low. When you feel low, you can't help but dream of being happy once more, but you may secretly fear that you're just not deserving of happiness, and so you question, doubt, resist, test, deny, defend against, overlook and push away invitations to be happy.

To deny your self acceptance is to believe you are not worthy of happiness. You cannot have a low level of self acceptance AND happiness. To persist with a feeling of unworthiness and also accept happiness is too much of a conflict – a conflict that will leave you feeling guilty. How can you accept happiness and also believe you do not deserve it?

You attract what you believe you deserve.

Self-acceptance and your self-worth are the key to both your happiness and unhappiness. If you can accept yourself as you are, happiness is natural and acceptable to you. If, however, you allow yourself to believe you are “not good enough”, then you send out energy vibrations, albeit some of them subconsciously that you are not good enough for happiness. Indeed, for as long as you perpetuate this belief you will always deny yourself complete happiness, for fear of the guilt you will feel.

Happiness and guilt

The greatest obstacle to our facing the truths of what we really want, what makes us truly happy and to finally accepting the happiness intended for us, is our guilt, and we have plenty of it.

Simply, guilt is the belief that you do not deserve all the happiness that activity or person will bring you. It is the belief that you are ‘not good enough’, ‘wrong’, ‘bad’ and ‘nothing’. This belief is learned. It is not your natural state. All thoughts of lack such as this are born in the ego, that part of you that hopes for happiness but ultimately has “learned to believe” that you are not really deserving of it.

We long for happiness, but we may also believe we are too guilty to accept it. We love the idea of happiness. It feels so good. But what holds us back is our fear that maybe it’s selfish, wrong, inappropriate, and that it comes with a price. Out-of-date conditioning has taught us to believe that happiness demands compensation of some sort – in the form of suffering, labour or sacrifice. Guilt doesn’t just rear it’s head to obstruct our happiness, however. Have you noticed, for example, how :



“That which you desire is what you feel most guilty about!”

This is the ego at work again! In spiritual circles, a tremendous amount of emphasis is placed on releasing our ego’s for the purpose of achieving true inner peace.

The ego creates guilty feelings everywhere it can, especially where happiness is to be found. The ego tries to make us feel guilty about anything and everything, particularly nice, pleasurable things. Take pleasure for example. Pleasure is a happiness of the body, an enjoyment of the senses. Pleasure is about beautiful colours, scented aromas, wonderful music, a healing touch and exotic tastes. We have also wrongly been taught to believe however, that pleasure is wicked. What nonsense!

Somehow we’ve picked up the erroneous belief that ‘pleasure is so good it must be a sin’. We hear that too much pleasure can kill off our morals, destroy our virtues and ruin all values. All by itself apparently, pleasure can lead to laziness, selfishness, anarchy, war, damnation, the end of the world and the downfall of the human race!

Sex is pleasure. Sex is natural, good fun and healthy. That sounds like a really great, very logical, objective and mature approach, but most of us still feel guilt-ridden talking about it. Remember the childhood gems of wisdom ‘play with it and it will fall off’ and ‘Do that again and you’ll go blind’ ‘That’s dirty, don’t do it?’

Examples are plenty of how, through conditioning with irrational beliefs, we have been taught to feel guilty about everything we like. Chocolate is ‘naughty but nice’, money is ‘the root of all evil’, peace and rest is re-written as ‘the devil making use of idle hands’, laughter ‘will end in tears’, success ‘will ruin you’. Until those beliefs are examined and seen for what they are, irrational and no longer serving us, guilt will remain a way of life for so many, reinforcing those thoughts of unworthiness.

For as long as you accept yourself to be unworthy, you will never be able to freely accept happiness when it presents itself. Show me someone who suffers with guilt and I’ll wager that you’ll see someone, who may on the surface appears confident and self assured, but has suffered, or continues to suffer with a disguised sense of unworthiness and the associated need for approval.

Self acceptance and true happiness are both impossible while you believe that guilt plays a valid part in your life. Whilst you continue to believe that guilt is valid, you will, deep down, have a subconscious belief that you do not deserve happiness.

If you replace the phrase ‘self-acceptance and happiness’ with **SELF-ACCEPTANCE IS HAPPINESS** , then maybe you will start to see more clearly how important it is to let go of guilt. Letting go of guilt is releasing the ego.

Letting Go Of Your Ego

The world is littered with man-made myths, superstitions and stories that tell of our descent from heaven, falling from grace and our separation from God.

Christianity reflects contradictions that are common to all organised religions of the world. On one hand there are Christians who believe in a loving, forgiving God and believe in the general goodness of mankind, that God wants unlimited happiness for each and every one of us, and then there are others who ask God to bless their bombs, who speak of the fear we should feel through God’s vengeance, believing in original sin i.e. that you and I are guilty.

Guilt is not exclusive to Catholicism, contrary to what many may think, they do not have the monopoly on guilt. The Jewish faith is riddled with guilt. Hindu’s have their ‘karma’, Muslims are permanently atoning. Guilt is clearly non-denominational.

From an early age, we are taught strange ideas such as :

- Guilt is our natural state
- Guilt is good for our morality
- It is bad NOT to feel guilty

- Anarchy rules if there is no guilt
- Guilt makes you behave better
- Guilt shows you care
- Guilt shows you are sorry
- Guilt stops you sinning

Of course, the reason we feel we are sinful is because we are conditioned to feel so guilty in the first place. Guilt begets more guilt. Guilt serves no useful practical purpose and will never take you to love, peace or happiness.

For centuries the organised religions have capitalised on our guilt, using fear of the wrath of God to cling on to their followers. These methods are outdated in this new world of ours. Whatever your beliefs, be it an organised religion or an individual spiritual path, a “Creator” that wields the enormous power to create and snuff out everything in this universe of ours, has no need to utilise fear or guilt.

I remember the “guilt trips” my parents perpetuated :

- You should be ashamed of yourself
- We are very disappointed in you
- How could you do this to us?
- You just don’t care
- How selfish can you get?
- You’ll be the death of me
- You’ll send me to my grave

Children learn quickly, and we created our own guilt trips too :-

- My mate’s dad always lets him . . .
- Why can’t I have one too?
- We never go anywhere
- Please Dad, just this once . . .
- If you loved me you would/wouldn’t

And, all too often, love gives way to guilt.

And our teachers did their bit too . . .

What would your mom say?

Then our bosses joined in with

“Whatever you do don’t screw this one up” ...

And then, our significant other chips in with . . .

- “If you loved me, you would”
- “I’d love you more if”



Guilt is learned. Anything that can be learned can be un-learned. You can let go of your conditioning right here and now if you can accept and adhere to a most fundamental key to happiness :-

I am not advocating anarchy, extending criticism of organised religion, or suggesting that socially unacceptable behaviour become the norm. Far from it. Peaceful enjoyment of life, without socially unacceptable or criminal behaviour is an essential pre-requisite for global happiness. A correct level of social conscience and values that do not contravene the law of the land, are far more appropriate and positive, whereas guilt is a negative emotion that serves no useful purpose to anyone.



“You cannot teach anyone they are guilty, if you are to be free of guilt yourself.”

Thoughts are never given away, they are always shared. If you teach someone they should feel guilty, you simultaneously teach yourself that you should feel guilty too. Also, when you judge someone as being unworthy of happiness you are, in that very same instant, telling yourself you are also unworthy.

The reverse of this principle is that every time you affirm another person’s goodness, you affirm these qualities for yourself. Either we are all free or none of us are. Happiness would have you commit to the idea that you are in essence, not guilty, and neither is anyone else.



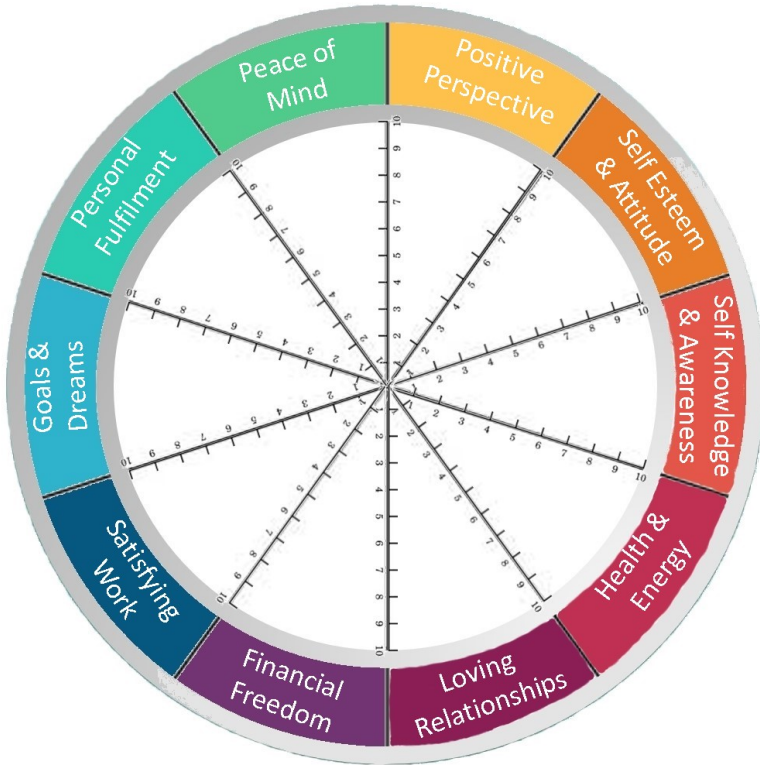
“Most men lead lives of quiet desperation and go to the grave with their best song still in them”.

Henry David Thoreau - 1817-1862, American Essayist, Poet, Naturalist

Happiness is an intentional choice. Choose happiness, it is your birth right.



Perception Cycle Exercise



Referring to the ten steps of happiness at the start of this section, plot your score for how you feel you are satisfied in each area out of ten. Zero or 1 is dire, suggesting you have a lot of work to do to arrive at a happier state.

Ten is perhaps a little optimistic. If you score yourself ten in every area and mean it sincerely, I congratulate you on achieving such an incredible state of self satisfaction. However, I would suggest there is little more these pages can add to your current state of euphoric bliss!

Seriously though, be realistic in your rating of each area. The GAP between where you are and where you would like to be, summarises where you need to focus to bring a balanced level of happiness and fulfilment to your life.



Coming up in the next section

THE REAL YOU

Discovering the authentic you that makes you most happy, reclaiming your authentic self, avoiding the negative influence of others, concluding with your authenticity self analysis.

A man with curly brown hair, wearing a white dress shirt and a dark tie, is shown from the chest up. He is pulling down a light-colored, textured mask from his face. His eyes are looking upwards and to the right, and his mouth is slightly open. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

*The Real
You*

*Behind
The Mask*

3 – The Real You

We need to find the courage to say NO to the things and people that are not serving us if we want to rediscover ourselves and live our lives with authenticity.

Barbara De Angelis - American Expert on Relationship & Love, Author

In order to understand what is meant by the authentic you, or your real self, think back to the times in your life when you have been at your best. We're talking here, about the times when you were happiest, when you felt most fulfilled, and more especially the most real. In the heart of those moments, your life flowed with an energy and excitement and yet you may have felt a gentle calmness within. You had unshakeable confidence and belief in your own self-worth with formidable strength and trust in yourself. You were having fun and there was no room for self doubt or anxiety. You had indestructible optimism, doing exactly what you felt you were meant to do with the people you chose. Your life was interesting and filled with colour and passion, and significantly, you accepted and liked yourself for who you were. Because you felt so good about yourself, so determined to live life to the full, you couldn't care less what others thought about you. From confidence rather than selfishness, **you** mattered more than anything. You may not have known what the future held, but you were confident you could handle it.

Remember the descriptions of happiness in the last section, let's remind ourselves:-



“Happiness is being yourself, the real authentic you. Not the limited self you pretend to be most of the time, but the real you under the layers of pretence, behind the masks you are forced to wear to protect yourself and others from hurt, pain and criticism. The freedom to do or not to do anything and everything – this is our natural state of happiness before we covered it with masks and limitations.”

What happened to the wonderful, authentic you? Life happened, that's what!

“Everyone says I must have the perfect life. They all think my husband is so caring and loving. They don't know the half of it. I disguise my unhappiness to the outside world, I don't like to do my dirty washing in public. It just looks perfect, but sometimes I feel I'm dying inside”.



The real you - behind the mask

Perhaps a relationship you once hoped would fulfil you in every way, started to lose its spontaneity, passion, honesty and excitement. Perhaps those endearing little traits became or were replaced by, annoying habits he wouldn't change. Maybe fear crept in. Fear of causing pain by revealing the truth of your feelings. Fear of acceptance that some of the responsibility for the problems might be yours. Fear of confrontation, fear of loss, fear of pain.

“I am recognised as an expert in my field. I have the respect of my peers and an outwardly successful career. What people don't see is that it's all a front. I am desperately unhappy, feeling trapped in a role that no longer suits me.”

Could it be that a career path that had been your lifelong vocation turned out to be soul destroying, disappointing or damaging to your self worth? Maybe you put on a brave face and tried to work through it, convincing yourself you couldn't have made such a wrong choice, but subconsciously knowing the truth?

“At some point earlier in my life, I must have listened more to what others said the perfect life should look like, rather than thinking through what would make me really happy. I have all the trappings of success, a wife that loves me, two beautiful kids, a lovely home, two nice cars, a successful business.... So why do I feel so disillusioned?”

You may have acquired all the things you had hoped for. Perhaps you have been, had and done all you set out to be, have and do, only to discover your happiness was marred by a gnawing sense of dissatisfaction? This torturous discontent is bewildering and you feel trapped.

You may have everything you thought would constitute a perfect life only to find yourself asking : “What's missing? How did this happen? What do I do now?”.

The most common reactions to these crossroads in life, are various types of **denial**. In an effort to drown out our inner voice of discontent, rather than face our inner truths and get back on course to happiness, we busy ourselves even more than usual, in the wishful state that some magical solution will make things right. Once we allow it to control our thoughts and behaviours, it has us in a powerful, vice-like grip that is difficult to escape.

Denial is a coping mechanism that gives you time to adjust to distressing situations — but staying in denial can interfere with treatment or your ability to tackle challenges. If you're in denial, you're trying to protect yourself by refusing to accept the truth about something that's happening in your life.

Denial through Distraction

Distraction is itself a form of denial, in that we can allow ourselves to become almost subconsciously preoccupied with other things, like addictive behaviours, work, excessive spending, or caring for others that we can end up becoming control freaks or achievement junkies, anything to avoid dealing with the painful issues we know at a subconscious level we must eventually face.

Denial through Wishful Thinking

There are those of us who even deny being in denial! We argue that we aren't in denial we're just very positive people who like to hope for the best in every situation. We apply magical thinking, believing that somehow, as if by magic, everything will turn out fine. This sort of denial often displays other symptoms, replacing confrontation with patience, compassion, concern, support and kindness. These are all admirable qualities to be sure, but when we use them as a form of denial, compassion can turn into co-dependence, patience becomes stagnation, concern manifests itself as enabling and support snowballs into sacrificing. We will do everything to avoid confrontation, pain and unpleasantness, without realising we are compromising our true happiness in the process.

Denial through hostility

Then there is the denial that is accompanied by hostility and anger. When confronted with the truth of our unhappiness, there are those of us that respond with anger, furious with the truth of our situation, resisting it at all costs. We show hostility, belligerence and outrage. We even threaten to punish those who would deliver the truth, as if our anger will scare the messenger off and make the truth go away.

Hostile denial blinds us to our truths that are trying so hard to reveal themselves to us. It keeps us blind to the true love, support and kindness of others, blind to the truths that are hidden within our hearts. Hostile denial creates angry people who hide their vulnerability and inadequacy from others. These people become angry at anyone that finds a way through to make them feel the pain of their vulnerability, which they have probably spent their whole lives mistakenly protecting.

Absolute Denial

Finally there are those of us, perhaps through pride, arrogance or stubbornness, who despite all the evidence to the contrary, adamantly refuse to acknowledge our truths. Let us assume it is the lesser, pride that is causing the problem.

Over a period of time, we may have built up a career, a family and a home that is the envy of the outside world. Hidden behind the mask of happiness we wear, may be the truth of a failing relationship, a dysfunctional family or crumbling finances. We may have had failed relationships in the past and hoped that this one was going to be different, but perhaps on closer examination, we had entered into, or remained in the relationship for the wrong reasons. We may have then distracted ourselves from the underlying unhappiness of the relationship by replacing missing elements with overspending on material things, believing they will restore our happiness. We may have overstretched our financial purse in pursuit of the latest gadgets or home improvements as a distraction from the problems that exist within the relationship.

All forms of denial share one important factor in common. Somewhere, deep down inside of us, when we use denial as a strategy, we are hiding from the truth of ourselves, that some part of us doesn't feel worthy or approved of. There is an expression that says "nature abhors a vacuum". We instinctively fill what we perceive to be gaps in our lives, (which in many cases are misconceived through the filter of our out-dated or irrational beliefs), with material acquisitions, time filling activity, unhealthy addictions, even having more children, rather than face painful truths that "the something missing" might be

nearer to home than the shelves of our local fancy goods store. Only when we conduct the exercise of digging deep, will we discover what, if anything is actually missing and prepare ourselves for the real work to be done to restore happiness to our lives.

Gradually, over a period of months and years, without necessarily realising it was happening, and for our own reasons, we created what we thought were protective layers of denial for ourselves. Those protective layers seemed to serve a purpose, but what they actually did was to obstruct our path to true happiness.

All forms of denial are a kind of survival mechanism that manifest themselves when we feel all that we have built, created or worked so hard to achieve is threatened by our inner truths. We create a version of truth, a mask if you like, that we wear with all those around us, that helps us get through each day.



Denial becomes very much like a life jacket that will keep us afloat in a sea of uncertainty. We tell ourselves that if we can only hang onto denial, we will not drown. So we cling onto it, convincing ourselves that this is as close to true happiness we will ever get. If it is allowed to go on for too long, we even begin to believe that this is all we deserve and our self worth plummets.



The truth is, the longer we stay in denial, the deeper and thicker the water and the more we begin to drown in it, until finally, we reach those cross roads where all we want is the truth, that authentic, happy life we all deserve.

Most people at some time or another, use denial as a strategy for survival. It is only when we look inward at the causes of our unhappiness that we can see how destructive it really is. Persistent denial obstructs our path to true happiness and sabotages our ability to have meaningful and truly intimate loving relationships.

Will the real me please stand up? Reclaiming Your Authentic Self

Having recognised that we may have got lost on the way to our true happiness, we realise that we may have planned our lives while still very young, perhaps too influenced by family and friends, unresolved issues from childhood, or values we feel were imposed on us by society. Sometimes it is a shock to realise the life plan we've been using is ten, twenty or thirty years out of date, based on values that no longer apply to us. When we strip our life plan down, we may even realise that many of our plans or goals belong to someone else, and are no longer plans we would seek to pursue.

On this voyage of self discovery, it is inevitable that we ask ourselves the question “Will the real me please stand up?” Asking the question takes immense emotional courage, which is why denial is so often chosen as the easier option. Answering the question takes even more courage, courage to face the uncomfortable truth, with relentless honesty and perseverance.

We must be prepared to dig as deep as is necessary to get to the truth of what will really make us happy. We must face parts of ourselves we have ignored or denied, face truths we have evaded, confront longings and dreams we have denied ourselves. The truth is closer than you think, inside of you right now. It is not a matter of searching for it, but through a willingness to see it, uncovering it by removing all the masks, denials and other strategies we have used to keep it hidden.

The
REAL

YOU



The search for your authentic self goes deeper than the roles you fill in life. In our quest for self-knowledge and awareness, when we identify who we are, the qualities that make us the people we are, it is striking to realise that many of our previous goals and dreams are incongruent with who we have now identified ourselves to be. It is at this time of introspection that we can sometimes see more clearly that what we thought we needed, no longer fits who we are, and we don't need the same things anymore. Perhaps we discover we are still living with choices we made ten years ago that were applicable then at 21, that no longer seem to fit at 31 or 41. It is in these powerful awakenings, that we feel compelled to make the outward expression of who we are to more honestly and accurately fit our true inner self.



A truly happy existence involves longing to live a more authentic life, appearing to others as you really are. Your outward expression becomes a mirror of your inner impression of your true values and beliefs. The more authentically you can live, the more peace you will experience.

Examine the choices you have made and make. Are they what YOU truly believe and not what others believe? Do you feel you can be your true self with others, particularly those you love, rather than having to wear a mask, live in denial, or have to behave in ways that will be acceptable to others? Do you accept yourself as you are or hide your real self from others? Do you tell the truth when you need to, even if it causes conflict or tension? Are you settling for less than you know you deserve in relationships? Are you unafraid to ask for what you need and want from others?

These are soul searching questions that reveal the answers to what will make you truly happy.

All too often, we resist the call from our authentic self, clinging to what we have convinced ourselves are our more comfortable, familiar roles. However comfortable and limited these roles might be, we are frightened that change will cause us to experience loss of something. By clinging to these roles, by resisting the change our authentic self yearns for, we become attached to the time and energy we have made in choices that once served us, but perhaps no longer do. We may have already given up so much of ourselves in commitment to relationships that fail to stimulate or satisfy our needs, in dissatisfying jobs or in life choices that no longer serve our best interests.

So what is this authentic self we keep talking of? The authentic self is the total of all your unique talents, gifts, skills, qualities, interests, insight and wisdom. It is your strengths and values, your weaknesses and insecurities. It is the you that existed before the pain of your parents relationship impacted upon you, it is the you before you suffered the physical or emotional abuse from a partner or former partner. It is actually very tiring suppressing your authentic self. In fact we spend more energy suppressing and masking it than we would expressing and showing it.

It is a well known proven fact in medical circles that our immune system is affected much more by stresses such as those created by suppression than we realise and there is no greater stress than the suppression of the authentic self. This is your life energy we are talking about here, which is being depleted and diverted every time you suppress the real you. It is said that for every year you live with high stress, you shorten your life expectancy by three years. If someone is draining your energy due to constant turmoil and conflict you lose another eight years. If you do not have a proper outlet for your passion, it costs you another six years. There are many other stressful factors that can affect our longevity; these are just a few of the more commonly known examples.

Suppose you were able to extend your life by ten years plus, ten more years to experience any way you wish – would you want those extra years? I would hazard a guess that you would grab the opportunity with both hands!

It takes so much energy to suppress your authentic self, to be what you are not, and yet so little energy to be who you really are. If your answer about the ten years was “Yes”, then let it be yes now.

Once you are committed to reconnecting and reclaiming your authentic self you will feel a surge of explosive energy that will uplift you. You will even see the tiresome daily chores in a new light.

Now let's talk about you.

Don't you think it's time you started enjoying the authentic life you deserve and all that goes with it? I suspect that you take care of everyone and everything else in your life first and almost always, you are last in line to get your needs met, if at all. The fact that you're reading these words tells me you feel the need for change. You are better than the life you are living, you are capable of more than you have allowed yourself to experience up to now.

To achieve this, you have to get back in touch with the real you with some self-analysis and diagnosis. Asking yourself some searching questions and answering them with absolute honesty can put you back on the right road to true authenticity and true happiness.

Beware the “Red Lighters”

Before we start on this exciting process, let us look at a group of people who you would have hoped would have your best interests at heart, but for reasons of their own, are motivated to obstruct you in your path of self discovery. These people are your loved ones, your closest friends, the people that know you best, even your intimate partner. These very people, who you love and cherish are those you would hope and expect to be most supportive in your mission, wanting only the best for you. Sadly, it is more often the case that they will oppose your search for new levels of authenticity and truth in yourself, fearing the changes your discoveries may bring and the possible effects it may have on their relationship with you. You will probably find, those you thought would be your greatest supporters, will turn out to be your toughest opponents and wish to stifle your development. They are what we will call the “red lighters”, they will see a red light with every change you want to make and will do everything they can to persuade you that they like you just as you are. When we are faced with their reluctance, resistance, disapproval, or even anger at the prospect of what we believe will be a change for the better, it often upsets us. 'If he loves me so much how can he be so unhappy with my growth?'

It is common that people will have formed a mental picture of you that they have become comfortable with. On discovery that there is more to you than meets the eye, they will often feel shocked or even threatened especially if what they now see doesn't fit their picture of what they want you to be.

Don't expect everyone in your life to be as keen as you are to discover and live your authentic self.



Many people will not want 'the real you' to emerge, because they were comfortable with your limitations and weaknesses, your old roles and denials, all of which fitted very nicely with theirs.

The more authentic you become the greater resistance you might face.

All too often, this is how people react when we find the inner courage to face and embrace our authentic selves. Expect all sorts of reasons and sabre rattling from them as to why you shouldn't change including :-

- Attention seeking and guilt throwing, to attempt to distract you from your course.
- Implying that there's something wrong with you
- Encouraging others in support of their opposition to you
- Suggesting others are displeased with the changes you intend
- Injecting fear of the consequences of your changes
- Using emotional blackmail by withdrawing their love until you change back to the ways that suit them

The disapproval of others often holds us back from making the changes we know in our hearts are right for us. They will feel that as long as they have to put up with an unfulfilling job, or a troubled relationship, then so should you. As long as they have to struggle, you have to struggle. As long as they have to suffer, you have to suffer.

What they project as protecting you from making what they think is a mistake, it is more likely they are protecting themselves. As we grow and transform as expect others to feel threatened by that growth. .

We cannot allow this to stop us from growing and moving forward as individuals. We have to accept that our courage will not always be well received by everyone. You will not be alone on your journey to authenticity, there will be others who will appear in your life who are on the same journey for themselves.

Your authentic self is right there, within you. Any factor obstructing you is the result of choices you have made and experiences you have had. This is no dress rehearsal. So, let's start asking some of those soul searching, self analytical questions. Let's start the process of digging deep for the truth of your answers. Let's reclaim the real, authentic you that you deserve to be.



Perception Cycle Exercise

Your Authenticity Self Analysis

This is a simple test designed to give you an indication of how authentically you are currently living your life. For each question, consider which of the two alternatives is most true for you. The brackets A and B are where you have a tendency to feel a lack of authenticity in that area. Brackets C and D are where you feel comfortable most or all of the time in that area. Place an x in the set of brackets that answers the question most truthfully for you.

Scoring : For every x in the far left column “A” give yourself 1, B=2, C=3, D=4. Add up the numbers for all 20 rows will produce a range between 20 and 80.

Tend to feel a lack of Authenticity	All A	Most B	Most C	All D	Tendency towards Authenticity
1. I don't feel I am being myself in most situations	()	()	()	()	1. I do not allow my true self to be denied or masked
2. I am generally uneasy about what others think of me	()	()	()	()	2. I am confident within myself around others
3. I feel lost most of the time in my life	()	()	()	()	3. I have a sense of purpose to my life
4. I dislike myself most of the time	()	()	()	()	4. I like myself and I am pleased with who I really am
5. I avoid internal feelings	()	()	()	()	5. I seek internal awareness and knowledge
6. I am motivated by a need to please others and win their approval	()	()	()	()	6. I am motivated by my approval of myself.
7. I am easily influenced and directed	()	()	()	()	7. I make choices based on my own self interest
8. I lack confidence without the support of an authority figure in my life	()	()	()	()	8. I function effectively making my own decisions. I feel in control making decisions
9. My self esteem hinges on what others think, I need approval desperately	()	()	()	()	9. My self esteem is defined internally, without need of outside approval
10. I am over compliant with others, even when I disagree with them	()	()	()	()	10. I am co operative when it is appropriate
11. If I am honest, a lot of my thoughts are not my own, but of others	()	()	()	()	11. I am capable of completely independent thought
12. I have feelings of dependency and fear	()	()	()	()	12. I have feelings of self confidence and strength
13. I play the victim. It brings me a kind of attention and love I need	()	()	()	()	13. I do not feel a need to look for sympathy or compliments from others
14. I always feel I do not belong here	()	()	()	()	14. I am adaptable and feel I have a rapport with most people
15. I have difficulty making choices or decisions without guidance	()	()	()	()	15. I make choices and decisions based on experience on a regular basis
16. I resist change in myself and others. I fear change	()	()	()	()	16. I embrace change as an opportunity to grow even if it involves pain
17. I would rather someone else took responsibility for important choices	()	()	()	()	17. I am in control of the major decisions and choices in my life.
18. I worry constantly I am going to mess up	()	()	()	()	18. I will not let pessimism affect my life, thoughts and actions
19. I do not feel I am growing emotionally	()	()	()	()	19. I am excited by the growth I am experiencing and welcome it
20. I am living my life for, and in the shadow of other people	()	()	()	()	20. I live my own life independently, happy that it will be harmonious with others
Sub Total each row					Total Four Rows

Analysing your score :

- 1-39 A score in this range suggests you are disconnected from your authentic self and are likely to be a chronic self-esteem victim. You need to be asking yourself, how much of your experience in life is making you truly happy and is what you really want.
- 40-59 A score in this range suggests you suffer chare wearing masks and living in denial of your authentic self, most of the time, suggesting a tendency to suffer regular bouts of low self-esteem. You shouldn't be surprised to feel confused and out of sorts about what you should be doing or what is the best use of your time. You may be at a loss as to what the world and those around you expect of you most of the time. You probably feel disconnected with life. A score in this area is problematic, in that you will be aware of the fact that you are not living an authentic life and understand that it doesn't have to be like this, but it is likely that you fear the responsibility of change.
- 60-72 A score in this range indicates that your self-esteem becomes distorted at least some of the time. You may experience instances where you are afraid to totally be yourself, because of outside influences, but you are aware of and want to express your authenticity fully.
- 72-80 A person scoring in this range operates mostly in an authentic manner. You will have a clear idea of your authentic self and what you want from life. In the midst of adversity, you look for the opportunities to live authentically and naturally.

If you have answered these questions truthfully, this short test should have given you an indicator as to how much you have to do to arrive at your authentic ideal. The questions are good examples that bring your level of authenticity out into the open for you to examine. It may be helpful for you to read the questions again, and where you are dissatisfied with your score, to write out your ideal description of where you would rather be in life as opposed to where your score indicates you are.

If you are in a relationship, a further useful exercise is for both of you to complete the test. Complete one for you and then another, drawn from your experience and knowledge of your partner. Discuss the differences in scoring for each question. He may believe with all sincerity that he is growing emotionally and independent by nature, whereas your observations may differ. So many relationships fail to reach this level of communication with the result that one partner may be living under the misconception that he is performing authentically to his best and the other may believe there is some work to do. It is the differences between us and how we adjust or accept them that determine the harmony in relationships.

“Achievement is not the most important thing -- Authenticity is” Source Unknown



Coming up in the next section

HUMAN NEEDS

In this section we learn about the basic human needs we all must satisfy to allow true happiness to return to our lives. We will explore the key roles you occupy within the main areas of your life that combine to influence your levels of happiness. Discover how to assess your overall level of happiness in roles and areas of your life, pinpointing specific areas to change that will bring you increased happiness.

Self-Actualization
You are living to your highest potential

Esteem
You've acquired the skills that lead to honor and recognition

Love & Belonging
Achieving deeper, more meaningful relationships

SAFETY
Home, sweet home

Physiological Needs
Food, water, sleep

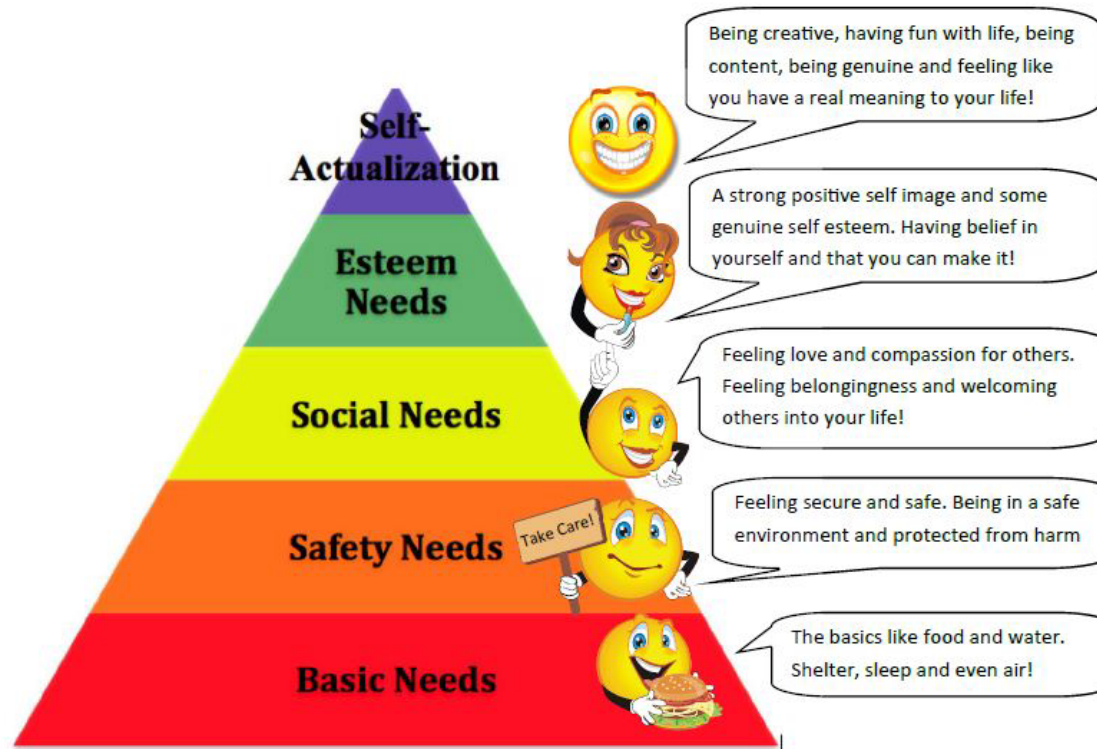
4 – Human Needs

*Everyone needs to be valued. Everyone has the potential to give something back,
Diana Princess of Wales ~ 1961-1997, Wife of Charles, Prince of Wales*

In chapter 1, we explored ten ingredients of happiness, ten areas of desire, that when fulfilled to our satisfaction, bring happiness naturally into our lives. What we are talking about in this chapter, are our human NEEDS. Each of us is motivated by needs. Our most basic needs are inborn, having evolved over tens of thousands of years. In the 1950's a respected psychologist, Abraham Maslow developed what has become known as the "Hierarchy of Needs". His work in this area has become the most respected in the field and forms the basis of all analysis of human needs in the search for happiness and fulfilment in life.

A simple diagram depicts the original hierarchy of needs :-

The Original 5 Stage Model of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs states that we must satisfy each need in turn, starting with the first, at the base of the pyramid in this diagram, without which, the others above it would be meaningless. This first level deals with the most obvious needs for survival itself.



Only when the lower order of needs of physical and emotional well-being are satisfied do we become concerned with the higher order needs of influence and personal development.

If the things that satisfy our lower order needs are swept away, we are no longer concerned about the maintenance of our higher order needs.

Maslow's original Hierarchy of Needs model was developed between 1943-1954, and first widely published in *Motivation and Personality* in 1954. At this time the Hierarchy of Needs model comprised five needs. This original version remains for most people the definitive Hierarchy of Needs.

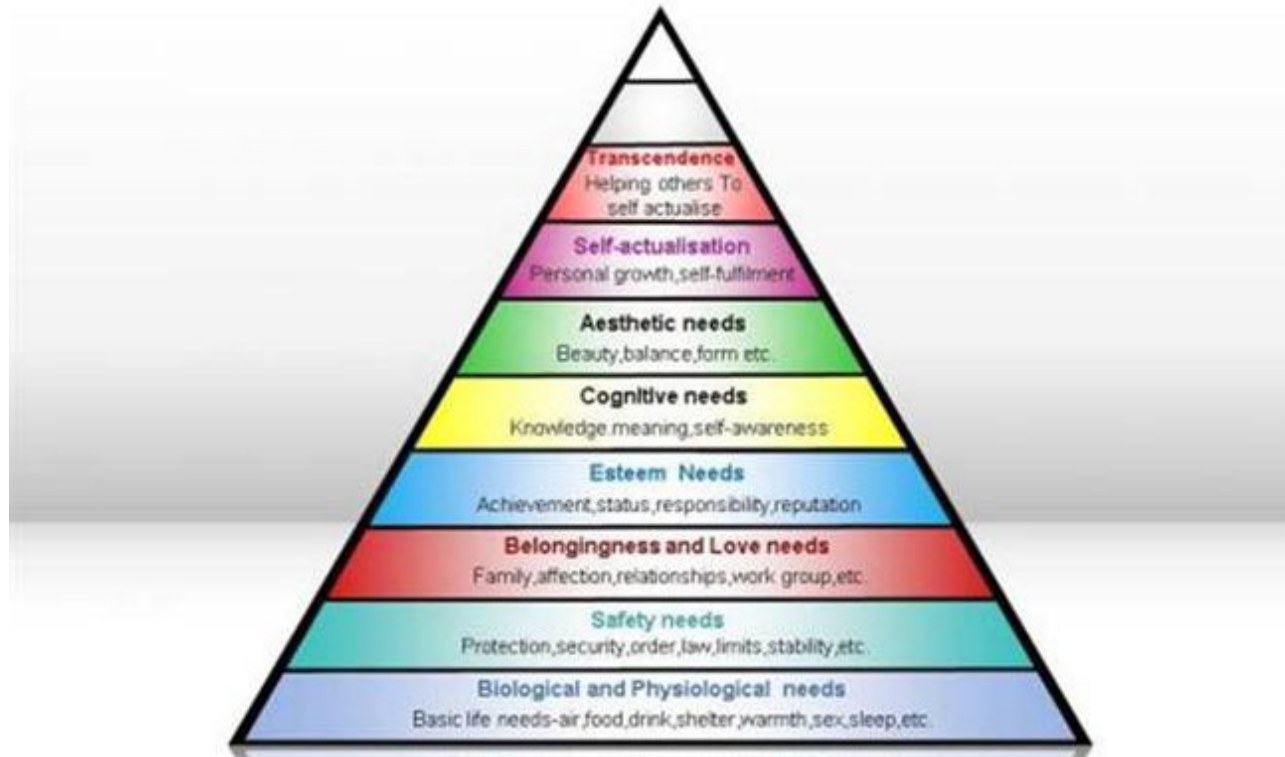
It follows that a fully self-actualised human being, that has satisfied all five levels of need for himself/herself, will display rare characteristics. Maslow's ground breaking work enables us to summarise the characteristics we would expect to see. They certainly seem to paint the picture of someone we would expect to see blissfully happy with their life as you can see from the following.

Maslow's Self-Actualising characteristics

- Keen sense of reality - aware of real situations - objective judgement, rather than subjective
- See problems in terms of challenges and situations requiring solutions, rather than as personal complaints or excuses
- Need for privacy and comfortable being alone
- Reliant on own experiences and judgement - independent - not reliant on culture and environment to form opinions and views
- Not susceptible to social pressures - non-conformist
- Democratic, fair and non-discriminating - embracing and enjoying all cultures, races and individual styles
- Socially compassionate - possessing humanity
- Accepting others as they are and not trying to change people
- Comfortable with oneself - despite any unconventional tendencies
- A few close intimate friends rather than many surface relationships
- Sense of humour directed at oneself or the human condition, rather than at the expense of others
- Spontaneous and natural - true to oneself, rather than being how others want
- Excited and interested in everything, even ordinary things
- Creative, inventive and original
- Seek peak experiences that leave a lasting impression

The Revised Hierarch of Needs (1990's)

What Maslow started in the 40's and 50's, others added to in successive years. The next diagram shows three new areas that psychologists believed were relevant considering the development of the human need for self awareness and progress.



Whilst money doesn't appear directly in any of the levels it is clearly a factor in the acquisition of many of the needs.

Having explored the basis for human needs analysis, we shall now move on to explore the key needs that are most directly connected to our happiness in life.

All human beings experience similar problems and challenges in life that develop from the drive to satisfy certain of the human needs. These needs are common to areas such as work, self appraisal, social activity and of course friendships and romantic relationships. Of all the needs Maslow and others have identified, there are a five that we must consistently have satisfied in key areas of our lives to feel balanced, fulfilled and happy.

1. Certainty, Safety & Comfort

These needs are at level 2 on the Maslow hierarchy.



For most people, certainty in life, in our finances, careers, relationships, health, friendships and social lives is a prerequisite for happiness in those areas.

We all need a degree of certainty, that our houses will not be repossessed, that we can avoid the pain and gain more pleasure from our relationships, that our careers will sustain and fulfil us.

The secret lies in getting the right balance in life between certainty and spontaneity. Too much certainty in any of the key areas of your life, when events become completely predictable, results in b-o-r-e-d-o-m.

So whilst we strive for absolute certainty in every area of life, if we eventually get it, little wonder we feel dissatisfied. The injection of a little variety, spontaneous behaviour, surprise and challenge, help us to feel more fully alive and experience greater fulfilment. Likewise, too much variety or spontaneity, we become fearful of losing that element of certainty we all need.

It requires a delicate balance to be achieved in the key areas of life for us to feel truly fulfilled. We need both certainty and variety for us to appreciate both.

2. Self Worth

This is a level 3 Maslow need, but is also affected by other level needs.



We all have a need for high self worth, to feel significant and to experience significance in our lives. We all want to feel that we are special, that our lives have a real sense of unique purpose and meaning. There are real ways to achieve this, through creativity and self awareness. Others choose more destructive, manufactured routes, developing extreme problems related to health, confidence or self esteem to gain the caring attention of others. This is low self worth, not significance. There is also the significance that a person, a career, good health and finances play in your life. When any of these lose or diminish in significance to you, they become less important and you will seek to replace them.

3. Love & Connection

This comes under level 3 in the Maslow hierarchy.



We humans all need to feel connected with ourselves and others to feel fulfilled and happy in life.

One of the oldest human needs is having someone wonder where you are when you don't come home at night.
Margaret Mead ~ 1901-1978, American Anthropologist

As a whole chapter of this project is devoted to Love, it is only covered briefly here.

The love and connection we are talking of is not restricted to romantic love but extends to all human interaction. It is a kind of love to have your work appreciated. Love from and for your family is an obvious example. Then there is the friendship love with close friends and colleagues. There is the love of work of certain social, sporting or health pursuits, the love of certain activities and pastimes. The most obvious is the love of self, without which, no other form of true love will exist for long.

Suffice to say at this point, that it is a basic human need to love and connect in life, both with yourself and others.

4. Personal Growth

A level 7 Maslow need.



It is said that everything alive is either growing or dying. Regardless of how much money you have, how well you are appreciated by others, or what you have acquired, achieved or accomplished, if you do not feel that you are growing, in a relationship, career or life in general, you will feel unhappy and unfulfilled.

A man needs self-acceptance or he can't live with himself; he needs self-criticism or others can't live with him.
James A. Pike ~ 1913-1969, American Episcopal Bishop

5. Human Contribution

This is both a level 4,7 and 8 level Maslow need.



So many of us in life, fall into the trap of allowing others or circumstances to direct our path in life. In doing this, we are at the mercy of those external factors of other people and events. Making effective contribution in our own lives and those of others is an essential prerequisite of a happy joyful, fulfilled life.

Remember Abraham Lincoln : *"We cannot help the poor by being one of them"*

If we do not contribute in the key areas of our life, it may be because we do not have what is needed to do so. For example, if we do not love ourselves, we cannot properly love another. We cannot give to others something we do not have. A happy balance of contributing to yourself and others, especially selfless, unconditional contribution is the ultimate secret to the joy and happiness many people seek in their lives.

Contribution works both ways, both in the giving and the receiving. If the significant other in your relationship is consistently unable to contribute, emotionally, physically, spiritually, mentally or financially, you will feel unfulfilled and unhappy. If YOUR contribution is unappreciated, again you will feel unhappy and even resentful. In your career, if it fails to satisfy your needs, it is failing to contribute to your wellbeing and you will feel dissatisfied and unfulfilled.

Anything that fails to contribute in life, to the degree that it provides the satisfactory meeting of your needs, is eventually replaced by something or someone that will.

Roles and areas

Having explored our basic human needs, we will now turn to how those needs fit into the **roles** we occupy within the specific **areas** of our lives.

Roles

Our roles are the relationships and the responsibilities we have in life. Very few people go through life without other people, family, friends, associates, colleagues, business contacts, customers and others. The relationships and responsibilities we have in those contacts with others are the roles we occupy in life.

There are roles that all of us must fill whether we want to or not, such as daughter, son, mother, father, sister, member of the human race. Other roles form a much larger group that we occupy from choice, and because of circumstances and experiences life has presented us, such as spouse, partner, boyfriend, girlfriend.

There are many other roles you might occupy. Think about your roles in life, here are a few examples to get you started :

Parent	Friend	Son or daughter	Colleague	Domestic Accountant	Listener
Spouse	Sister or Brother	Grandparent	Mentor	Performer	Taxi driver!
Partner	Learner	Home Manager	Coach	Caregiver	
Professional	Employer	Employee	Manager	Peacemaker	
Nurturer	Volunteer	Teacher	Provider	Motivator	



It is important to remember that you bring your own unique brand of life and personality to each of the roles you fulfil. You are one of a kind, there is no-one exactly the same as you on this planet, there never was and there never will be.

Understanding your own uniqueness is an important step in the process of discovering who you really are, identifying and doing something about what matters most to you and makes you really happy. In addition to the more obvious ones, there is a broad range of roles covering the various activities you are engaged in life, the work you do, the interests and abilities you have. Identifying each and every one of your roles and what they bring to your life is an important part of your internal discovery process. Some of the roles we occupy are obligatory, some of them we have created for ourselves. Some of them will fulfil us, others may drain us.

Areas

Closely connected to the roles we occupy are the key areas of life that the roles fit into. Again they are different and personal to each of us, some more or less applicable to the individual. Here are a few of the more obvious areas of life to consider :-

Family Life	Friendships	Home Life	Love Life	Leisure & Social Life
Personal Growth & Attitude	Health	Career	Finances	Spiritual

There are many other areas that consume the human existence. There may be others that occupy your life not connected with those above. As the ten above affect the majority of us to a greater or lesser extent, it is worth considering how each area has it's own effect on the happiness present in your life.

Family Life

Most of us would agree that happiness within the family unit is important and we tend to accept that family life should contain a healthy emphasis on loving, caring, nurturing and supporting. For most people, family life is where major challenges are faced. Family life can be a source of major stress and you can be certain that any challenges faced in this area will have a knock-on effect in other areas.

Friendships

Without doubt, our human relationships with others contribute the majority of happiness and unhappiness we experience in our lives. For every happy or unhappy experience you will have, there will usually be another person involved, or the lack of another person or persons in a significant area of your life to influence the degree of happiness you enjoy.

Home Life

What makes a home happy is the people that are in it, the attitudes we come in the door with, and the simpler things that we can do to the space we call home each time we're in it that don't cost a thing.

Love Life

Overlapping with the family life section, this may apply to your spouse, partner, lover, boyfriend, girlfriend, children, relatives, friends – in fact any person or circumstances where you experience love on any level. For example, recognition and acknowledgement for a job well done, or support and assistance provided, is in itself a form of love. Do not restrict yourself to the person you wake up next to!

Leisure & Social Life

We have to relate to so many people, those we work and live with, those we meet out shopping in stores, banks, etc. What we are trying to get to here is how genuinely at ease you feel interacting with other people. How comfortable are you in different social situations? It is the broader picture of your interaction with other people we are assessing here, not merely your pleasure gained from nights out with the girls or lads!

Personal Growth & Attitude

One of the traits of those fortunate few who enjoy more happiness in life, is that they commit themselves to the continuous process of learning and accepting the inner truths about themselves. The closed mind and know it all attitude has no place in the search for happiness. It is a form of denial that obstructs the path to inner peace. Some discover most about themselves through spiritual enlightenment, others simply by digging deep into why they respond and behave the way they do in certain situations. In the sections that follow, there will be plenty of support to help you in this section.

“Your attitude determines your altitude”

Without doubt, attitude is the single most influential factor on the path to true happiness. The right attitude produces results you never imagined possible, the wrong attitude can produce nightmare situations. You choose your outcomes with your choice of attitude. You can be the architect of your own happy destiny or the author of your own misfortune, the choice as they say, is up to you! When things go wrong are you looking for solutions or fretting about the past you can't change? So many people waste so much time worrying about the past they can't change, and the events of tomorrow that might never materialise, that they miss the opportunity to do something positive today.

Health

Your health is a crucial part of your happiness in life. So many of us take it for granted, until we collapse with exhaustion, stress or some other preventable condition. Do you take regular exercise? Are you happy with your general level of fitness? Are you careful about your diet? Do you take enough rest? You will discover that what follows in the coming chapters, will guide you toward your general well being and happiness will have a positive effect in the area of your health.

Career

It is said that 70% of people in employment would rather be doing something completely different. Are you passionate about your career choice? Does it light your candle? Does it excite you? Are you fulfilled? Do you have your career path all mapped out? Does it inspire your creative juices to flow? We spend more hours working than in any other area so it is natural that unhappiness, dissatisfaction or demotivation in this area will spill over, souring other areas of our lives. It is therefore vitally important that your career stimulates you and helps you to grow.

Finances

We are not talking here about how wealthy or poor you are. It's not about how much money you have but how you relate to it. Does it cause you so much stress that you worry yourself sick or are you at ease with the flow of money. Money or rather the lack of it, is a major cause of disharmony in relationships and again, can severely impede your path to true happiness in all the other areas of your life.

Spiritual

Spirituality exists for most people to some degree in their lives, either in faith in an organised religion, or in their own perception and belief in a creator. There are those that have absolutely no religious or spiritual beliefs at all, if this is true of you, you can replace this section with something else and indeed further sections that come to mind for you.

Your happiness resides in you



No matter how much you love, admire or respect someone, your own true happiness cannot be found in them, it must be found within yourself. Of course we all need the companionship and love of others, but it is our appreciation of them that brings us long term happiness. If we love someone, it is human nature to expect that love to be returned, and it is often in this area that the major cause of dissatisfaction is found. Learning to appreciate that the love we feel for them is more important than receiving their love, is a major step forward to understanding that the happiness within us is the only happiness we can sustain indefinitely.

The same can be said of material possessions. In this fast moving world of consumerism and materialistic values, so many of us strive for the bigger house, the nicer car, the finer things in life. That is perfectly natural, but recall the last major purchase you made, the initial thrill of owning the latest DVD player, top of the range car or beautiful detached home. How long did the excited feelings last before the item became part of the everyday furniture of your life?



The true happiness that is the authentic you, is totally independent of any material possession you might **have**, and any other person who you might have regard for, yet it does improve your experience of that possession or person. The true happiness that is you, is independent of what you **do** or do not do, yet in possession of happiness it makes your experience of what you do or do not do infinitely more enjoyable. The true happiness that is you is independent of anything you might **be** or not be, yet it makes your experience of what you might be or not be, more pleasurable.

True happiness, happiness that lasts, is to be found within us, in the inner peace and contentment with our feelings of appreciation for ourselves and others.

A major turning point in our lives occurs when we learn two key lessons :-

1. If we don't commit to achieving our own happiness, no-one else will or can. If all we ever do is set out to make other people happy, our happiness is largely determined by their feelings, not our own. Focusing entirely on making others happy is a soul destroying exercise that can only result in frustration, resentment and disappointment.

2. We can't give away what we don't have. We can't make someone else happy, if we are steeped in self misery. As Abraham Lincoln said : "You can't help the poor by being one of them."



We experience happiness when we are completely free from the negative and destructive emotions in life, fear, anger, doubt, guilt, resentment and worry.

Only when we have identified the emotions that are obstructing our happiness can we focus on the work of eliminating or minimising them in our lives.

Could the key to true happiness in life really be that simple?

The answer is most emphatically YES. The major obstacle to achieving the happiness you deserve, is to be found in your attachment to the negative people and situations that are causing it. It is important to understand at this point, the difference between mind based thinking and heart based decisions. Our wonderful mind will work against us if we let it here. It will find no end of reasons to stay put, resist change and continue as you are. Common sense tells us that if nothing changes, everything stays the same. If we follow the direction of our mind on this, instead of providing the solutions to our problems, our mind will keep us trapped in the unhappiness surrounding them. The key to our true happiness lies within our hearts, in how we feel, not in our minds, where we think.

What is the key component of happiness ?

If happiness is being the true, authentic you, free to do or not to do anything in life, the key component of true happiness is experiencing that authenticity in all the important areas of your life identified earlier in this section. Determining your state of happy authenticity in your family, love and social lives, discovering and experiencing what makes the real you happiest regarding your levels of personal development, health and attitude and establishing your happiest levels in your career, financial and spiritual lives.

What is the connection between happiness and truth?

So many of us wander aimlessly through life where our happiness is concerned. The majority of us are so busy merely surviving, we haven't even identified exactly what constitutes happiness for us. In this condition, we are at the mercy of others and circumstances. Like a ship without a rudder, we drift aimlessly on the ocean, crashing off rocks and into other ships, until we finally reach a harbour called safety. This is not true happiness if the destination isn't truly where we wanted to end up, this is simply making do.

By working through the information and accompanying exercises in this project, we fix a rudder to that vessel of ours. By digging deep for the truth of your hearts desires in the important areas of your life, you will be able to plot a course and use that rudder to steer your ship to the port of true happiness.

The Connection between Loving & Happiness

When you ask yourself the question “What do I want out of Life?”, whatever your answer, it will involve be-ing having or doing something that will bring you true happiness. Reflecting back over your life so far, recapture the moments where you felt truly happy. Don’t be too surprised if you discover that it was when you were most loving, that you were at your happiest.

Contrary to what you might think, your happiness is connected more to your capacity to love, than to your being loved.

Remember the last time someone told you they loved you? It felt great didn’t it? That special person in your life, uttering those magical words? How long did the feeling last, a few moments? When someone you care for, expresses their love for you, it brings you a feeling of warmth and approval that is so special. The feeling only lasts a moment. In order to keep having that feeling continuously, your significant other has to continue saying it, which is clearly impractical.



This momentary and magical piece of ego approval, wonderful and essential as it is, to loving relationships, is nowhere near as long lasting, as your own feeling of loving them. As long as you feel love for them, you feel happy. As long as you can keep that loving feeling, right there in the moment with you, you will enjoy a sense of unrivalled happiness. Their loving you is a momentary pleasure that needs constant re-enforcement on their part to sustain your ego. Your love for them is a constant source of happiness, for as long as you love them.

Your true happiness is directly related to your capacity to love. The more you can be truly, authentically loving, the more true happiness will appear in your life.

The Wheel of Life



We have explored the basic human needs we all have, the roles some of us fulfil and the areas of our lives those needs and roles occupy. Now it is time to bring them all together in a simple exercise that will reveal how well your human needs are currently being met in the key roles and areas of your life.

The Wheel of Life Exercise, sometimes Life Balance Wheel, is one of the most powerful and versatile personal awareness and growth tools available.

It’s simple and easy to use - and extremely flexible. You can use it to reveal your analysis of the AREAS we have shown or adapt it to almost every part of your life. An example might be to assess a relationship, breaking it down into the areas you consider most important and then scoring them to arrive at a more visual picture of your present position. You may choose to analyse the ROLES you occupy to reveal which bring you most and least satisfaction.

The Wheel of Life is a popular visual tool to help you quickly understand how balanced or fulfilled your life is *in this moment*.

It consists of 10 categories or areas considered important for a whole or balanced life. Score your level of satisfaction with each area, drawing a line that joins the score in each area. This gives you an immediate overview of your current "life balance". Crucially, the life wheel scoring system also allows you to see right away which *areas* of your life might need improvement.

Another revealing exercise is to replace the areas shown here with the 10 steps to happiness in Chapter 2. To remind you they are:-

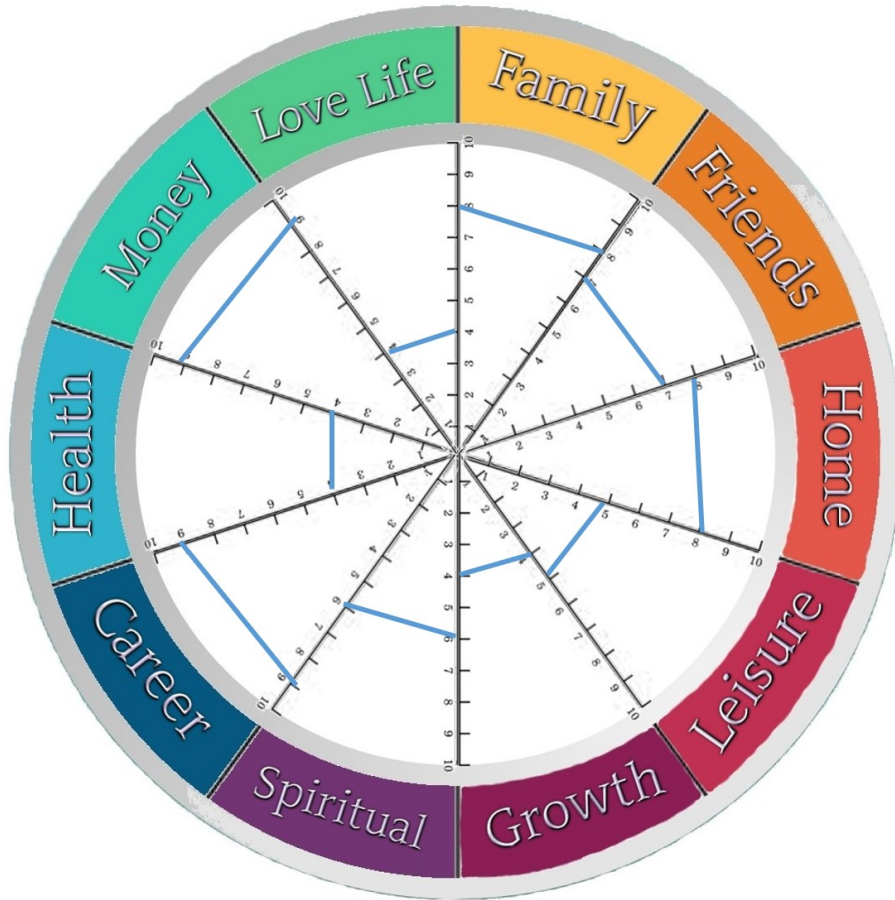
1. PEACE OF MIND
2. POSITIVE PERCEPTION AND PERSPECTIVE
3. HIGH SELF ESTEEM & GOOD ATTITUDE
4. ENHANCED SELF KNOWLEDGE & AWARENESS
5. VIBRANT HEALTH AND ENERGY
6. LOVING, CONNECTION FROM WARM RELATIONSHIPS
7. FINANCIAL FREEDOM
8. SATISFYING WORK
9. WORTHY GOALS & INSPIRING DREAMS
10. PERSONAL FULFILLMENT

A blank Wheel Of Life is printed at the end of this section so you can use it however you feel is most appropriate and deserving of your attention.

You can see from this example that if the solid line represented the current Wheel Of Life on which your life rotated, little wonder the ride feels so bumpy! If the line represents an ideal picture of happiness in each of the important areas of your life, for the first time, you can see visually, the gaps between where you are and where you would like to be.

Not only does the wheel help you quickly assess your current levels of life balance, you can also use it to clarify priorities for goal-setting. You can also use it for a regular (eg. quarterly) life check-in and to review and assess your progress.

So, hopefully we've given you lots of ideas! Some other ideas for life balance wheel labels include Security, Spiritual Growth, Religion, Sense of Self, Community, Leadership, Service or Achievement.



Be prepared, the results may surprise you. At the very least, the exercise will give you a visual indicator of how balanced or imbalanced your life currently is, which will have a residual effect on the levels of satisfaction and happiness you enjoy. The results will empower you with a marksman like focus on the areas you need to work on to get closer to where you want to be.



A happy life is a balanced life, where the key areas of your life are in balance. You will find that if you score low in two or three areas, mid-range in a few others and high in the remainder, your journey through life may seem unsettled and bumpy.

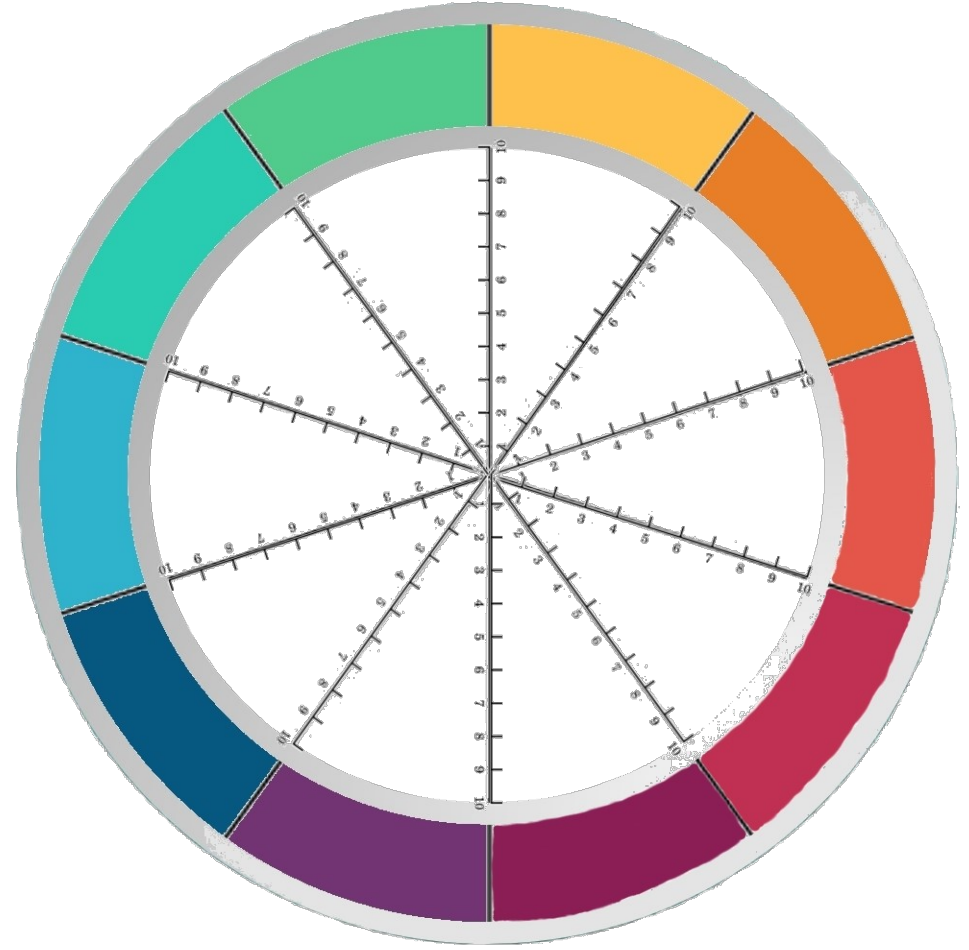
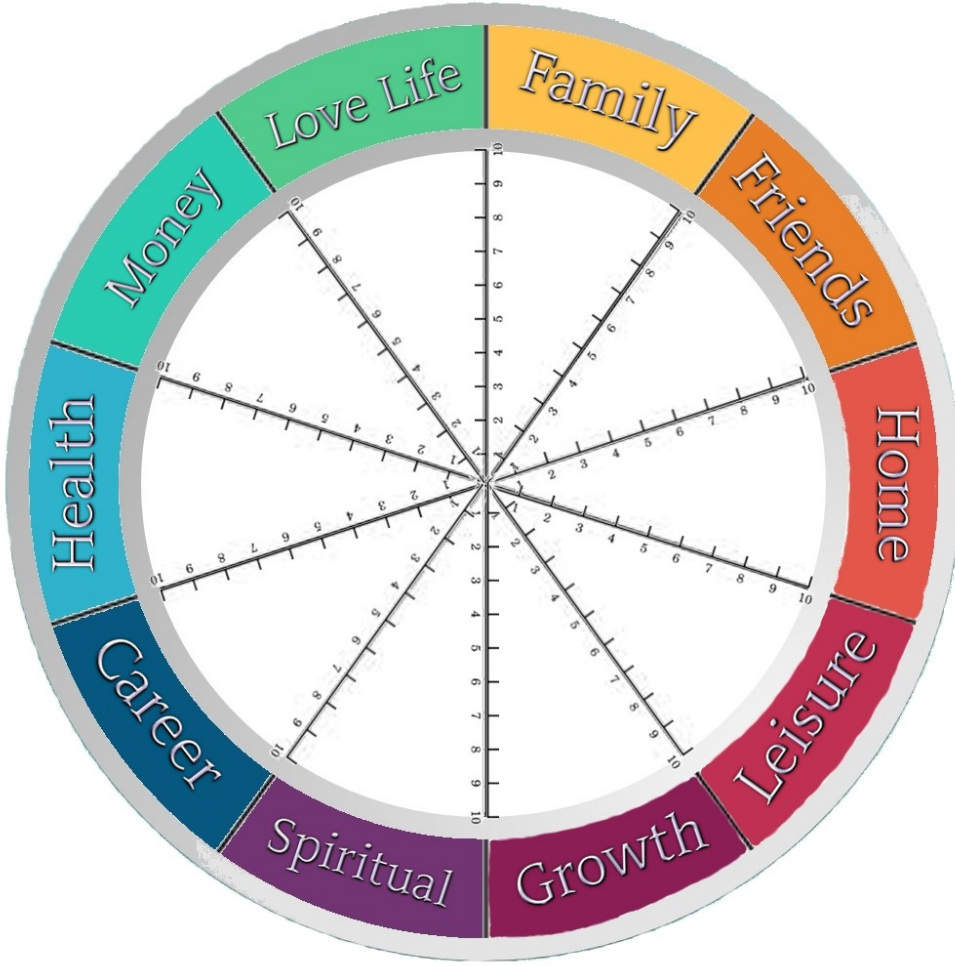
Now it's your turn.



Perception Cycle Exercise

Reprinted on the next page are an AREAS Wheel of Life and a blank version for your own use.

Your Wheel of Life



Consider the key roles and areas of your life.

Give yourself a score out of ten for each role and area, placing an x alongside the score and in line with the respective role or area. Then join up the crosses.

Here are a few questions to prompt your thinking :-

- Do you experience the correct balance of certainty and comfort alongside variety and spontaneity in each of your roles and areas?
- Do your relationships and the people involved bring the correct balance to your life to result in the happiness you seek?
- Does your career provide a comfortable mix of certainty and variety to fulfil you ?
- Does a happy balance exist in each of your roles? Where is there a shortfall? Who/what causes it? Can it be remedied?
- Does the feeling of significance you experience from yourself and others in each area satisfy you? What part does significance and self worth play in each area? Your self esteem is an important part of your inner happiness and has a major effect on all the key areas of your life.
- Again look at the key areas and roles of your life. Identify where the quality and quantity of love given and received, satisfies your needs or falls short.
- Are you experiencing personal growth in all the areas that will bring you happiness? Are the key people that surround you in your family, love, social and career lives supporting or obstructing your growth and development?
- Is there enough contribution in your life, from yourself and others? Apply the need of contribution to your key areas and roles. How well does contribution fit into your life?

Family : Whatever family life looks like for you, give yourself a score out of ten to describe the degree of happiness or harmony you currently experience. 10 is absolutely perfect, 1 is on the verge of collapse. Consider your role and the roles of others carefully before writing it down. Make any notes you think are relevant regarding factors or people affecting the degree of happiness you enjoy.

Love : How much love is present in your life? Making whatever notes you feel are appropriate and relevant, score your situation out of 10 to describe the degree of happiness love brings to you.

Leisure : Ten, you are the life and soul of every party, you are loved by everyone, you are confident yet sensitive and caring to all you meet. One, surely not, unless you are locked away in solitary confinement in an institution somewhere!

Growth and Attitude : Ask yourself: “Am I committed to learning as much as I can about myself and life, am I open to learning and stretching? Give yourself a score out of ten, based on the level of happiness you gain from this area of your life. How happy are you with your attitude and the role you play in effecting positive change in your life? Are you a ten, the eternal realistic optimist or a 1, the suicidal pessimist? Surely not, they are all in solitary confinement too!

Health : Are you truly a 10? 1 is clearly seriously ill. Score yourself based on how well you fill your role within the area of your personal health.

Career : How do you fair in the working part of your life? Are you a 10 or looking for inspiration and confidence in these pages to make that change?

Finances : Are you completely at ease with the flow of money, a 10? or so worried about it that it is limited your very existence?

Spiritual : Is your spirituality central to your life or are you experiencing doubt or guilt about your commitment in this area? Give yourself a mark.

The underlying theme of this chapter is that everything you will ever need to be, have and do, whatever you want in life, including the desire for happiness, is to be found inside of you, not in the physical presence of another person, or in the material possessions you may acquire, such as bigger houses or nicer cars. Your true happiness, the only happiness that is everlasting is right there inside each and every one of you.

Customise the Wheel and adapt it to whatever thorny problem you are having. Grab a blank coaching wheel and add the 10 biggest things stressing you out right now. Score out of 10 how stressful each thing is. Or, label the 10 segments with the key things that make you a good mom/dad/leader/friend. Again, score yourself according to how well you think you are doing in each area. Then derive an action plan to move forwards.

Here are 12 Wheel of Life Questions to Help:

1. How do you feel about your life as you look at your Wheel?
2. Are there any surprises for you?
3. How do you currently spend time in these areas?
4. How would you like to spend time in these areas?
5. What would make that a score of 10?
6. What would a score of 10 look like?
7. Which of these categories would you most like to improve?
8. How could you make space for these changes in your life?
9. What help and support might you need from others to make changes and be more satisfied with your life?
10. And what change do you want to make first?
11. What is the smallest step you could take to get started?
12. If there was one key action that would begin to bring everything into balance, what would it be?

12 Awesome New Ways To Use The Wheel of Life

The "Wheel of Life" is a powerful tool - and can be used in many different ways. In fact it may just be the best and most flexible tool in your personal development and happiness toolbox.

Here are some more uses for the “Wheel of Life”.

1. **The Wheel of Stress (or Wheel of Frustration).** List the top 10 areas that stress you out or frustrate you most. Score each area out of 10 as to how much it adds to the stress in your life. **Tip:** Ask yourself, which area frustrates or stresses you out the most? Are there any surprises? How could you lower your scores? What actions could you take?
2. **The Wheel of Progress.** When used on a regular basis The Wheel of Life is excellent to help you see how far you've come. Use it monthly or quarterly as both a check-in to see how you're doing AND as a way for you to see how you've improved and grown. Improved scores demonstrate concrete value from the exercise and provide food for thought to help you see your learnings and progression. **Tip:** It's a bit like looking back over an old journal and seeing how far you've come!
3. **The Wheel of Happiness, Fun or even Excitement!** Do you need help to create more happiness, fun or excitement in your life? Well, identify 10 areas or things that are fun or make you excited or happy. There are different ways to score this - you could score how satisfied you are with each area, or how MUCH each area excites you, or how much you WANT to 'do' or feel drawn to each area. It depends on the labels you've used. Then decide on an action or commitment for each segment. **Tip:** Ask yourself ‘How could you bring more of each segment into your life?’
4. **Getting a Deeper Understanding.** Use the wheel to drill down into each area and help understand your life and issues more deeply. So, take one of the segments and write out a further 10 areas that make up that segment for you. Eg. a 'Finance' wheel could include saving for a house, budgeting, focusing on buying needs and not wants, saving for a rainy day, paying off debts, getting a pay-rise etc. **Tip:** This is great homework - to identify areas to bring to work on.
5. **The Wheel of Compassion.** There are few of us who couldn't do with more self-compassion. Ask for 10 areas where you could be more kind or compassionate with yourself. Score HOW compassionate you are currently - and identify an action for the top 3 areas that need kindness or compassion most.
6. **Set More Meaningful Goals.** The Wheel of Life is a great way to help when struggling to identify goals. Low scores point to areas where a goal could be identified to raise the score. And high scores suggest areas where a goal could really BOOST you and skyrocket your life. When we work on where we're already doing well - this spins off into other areas in our lives and lifts them too. **Tip:** This is great for business and career/executives - to ease clients into thinking about their personal lives - which we know will, of course, benefit their careers and businesses in the long run.
7. **The Wheel of Priorities.** Label your Top 10 priorities - across work, home, relationships - basically the priorities in life overall. First, identify your Top 3 priorities. Then score the satisfaction out of 10 for all the areas. This approach can also be used to look at a specific area of life eg. career, finances or even to prioritise goals! **Tip:** What do you notice? How does the score for your Top 3 priorities compare to the lower priorities? Do you have your priorities 'straight' or do you need to shift your focus? What actions could you take?
8. **The Wheel of Sales (or Wheel of Marketing).** A wheel can also be used to help identify actions rather than identify and score 'areas' to work on. So, take a blank wheel and ask your business clients to identify sales or marketing actions to complete in the next month (or key actions to complete in the coming year). I recommend having a Sales Wheel AND a Marketing Wheel as although they're related they are different disciplines. **Tip:** You could also pre-fill some of the wheel for them so a Marketing Wheel might include social media, networking, advertising, workshops, a newsletter and a Sales Wheel might include clarifying a sales process or funnel, writing a script for complimentary sessions, calling enquiries back, creating an entry level product, reading about Sales.

9. **The "Skills and Knowledge Gap" Wheel.** What are the Top 10 skills and knowledge gaps that get in the way of that job, promotion or new career? Identify the gaps and then to score out of 10 where you are on the road to filling this gap. Finally identify action next steps for each 'gap'. **Tip:** It helps to clarify whether each 'gap' is a skill or knowledge gap. AND it's also important to do a 'sanity' check that the gap is fillable and that it's a skill you are able or WANT to fill!
10. **General Action Planning.** The visual wheel format is also great to make action planning more fun. So, using a blank wheel, write the goal or required outcome at the top of the page. Then write out the next 10 actions or chunks of work that make up your goal. **Tip:** If you put a date against each action - you can then use the 'pieces of pie' to record the % complete for each area! Using a wheel is also a great way to BREAK DOWN bigger actions into smaller more manageable chunks.
11. **The Relationships Wheel.** This is a wheel ABOUT relationships. List the 10 people that most energise or drain you and then score HOW energised or drained they feel after spending time with them. What do you notice? **Tip:** What % of your time do you they currently spend with each person. For the energising people you could ask how you could spend MORE time with them? And for the drainers you could ask how you could spend less time - or change the way you spend time with them.
12. **The "Finding Love" Wheel.** Our final suggestion is to help you identify what you are looking for in a relationship. Take the blank wheel and label the pieces of pie with the 10 essential qualities your ideal partner would have. Then score how IMPORTANT out of 10 each quality is. This will help you identify which qualities are MOST valuable. **Tip:** It's a good idea to set yourself this one as homework and think broadly about qualities that are REALLY important in a LIFE partner. And, depending on your preferences, a few examples to start with might include "good listener", "kind", "spiritual" to get you thinking beyond "tall" or "good looking".

So, obviously you can use as many segments as you like on your wheels, you're not limited to 10 wheel segments - but it is easy to divide the wheel up this way!

Final Tip: And whatever we've used the wheel for I like to ask this question when complete, "So, if this wheel represented your life/relationship/career/marketing strategy, is it a bumpy ride?"



Coming up in the next section

HOW DID I GET HERE?

Learn about the eight stages of human development and how your childhood conditioning and emotional programming could be affecting your happiness. We will identify the influential events, choices and people in your life up to this point, that had a positive or negative effect on your happiness now.

A photograph of a road stretching towards a bright sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a lens flare effect. The sky is filled with orange and yellow clouds. The road has a dashed yellow center line and solid yellow edge lines. The text "How Did I Get Here?" is written in a white, cursive font across the center of the image.

How Did
I Get Here?

5 – How Did I Get Here ?

A man sooner or later discovers that he is the master-gardener of his soul, the director of his life. James Allen ~ 1864-1912, British-born American Essayist, Author of "As a Man Thinketh"

In this complicated process of living, there comes a time when we look around at where we are in life and it looks nothing like what we expected. We remember where we wanted to be by this time of our lives in our relationships, our work and our achievements, but somehow we got lost on our path to happiness.

The information and exercises contained in this section will help you to dig more deeply into your inner self, getting ever closer to the authentic happier you.

We will be searching for significant turning points of pain and joy. The choices and decisions that had a long term positive or detrimental effect on your life and behaviours, and the influences of significant people at various stages of your development, to arrive at the you that you know in this moment.

Let's look how our character and personality developed.

Emotional Programming – Your Conditioning

It's not by accident or luck that you have ended up the person you are now. Much of it is due to the emotional programming you experienced as you grew. Your emotional programming is simply a set of beliefs you acquired about yourself, collecting experiences and influences, minute by minute from your parents, peers, relatives, friends and society. For the rest of your life, these beliefs affect the way you think and behave. Until you identify the beliefs that are not relevant to you personally, or no longer serve your best interests, your happiness through authenticity remains at the mercy of those beliefs.

In other words, your life experiences cause you to make decisions about yourself, your abilities, the thoughts you will have, the behaviours you will employ and the choices you will make.

- Between birth and 5 years you receive 50% of your emotional programming
- Between 5 and 8 years you receive 30% of your emotional programming
- Between 8 and 18 years you receive 15% of your emotional programming



By the time you are eighteen, you are 95% programmed! It is the 5% remaining for the rest of your life that can be used to make worthwhile changes in your life. As an example, whilst 5% of your mind says “I want a wonderful relationship with a partner that treats me well”, it is the 95% already programmed that is responsible for the poor love choices you may have made in the past. It is only once you dig deep enough like this, to understand why you have been doing what you have been doing that you will be free to change your life and behaviour for the better. Your unconscious mental programming is responsible for most of the pain you have experienced from decisions and choices you have made in the past.

The Stages of Human Development

One of the worlds most recognised psychologists was Erik Erikson, whose work in the field of human development is particularly relevant to the subject we are exploring here.

Babies are born with some basic capabilities and distinct temperaments. But they go through dramatic changes on the way to adulthood, and while growing old.

According to Erikson, each individual passes through eight developmental stages. Each stage is characterized by a different psychological "crisis", which must be resolved by the individual before the individual can move on to the next stage. If the person copes with a particular crisis poorly, the outcome will be more struggles with that issue later in life.

Stage	Description	Positive Outcome	Negative Outcome
Infancy Age 0 to 1 Trust vs. Mistrust	Infants depend on others for food, warmth, and affection, and therefore must be able to blindly trust the parents (or caregivers) for providing those.	Develop a secure attachment with the parents, but will learn to trust environment in general as well.	Infant will develop mistrust towards people and things in their environment, even towards themselves.
Toddler Age 1 to 2 Autonomy (Independence) vs. Doubt (or Shame)	Toddlers learn to walk, talk, use toilets, and do things for themselves. Their self-control and self-confidence begin to develop at this stage.	Child will develop the confidence needed to cope with future situations that require choice, control, and independence.	If overprotective, or disapproving of the child's independence, she may begin to feel ashamed or have too much doubt of her abilities.
Early Childhood Age 2 to 6 Initiative vs. Guilt	Develop motor skills and become more engaged in social interaction with people around them.	Children learn to accept without guilt, that certain things are not allowed, but at the same time will not feel shame when using their imagination and engaging in make-believe role plays.	If not, children may develop a sense of guilt and may come to believe that it is wrong to be independent.
Elementary and Junior School Years Age 6 to 12 Industry vs. Inferiority	School is the important event at this stage. Children learn to make things, use tools, and acquire the skills to be a worker and a potential provider.	If children can discover pleasure in intellectual stimulation, being productive, seeking success, they will develop a sense of competence.	If not, they will develop a sense of inferiority.
Adolescence	This is the time when we ask the question "Who am I?"	If the adolescent solves this conflict successfully, he will come out of this stage	If not, the adolescent will sink into confusion, unable to make decisions and choices, especially about

Age 12 to 18 Roles: Identity vs Confusion	Those who successfully dealt with earlier conflicts are ready for the "Identity Crisis", which is the single most significant conflict a person must face.	with a strong identity, and ready to plan for the future.	vocation, sexual orientation, and his role in life in general.
Young Adulthood Age 19 to 40 – Intimacy vs. Isolation	In this stage, the most important events are love relationships. No matter how successful you are with your work, you are not developmentally complete until you are capable of intimacy.	Adult individuals can form close relationships and share with others if they have achieved a sense of identity.	If not, they will fear commitment, feel isolated and unable to depend on anybody in the world.
Middle Adulthood Age 40 to 65 Generativity vs. Stagnation	Generativity refers to the adult's ability to look outside oneself and care for others, through parenting, for instance. We might also see this as an end of self-interest.	People can solve this crisis by having and nurturing children, or helping the next generation in other ways.	If this crisis is not successfully resolved, the person will remain self-centred and experience stagnation later in life.
Late Adulthood Age 65 to death Integrity vs. Despair	A time for reflecting upon one's own life and its role in the big scheme of things, and seeing it filled with pleasure and satisfaction or disappointments and failures.	If the adult has achieved a sense of fulfilment about life and a sense of unity within himself and with others, he will accept death with a sense of integrity. Just as the healthy child will not fear life, said Erikson, the healthy adult will not fear death.	If not, the individual will despair and fear death.

Whatever age, sex or colour you happen to be, whatever stage of human development you may have reached, you will have memories of phases when life seemed more of a trial than others. You may have experienced a difficult childhood, when you felt unloved, or lacking in approval. You may have been taught that guilt was a natural state of mind, and through experience, that trusting others only ended in tear and pain.

Reflecting back over your life, you will have your own recollections of experiences from earlier life phases that either positively or negatively influenced your beliefs, thoughts and experiences up to this point. Vitally important learning skills are acquired in our formative years. We receive so much of that learning as a result of influences received from events, selections (choices) and people.

You get treated in life the way you teach people to treat you. Wayne Dyer ~ 1940-, American Psychotherapist, Author, Lecturer

The experiences that have defined life as you know it

From the thousands of hours of life you may have amassed, your defining experiences, those that moulded you into the person you are now, are derived from:

- Your decisive EVENTS
- Your important SELECTIONS
- Your dominant PEOPLE

These key areas have contributed positively and negatively to the construction of your authentic self. Some will have positively influenced it, others will have caused you to wear masks, engage in denials and otherwise obstruct your life of authentic happiness. So, the sooner we dig deep and identify the roots of your tree of life, the sooner you will be able to start working toward a life of fulfilment and joy.

You are today, a sum total of how you responded to all the experiences, thoughts and influences that have occurred in your life up to this point. You are a reflected image of your reaction to all the critical moments, crucial decisions and influence of others that life threw at you down the years. Some of your reactions will have been positive and you will have learned healthy lessons and grown as a human being. Other reactions will have been misguided, perhaps influenced by your family, friends, peers or society.



The result is that, you are today, a mixture of the correct, positive and beneficial responses and the incorrect, negative and detrimental responses to your influential Events, Selections and People.

To conclude this section we have some exercises that are designed discover the important, significant and influential Events, Selections and people that have contributed to the person you see in the mirror. You may find it useful to have a notepad and pen available. Remember to keep the notes you make private. They are your memories and yours alone and should be intended FOR YOUR EYES ONLY.

Think of this process like this: You have in front of you, two jigsaw puzzles. One puzzle, when completed, depicts a picture of you, living your ideal, happiest, authentic life. The other depicts you living an unhappy life, wearing masks and lost in a fog of denial. Someone has very kindly mixed the pieces of both puzzles together in one box! You only want to complete one jigsaw, the right one, the one that forms a picture of you in your happiest, most authentic state.



Your challenge, as you trawl your memory banks for this exercise, is to identify and separate the useful pieces (events, selections and people) from the pieces that no longer serve you to your best advantage.

To get as much benefit as possible from the exercise, once you have read through the guidance paragraph first then write down as many detailed memories as you can recall. Recall facts, events, circumstances, experiences, emotions and reactions as clearly as you can. Be prepared to answer questions like “What emotions did this provoke?” and “How did this change your emotional state?” and “Did you feel love – hate – insecurity - fear?” and “How did this cause you to alter your behaviour for similar future experiences?”



Perception Cycle Exercise

Influential Events

It is important to think right back to the moment of your birth and work your way forward in age groups to the present moment. From the moment you were born, forces were at work that would determine the outcomes of your life. From all that you know from what you were told by your parents, siblings and others, form a mental picture of what life must have been like in your family at the time of your arrival.

Were you born into an under privileged, poor, dysfunctional or battle-weary family, or was life more comfortable and enriched for you? Were there negative influencing factors such as alcohol, violence, disharmony, abuse or financial pressure or were your early years filled with healthy solid, happy foundations? Either way, was the correct quality and quantity of unconditional love present in those early years? These may be difficult issues for to even consider let alone confront, but the process is worthwhile to get to the crux of what started the chain of events and experiences that helped form your present self.

Take up your private notepad and allocate a separate page for the age groups given. Consider the critical moments in your life for each group. This will require all of your powers of recall to arrive at your true analysis of self.

- Stage 1: 0 to 6 Up to early Childhood
- Stage 2: 6 to 12 Up to Junior School Years
- Stage 3: 12 to 18 Adolescence
- Stage 4: 19 to 40 Young Adulthood
- Stage 5: 40 -65 Middle Adulthood
- Stage 6: 65 Onward - Late Adulthood

For each stage of your life, up to the age you have reached now, we will consider the key factors affecting your development.

Referring back to the Erikson table, remind yourself of the influential events that occurred in each phase of your life.

For each critical moment you identify, ask yourself questions to place yourself in the real moment of time that is relevant.

The answers you truthfully arrive at will form a sound basis from which to move forward to that life of authenticity and happiness you are seeking.

Questions to prompt you:-

1. Where are you at this moment?
2. How old are you and what do you look like?
3. Who is there with you? Who is supposed to be?
4. What is happening that makes this moment so influential?
5. What emotions or changes of emotions are you feeling now ? Loneliness? Anger? Fear? Confusion? Joy? Power? Helplessness?
6. How would you change the experience if this were possible?
7. What is your mental/physical experience? Clarity/confusion? Happy/sad? Joy/pain? Weak/strong?
8. If you could speak to someone, who? What would you say?
9. What are you saying to yourself?
10. What do you need right now more than anything else?

Having answered the questions as if you were in the moment for each incident, answer the following in writing :-

1. How do you feel now?
2. What emotions are you having now?
3. What are you telling yourself about these events today?
4. What power did you lose to this event? (if negative) What power did you gain or what did you learn (if positive)

If you have completed this first exercise truthfully and completely, you will now be armed with the information you need to move forward.

- Now, list your influential events in one brief paragraph or few sentences
- For each, define the before and after of how the event affected you
- Write a few lines to define the long term effect of the event
- Write how and why you think the moment supported or obstructed your authentic self showing through
- Review and decide if your interpretation and reaction to the event was correct or not.
- Write down whether you should keep or discard your views regarding the impact on your self from each event
- Having survived your events, review them as a whole and determine what has been the effect on your self worth and confidence.

Influential Selections and Choices

Before starting this section of the exercise, briefly review the hierarchy of needs pyramid in the last chapter. We are all motivated by different factors to make choices and decisions in our lives and invariably, the choices and decisions you make, will be driven by one or more of the human needs.

Armed with the information of your influential events, work through the appropriate age groups and identify the important selections, decisions and choices you made in each band. The challenge of this section is to identify the selections, decisions and choices you made and how they affected living your life authentically :-

- Stage 1: 0 to 6 Up to early Childhood
- Stage 2: 6 to 12 Up to Junior School Years
- Stage 3: 12 to 18 Adolescence
- Stage 4: 19 to 40 Young Adulthood
- Stage 5: 40 -65 Middle Adulthood
- Stage 6: 65 Onward - Late Adulthood

Look at the choices that had significant impact on your life emotionally, physically, financially, legally, socially and ask yourself the following questions :-

1. What was/were the choice(s)?
2. Why did you make it/them?
3. What did you give up by making this choice?
4. What was the effect on your self worth before and after the choice?
5. What was the long term effect of the choice on your self worth?
6. How or why did the choice clarify or obstruct your authentic self?
7. Review your interpretation and reaction to the choice. Was your interpretation accurate or inaccurate?

Influential People

Finally, we will look at the people who intentionally or otherwise, well intended or not, have exerted influence over the level of authenticity with which you now live your life. List the people who have influenced your life, positively and negatively. Again, consider the age bands:-

- Stage 1: 0 to 6 Up to early Childhood
- Stage 2: 6 to 12 Up to Junior School Years
- Stage 3: 12 to 18 Adolescence
- Stage 4: 19 to 40 Young Adulthood
- Stage 5: 40 -65 Middle Adulthood
- Stage 6: 65 Onward - Late Adulthood

Who was most influential in your life throughout each band? The same people may have exerted influence across the bands, such as parents, siblings, friends. Who shaped your concept of self and authenticity that controls your life today?

For each person :-

- List their name
- How old were you at that time?
- Write their actions that affected you
- Write down the influence of these actions on you, positive or negative

For the purpose of this exercise, take a cold hard look at the influence that has been exerted on your development. Do not allow your feelings for the person affect your judgement. However well intended, their influence may no longer fit with you comfortably. It is time to determine if the influences that have helped create the present “you”, are they still (or were they ever) serving your best interests in terms of your emotional development?

Were you on the list of influential people? If not, why not? If your own name does not appear on the list it may mean that the self you now own has been moulded and forged by other people. This would mean that you attribute your basic core characteristics to the action and behaviour of others. If so, maybe they took good care of the precious commodity you entrusted them with and maybe they didn't.

It surely makes good sense, that you should be the first person on your list of influential people. Only you can change YOU to your own satisfaction.

By now, you will have valuable memories, crystallised into note form, that spell out for you the influential events and moments that moulded your life as it is now, the pivotal, influential choices and decisions you made and the actions of the influential people in your life and the effects, good or bad of their influence.

Reviewing the process

Assuming you have completed this important exercise, you are equipped to analyse the life changing moments, influencing factors, choices and decisions that have created the life you now live. Ask yourself how much of the life you now live is authentic to the degree that would make you happy?

Revisit the results of your happiness tests in the section on human needs, roles and areas. Look at the areas where you are happiest and least satisfied. Can you see more clearly how your life changing moments, influential people and factors, choices and decisions have influenced your authentic state of happiness? Are you more or less happy as a result of the influences and actions of those events and people? Can you see areas where change would significantly impact on your happiness, positively or negatively?

The Dash

by Linda Ellis

I read of a man who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend. He referred to the dates on the tombstone from the beginning...to the end.

He noted that first came the date of birth and spoke of the following date with tears, but he said what mattered most of all was the dash between those years.

For that dash represents all the time they spent alive on earth and now only those who loved them know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not, how much we own, the cars... the house...the cash. What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash.

So think about this long and hard; are there things you'd like to change? For you never know how much time is left that can still be rearranged.

To be less quick to anger and show appreciation more and love the people in our lives like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect and more often wear a smile...remembering that this special dash might only last a little while.

So when your eulogy is being read, with your life's actions to rehash...would you be proud of the things they say about how you lived your dash?

*“There will be two dates on your tombstone,
And all your friends will see them
But all that really matters
Is the dash you lived between them”*





Coming up in the next section

YOUR BELIEF SYSTEMS

Discover how the beliefs that reside in your mind dramatically improve or impair your experience of happiness. We will learn how to improve our belief systems and how to eliminate self-limiting, destructive and negative beliefs.

6 – Your Belief Systems

*“Belief in yourself is a power with more magic than most can conceive
Turn your darkest defeat into triumph, when you understand how to believe
Belief in yourself is much greater, than knowledge ability or skill,
And nothing is too overwhelming, if belief you would only instill.
For belief is a mover of mountains, there is nothing you could not achieve,
If you were simply willing to learn, how to develop your power to believe”
Author Unknown*



A belief is not merely an idea the mind possesses, it is an idea that possesses the mind. There is a strong unconscious drive to behave consistently in accordance with our beliefs. Our beliefs will stop us from trying certain things or they affect our results, and therefore our ultimate happiness, in different ways.



Whatever we believe with feeling, rightly or wrongly, positive or negative, becomes our reality. Our beliefs form a filter through which we see our entire world, and we naturally resist allowing information that is inconsistent with our beliefs to pass through our filter. So, even if we have beliefs that are totally inconsistent with reality, because we believe them to be true, they become true for us and we behave and act in a manner that is consistent with those beliefs.

Try this. Whatever you do in the next five seconds – **DO NOT think of PINK ELEPHANTS PLAYING MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS** . Don't !

I'm willing to bet that you couldn't fight images of pink elephants from entering your thoughts!


A daft example to illustrate how easily, beliefs can become embedded in our subconscious minds.

Girls, how many times have you passed a magazine rack to be bombarded with images of size 8 women with flawless skin that has been digitally enhanced or airbrushed, yet, if you allow the images to settle in your mind long enough, you buy into the belief that this IS the perfect image of a woman?

Beliefs are imposed upon us every day, thousands of messages and images of how we should look, how we should behave and react and think.

The connection between values and beliefs

Our values are our emotional states, based on life experience and inheritances from our parents, siblings, friends and teachers. They are the emotional states that we believe are the most important to experience (the pleasurable positive values we move towards, such as love, happiness, significance, security and spontaneity), or to avoid (the negative values that bring us pain such as fear, loss, sadness, doubt and boredom).

A person stands on a rocky path, looking up at a massive waterfall cascading into the ocean. The scene is framed by a natural rock archway. The sky is filled with dramatic, colorful clouds, and a rainbow is visible in the mist. The overall atmosphere is awe-inspiring and majestic.

“You must unlearn what you have been programmed to believe since birth. That software no longer serves you if you want to live in a world where all things are possible”

~Jacqueline E.Purcell~

Remember that cars, houses, money, relationships are not values, they are objects of desire. It is the feeling these things bring to our lives that are represent our values.



A belief is nothing more than a feeling of absolute certainty that something has a particular meaning to us. Many of the beliefs we hold onto so tightly, are either out of date, no longer serving us, or do not belong to us at all, having inherited them from others. Beliefs can either positive or negative, they can either limit or liberate us.

Where do our beliefs come from?

Our earliest and initial beliefs stem from childhood. From birth up to the age of two years, we believe that anything is possible. You will recall the section on self esteem telling us that we are born with only two fears and without the inhibitions the develop later in adulthood.

We are born with only two fears :

- A fear of loud noises
- A fear of falling



From childhood onward, we slowly begin to adopt and acquire other beliefs which we inherit from our parents, peers, teachers and what we see, hear and experience. We believed things when we were children that now seem silly. We will believe things now that we never even thought before.

How does this happen?

Children have little or no information to analyse situations, starting out in life as they do, as a blank sheet of paper. Because of this, they tend to accept information without judgement. For example, let us imagine a beautiful young girl who loves dancing. She practices with passion daily and is truly at her happiest when entering competitions and performing. If that child is praised **only** when performing or looking her best, she will have embedded in her the belief that she is only worthy of praise when looking her best or winning. Once this belief is accepted in her mind, it will lead to a change in behaviour from that day. She will believe she is only pretty and worthy of praise when winning or standing out from the crowd.

From that day onward, that small child may be conditioned with the belief that could influence all her later interactions in life. Every human being wants to be loved unconditionally, looking pretty or not, performing well or not. In this example, it would not be surprising to discover the child grows into an adult with a tendency to perfectionism, constantly seeking approval to validate her need for self worth.

Imagine the father of that child, proudly boasting to his friends that his daughter could be a professional dancer or a model, but then following it up with “forget how she looks today, she hasn’t washed her hair and she has a few spots. When she dances she looks beautiful and she’s my darling”.

The poor girl is too young to analyse the situation fully and believes she is only acceptable and praiseworthy when performing well and looking her best. The father has applied conditional love, albeit unknowingly, that until corrected by the child as she becomes an adult, will affect her beliefs about herself and the behaviours she will adopt and the outcomes she will achieve.

Some may say this would be good for the child's self discipline. If the child were able to differentiate between being loved unconditionally and being loved for her beauty and performance, this would be fine, but very few children are born with this natural ability and wisdom. Who of us can say that we have not made similar mistakes with our children at some time or another?

Between the ages of one and eighteen, we are told "No" on average five times daily and positive things on average, four times a year. What type of conditioning is that? What consequences should we expect?

Types of belief

There are two basic types of belief, generalised and conditional.



Generalised beliefs are those where we group life or people as one, for example "Life is wonderful", "People are basically good", "I am a caring loving individual"

Conditional beliefs are those where we apply a condition that precedes the belief, such as : "If I exercise more regularly, I will extend my life" "If I love her more she will love me more in return" (A common false belief that causes so many problems in relationships). Conditional beliefs make the statement "if this applies, then that will happen".

Where do beliefs get stored?

Each of us is unique, and forms beliefs from different input not only in our conscious but also in our subconscious mind. Our subconscious acts as our filing cabinet and is totally non judgemental. As we move forward in our lives, beliefs can be activated or triggered and impact on the way we react and the results we achieve and the choices we make, careers, relationships, care for ourselves and others, our ability to love fully. Since our beliefs are given back to us exactly as our subconscious mind received them, we think and behave in a way that is consistent with our beliefs.

In some circumstances, these beliefs can be outdated for our current needs, or inherited from others to whom they are more applicable. In these instances, these beliefs are no longer serving our best interests and can hold us back.

So how do we cope with our beliefs?

We will, in this section, explore two types of belief, negative and positive, empowering and limiting beliefs.



Some people cope with their negative, limiting beliefs by ignoring them, pretending they do not exist. Unfortunately, this action alone is not sufficient to prevent the impact they can have on our behaviour. Once a limiting belief is brought to the surface and identified, we can take responsibility for choosing to change it, if we so wish. All around us every day are life experiences, information we absorb into our subconscious. If we take these experiences in negatively, then the person that suffers most is ourselves. If we recognise the opportunity to interpret events in a more positive way, then we empower ourselves to move forward.

The way we train our mind to react is important. Rather than constantly criticising ourselves with our inner voice, we can construct our inner questions to be more positive, for example :-

“How well did I do that?”

“Could I do it better?”

“How could I do it better?”



By asking ourselves these questions, we can digest information in a positive way into our subconscious, where it will remain until we need to apply it. Such positive information will reinforce other positive beliefs already there. Learning to accept responsibility for our perceptions of the world and understanding that our limits are self imposed by our attitude of thought is invaluable to our development and growth.

The Power of Beliefs

Once you have identified your beliefs, changed those that are limiting you, by resolving any that conflict with your innermost desires and embraced fully those that serve you best, you will be in a position to literally take control of, and change your life for the better.

How beliefs affect our thought processes



When we examine what effect beliefs actually have upon our thoughts, we can see that there is a domino effect in place here. The first domino in the chain is your beliefs. The beliefs you have, help reinforce or discard your values. The combination of beliefs and values result in thoughts, which mixed with feelings become our emotions. From all of this, our expectations are born, which lead to our behavioural pattern and the actions we take. Expectations mixed with behaviour and action, create a force of attraction which magnetically attracts the results we experience, good or bad.

Your Belief Becomes Your Reality

Perhaps the most powerful single factor in your quest for happiness is your belief about yourself. This law of belief that simply says: Whatever you believe, with feeling, becomes your reality. Whatever you intensely believe becomes your reality. We have a tendency to block out any information coming in to us that is inconsistent with our reality, with our beliefs.

Successful and happy people absolutely believe that they have the ability to succeed and the right to happiness. They will not entertain, think about or talk about the possibilities that they will fail. They do not even consider the possibility of failure.



You always act in a manner consistent with your beliefs. The most important belief system you can build is one of the highest self-worth, where you absolutely believe that you are going to achieve your goals. Positive thinking can sometimes be no more than wishing or hoping. But positive knowing is when you absolutely know that no matter what, you will be happy and successful.

Control over your thoughts is the hardest exercise in mental self-mastery that you will ever engage in. See if you can talk and think about only what you desire, and not talk or think about anything you don't want, for 24 hours. Then you'll see what you're really made of. It's a hard thing to do. But with practice, you can reach the point where you are thinking about your goals and desires most of the time. Then your whole life will start to change for the better.

Two things you can do to build a belief system consistent with the happiness you desire.



First, continually repeat to yourself the words, pictures and thoughts consistent with your dreams and goals. Whatever you repeat often enough, over and over, becomes a new belief.

Second, set a goal for yourself to think and talk only about the things that will make you happy for the next 24 hours. This will be one of the hardest things you ever do. But if you can keep your mind on what you want, and off what you don't want, for 24 hours, you can begin to change your entire future.

Whatever you believe with emotion becomes your reality. You do not necessarily believe what you see, but you see what you have already decided to believe.

Your beliefs control your realities. You always act in a manner consistent with your innermost beliefs and convictions. In fact, you can tell what you or anyone else believes by simply looking at what they do. It is not what a person says, or hopes, or writes, or wishes or intends that is a clear indication of his beliefs; it is only his actions. Actions truly do shout louder than any words. It is only the actions that a person actually takes that tells you what he truly believes.

Since you act in a manner consistent with your beliefs, and you can control your actions, if you engage in actions consistent with the beliefs you want to have about yourself and your life, you eventually develop those beliefs, just as you develop muscles by lifting weights.

For example, if you absolutely believe that you are destined to be happy in your chosen circumstances, and you walk, talk, act and behave every single day exactly the way a happy person would act, you will eventually develop the mindset of a happy individual in your circumstances. And as you progress, you will begin to get the results. Your belief will become the actual fact. Your beliefs will become your realities.

Two things you can do immediately to put these ideas into action.

First, begin to believe today that you are programmed and designed to be happy and successful. Create in yourself the beliefs you most desire — the beliefs that serve you the best.

Second, make a habit of walking, talking and behaving as if you were already enjoying the blissfully happy life you dream of. Your behaviour and actions will build your belief system and will become your reality.

Guilt, Behaviour and Your Beliefs

It is not what happens to you but the way you think about what happens to you that determines how you feel in the present and in the future. By changing your interpretation of a past event, you can change your current feelings.

Guilt is the result of having a belief about how you should be, and then having your behaviour not match that belief.

Now the way to get rid of guilt is you've either got to change your belief or change your action. So if I believe that it's not good to be selfish and I'm being selfish, I can change my belief and say it's okay to be selfish, or I can change my action and stop being so selfish. But can I change my past actions? No. You can't undo the past actions, so if you want to get rid of the guilt, what you have to do is let go of the belief.

You always do the best you can with the awareness, skills and information you have to meet your needs. You can only do what you're doing. And you only did what you did. You couldn't have done anything different. If you could have done it, you would have done it. People say, "Well, I knew better." You might have known better, but given the pressure that was on you and the needs you had and the skills you had and the courage you had and the information you had, you still couldn't have done anything other than you did. So the key here is to forgive yourself, change your beliefs and let go.

Liberate your mind and spirit from negative experiences in the past.



Recognize that whatever you did in the past was done by a different person than the person you are today. That person in the past behaved differently than you would if you had to do it over again in the moment. Let it go.

Accept that you are not perfect and that you have done silly things in your life. So has everyone else. Forgive yourself, and get on with the wonderful future that lies ahead of you.

How to Identify Beliefs

Why is identifying beliefs important to our lives? Let's take the example of the lady who was trying to lose weight. After some early success she couldn't figure out why she reverted back to old habits of binging on food that caused her weight loss to plateau. With some investigation she discovered an idea in her mind that she agreed to long ago and had since forgotten. She had agreed to feeling deprived if she didn't eat everything she wanted. Since our minds naturally direct us to avoid the unpleasant feelings like "deprived", she ate food to avoid these feelings. Beliefs in her mind she was not aware of, were driving her to unwanted behaviours.

When she stepped outside the emotion and the perspective of being deprived she saw a completely different picture. By overeating she was actually depriving herself of a healthy body and physical vitality that she really wanted. By identifying that one belief about food she is back on her way to changing her eating habits.

Finding these hidden beliefs often requires that we do some hunting. The process is rather like investigating a crime. We begin by gathering clues until all the pieces fit in a way that we can see the hidden belief that drives destructive behaviours and habits. You might also think of it as solving the mystery of who you are.

Sometimes these beliefs in our mind are right in front of us and we don't see them. The same way we might not see the windshield because we have trained our self to look through it. It might not seem like much until we bump our head into it. Beliefs are the same way. We have to retrain our mind to see the beliefs in front of us.

IDENTIFYING SELF-LIMITING BELIEFS

It is useful to understand why we form self-limiting beliefs in the first place and how we act them out.

Caught between two decisions

"Should I go this way or that?" This is a dilemma that can result in nothing being done. The limiting belief here may be "I can't make decisions".

Stuck in a mental rut

We may have always done something in a particular way that seems to have worked in the past. We get frustrated when it doesn't work this time, but stay with what we know having "bought into the belief" as a form of habit. This limiting belief may be one of "I can't change".

Dreaming

Constructive dreaming is useful for realisation and attraction of goals, but we all know that dreams do not become positive reality until some action is taken. The limiting belief here might be “I can do it tomorrow”.

Fatalistic Attitude

“The bubble has to burst”, “My luck won’t last forever”. The limiting belief here is a general one with a self sabotaging theme.

Outside Influence

“You’ll never do that” “You’re expecting too much” “You’re setting yourself up for disappointment” “Don’t set your sights too high then you won’t get hurt”. The limiting belief here is to be influenced by the limited beliefs of others, however well intended.

To identify a limiting belief a useful exercise is to ask yourself a series of questions :-

- “Who are you being right now?”
- “What is holding you back?”
- “If your life was perfect right now, what would you be doing?”
- “What has brought you to this point?”

Having identified the limiting belief, you can challenge it internally and create a better one. There will be plenty of evidence to support the new belief, considering it is more likely to lead to the positive outcome that the limited belief is obstructing. To overcome barriers to your progress, a systematic series of questions will lead to better formed outcomes. Ask yourself :-

- “What do I really want from this right now?” “When, where and with whom do I want this?”
- “What will I hear, see and feel when I achieve this?”
- “Am I in charge of the changes?”
- “Will I lose anything when I achieve this outcome?” “Is the outcome worth the effort?”
- “What life consequences will the outcome bring?”

Common Irrational Beliefs

- It is essential for me to be loved or approved by almost everyone for virtually everything I do.
- I should be thoroughly competent, adequate, and achieving in everything.
- Some people are bad, wicked, and they should be severely punished.
- It is terrible when things are not going the way I want them to go.
- My happiness is externally caused I no ability to control my sorrow or rid myself of negative feelings.
- If something scares me, I should be pre-occupied with it and upset about it.
- It is easier to avoid facing my life difficulties and responsibilities than to undertake more rewarding forms of self-discipline.
- My past is all-important. Because something once strongly affected my life, it should indefinitely do so.
- People and things should be different from the way that they are, and it is shattering if perfect solutions to the grim realities of life are not immediately found.
- Maximum human happiness can be achieved by inactivity and inaction or by passively "enjoying myself."
- I should always feel happy, confident, and in control of my emotions.
- I must never fail or make a mistake.
- People will not love and accept me as a flawed and vulnerable human being.
- I need everybody's approval to be worthwhile.
- If I'm not loved, then life is not worth living.
- If I'm alone, then I'm bound to feel miserable and unfulfilled.
- My worthy-ness depends on my achievements (or my intelligence or status or attractiveness).
- People who love each other shouldn't fight.
- I should not feel angry, anxious, inadequate, jealous or vulnerable.
- People should always be the way I expect them to be.



Perception Cycle Exercise

Eliminate Irrational, Negative or Self-Limiting Beliefs

Unless we focus our minds on the task of challenging our beliefs, our subconscious mind simply accepts unchallenged irrational, self-limiting beliefs as real.



With determination and repetition of thought processes, it is as simple to replace a destructive belief with a constructive, positive one, as it was to form the original irrational belief.

The following process works well :-

1. **Identify** the irrational, restricting beliefs and the negative assumptions that reinforce them.
2. **Challenge** the validity of those beliefs by challenging the assumptions under them. In what ways could they be wrong or incomplete? The more challenges you can develop, the weaker the ties will be to the restricting beliefs.
3. **Explore** positive beliefs that would challenge your negative ones. Find validation for empowering, rather than restricting, beliefs. Again, the more you can reinforce empowering beliefs, the more lightly you will be attached to restricting beliefs.
4. **Adopt** a statement you are willing to work with that turns a restricting belief into an empowering one. Each time your habit pattern starts to move toward reinforcing the restricting belief, go back to your written statement. That statement is your guide for turning around restricting belief systems.

Start with a single irrational belief. Don't make your goal so ambitious that you sabotage yourself. One of my favourite authors on the subject, Tony Robbins, in his book, "*Awaken the Giant Within*", writes about breaking old belief systems by visualizing a negative situation in ways—often comical—that minimize its power. The UK's most famous expert on hypnotherapy, personal change expert and author Paul McKenna introduced similar principles. In his book "Change Your Life in 7 Days" he details his "Movies of Your Mind" process which suggests the following:

1. If your belief involves a person, freeze frame the picture so it is still.
2. If the image is in colour in it, drain it down to black and white.
3. Shrink the image until it's tiny.
4. Move the location of the image so it's further away.
5. Give the person a clown's nose, pink hair and Mickey Mouse ears
6. Imagine the sound of their voice. Then alter it by giving them a deep, sexy voice. Change it again until they sound like a squeaky little mouse.

If the source of the restricting belief is a person, see that person reduced in size, just as your dimensions grow. Place the person far away, or locked in a container, or only as a cartoon with a squeaky voice. If it's a place, play with size and structure so that its qualities become less than life-sized. When you feel progress with converting the restricting belief you tackled, select another.



Coming up in the
next section

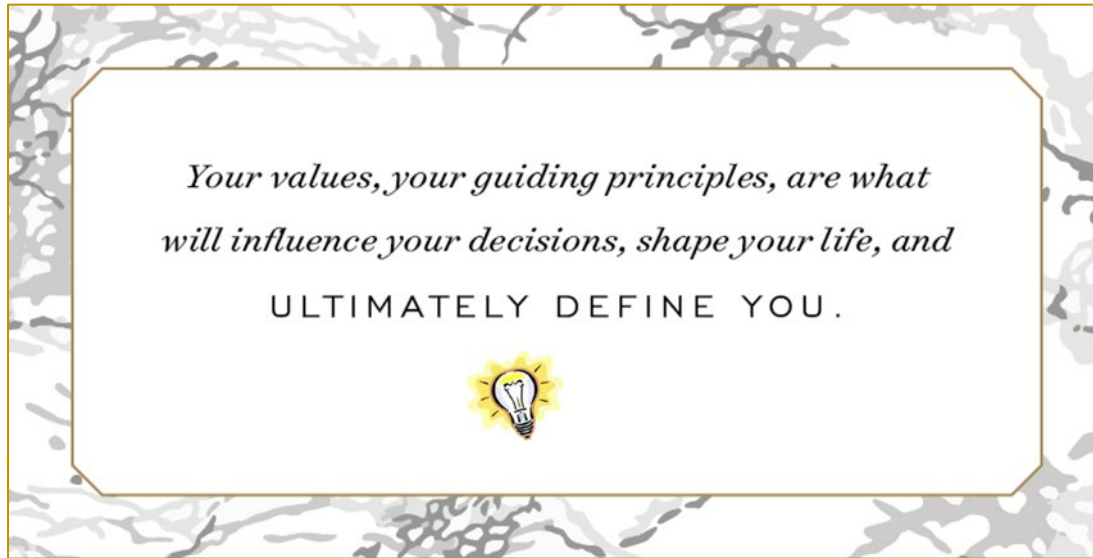
YOUR CORE VALUES

**What are your values and why are they so important to your happiness?
Identify the core values of importance to you and where they come from.**

A close-up photograph of a human eye. The iris is a light, golden-brown color. Overlaid on the iris is the text "CORE VALUES" in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The text is slightly tilted upwards to the right. The eye is looking directly at the camera. The eyelashes are dark and well-defined. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

CORE VALUES

7 – Your Core Values



What are Values?

Values are who we are. What we value determines what life means to us and what actions we take. When we honour our values consistently, life is happy and fulfilling.

Two fundamental areas have an influence over the happiness we experience in our lives, and they are our values and our beliefs. This section will set out to explain the importance of understanding the impact that values can have on our accomplishments. Beliefs are covered in the next section.

Values are the supporting framework for our beliefs and are strongly connected to our identity. Our primary principles and way of life are controlled by our values. They give us direction and motivation to accomplish tasks and face challenging situations.

By the end of this section, you will be able to identify your core values and relate them to the specific areas of your life we mentioned in section one, which once again are :-

Family Life

Love Life

Social Life

Personal Development

Health

Attitude

Career

Finances

Spiritual

Why are our values so important ?

It is only when we identify our core values, the things that really matter most to us, the processes on which we base all of our emotions, decisions and choices, that we come to realise how important they are in our search for happiness and peace.



Whether we are conscious of it or not, we have inner values that strongly influence our outward behaviour.

Deep within each of us there are some strong behaviour governing values and beliefs that have always been there. Many of these values were embedded in us from the earliest stages of childhood, partly from the influence of parents, siblings, elders, relatives, teachers and friends and partly from our own experiences.



Our natural human inclination is for our actions and behaviour to be consistent with these deeply held governing values. That is why we experience pain when our actions are not consistent with our inner value system. It is almost as if we have an inner blueprint that tells us how we should behave and react in given situations and pain is a way of reminding us that we have acted in conflict to these values. Of course this is fine when we still support and believe the values serve our best interests, but many of the values become outdated or are not truly OUR values but those we have accepted as being right for us because they were right for our parents or others. It becomes essential to define the core values that serve us best.

A great deal of stress is unnecessarily experienced as a result of people failing to identify the core values that mean most to them. They punish themselves for sins and transgressions that no longer contravene their real value and belief system, had they only identified it.

By identifying and clarifying our true governing core values, we can access the power within them to increase our personal effectiveness in life. A very real power becomes accessible to you once you identify something that matters a great deal to you at soul level. The power and focus this identification process reveals to you will help you eliminate uncertainties and move you closer toward accomplishing the goals that are significantly important to you.



When our actions and behaviour is in line with our governing values, we finally experience the inner peace we have been seeking. Such is the importance of values.

What matters most

It is important to remember that your values are the emotional states that are most important to experience or to avoid, depending on whether the beliefs that supports them are positive or negative. They are the feelings you want to experience or avoid, move toward or move away from. They are the end result of your belief process. Positive, uplifting beliefs will generate equally positive and uplifting values that will form the basis of your decision making. Clarification and identification of your core values, what you value most and what you truly want most out of life will help you make decisions more effectively and rapidly and bring about the happier, more positive results you are looking for.

Where do our values come from?

The multiple governing values we all possess have their origins in many sources and life experiences. Most of us for example respect the sanctity of human life. Keeping ourselves alive is a foundation of our existence and there are those who place a greater value on the lives of others than they do of their own, evidenced by the mothers love of her children. How many mothers reading this, would not put their own lives at risk or even sacrifice their own lives for the sake of protecting or saving their children?

Many of the moral laws that have evolved in different societies have bestowed their share of governing values in our lives. Many of these draw their source from a respect for life, honesty, property, integrity and other elements of the moral fabric that society is weaved from.

Values are linked to our identity and beliefs and often they are developed at an unconscious level. Unconscious values often come from our families, our teachers and our peer groups and are strengthened and developed as we ourselves develop and grow.

A core value is one that is relevant to all aspects of the individuals' life. When a core value is dishonoured, this can generate stress.

Other values emanate from the roles we occupy in our lives. Friendship for example requires respect, trust and empathy. Leadership includes values such as integrity, wisdom and vision.

Our childhood brought many of our values, often in the form of emotional programming described in a previous section. It comes from our exposure to and awareness of parents, siblings and others, all of whom influenced our lives with their own values and beliefs. Some of these contributors brought excellent lifetime values to our lives, others, consciously or not, may have brought negative influence in the area of our values that have impact for as long as we continue to rely on them for our decisions and behaviour.

The most important person in all of this is you.

Whilst we may be grateful or ungrateful for the influence others may have had imposing or implanting their values upon us, the ultimate responsibility rests with you to determine which of the values that form your foundation are really valuable to you and which are not.

There follows a detailed exercise to determine your core values. Before starting, reflect back on previous sections, at those key times in your life when you had choices and decisions and were influenced by the conduct, actions or behaviour of others. How much of your life today has been formed by their influence and how much is truly your own. Identifying your own true core values is so important in moving forward with your life as the authentic you. It is time to be ruthless about the values that are not yours, or no longer serve you. By the same token, it is time to be appreciative of the values that are truly important to you and will continue to serve you well on your journey.

Values in Specific Areas

It is very important to elicit your own core values. The values identification exercise that follows is for life in general. It is a simple process to repeat the exercise, applying it specifically to the key life areas we have discussed previously, repeated again at the start of the section.



When people become disconnected from their values, they lose their motivation. You may recognise people who are examples of this. They may become so disconnected from their values that they sit for hours on end in front of the television, flipping the remote control from one channel to another, hoping to find amusement or distraction.

Value Identification Exercise

Values are the reasons that determine why we want the things we do. Reasons are the fuel in the furnace of achievement. The more reasons we can identify for wanting something, the more likely we will ultimately achieve it.

The stages of this process will be as follows :-

1. To select the ten values that are most important to YOU in life
2. To compare the values against each other to prioritise them in order of importance
3. To elicit your core values in each of the roles and key areas of your life.

By identifying your core values for certain, you will undoubtedly clarify your areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in life, in the degree to which your life is being lived in accordance with or in contravention of your innermost values.

Listed below are some examples of values that are important. You may have others you will want to include or substitute for these.

Acceptance	Compassion	Enthusiasm	Honesty	Marriage	Practicality	Sincerity
Accomplishment	Competence	Excellence	Hope	Maturity	Precision	Sociability
Adaptability	Confidence	Excitement	Humour	Modesty	Professionalism	Special ness
Adventure	Conscientiousness	Fairness	Imagination	Money	Progress	Strength
Affection	Consideration	Faith	Impartiality	Nurturing	Prosperity	Success
Ambition	Courage	Fitness	Independence	Optimism	Punctuality	Sympathy/empathy
Assertiveness	Creativity	Flexibility	Innovation	Organisation	Purposefulness	Tact
Authenticity	Dependability	Forgiveness	Integrity	Passion	Quality	Talent
Balanced life	Determination	Freedom	Intimacy	Patience	Resourcefulness	Thoughtfulness
Beauty	Diligence	Friendship	Joy	Peace	Respect	Tolerance
Boldness	Discipline	Fulfilment	Kindness	Perseverance	Responsibility	Trust
Broad minded	Education	Generosity	Knowledge	Personal Growth	Security	Understanding
Calmness	Effectiveness	Gentleness	Leadership	Playfulness	Self Control	Value
Career	Encouragement	Good attitude	Learning	Politeness	Serenity	Wisdom
Children	Energy	Happiness	Love	Possessiveness	Sensitivity	
Clarity	Enjoyment	Health	Loyalty	Power	Significance	

Stage 1

The list is provided more as a prompt than anything else and is not exhaustive. If you know with absolute certainty, your ten core governing values, write them down. If you know a few, look at the values on the list to see which ones are different from the ones you have identified and strike a real chord with you.

From the list of values and adding any that you feel are more appropriate to you, circle the ten values that are most important to you, the ten that matter most to you. For the purposes of this stage of the exercise, look for the ten that have the biggest overall impact on you. Later we will look at the key areas and roles in your life and repeat the process. This process will be harder than you may imagine as there are a number of values you may initially think are important to you, but perhaps they are inherited or no longer serve your best interests.

To show you how the process works, I have inserted ten example values in no particular order, in the boxes :-

1	What is important to you in life ?	<i>Love</i>
2	What else is important to you in life?	<i>Honesty</i>
3	What else is important to you in life?	<i>Fairness</i>
4	What else is important to you in life?	<i>Peace</i>
5	What else is important to you in life?	<i>Fun</i>
6	What else is important to you in life?	<i>Forgiveness</i>
7	What else is important to you in life?	<i>Well-Being</i>
8	What else is important to you in life?	<i>Security</i>
9	What else is important to you in life?	<i>Freedom</i>
10	What else is important to you in life?	<i>Authenticity</i>

Stage 2 – Your Hierarchy of Values

Having identified your ten core values, now it is time to prioritise them in order. This is called your “Hierarchy of Values” There are multiple reasons for you not to rely on guesswork alone here. Only by comparison of each value against the others accurately, will you arrive at the true order of priority of your values. You may have the instinct to write down love as your number one core value, only to find when comparing it one on one with others it appears lower down the list. Trust the process, it works !

Again, in no particular order, insert the values in the comparison chart like the one below. The column headed ‘No’ contains two boxes, the top one is the number of the value, the bottom one, shown in italics, is the count of each value.

How it works:- Write all your value choices in the column headed Governing Core Value, as in the example above. Then proceed to ask yourself the questions as follows :-

Imagine you are standing on a train platform waiting for your train to “Happyville”. You have two suitcases that are labelled with the names of your values. At the last minute you are told by the porter that only one suitcase per person is allowed on the train, no exceptions. Each time, you have to choose one of the cases to take and the one to leave behind.

Is 1 “Love” more important to you than 2 “Honesty”? If it is, put a circle around number 1, if it is not put a circle around number 2.

Is 1 “Love” more important to you than 3 “Fairness”? If it is, put a circle around number 1, if it is not put a circle around number 3.

Having compared your item number 1, in this example love, with all the other values, and circled your choices, move down to the next item, number 2, in this example Honesty. Honesty has already been compared and rated against love in the line above, so now we proceed across the boxes, comparing your number 2 choice (this example honesty) and rating it against all of the other choices and circling the choice of value you want to take with you on your journey.

By the time you get to the 10th value, this will have already been compared against the previous 9, hence the blank boxes. Counting up the circles for each value, and entering the count in the bottom left hand box, as they appear in italics in the example given. From this example we can see that the prioritised order of values are as follows :-

1 st Freedom 9	2 nd Authenticity 7	3 rd Love 6	4 th Forgiveness 6	5 th Honesty 5
6 th Peace 4	7 th Fun 4	8 th Fairness 2	9 th Well Being 1	10 th Security 1

You have now arrived at your top ten list of core values, prioritised in the order that mean most to you. It is these values that should be congruent with any goals you set in the future. Goals that are not aligned with your core values may create an uncomfortable sense of anxiety. Consciously or otherwise you will be aware that you are pursuing a goal that is not in line with the values that mean most to you.

Example

No	Governing Core Value	Ranking Calculation									
1	Love	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
6		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
2	Honesty	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		
5		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
3	Fairness	3	3	3	3	3	3	3			
2		4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
4	Peace	4	4	4	4	4	4				
4		5	6	7	8	9	10				
5	Fun	5	5	5	5	5					
4		6	7	8	9	10					
6	Forgiveness	6	6	6	6						
6		7	8	9	10						
7	Well-Being	7	7	7							
1		8	9	10							
8	Security	8	8								
1		9	10								
9	Freedom	9									
9		10									
10	Authenticity										
7											



Perception Cycle Exercise

Now its your turn. Start off by identifying your top ten core values :-

Acceptance	Compassion	Enthusiasm	Honesty	Marriage	Practicality	Sincerity
Accomplishment	Competence	Excellence	Hope	Maturity	Precision	Sociability
Adaptability	Confidence	Excitement	Humour	Modesty	Professionalism	Special ness
Adventure	Conscientiousness	Fairness	Imagination	Money	Progress	Strength
Affection	Consideration	Faith	Impartiality	Nurturing	Prosperity	Success
Ambition	Courage	Fitness	Independence	Optimism	Punctuality	Sympathy/empathy
Assertiveness	Creativity	Flexibility	Innovation	Organisation	Purposefulness	Tact
Authenticity	Dependability	Forgiveness	Integrity	Passion	Quality	Talent
Balanced life	Determination	Freedom	Intimacy	Patience	Resourcefulness	Thoughtfulness
Beauty	Diligence	Friendship	Joy	Peace	Respect	Tolerance
Boldness	Discipline	Fulfilment	Kindness	Perseverance	Responsibility	Trust
Broad minded	Education	Generosity	Knowledge	Personal Growth	Security	Understanding
Calmness	Effectiveness	Gentleness	Leadership	Playfulness	Self Control	Value
Career	Encouragement	Good attitude	Learning	Politeness	Serenity	Wisdom
Children	Energy	Happiness	Love	Possessiveness	Sensitivity	
Clarity	Enjoyment	Health	Loyalty	Power	Significance	

Deciding your core values

Values and beliefs are fundamental to the setting of goals. When looking for our true values, the questions to ask yourself might include :-

- What is important to you?
- What is your goal?
- What is important about this goal?
- What do I value or treasure about this goal?
- What meaning does this goal have for me?

Values measure the meaning life holds for us. Wanting a family for example is a goal not a value. To arrive at the value we must ask the above questions. If wanting a family will bring you love and a sense of belonging, then these are the core values behind the goal. Now, enter your ten values in the appropriate column, and work through the exercise, following the guidelines in the example given above. You may be surprised to discover that your number one core value isn't the one you thought it was!

No	Governing Core Value	Ranking Calculation								
1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
3		3	3	3	3	3	3	3		
		4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
4		4	4	4	4	4	4			
		5	6	7	8	9	10			
5		5	5	5	5	5				
		6	7	8	9	10				
6		6	6	6	6					
		7	8	9	10					
7		7	7	7						
		8	9	10						
8		8	8							
		9	10							
9		9								
		10								
10										

Values and Goal Setting

This section will have helped you determine your core values and recognise their importance in achieving your authentic state of happiness. Your values are you, they are what you stand for and what makes you happiest when you live your life in accordance with them and unhappiest when you are forced to compromise them.

Any goal setting program that is not based on your core values is flawed from the outset.


If you were to ask someone what they want most from life, they might say something like “a half a million pound house” or “a top of the range Mercedes” or “a kind, understanding, compassionate, sensitive and considerate partner”.

These are wants, not values. In these examples, it would be important to ask “If you got the house, Mercedes or the ideal partner, what would you gain and how would that make you feel?” The answers might sound like this : “With a half a million pound house I would gain the respect of my friends and I would feel proud”. In this instance, respect and pride are the values that underpin the goal.

For the second example you might ask “If you got the Mercedes what would you gain and how would it make you feel?” The answer might be “I would be seen as successful and it would make me feel accomplished”. This time, the values identified are success and accomplishment.

Finally, we might ask “Supposing you got your ideal partner, what would you gain and how would it make you feel?” The answer might be “I would feel loved and understood for who I am”. The values identified here are love and understanding.

It is invaluable and essential to elicit your core values before putting your heart and soul behind the goals you might be considering. This is the main reason why some outwardly successful people, who seemingly have all the trappings of success and happiness, remain discontented. It is only when they have identified their core values that they realise the goals they set out to accomplish would never bring them satisfaction, because they were not aligned with their values. An obvious example would be to set oneself the goal of having numerous one night stands, when your core value is to have real, meaningful love in your life. Clearly the goal is misaligned with the value and you would be setting yourself up for disillusionment and unhappiness.

 Only when you have identified what matters most to you in terms of values in the key areas of your life, can you determine the goals you want to accomplish that will honour your values. To do otherwise would be a recipe for disaster, promising only a lack of fulfilment and plenty of heartache.

Understanding the importance that our values have on our lives is fundamental to achieving a balanced, happy life. Values impact on our beliefs, which together have a powerful part to play in whether we set goals to begin with and if we do, what we choose to achieve. Eliciting our values and discovering how we can choose to live our lives so that our values and belief are honoured is a major step to achieving the rewarding, fulfilling, happier lives we all seek.

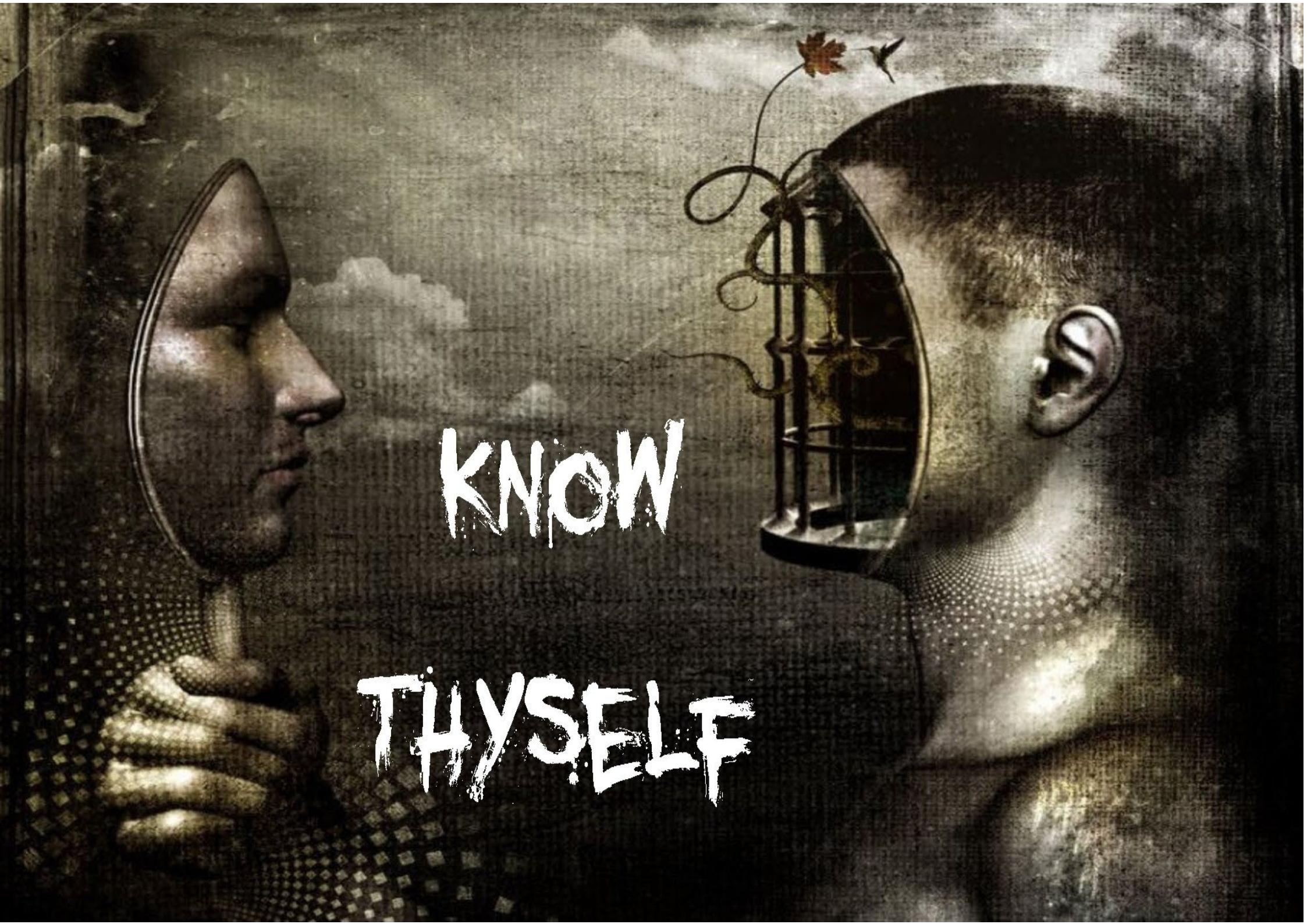


Coming up in the next section

KNOW THYSELF

Understand the role played by your self-concept and self-esteem in your search for inner happiness. Learn how to recover from low self-esteem and create techniques for building higher self esteem.

Assess your level of self-esteem to identify where you can make adjustments.



KNOW

THYSELF

8 – Know Thyself

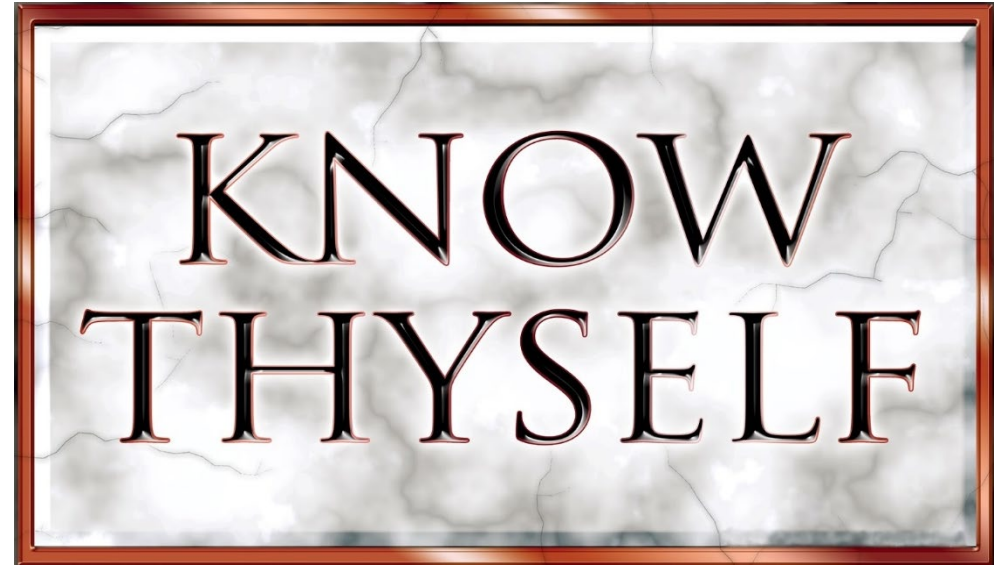
Everything that has ever happened and will ever happen to you, everything you might become and accomplish, is influenced and determined by the way you think.

We have already seen that “external” factors such as events, decisions and influential people, have an impact in shaping our lives.

The most significant “internal” factor that influences our experience of life is our self esteem. We will all have a rudimentary awareness of what self esteem means to us. Having regard to the importance of self esteem in achieving long term authentic happiness in the key areas of our lives, this section will explore the subject in some detail.

This chapter delves into our self-esteem, which can be defined as the impression we hold of ourselves which, consequently, influences all of our experiences in life. Self-esteem reflects how we think about ourselves and the value we assign to ourselves as people. These thoughts may be positive such as “I am intelligent and capable” or negative such as “ I am stupid and useless”.

A positive or high level of self-esteem enriches the quality of your experience of life. It makes you feel good about yourself with the ability to truly appreciate yourself. It gives you a sense of belonging, of feeling safe and empowered to set and achieve whatever goals in life you desire. You feel energised to tackle new challenges, confident and courageous enough to push out the boundaries of your personal ‘comfort zone’ and generally enjoy a much enhanced experience of life.



YOUR SELF CONCEPT



Your self-concept is an expression that is commonly used for your complete bunch of beliefs about yourself, the life you live and the world you live in. As we have seen, your beliefs determine what becomes real for you. Those beliefs have been gathered since your earliest childhood from your parents, family, friends, teachers and others. Some are still current, others are not. It is probable that you are hanging on to beliefs right now, despite the fact that subconsciously, you know they no longer serve your best interests.

When we change our beliefs in a given area of our lives, we begin to experience change in that area. If your overall self-concept, your general summary of your beliefs could be called your “Major Concept”, then you are also equipped with a series of “Minor Concepts”, that control thought, behaviour and results in the individual areas of your life. Here are some examples of the minor concepts you may have :-

- One for each of the roles you occupy
- How you appear to other people
- Yourself as a parent
- How popular you are
- How good you are at your job
- How much money you are capable of earning
- How you look
- How you perform in certain areas
- How you respond to various situations

There are as many minor concepts as there are roles you occupy and specific thoughts you have about yourself.

WHAT MAKES UP THE SELF CONCEPT?

Your self-concept is made up of three distinctly separate parts, namely :-

- Your Self Ideal
- Your Self Image
- Your Self Esteem



Before you can truly discover your authentic self, you must be able to distinguish and separate the different parts of your self-concept, so you can more easily differentiate between who you would like to be, who you really are and how the differences affect you.

SELF IDEAL

This is your vision of who you would really like to be in every area of your life. Your ideal self is the perfect person you aspire to be, that you would want the world to see, with aspects of personality you hope people will see first. Exceptionally happy men and women have a clear vision of their ideal self and are usually doing something every day towards accomplishing it. Again, it follows, that if you have a negative perspective of your self-ideal, it is likely that you will attract circumstances and people into your life that reflect that.

People who allow themselves to remain unhappy over a prolonged period give little thought to the person they want to become, they stop growing and evolving.

SELF IMAGE



This is the real, authentic you as you are right now. It is the “you” that exists when nobody is watching, the real you, as you are that looks back at you from the mirror. If your image of your real self is under confident in particular circumstances on a particular day, your outer behaviours will reflect your inner turmoil.

When you think about yourself as you truly are, the image you see is the value you place upon yourself about a particular characteristic, so for this reason, the self-image could also be seen as your self-worth.

It is perfectly possible to change your outward performance and behaviour by changing your mental pictures of your self-image.

The term positive thinking has become over-used and clichéd through the years, and indeed positive thoughts alone are ineffectual unless you make the feeling appear real in the conscious and subconscious mind. Thought + Emotion is far more powerful. Imagine yourself in circumstances where you have exuded confidence in the past, remembering those feelings, holding onto them and combining them with supportive and constructive thoughts is a far more effective strategy. Habit and imagination play an important role in reconditioning the mind and they are immensely more powerful than logic and willpower.

When you learn to change your self-image deliberately, you'll behave and perform more to your satisfaction than you ever have before. You can change your personality and the outcomes in your life by changing your mental images.

SELF ESTEEM



If your self-ideal is how you ideally see yourself, and your self-image is how you actually see yourself, your self-esteem is how you feel about the gap between the two.

Let us assume for a moment that the ideal way you see yourself weighing two stone lighter than you actually do. The two stone lighter weight is your ideal self, your real weight is your image of self as you actually are. In this example, your self-esteem is represented by how you feel about that two stone difference! How you feel about yourself as you are right now.

Look at the key areas of your personality, your confidence, your appearance, your fitness, your abilities, how you are loved by others. It is the difference between how you would like to be and how you see yourself that determines your level of self-esteem.

If you see yourself ideally as a person who is loved and respected and you feel that you are neither loved nor respected as much as you deserve, then your self-esteem will suffer. If you see yourself in excellent physical condition with good health and a positive outlook and in fact you are in peak condition, with abundant good health and positive perspectives, it is likely that in this area your self-esteem will be high.

The importance of your self-esteem cannot be understated. It is the key to your happiness and personal effectiveness and represents the foundation of your performance in all areas of your life, relationships, career performance health, finances, in fact every key area of your existence.



Your self-esteem is the fuel for your personality and enthusiasm that powers your accomplishments in life. Self-esteem is the emotional part of your personality and as human beings are predominantly emotional in their decision making and behaviours, the remainder of this section will focus on this very important area in detail. Self-esteem is our belief that we have value and potential.

We know that we are important simply for being here. We believe we have a right to express ourselves, and to be happy. We are certain that we have a purpose for living. We can have dignity and poise, regardless of our physical appearance, financial status, possessions, occupation, accomplishments and things that we cannot control such as other people's opinions of us.

Self-esteem is the collection of thoughts, images, beliefs, and physical habits that correspond to our perception and opinion of ourselves. Self-esteem manifests itself in our outer world. We know that we possess unique talents and perspectives that make an important contribution to society. We have the right and responsibility to develop that potential.

While we created our ideas about ourselves, we were particularly vulnerable to other people's teasing, insults, rejections, and shaming. As adults, we are less vulnerable to the same assaults if we have learned that we are responsible for our own self esteem. As Eleanor Roosevelt said, "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent". It is difficult to have self-esteem without support from people, at least from the people whom we respect.

If we value honesty, and we violate that value, we can be damaging our self-esteem, if we respond excessively or incorrectly. When we correct the action, our self-esteem is restored and even enhanced because we have indicated to ourselves that we are competent to live life fairly and directly. We can question the values that were violated. We realize that our values are ineffective for the purpose of enhancing our life, so we change them. We can avoid shaming ourselves and becoming wracked with guilt. Shame and guilt are harmful and unnecessary acts in which we proclaim that we are flawed and incapable. In one sense, shame and guilt are the opposite of self-esteem. They damage self-esteem.

Low self-esteem is at the core of our behaviours which make us feel that life is unproductive or unmanageable. The purpose of this chapter is to assist you to get life under control so as to feel more productive, successful and happy.

The development of low self-esteem takes time. It takes a series of events and a chain of habitual behaviours to dampen our sense of self-worth. What is most important is for you to identify the negative impact of low self esteem which has resulted in your feelings of being out of control, unproductive, and unhappy.

Low self-esteem has its origins in a number of life circumstances. If you come from a family of origin where one or both of your parents had problems with: alcohol, drugs, mental illness, inability to show warmth, affection and approval, overly critical, rigid in religious belief, workaholism, then in all likelihood your self-esteem suffered. If you were physically, emotionally, verbally, or sexually abused or neglected your self-esteem was lowered.

THE IMPACT OF LOW SELF ESTEEM



If, in a relationship you worked hard to overcome the other person's irresponsibility and insecurity, this "codependent" relationship negatively affected your self-esteem. If, on the other hand, you were dependent on another person to make the world seem right for you, your self-esteem was also hurt and damaged.

These sources helped to distort your thinking, emotions and actions, resulting in lowered self-esteem. Your thinking was affected by irrational beliefs not founded in reality but motivated by the need to induce guilt, fear, mistrust, insecurity, and manipulation. This thinking led you to believe that no matter what you did in life it would "never be good enough." This thinking led you to believe that you were nothing unless you "did something." This thinking did not allow you to love yourself unconditionally for just being the person that you are.

Irrational thinking may have led you to develop a negative self-image which kept your self-esteem lowered and make you feel bad about yourself.

The repression and denial of feelings may have made it difficult for you to identify your true feelings today. Another problem could be that your feelings were only expressed in exaggerated or explosive ways. Distorted feelings, be they repressed, denied, exaggerated or explosive, result in withdrawal and depression, common feelings experienced by people with low self-esteem.

Distorted thinking and feelings result in like behaviors with consequences that reinforce low self-esteem, so the cycle continues until you break it.

Repressing or denying feelings of love, grief, anger, fear or any important emotion results in feelings of unresolved loss. Because of feeling the need to "look good" for others, you may have never gone through the wrenching emotional response to a death of a loved one, denied yourself the exquisite joy of a truly loving relationship, suffered the pain of a lost relationship or a major failure experience. You may have denied the inappropriate way you were treated by others, or your nagging doubts about the quality and happiness of your life. A void is created in your life by the lack of accepting and letting go of losses, fully giving and accepting love, any one of which may have created emotional barriers which affected your thinking, feelings, and behaviours resulting in lowered self-esteem.

Self destructive behaviours both contribute to and are the result of low self esteem. Many self destructive behaviours such as overuse of alcohol, drugs, food, gambling, or sex may need specific and direct help to overcome.

Such behaviours are often only the visible symptom of the bigger problems emanating from your low self esteem. These behaviours require a lot of energy, persistence, and self love to deal with. It is almost impossible to eliminate these behaviours unless you fall in love with yourself, forgive yourself for your past and enhance your self-esteem.

Controlling behaviours and related issues are a direct result of low self-esteem. In order to keep your sanity, you may have tried to over control people, events, and circumstances. On the other hand, you may have found greater acceptance for yourself by being helpless and dependent on others. In either case, these control behaviours were unhealthy and negatively affected your self esteem. The road to recovery emphasizes taking self control over your thoughts, feelings, and actions so that you assume personal responsibility for yourself and enhance your self-esteem.

Anger is a healthy emotion which gets distorted as a result of low self-esteem. You may have beliefs which block your expression of anger leading you to be depressed. Or your anger is so hostile and explosive that it hurts others. You may have denied anger so much that just the thought of getting angry scares you. Because unresolved anger contributes to a faulty belief system, inadequate emotional life and unhealthy behaviours, it contributes to the lowering of your self esteem.

Poor communications arise as a result of having received poor communication experience in the past. Your inability to express feelings openly was due to low self esteem. The ability to listen to others and reflect back their feelings was also a missing skill. These poor communications resulted in poor problem solving with a sense of failure and lowered self esteem. In order to gain new skills at communication, you will need to learn to focus on feelings rather than the content of what is being said by another person.

Being resistant to change is affected by low self esteem because you lack the self confidence to believe in your own abilities and worth. As a result you have either worked harder to prove yourself or you have given up to a sense of failure. Because of your low self esteem, you may have sabotaged your own efforts to be successful in life. You may have problems dealing with stress and burnout and don't know how to relax and have fun. You may have severe insecurity and lack of trust in self which inhibit your ability to take a risk. You may find yourself going in circles with no way out of lowered self esteem. Any negative self talk may have you captive in a lack of belief in and dislike of your self. Affirmations and changing your self talk to a positive style not only leads to enhanced self esteem but also to the ability to accept personal responsibility for a healthy self.

Relationship problems at home, school, work, socially, and in the community result from low self esteem. Unproductive and unhealthy relationships contribute to the lowering of self esteem. Low self esteem is often the root cause of failure of most relationships. It takes two people to make a relationship work and it takes two people to ruin it. BOTH parties in a relationship need to have healthy self esteem in order for the relationship to be healthy. If they do not, then the relationship has barriers to its growth and productivity. People with low self esteem often seek out others with low self esteem to establish personal, work, or social relationships.

These relationships start out on a fragile foundation which often results in disastrous consequences. As you work at loving yourself unconditionally and building confidence in your ability to sustain healthy relationships, then you will attract healthy parties in your personal, work, and social life. Problems will persist if one partner advances on growth and productivity dramatically faster than the other. The growing partner can feel resentful for having to care take the other, and for being held back. The stagnant partner may adopt victim type behaviour over time and feel resentful that their partner is advancing in life more rapidly than they are.

Recovery from low self-esteem

The recovery process to enhance self esteem may seem arduous, but it is worth every ounce of your mental effort. You may have developed old habits which are hard to break. You have fantasy dreams of the way things are supposed to be and these dreams die hard. The path of recovery involves a lot of work and effort on your part. There are a lot of issues needing to be addressed and a commitment to personal recovery is needed in order to keep the focus clear and direct.

The first step in the recovery process is to address the distorted thinking, feelings, and behaviours which resulted from the sources of your low self-esteem.



To correct your thinking, you will need to stand back from your life and beliefs to learn what "normal" is and to get in touch with what is reality in your life. You will need to dispel your irrational beliefs. You will need to identify, discard, and replace negative self talk with daily constructive affirmations. You will need to let go any intellectual opposition to the notion of a Higher Power in your life. You will need to define a relationship between you and your Higher Power that is healthy and works for you.

To heal your feelings you will need to identify and label your feelings. You will need to give yourself permission to have both negative and positive feelings. You will need to get in touch with how you are feeling about the reality in your life. You will need to feel the power of self affirmation and self approval which results in your growing in self love and self caring. You will need to open your feelings up to the healing of your Higher Power's will. You will need practice in expressing feelings and listening to others expressing their feelings.

To change any unhealthy behaviours you will need to begin to act only on rational thinking and true feelings, sincerely felt by you. Accept personal responsibility for your own actions and stop blaming others. You will need to identify your self defeating behaviours and change them.

As a result of improved thinking, healed feelings, and healthy behaviours, your compulsively driven behavioural pattern can change. This will occur by rewriting the old behavioural self talk, taming your inner voice. Keep the positive elements of your personality and replace the unhealthy aspects. You can change your old pattern by getting in touch with the feelings you have for too long ignored. You can "let go" of the compulsive nature of your old unhealthy personality traits and work at thinking before you act. You can redefine yourself by letting go of self defeating behaviours with their negative consequences.



As you work at rewriting and changing your old personality trait's self-talk, you also need to work at addressing the problem areas identified in the earlier paragraphs on low self esteem.

The steps for recovery for each problem area is as follows:

- Let go of the unresolved grief over losses you have experienced in your life.
- Eliminate self destructive behaviours and gain outside support if necessary to ensure your continued progress.
- Let go of the things you can't control or change personally in life and accept self control over your own behaviours and feelings.
- Release any unresolved anger appropriately - recognize that anger is a healthy feeling with an appropriate place in your life.
- Learn how to focus more on feelings than on content to improve your communication skills, by active listening, reflecting of feelings and problem solving based on the expression of honest feelings.
- Let go of self-defeating behaviours and to adopt new, healthy behaviours by accepting personal responsibility for self. Learn to embrace and welcome change.
- Work on improving personal behaviours so as to improve personal, work, and social relationships.

The road to recovery requires a great deal of your patience, effort and energy. Hard work, persistence, patience, and a sense of faith and hope will pay off in the end as you begin to feel the glow of healing self-esteem. This process is filled with setbacks and relapses and you must accept this as part of the human condition. If you fall off the wagon of recovery, get right back up and keep on going. No one but you can keep you from your goal of increased self-esteem.

Techniques for creating self-esteem

We develop energy vibrations such as poise, self-confidence, self-love, self-appreciation, and joy. We develop affirmations regarding our true value and potential. We visualize ourselves in situations where we have poise, self-confidence, self-love and an ability to interact effectively from a base of our true self. We act as if we have self-esteem. Self-esteem gives permission for us to grow effectively and happily in the human world. As we examine our values, we discover that we have full self-esteem only if we are complying with our values. We need to have the values that provide valid feedback on our actions, such that they trigger alarm bells when we commit an act that is truly destructive or self-destructive. If we value life, we value this alarm mechanism that tells us that our current actions are diminishing our life.

Where does self-esteem come from ?

As newborn babies, we did not enter this world equipped with a self-concept. Everything you are today, you have learned or experienced since birth. Every attitude, belief, value behaviour and fear you may have right now has been learned. It therefore follows that if there are elements that no longer serve your best purposes, you can let them go and replace them with more positive elements that will serve you better.

As we have seen from the Erikson stages of development, from birth throughout the stages of our lives, we grow emotionally as human beings by successfully passing through the various development phases of life from infancy, through childhood and teenage years, to adulthood and then old age.

Children are born unafraid and without the inhibitions of adults.

They are born with only two fears, the fear of loud noises and the fear of falling. Ask anyone who has raised children about their experiences and they will tell you of the apparently fearless behaviour of children. They will climb high trees, run out in front of cars, put their fingers in flames and frighten the living daylight out of their elders with their suicidal tendencies. For their own protection, they are gradually taught what to fear by adults. Other than falling and of loud noises, all fears children learn are taught to them by adults or by painful experience.

Children are wonderfully uninhibited. They will laugh, cry and wet themselves without any concern of what others might think. They are spontaneous and naturally expressive, without inhibition. Ever seen a self-conscious baby?

This is our natural state, the way we entered the world, unafraid and uninhibited. Any fears and inhibitions have been learned along the way. The times when you are your happiest are those when you have felt so comfortable in the company of people you trust, that you can revert back to your inner child, fearless and spontaneous, relaxed and at ease.

How we learn and develop is critical to our self-esteem and happiness in life. Much of our learning is from our parents and siblings, often influenced by one or both of them in our development. Another way we learn is by the natural response of moving away from discomfort and pain toward comfort and pleasure.



Perception Cycle Exercise

Now it's time to see how healthy your self-esteem is at the moment. Only you will see the results, so please don't be afraid to be completely honest with yourself. Once you have identified where you are, you will be able to determine where you want to be and how to get there.

The following test is a simple assessment of your levels of self esteem at this moment. From the statements, score yourself with the number that is most true for you on the following basis :-

	1=Never	2=Rarely	3=Sometimes	4=Frequently	5=Always	
1						()
2						()
3						()
4						()
5						()
6						()
7						()
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22						()
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25						()
26						()
27						()
28						()
29						()
30						()

TOTAL SCORE

Scoring Analysis and Interpretation

Remember that whether your result reflects a high or low self esteem, individual questions may indicate an area for you where self esteem is or may become an issue.

0	-	30	Not affected by low self esteem
31	-	45	Traces of low self esteem. Preventative action should be taken to reduce its impact on your life.
46	-	61	Mild self esteem issues in your life take steps to treat this
62	-	90	Moderate low self esteem indicated Take steps to treat this as soon as possible
91	-	120	Severe low self esteem. Take immediate steps to treat this
121	-	150	Profound low self esteem. Take immediate steps to treat this and seek out professional help to assist you in the process.

An interesting exercise is for both partners to complete the exercise twice, once about themselves and once about their perception of the other. The degree of difference between your scoring for yourself and the score your partner gives you is an indicator of the honest levels of communication that exist between two people in a relationship.



Coming up in the next section

PERCEPTION AND THOUGHTS

Introducing the perception cycle, a powerful tool to improve the quality of your beliefs and thoughts to increase the levels of happiness you enjoy. Discover the power behind your thoughts and how they attract positive and negative circumstances and people that affect your happiness.

All our knowledge has its
origin in our perceptions.

Leonardo da Vinci

9 – Perception and Thoughts

Thoughts and Thinking

Thoughts are things; they have tremendous power. Thoughts of doubt and fear are pathways to failure. When you conquer negative attitudes of doubt and fear you conquer failure. Thoughts crystallize into habit and habit solidifies into circumstances.

Bryan Adams ~ 1959-, Canadian-born American Musician, Singer, Songwriter



The Universal Nature of the Perception Cycle . . .

We can transpose new, more constructive beliefs for old outdated, non-serving beliefs in any area. Whether the subject be happiness, authenticity, your needs, beliefs, values, your level of self esteem, your roles, awareness, appreciation, acceptance, or your beliefs about any subject, event or person, in fact, whatever you choose to think about, you can substitute a negative belief for a more positive, constructive one and create a different cycle of events, and arrive at happier results. Test it for yourself. Feel the positive emotional energy from replacing a destructive belief with a more positive one.

An exercise in imagination

Imagine if you would, that you are running or walking fast up a steep mountain path. The sun is scorching overhead, and although you are perspiring, the inside of your mouth feels dry like sandpaper. You wish you'd remembered to bring some water to quench your thirst. Too late now, you are an hour away from base camp and another hour from the hotel further up the mountain.

The seconds feel like hours as you struggle up the mountain. The sun, that searing heat. . . your lips feel like they're glued together, you feel so parched. What would you pay for a bottle of water right now.

Imagine the scene an hour later as you almost run into the hotel. Can you believe it, the bars and cafeteria are all closed! Ah well, there's always the mini bar in your room, there must be a drink in there. The lift is broken so you take the stairs in threes, almost demolishing the door to your room. You dash to the mini bar, now anxiously anticipating how wonderful that cold drink will feel inside your mouth.

What? Nothing in the fridge but a lemon! You examine it in the palm of your hand. You close your eyes and you can indeed smell its zesty, clean, crisp fragrance. Doesn't it have a pretty lemon yellow colour? You can feel the texture of the lemon lightly with the pads of your fingers. Doesn't it feel lumpy?

Now, squeeze it and feel the consistency. Smell it again. Hold it up to your nose and take a deep breath. Imagine you can hear yourself say, "Isn't that a pretty lemon? Doesn't it smell fantastic?"

Now, I'd like you to, in your mind, take a knife from the drawer and cut a slice from the lemon. Take the slice and squeeze it until the juice is dripping down your fingers? Good. It's easier to smell the free-flowing juice. Now, take that slice and place it in your mouth, just in your mouth, not on your tongue. Doesn't it smell fresh?

OK, do you feel the juices dripping on to your tongue? Great. Now, set the lemon slice on your tongue. Oooh, can you taste that tangy juice? Great.

Now back to reality . . . What is happening in your mouth?

Well, if you're like a good percentage of the people, your mouth is salivating. OR drying up. Either way, you are having a reaction to the sight, sound, smell, taste, and feel of the lemon.

You know why? Your brain does not know the difference between what is real and what is vividly imagined! Now, how can this help you?

If you really take the time and effort to change your view of reality, your brain will put in the time and effort to make your reality become your view.

And so it is with changing your perceptions. You won't have to imagine lemons every time you want to substitute a belief, but this exercise should help you to see just how powerful your imagination can be.

Perception

Is the world really as you see it? Do you see a lovely young lady or a shrivelled old woman? The ear of the young lady is the eye of the old woman. This reversible figure shows how we can be given subtle cues which influence what we see. We tend to believe that our perception or experience of the world is reliable, "Seeing is believing", but we may not be the objective observers we



think we are. Our perceptions reflect our needs, expectations, attitudes, values and beliefs. We see what we believe. Research shows that rather than passively recording details we actively process incoming stimulation, focusing on some aspects while ignoring others. And so it is with your beliefs and thoughts.

Stress, misunderstanding and conflict often occur when our perceptions are inconsistent with the way in which we are perceived by others. Having the courage to explore these differences enables us to reassess our point of view.

Research shows us that we hold onto our perceptions tenaciously even in the face of contradictory evidence. We will be more likely to alter our perception of the contrary evidence than our own opinions. What is called for, is a greater sense of awareness and acceptance of alternative perceptions.

We often go through a process of denial, refusing to question our perception of ourselves and our world, even when faced with overwhelming evidence to the contrary. For this reason, the first step in self improvement is to question and change irrational thoughts and limiting beliefs as described in previous chapters. Chapters that follow will provide further assistance in specific areas that are known to be successful in the transformation of thought and belief.

The attitude factor

- Our thoughts, feelings, and actions constitute our attitude.
- Our attitude controls our life experience and our ultimate destiny.
- We unlock our true potential by understanding and controlling our thought
- 85% of the factors that contribute to our results relate to attitude.
- Only 15% of the factors that contribute to our results relate to skills and knowledge.

Thought vibrations



Every thought that you send out is a vibration which never perishes. It goes on vibrating every particle of the universe and if your thoughts are noble and forcible they set in vibration every sympathetic mind.

Unconsciously all people who are like you take the thought you have projected and in accordance with the capacity that they have, they send out similar thoughts. The result is that, without your knowledge of the consequences of your own work, you will be setting in motion great forces which will work together and put down the lowly and mean thoughts generated by the selfish and the wicked.

The way you think



Everything that happens to you, everything you become and accomplish is determined by the way you think, by the way you use your mind. As you begin changing your mind, you begin changing your life. But how did you get to where you are today? What formative influences have combined to make you the person you are right now? Why do you think and feel the way you do, and what are the factors that have brought you to your current

situation? In this chapter, you will learn about your how you have been put on a form of autopilot, starting from an early age. You will learn how to begin taking control of your internal guidance system, and how to remove influences and obstacles mat have been interfering with your happiness without your even knowing about it. You will learn how to alter your mind to make it more consistent with the results you want.

Thought—The Architect of Destiny

If the mind dwells continually upon one train of thought, a groove is formed into which the thought-force runs automatically and such a habit of thought survives even death.

Every thought, it must be remembered, has got its own mental image. The essence of the various mental images formed in one particular physical life is being worked out in the mental plane. It constitutes the basis for the next physical life.

Not so easy is the act of explaining the detailed workings of thought and destiny.

Each thought is a link in an endless chain of causes and effects, each effect becoming a cause and each cause having been an effect; and each link in the endless chain is welded out of three components—desire, thought and activity. A desire stimulates a thought; a thought embodies itself as an act. Act constitutes the web of destiny.

Unselfish loving and every thought of compassion helps to build the strongest framework of thought imaginable.



You sow an action and reap a habit; a habit sown results in character. You sow a character and reap a destiny.



Man is the master of his own destiny. You make yourself, by the power of your thought, your destiny. You can undo it if you like. All faculties, energies and powers are latent in you. Unfold them, and become free and great.

Thoughts Chisel Your Outward Appearance

Your face is like a gramophone record or freshly created compact disc, whatever you think is at once written on your face.

Every unpleasant thought serves as a chisel or needle to sculpt the thoughts on your face. Faces are covered with the scars and wounds which are made by thoughts of hatred, anger, lust, jealousy, revenge, etc.



The man who thinks that he can hide his thoughts is fooling himself. The face is the contents page of the mind. Every thought cuts a groove in the face. A loving thought brightens the face. An evil thought darkens it.

Continued unpleasant thought increases the depth of dark impressions. The facial expression truly advertises the inner state and true contents of the mind.

The face is like an advertisement hoarding displaying what is going inside the mind. Your thoughts, sentiments, states and emotions produce their strong impressions on the face.

In your face, you can hardly hide your thoughts. You may wrongly think that you have kept up your thoughts in secret. The thoughts of lust, greed, jealousy, anger, revenge, hatred, at once produce their deep impressions on your face.

The face is a faithful recorder and a sensitive registering apparatus to register and record all the thoughts that are in your mind. The face is a polished mirror to indicate the nature of the mind and its contents at a particular time.

Thoughts Feature the Physical Expressions

Mind is the subtle form of our physical body. The physical body is the outward manifestation of the thoughts. So when the mind is twisted, the body becomes twisted too.

Mind very conspicuously reflects on the face its various states which a man of intelligence can very easily read.

The body follows the mind. If the mind thinks of falling from a height, the body prepares itself immediately and shows external signs. Fear, anxiety, grief, cheerfulness, hilarity, anger, all produce their various impressions on the face.

Your Eyes Betray Your Thoughts

The eyes are the windows of the soul and cannot conceal the condition and state of the mind.

There is a telegraphic instrument in the eyes that transmits messages or thoughts of treachery, depression, gloom, hatred, cheerfulness, peace, harmony, health, power, strength, beauty and of course love.

If you read the eyes of others, you can read the mind at once. You can read the uppermost thought or dominant thought of a man if you are careful to mark the signs in his face, conversation and behaviour. It needs a little knowledge, training, intelligence and experience.

Negative Thoughts Poison Life

Thoughts of worry and thoughts of fear are fearful forces within us. They poison the very sources of life and destroy the harmony, the running efficiency, the vitality and vigour. While the opposite thoughts of cheerfulness, joy and courage, heal, soothe, instead of irritating, and immensely enhance efficiency and multiply the mental powers. Be always cheerful. Smile often. Laugh a lot.

Thoughts are living things

While light travels at the rate of 1,86,000 miles per second, thoughts virtually travel in no time.

Thoughts are living things. A thought is every bit as solid as a piece of stone. We may cease to be, but our thoughts can never die. Every change in thought is accompanied by mental vibration of its matter. Every thought that you send out is a vibration which never perishes. It goes on vibrating every particle of the universe setting in vibration every sympathetic mind.

Unconsciously all people who are like you take the thought you have projected and in accordance with the capacity that they have, they send out similar thoughts.



Thoughts are giant power transmitters and receivers. They are more powerful than electricity. They control your life, mould your character, and shape your destiny.

Thought exerts its influence over the body. Grief in the mind weakens the body. The body also influences the mind. A healthy body makes the mind healthy. If the body is sick, the mind also becomes sick. If the body is strong and healthy, the mind also becomes healthy and strong.

Violent fits of hot-temper do serious damage to the brain cells, throw poisonous chemical products into the blood, produce general shock and depression and suppress the secretion of gastric juice, bile and other digestive juices in the bodily system, drain away your energy, vitality, induce premature old age and shorten life.

When you are angry, the mind becomes disturbed. Similarly, when the mind is disturbed, the body also becomes disturbed. The whole nervous system is agitated. You can most easily control anger by the expression of love.

Thought creates the world. Thought brings things into existence. Thoughts develop the desires and excite the passions. So, the contrary thoughts of killing the desires and passions will counteract the former idea of satisfying them. So when a person is impressed with this, a contrary thought will help him to destroy his desires and passions.

Think of a person as a good friend of yours and there the thing is created as a reality. Think of him as your enemy, then also the mind perfects the thought into an actuality. He who knows the workings of the mind and has controlled it by practice is truly happy.

Similar Thoughts Attract

In the thought world, the great law “Like attracts like”, operates. People of similar thoughts are attracted towards each other. That is the reason why the maxims run as follows: “Birds of the same feather flock together,” “A man is known by the company he keeps.”

The mind has phenomenal ‘drawing power’. You are continually attracting towards you, from both the seen and the unseen sides of life, forces, thoughts, influences and conditions most in tune to those of your own thoughts.

In the realm of thought, people of similar thoughts are attracted to one another. This universal law is continually operating whether we are conscious of it or not.

Understand the Laws of Thought



Every man should have a comprehensive understanding of the laws of thought and their operations. He can utilize the helping forces to serve his ends in the best possible manner.

He can neutralize hostile forces or antagonistic situations. Just as the fish swims against the current, so also he will be able to go against the hostile currents by adjusting himself properly and safeguarding himself with suitable precautionary methods.

The alternative is that man becomes a slave to his thoughts. He is tossed about helplessly by various currents. He is like driftwood on a river, a ship without a rudder. He may be miserable and unhappy, although he may be wealthy and possesses everything.

Understanding the laws of Thought, you can mould or shape your character in any way you like. The common saying, “As a man thinketh so he becometh,” is one of the great laws of thought. Think you are pure, pure you will become. Think you are noble, noble you will become.

Become an embodiment of good nature. Think good of all. Always do good actions. Serve, love, give. Make others happy. Then you will reap happiness. You will get favourable circumstances or opportunities and environments.

If you hurt others, if you gossip, scandal or mischief monger, backbite, tell tales, if you exploit others, if you acquire the property of others by dishonest means, if you do any action that can give pain to others, you will reap pain. You will get unfavourable circumstances or opportunities and environments.



This is the law of thought and nature. Just as you can build your good or bad character by good or bad thoughts, so also you can shape your favourable or unfavourable circumstances by doing good or bad actions.

By his good thinking, by watching the nature of his thoughts, by introspection, by active noble thinking, a man of discrimination builds his noble character, forms his high destiny. He is careful in his choice of words. He speaks little. He speaks sweet loving words. He never utters any kind of harsh words that can affect the feelings of others.

He develops patience, mercy and universal love. He speaks the truth.

He prepares himself to always get favourable circumstances. The man who spreads happiness will always get such favourable circumstances as can bring him happiness. He who spreads pain to others will, without doubt, attract by the law of thought unfavourable circumstances that may include misery and pain. Man creates his own character and circumstances, by the manner of his own thinking.

Bad character can be transformed into good one, by good thoughts, and unfavourable circumstances can be changed into favourable circumstances by doing good actions.

Improve the quality of your thinking

Human beings are mental organisms. Everything we are or ever will be, will be as the direct result of the way we think. If we improve the quality of our thinking, we must improve the quality of our lives. And, there is no other way to do it.

In tests given to children ages 2 - 4 years, 95% of the children were found to be highly creative with curious, questioning minds and an ability for abstract thought.

Sadly, when the same children, were tested again at age 7, only 5% still demonstrated high levels of creativity. In the years in between, they had been taught conform, conditioned by repetitive mental programming.

Children are taught to colour between the lines, sit in neat little rows like soldiers, to do and say what the other children did and said, and to do as they were told. Over time, they lose the wonderful fearless spontaneity of youth and learn to suppress ideas and insights that are unusual or different.

Most of us have experienced something similar. Fortunately, the human race is creative. Creativity is your birthright, and you can tap into it at any time, no matter how long it has been since you really used it.

What you think upon grows.

Whatever you allow to occupy your mind will be magnified in your life. Whether the subject of your thoughts is good or bad, the law works without judgement. Any subject that you release from your thoughts tends to diminish in your life, because what you do not use withers.

The more you think about your poor health, the worse it will become. The more you think of yourself as healthy and well, the better will your body be. The more you think about lack, debt and turmoil, the worse will your situation will become. The more you think of prosperity, abundance, and success, the more of these things will you attract into your life.

The more you think about your complaints, grievances or injustices, the more such turmoil will you receive, and the more you think of the good fortune you have had, the more good fortune will come to you.

The Eagle and the Chicken

I will conclude this chapter with an old parable, so relevant to perception and thought.

It seems there was a female eagle that fell from her nest at a very young age. She wandered into a chicken yard where an older hen adopted and raised her. The chickens taught the eagle the way of chickens. She learned to dig holes and wiggle down into them on hot days so as to stay cool. She learned to scratch with her talons and soon became treasured for her ability to scratch deep into the earth. She learned many things from the chickens and despite her size became loved by all. She was secure in her chicken house surrounded by her friends and adopted mother. Still, she sometimes felt out of place, uneasy in ways she could not explain, unfilled and un-natural. Her friends would reassure her. They would let her know things like other chickens didn't always lay an abundance of eggs and why hens made so much noise when they did lay an egg. She would confide in her closest friends and most would reassure her that this was life and she would adjust in time. She needed only to try harder; after all, her maternal mother had failed her. This was comforting, for it wasn't her fault—her maternal mother was to blame. So, her potential, the possibilities in life, went altogether unknown until one day when a male eagle flying overhead spotted her in the chicken yard.

She is such a grand Eagle, he thought, so he began to descend to speak with her, but one of the chickens caught a glimpse of his shadow and called to all. The female eagle, who all called Nina, together with the chickens quickly scurried to the chicken house where they hid the rest of the afternoon. The male eagle was confused, but determined.

Days passed before he gained his opportunity. Darting out of the sky with the sun in his face he cut off Nina's retreat almost before any in the yard were aware he was approaching. All of the chickens hid in the chicken house—not one dared to venture out to even see what might be happening to Nina.

Nina crouched down in fear, almost paralyzed by her expectation. "Why are you here," the male eagle asked. Unable to answer Nina could only tremble and look down. "What are you doing here?" he went on. "I have never seen an eagle nesting with chickens. Have you lost your mind girl?"

Nina looked up. She suddenly had an idea—for she was a smart chicken. "Did you call me an eagle?" she meekly enquired. "Of course, you are one. Have you not looked at yourself? Have you not felt the urge to stretch your wings and soar? Have you not felt out of place with these chickens? Do you think those talons were made to dig in the earth? I have watched you for days now; you do everything the chickens do. Why?"

Nina now stared in his eyes, they were large and brown. His pupils were dark black and nearly filled his entire eye. He looked as though he could see forever. "You've watched me?" she added.

"Yes girl—I've watched you, but I don't understand. You are capable of so much. I could tell you stories for days of adventures and sights that have filled my life—that should fill yours. You were created with such an unlimited potential—you simply don't belong in this yard for a day. You are a beautiful and capable eagle. Can't you see that? Don't you believe me? Have you spent your entire life here?"

Nina felt stronger now. Something was wrong with this eagle. Imagine him telling her she could soar. Nina spoke, "So I'm an eagle and I can soar and do things you can show me that I have never done? Is that right?"

"It's in you girl. Follow your feelings. Be natural. You're not a chicken, I promise."

"So then," Nina continued, since I'm an eagle, you're not going to hurt me."

"Of course not—what non-sense is that?"

"Well then," Nina confidently added, "Show me—step aside so I could leave if I chose to."

With that, the male eagle stepped back and out of Nina's path. She seized the opportunity and made the best of her plan, running straight for the chicken house. Once inside she told the chickens how she had out-smarted that dumb old eagle. They all laughed and rewarded her with their chicken appreciation, "Your such a good smart chicken Nina!" The old rooster chicken even spoke nicely to Nina, "I'm proud of you Nina—you certainly did outsmart that eagle."

By now, the moral to this story is obvious. Most of us have been conditioned to accept and believe certain things that may, and likely do, betray their real potential. Like chickens in the chicken yard, we have all been imprinted. Behavioural scientists use this term to refer to the process whereby animals seek to be accepted by imitating their peers. A duckling raised in a chicken yard will behave like a chicken, and so forth. The advantage this story provides gives rise to this question: how many chicken beliefs limit you now?

“Whatever you believe with emotion becomes your reality. Take charge of your beliefs and you’ll take charge of your circumstances”.



Perception Cycle Exercise

The Perception we have about a person or event, feed the thoughts we have about them or it. The thoughts we have create the emotions in our mind. Emotions are powerful. Left unchecked, they forge our views of the person or event. Our views invariably lead to the action we take, with positive or negative consequences. The action we take creates results.

Think of a person or event that is causing you stress or anxiety. With empathy and sympathy, try replacing the perception you currently have with an alternative. Put yourself in the other person's shoes to recreate their view of things. You can also do this to affirm that your perception is in fact correct.

If you're unhappy with the results you are getting, change your perceptions and watch the results change with it.



Coming up in the next section

FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

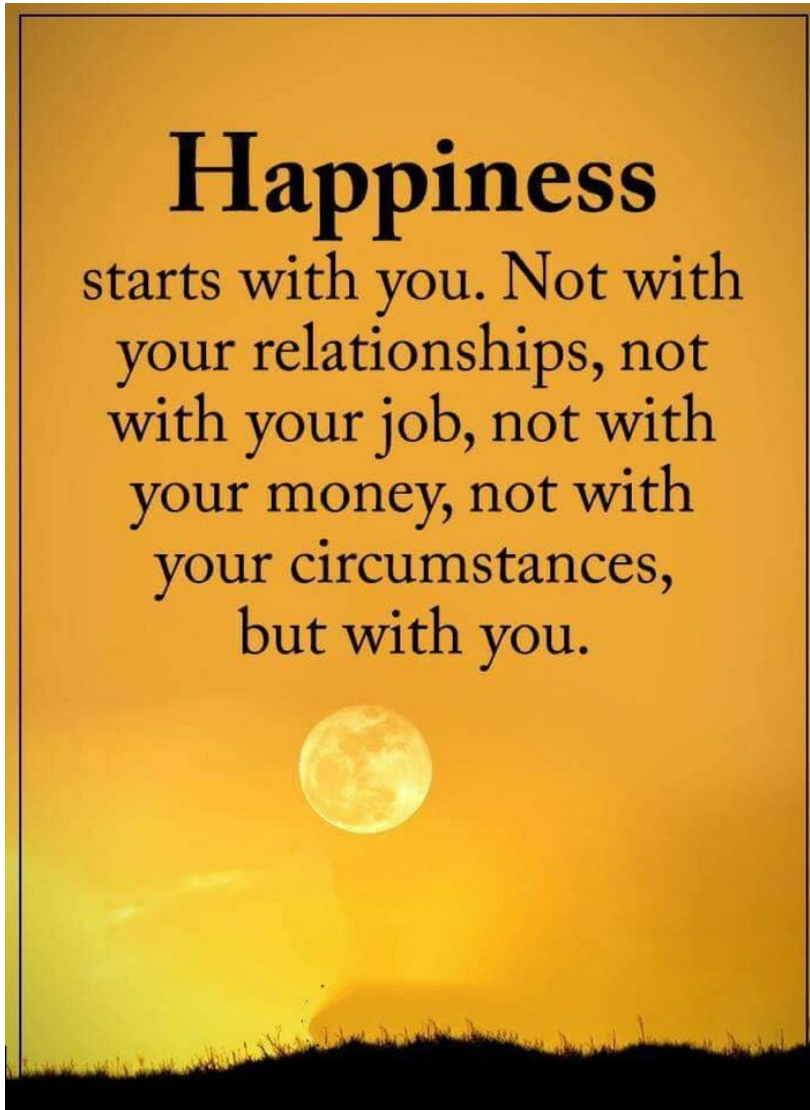
Understand how your feelings and emotions colour the thoughts you have, affect the decisions you make and the outcomes you achieve.

Discover how to use your emotions to generate energy and improve the quality and quantity of happiness you attract.

Emotions & Feelings



10 – Feelings and Emotions



Feelings versus Emotions

So, what is the difference between a feeling and an emotion?



I found that there are many long and complex answers to this question, most of them totally incomprehensible to an average bloke like me. So, having waded my way through technical books on the brain, hundreds of articles on psychology and physiology, spent hours on the internet in search of a simple, easy to understand solution, I reverted back to the faithful old dictionary!

Feeling : an emotional state or reaction

Emotion : a strong feeling such as joy, love, anger or fear

What a cop out! Even the compilers of the worlds most respected dictionaries can't distinguish between the two.

It seems to me that these are two different words. Whilst they may overlap in their meaning, it is important to be able to separate the two distinctly, if we are to fully understand their respective effects on our happiness.

After all the research is done, the answer seems to be a subjective one, a matter of your own opinion.

My favourite conclusion is this.

An *emotion* is the actual experience of happiness, love, sadness, fear, anger

A *feeling* describes the actual changes that occur as a result of the emotion.

This is supported by the physiological explanation of the components of emotion :-

Components of Emotion

- The *subjective experience* of happiness, sadness, anger, and so on;
- The *physiological changes* which occur, involving the autonomic nervous system (ANS*) and the endocrine system**, over which we have little, if any conscious control. However, we may become aware of some of their effects (such as 'butterflies in the stomach', 'goose-pimples' and 'sweating').
- The *associated behaviour* such as smiling, crying, frowning, running away, being frozen to the spot.

The second and third are sometimes categorised together as bodily reactions, with the former being called visceral and the latter skeletal. This distinction relates to the ANS and the central nervous systems (CNS) respectively. However, while running away is largely under voluntary (CNS) control, crying or seeping definitely are not, yet in all three cases we infer another person's emotional state from these observable behaviours.

(*The autonomic nervous system acts quickly (hundredths of a second) sending nerve impulses immediately to the parts of our body for reaction.)

(*The endocrine system (meaning, "inside secretions") works through endocrine glands that secrete special chemicals into the blood system, affecting other glands or the body generally. Dopamine excites and is involved in movement, attention and learning. Serotonin is released during arousal, dreaming, moods, appetite and sensitivity. The endocrine system generally reacts more slowly than the ANS, in seconds or minutes, and has a more long term effect on behaviour).

Feelings then are sensations, the means by which our intuition conveys information to us about our inner and outer circumstances, such as conflict, turmoil, a person or an event.

How do feelings work?

When we feel, our personal energy resonates with the energy of the event or person causing the feeling. This is similar to how our eardrums vibrate at the same frequency of a sound we hear, enabling us to hear each sound. When we experience an event or interaction with someone, pleasant or otherwise, our bodily systems record our reactions by generating feelings that have the same empathic resonance. Another example of this is when you strike a tuning fork in close proximity to another tuning fork, the second will vibrate in resonance with the first.

Remember the chapter on energy? When you walk into a crowded room, filled with happy, cheerful people, they are vibrating at a collective frequency that exerts influence on everything and everyone in the vicinity. Unless you have a high level of resistance, or are affected by some stronger vibrating trauma, your body will receive signals of the happiness within the room and your nervous system will send signals to your body to resonate at the same level. You start to receive those signals and begin to experience a sensation of empathic or sympathetic resonance. You are experiencing a feeling of happiness.

In this example, the emotion in the room was happiness. It exerted its vibrating influence and you felt happy.

Feelings are not the same as emotions

Feelings exist only in the current moment as a response to present circumstances. Emotions linger. Our nervous systems need time to disassociate from them, particularly those emotions that affect our physiological state, the ones that cause muscle tension, surges and draining of adrenalin, changes in the heart rate and breathing.

Feelings are subtle and light, so that we have to consciously listen for them. Emotions are more direct and can even be disruptive because of the physiological effects.

Feelings do not release energy, they are a simplistic activity. Emotions have the distinct characteristic of releasing energy for use in choices such as fight or flight or some other physical act.

Feelings are simply vibrations of energy. It is only our perception, interpretation and judgement of them that causes us to separate them as good or bad feelings. When we interpret and judge feelings, we move into uncharted waters. When we try to judge a feeling, we obstruct their free flow by giving them a value and create uncomfortable blockages in our energy.

Feelings are messages from within us. Feelings tell us whether we are on track or off course. Contentment tells us we are getting what we need. Discomfort tells us we are unfulfilled. Feelings guide our choices and confirm their correctness or otherwise by the pleasure we experience. When we can see an overview of our general feeling strategy, we really get to learn who we really are as people. We define ourselves to some extent, by what we like, and our feelings determine what we like to do.

Feelings help us to live in this Universe. Feelings are part of our survival mechanism, alerting us to dangers, excesses and shortfalls. Feelings enable us to respond to stimuli in all areas, from art through to Zen. A psychologically healthy individual responds with feelings to everything experienced.

Emotions generate energy within us

Emotions are valuable. We have seen that emotions cause a chemical and energy reaction within us, to confront challenges and appreciate pleasurable experiences.

Emotions add depth to communication. They add force, depth and texture.

The Emotions of Anger and Fear. These are usually considered negative because they disrupt our harmonious existence. The disruptions however, occur because of our failure to manage them properly rather than because the emotions themselves are bad. Because of our inability to manage them, anger and fear are often repressed, damaging our psychological health. These two emotions create a vibrational turbulence of our energy, blocking our ability to make sound decisions, to think rationally, to tap into our intuition and use our common sense.

Feelings and emotions energise your thoughts

We have learned that by visualizing a mental image of a desired object or situation, you can attract it into your life. In this way you can change and shape your life, behaviour and circumstances.

There are many effective techniques to achieve this. One such technique, immortalised by Shakti Gawain is called Creative Visualisation. The technique utilises the power of thoughts, but thoughts alone are not enough to make things happen. Additional elements are required to transform your thoughts into action. These elements are your feelings and emotions.

What would make you take action, a lifeless thought, or one charged with emotion?

What kind of speaker magnetises your attention, someone who talks in a boring, lethargic manner, or one who talks with passion and emotion?



People, actions and thoughts charged with the energy of emotion make a much stronger impact. For this reason, it is important to mix emotions with your thoughts, if you wish to make your thoughts a reality. Feelings and emotions inject life into thoughts and make them produce effects in the external world, the same way that electricity makes appliances work. Both electricity and thoughts require some sort of energy to make them work and produce results.

In order to bring your desires and thoughts into reality, you need to charge them with emotional energy. Thoughts that are charged with emotional energy have a greater effect and can drive them into action.

If you want to achieve anything through constructive thought strategies such as creative visualization you need to energize your thoughts. You can do this by producing positive and happy feelings of success and happiness, and associating them with your goal.

We have all have experienced at least some sort of success or happiness in our life. Even small experiences count. Remind yourself of that success or happiness and relive how it felt in your imagination. Visualize the event as clearly as you can, and let the positive and happy feelings of pleasure you experienced at that time come alive again. Relive and relish the happiness, exhilaration and feeling of happiness that you have brought back into your awareness.

While in this happier, constructive mental and emotional state, start visualizing your current goal, while at the same time continuing to relive in your imagination the feelings and emotions you felt. Attach those feelings to your present goal. Feel as if you have already accomplished it, and you are feeling great, happy and satisfied. This action alone will inject energy into your thoughts and make them stronger and increase the possibility of realising your goal.

With practice, you will arouse these happy feelings of success and accomplishment, without having to relive old experiences.

By charging your thoughts with a fresh emotional energy you can accomplish wonderful things. You set energy forces into action that will bring you the opportunities, tools or people necessary to accomplish your objectives.

The law of emotion

You will understand from the preceding paragraphs that emotions are the energy that turn a mere thought into reality. The more emotionally you feel something, the greater effect that thought or event will have on your life. Emotion can be either constructive or destructive, depending on how it is used.

100 percent of the decisions you make and the results you will get are based on emotion. Everything you do is driven by an emotion of some kind.

For many of my adult years, I focused on always applying logic, practicality, common sense. Learning about how emotions influence our lives taught me that if I only relied on the logical answer, I was cutting myself off from the benefits of those emotions that could help me make better decisions.

There are many hundreds of individual emotions but there are only two driving categories, those of LOVE and FEAR. LOVE or FEAR of some description, are the main drivers behind most of what you do, or don't do. Not surprisingly, our mental programming and conditioning produces consequences here too, finding ourselves involved in far more activity to avoid fear than to satisfy desire.

Fear of all types paralyses so many of us.

So what are the common fears we subject ourselves to :-

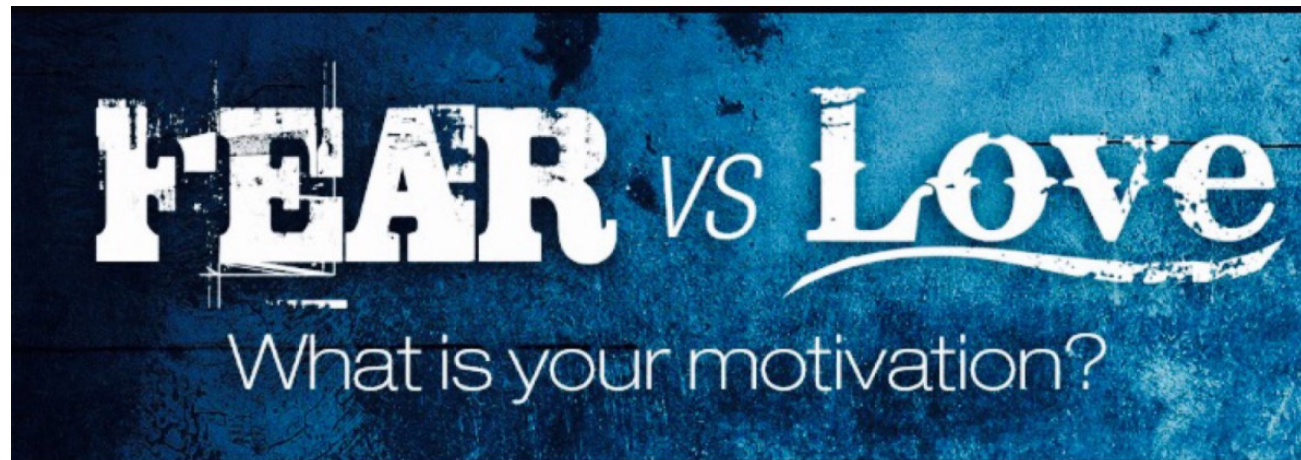
- Poverty or loss
- Criticism or disapproval
- Ill health
- Being taken advantage of
- Failure and rejection

It is a sad reflection on our society that, despite the opportunities for abundance and happiness that exist today more so than ever before in the history of mankind, so many are trapped in thoughts tinged with fear.

We know that like energy attracts like energy in the form of circumstances and people. It follows that the more you desire or fear something, the more likely you are to attract it into your life. An emotionless thought has no power to influence you one way or the other. An emotionless thought causes frustration and unhappiness. When you have clarity of thought, positive or negative, accompanied by an intense emotion of either fear or desire, you set the wheels of energy in motion to attract whatever it is toward you.

Reject fear, choose love. This is a popular refrain and wonderful advice. Many believe that there are only two primal emotions in the human being, love and fear, and that we cannot feel both at once. In the same way that light removes darkness, love can remove fear.

The choice to reject fear and choose love can feel like something that only applies to moments of crisis, when we're leaving a marriage, starting a new business, preparing to climb Mount Everest. But in truth, the opportunity to choose love and reject fear presents itself in the smallest moments of life, and specifically, in relationships with those closest to us. Love over fear is a choice every time someone tells us something about ourselves or has an experience of us that we don't want to hear.



Can you see why it is so important for you to keep your thoughts on the things you want and replace the thoughts of what you fear with more constructive thoughts of love?

LOVE

admiration
cheerfulness
contentment
confidence
enjoyment
enthusiasm
euphoria
gratitude
hope
interest
inspiration
joy
kindness
satisfaction
serenity

-versus-

FEAR

alarm
anger
avarice
aversion
cruelty
disgust
frustration
greed
grief
hate
pride
indifference
jealousy
rage
sorrow



Someone may want to make more money, so they can buy an impressive car, so they can feel better about themselves. Or, we may have a friend who works three jobs because his wife has a potentially life-threatening illness and he doesn't have health insurance. These are wildly different circumstances. One is based in fear – the feeling of inadequacy and the need to impress others with a car or a home. The other is based purely in love. The emotion we allow to drive our thoughts and actions is what makes all the difference in how your life will turn out. An intended focus on love delivers the positive elements associated with it, whereas a tendency toward being driven by fear related associations will inevitably deliver its associated negative elements.

FEAR AND LOVE

“There are two basic motivating forces: fear and love. When we are afraid, we pull back from life. When we express and feel love, we are open to all that life has to offer with passion, excitement and acceptance. We need to learn to love ourselves first, in all our glory and imperfections. If we cannot love ourselves, we cannot fully open to our ability to love others or our true potential to create. Evolution and all hopes for a better world rest in the fearlessness and open-hearted vision of people who embrace life”.

John Lennon 1940 - 1980



The happiest most successful men and women are aware of the power of their thoughts and they are very conscious about keeping them positive and constructive. Your mind is such a powerful tool that you must control it with great discipline for it to consistently move you in the direction you want to go.

Changing the way you think is not easy. It may be the hardest thing you ever do, but it will be the most valuable. Once you have made the firm choice to do something more important and valuable with your life, to achieve your own ideal of personal happiness, you absolutely must go to work on changing the way you think.

Emotions and the young

Imagine what our school systems would be like if we placed the same degree of importance emotional well-being as we do on intellectual competency. When we arrive at the stage of human development when our children understand how to express a full range of emotions such as fear, anger, peace, sadness, excitement, and joy, they will learn at a much earlier point, how to express emotional truth, and how to develop good communication skills for healthy relationships. Our children would be so much better equipped to live full, satisfying lives, rich in experience with skills to handle the ups and downs that come our way in this life.

Emotional truth is something which is so much lacking in our world. It is very simple and has its origins in childhood innocence. When it comes from this pure expression, it is immensely powerful.

Negative emotions



Negative emotions are main cause of unhappiness, underachievement and failure in life. At their worst, negative emotions adversely affect our physical and mental health. If they are the cause, then the effects can be seen in ruined relationships destroyed careers and wretched lives. They are harmful to you and if allowed to thrive, will obstruct your path to happiness.



Nothing is more important than the elimination of your negative emotions. Peace of mind can only exist in the absence of negative emotions. You can't be negative and at peace at the same time, the two conflict.

The deeper my studies into this area took me the more I was surprised to discover that most of the problems that I have experienced in life had their origins in negative emotions of one kind or another. It became clear if I could find a way to eliminate negative emotions, my life could be wonderful.

I also recognised that by failing to eliminate my negative emotions, I would prejudice all my efforts and kill most of the joy and pleasure from anything I managed to accomplish. I have to confess that destructive emotions have been responsible for more grief and pain than I care to admit.

Negative emotions are completely unnecessary and unnatural to us. They serve no useful purpose, only destructive ones. They are the major cause for men and women to fail to grow and evolve. The good news is that you do not have to tolerate them at all, if you consciously choose to get rid of them.

Until I started to investigate this subject, I had always assumed that negative emotions were normal responses. Partly from parental conditioning I suppose, I thought that they were a part of human nature, to be accepted as inevitable, after all mom and dad had said it was natural, and moms and dads are always right aren't they?

Consider this. Have you ever seen a negative baby? Every negative emotion that we acquire as adults, we had to learn, starting in childhood, through a process of conditioning, programming, imitation, practice, repetition and reinforcement. Since negative emotions are learned, like most things, they can be unlearned, and you can wipe them out of your life like a mud stain from a clean floor.

Don't worry if you have suffered with negative emotions for a long time. Suspend your disbelief and resistance to the idea that they can be eliminated, they can. Whatever you choose to believe, with feeling, becomes your reality. If you continue to believe that negative emotions are helpful to you, then they will remain a part of your life. However, you will know in your heart that the negative emotions you have experienced serve no useful purpose. Accepting this is the first step to getting rid of them.

How to eliminate negative emotions



Remember the perception cycle. Your conscious mind can only hold one thought at a time, positive or negative, and you can deliberately choose that thought. You can replace a negative, destructive thought with a positive, constructive one, and in doing so, push the negative thought out of your mind.

Whenever you feel a negative emotion appearing, you can immediately cancel the thought that is causing the negative emotion by saying, very firmly, "I am responsible for what I think, You are not welcome. I am replacing you with (more positive thought)"

This is the most powerful of all strategies for mental control. These words put you back in control of your emotions. The words "I am responsible!" switch your mind immediately from negative to positive. They make you feel calm and relaxed, and let you to see the situation with greater clarity.



Your willingness to accept responsibility, and the elimination of negative emotions will determine your future happiness and peace of mind.

Pause for a moment and think back over your entire life, past and present. Reflect on the influential events, selections and people exercise you completed in the chapter entitled "How did I get here?" Scrutinise each memory or situation where you were the decision maker, that makes you feel negative in any way. Then neutralise any negativity associated with it by simply saying, "I am responsible," over and over. Bear with me on this.

Whatever your difficulty or problem, you played a part. In most instances, you were free to choose, and you are still free. You probably knew at the time that you should not be doing it, choosing it, or permitting it, but you went ahead anyway. So accept that you are absolutely, completely, 100 percent responsible for your situation, for the consequences of your decisions.

"Isn't accepting responsibility the same as accepting blame?" ... Responsibility always looks forward, always to the future. Blame always looks backward, to the past, to blame someone who is guilty. Apportioning blame and guilt will not free your mind of negative emotions.

Responsibility gives you back your control, self-reliance and pro-activeness. Blame makes you feel angry, resentful and frustrated. Someone bumps into your car at a traffic light. Of course you're not at fault. But you are responsible for the way you react. You are responsible for how you conduct yourself. You can show anger and other negative emotions, or be mature, calm and controlled. The choice is yours. And how you will feel is determined by how you decide to react, not by the circumstances. Responsibility or irresponsibility, positive or negative, happiness or bitterness; the choice is yours.

Clean your windows

When I first heard this, I was still in negative mode. I reacted quickly and from ignorance. I would find myself saying "If you knew what that other person did to me, you'd never expect me to accept responsibility." But here is the key lesson I learned. The perpetuation of negative emotion in your mind is enough to sabotage your chances for happiness. Even one negative emotion of blame or anger can interfere with your peace of mind indefinitely.

To illustrate this critical point, imagine that you have just purchased a beautiful house in your dream location, with wonderfully peaceful panoramic views, perfect in every detail. There is only one problem. The windows are so coated in dust and grime, you cannot see out. If everything in this house is perfect except for those dirty windows, what would happen if you did not clean them?

The answer is that you would eventually forget what a beautiful view you had inherited, it is likely that the house would not seem as appealing. You can't see the wonderful view for the dirty windows.

Your world is full of people who are just like that new house. You may be one of them. Possibly they are intelligent, good-looking and well-educated, .and may seem to have everything going for them, but their lives just never seem to contain the reality of happiness contained in their dream. Almost always this is because they are holding on to at least one negative experience from their past for .which they are refusing to accept responsibility. They are still blaming someone or something for a hurt they have suffered.

Generations of people from all cultures, many of whom have reached and past middle age are still angry and resentful over something that happened to them in childhood. These unresolved issues of bitterness affect their relationships with their spouses, their children, their colleagues and their friends. It shows itself in psychosomatic illnesses, and in the most extreme cases, can even lead to early death.

There are thousands of psychotherapists have become very wealthy on the back of helping people to deal with these unresolved emotions of anger, guilt and resentment. The cure comes when he or she can identify what is holding him or her back, face it honestly and release it. You can accomplish very much the same thing by identifying any feelings of negativity you have toward anyone, accepting responsibility for the situation and releasing it.

What Is Intuition?

There is a universal, intelligent life force that exists within everyone as a deep wisdom, an inner knowing. You can access this wonderful source of knowledge and wisdom through your intuition, an inner sense that tells you what feels right and true for you at any given moment.

Intuition is all too easily dismissed as being lacking in scientific credibility. In fact, your intuition is a very practical, down-to-earth tool that is always available to help you deal with the decisions, problems, and challenges of your daily life. One way that we often describe intuition is as a "gut feeling" or a "hunch."

We are all born with it. Young children are very intuitive, although in our culture they are often trained out of it early in life.

Women are generally considered to be more intuitive than men, for example. Yet many men follow their hunches on a regular basis. We are all potentially intuitive. Some of us consciously develop this ability, while a majority of us learn to disregard and deny it. Still, many people are unconsciously following their intuition without realizing it.

Fortunately, with some practice most of us can reclaim and develop our natural intuitive abilities. We can learn to be in touch with our intuition, to follow it, and to allow it to become a powerful guide in our lives.

Our school system reflects and reinforces this bias against intuition. It focuses almost exclusively on developing our left-brain, rational abilities and mostly ignores the development of the right-brain, intuitive, creative ones. The same bias is perpetuated in the business world. Only in recent years have some schools and businesses begun to truly value intuition, and to encourage the kind of creativity and progressive thinking that results from intuitive awareness.

The rational mind processes the input it receives and calculates logical conclusions based on this information. It can only compute the data that it has received directly from the external world. In other words, our rational minds can only operate on the basis of the direct experience each of us has had in this lifetime -- the knowledge we have gained through our five senses.

The intuitive mind, on the other hand, seems to have access to an infinite supply of information, including information that we have not gathered directly through personal experience. It appears to be able to tap into a deep storehouse of knowledge and wisdom scientists are now calling the universal or super-conscious mind. It is also able to sort out this information and supply us with exactly what we need, when we need it. The message may come through a bit at a time, but if we learn to follow this flow of information, the necessary course of action will be revealed. As we learn to rely on this guidance, life takes on a flowing, effortless quality. Our life, feelings, and actions interweave harmoniously with those of others around us.

I would not presume to disregard or eliminate the value of intellect. Our rational mind is a very powerful tool that can help us organise, understand, and learn from our experiences, so of course it is important to educate our minds and develop our intellectual abilities. However, if we direct our life solely from intellect, we are missing out on a great deal. Experience has shown that it is best to balance and integrate logic with intuition.

Many of us have been programmed or conditioned to doubt our intuition. When an intuitive feeling arises, our rational minds immediately say, "I don't think that will work," or "What a daft idea," and the intuition is disregarded. We must train our intellect to respect, listen to, and express the intuitive voice.

We spend our lifetime developing our rational minds. Fortunately, it doesn't take so long to develop our intuitive abilities.

Emotional dependency versus emotional independence

If you are emotionally dependent you are getting your good feelings from outside of yourself, from another person or something external to you.

There are numerous forms of emotional dependency:

- Dependence on substances, such as food, drugs, or alcohol, to fill a void and take away pain.
- Dependency on processes such as spending, acquisition of material things, gambling, or TV, also to fill emptiness and take away pain.
- Dependence on money to define one's worth and adequacy.
- Dependence on getting someone's love, approval, or attention to feel worthy, adequate, lovable, and safe.
- Dependence on sex to fill emptiness and feel adequate.

When you do assume responsibility for defining your own self-worth or for creating your own inner sense of contentment, you will look for adequacy, worth and contentment externally. Whatever you do not give to yourself, you will seek from others or from substances or processes.

Emotional dependency is the opposite of taking personal responsibility for your own emotional wellbeing. Yet many people have no idea that this is their responsibility, nor do they have any idea how to assume this responsibility.

What does it mean to assume emotional responsibility rather than be emotionally dependent?

It means recognising that our feelings come from our own thoughts, beliefs and behaviour, rather than from others or from circumstances. Once you understand and accept that, you create your own feelings, rather than your feelings coming from outside of yourself, then you can begin to take emotional responsibility.

For example, let's say someone you care about gets angry at you.

If you are emotionally dependent, you may feel rejected and believe that your feelings of rejection are coming from the other persons' anger. You might also feel hurt, scared, anxious, inadequate, shamed, angry, resentful, blaming, or many other difficult feelings. You might try many ways of getting the other person to not be angry in an effort to feel better.

However, if you are emotionally responsible, you will feel and respond entirely differently. The first thing you would do is to tell yourself that another person's anger has nothing to do with you. Perhaps that person is having a bad day and is taking it out on you. Perhaps that person is feeling hurt or inadequate and is trying to feel better at your expense.

Whatever the reason for the other persons' anger, it is about them not about you. An emotionally responsible person does not take other peoples' behaviour personally, knowing that they have no control over their feelings and behaviour.

The next thing an emotionally responsible person will do is find compassion for the angry person and be open to learning about what is going on with them. You might say, "I don't like your anger, but I am willing to understand what is upsetting you. Do you want to talk about it?" If the person continues to express anger, or if you know this person is not going to open up to you, then as an emotionally responsible person, you should take loving action for your own sake. You might say, "I'm not prepared to be the target of your anger. When you are ready to be open with me, call me. Meanwhile, I'm going to leave you to yourself."

An emotionally responsible person will give the other person the space and time they need rather than trying to change them or persuade them they're wrong.

Once away from the angry person, the emotionally responsible person explores any painful feelings that might have resulted from the episode. Perhaps you are feeling vulnerable or rejected. An emotionally responsible person embraces the feelings of vulnerability and rejection with understanding and self-compassion. When you acknowledge and embrace the feelings of vulnerability and rejection, you allow them to move through you quickly, so you can move back into peace.

You are no longer at the mercy of anyone else's behaviour, having taken emotional responsibility for yourself. Instead of staying trapped feeling angry, hurt, blaming, afraid, anxious or inadequate, you have moved yourself back into feeling safe and peaceful.



When you realise that your feelings and emotions are your responsibility, you can move out of emotional dependency. This will make a huge difference within you and the happiness you experience with all of your relationships. Relationships thrive when each person moves out of emotional dependency and into emotional responsibility.



Perception Cycle Exercise

An exercise in emotional expression

Just for fun, try this exercise.

On the pages that follow is a list of emotions and feelings. Find a place where you can experience quiet, uninterrupted peace. As you read the emotions on this list, select an emotion to 'play with'. Soak up the emotion, think of circumstances or people that will allow you to experience the emotion fully. Invite the emotion into your mind, whether it invokes positive or negative qualities to you. Allow each emotion you select to become your friend. The more deeply you role play with each emotion, the more you will become aware of the physiological changes each emotion creates within you.

After you have done this and are able to feel the emotion fully in your body, now say the words, "I feel (excited) ," or "I feel (shy)_" Then notice how much of the emotion is conveyed through the words, not to judge yourself, but to be able to get more and more comfortable with full emotional expressions.

Some emotions will be fun and easy, others may be more difficult and painful. It all depends on what your past experience has been. Many of the emotions will bring up memories for you, and this is wonderful and healthy. The more open you are to feeling whatever is there for you, the more transformed and healed you will become. Each emotion is a treasure, a gift of experience for you to broaden the quality of your life. Remember that all emotions are just different variations of the same energy, which is love.

When you get comfortable with the emotion, try using it constructively in the world. Use those three simple words "I feel (happy)" with someone you are close to. Children are wonderful to practice on -- they will understand and respond. Focus on the emotional content. You can even express the emotion without the words!

Then practice with adults as well. Do not be attached to others' response but focus on enjoying your own expression. That is the purpose of this - it is for your own health, truth, and expressing who you are. Whatever others do with your expression, well this is up to them. Truth attracts truth. Your true and pure expression of emotion will most likely stimulate some kind of inner emotional truth for them as well. It may be fear, anger, delight, or defensiveness. Whatever the response is, appreciate what is unfolding in them.

You might also use this list to check in with yourself periodically throughout the day to ask yourself, "What am I feeling right now?" See if you can identify the feeling, or just refer to the list to find an emotion that fits.

Another way to use this list is as a game of emotional charades. One person acts out the emotion while the other guesses the emotion. You can do this between lovers to add emotional depth to the relationship. Also, it will help to teach your children to identify their own feelings. The bottom line is to have fun and learn as much as you can about yourself.

Good Luck and have fun !

Abandoned	Bewitched	Despair	Giggly	Jolly	Proud	Sorrowful	Weary
Abhor	Bitchy	Despondent	Glad	Jovial	Provocative	Sour	Welcomed
Ablaze	Bitter	Devoted	Glee	Joy	Provoked	Sparkling	Whining
Abominable	Blessed	Devoured	Gleeful	Joyful	Quarrelsome	Spastic	Winsome
Abrasive	Blissful	Discomfort	Gloom	Jubilation	Quenched	Spicy	Wistful
Absorbed	Blunt	Discontented	Gloomy	Languid	Quiet	Spirited	Woe
Absorbed	Boiling	Disgust	Glowing	Languish	Quivering	Spry	Woeful
Absurd	Bored	Dismal	Gnawing	Laugh	Quivery	Stoic	Worked up
Abused	Bothered	Dispassionate	Good	Laughingly	Radiant	Stranded	Worried
Abusive	Brave	Displeased	Goodness	Lethargic	Rash	Stressed	Wounded
Accepting	Breathless	Disregard	Grateful	Light hearted	Raving	Stricken	Wretched
Accommodating	Breezy	Disregarding	Gratified	Lively	Ravished	Stung	Yearn
Acknowledged	Bright	Distracted	Gratitude	Loathe	Ravishing	Stunned	Yearning
Acquiescent	Broken	Distressed	Grave	Lonely	Ready to burst	Stunning	Yielding
Acrimonious	Bruised	Disturbed	Grief	Lonesome	Receptive	Subdued	Zeal
Admonished	Buoyant	Doldrums	Grieving	Long-suffering	Reckless	Subjugated	Zealous
Adoration	Burdensome	Don't mind	Grim	Lost	Reconciled	Suffering	
Adored	Bursting	Doomed	Griped	Love	Refreshed	Sulky	
Adventurous	Callous	Droopy	Grounded	Loved	Rejected	Sunny	
Adverse	Calm	Dull	Gushing	Loving	Rejection	Supportive	
Affected	Captivated	Eager	Gusto	Lukewarm	Rejoice	Surrender	
Affectionate	Captivating	Earnest	Haggard	Luxurious	Relish	Susceptible	
Afflicted	Careless	Easy	Half-hearted	Mad	Repressed	Suspended	
Affronted	Caring	Ecstatic	Hardened	Manic	Repugnant	Sweet	
Afraid	Celebrating	Electric	Harsh	Martyr	Resentful	Sympathy	
Aggravated	Chagrined	Enchanted	Having Fun	Meddlesome	Resentment	Taken advantage of	

Aggressive	Charmed	Endearing	Hearty	Melancholy	Resigned	Tame
Agitated	Charming	Enduring	Heavy	Melodramatic	Resistant	Tantalizing
Agonized	Chastened	Engaging	Hectic	Merry	Restrained	Tantrum-y
Agony	Cheerful	Enjoy	Hilarious	Mindful	Restraint	Temperate
Agreeable	Cherishing	Enlivened	Hope	Mindless	Revived	Tender
Airy	Clandestine	Enraged	Hopeful	Mirthful	Ridiculous	The blues
Alienated	Clear	Enraptured	Horrific	Miserable	Romantic	Thick-skinned
Alive	Cold	Enthused	Horrified	Moderate	Rueful	Thin-skinned
Alluring	Cold-blooded	Enthusiastic	Horror-stricken	Mopey	Safe	Threatened
Alone	Collected	Enticing	Humorous	Mortified	Satiated	Thrilled
Altruistic	Comatose	Even tempered	Hurt	Moved	Satisfaction	Tickled
Ambiguous	Comfortable	Exacerbated	Hysterical	Nervous	Satisfied	Tight
Ambitious	Compassion	Exasperated	Impetuous	Nonchalant	Scared	Tight-lipped
Amenable	Competitive	Excited	Imposing	Not caring	Secretive	Timid
Amorous	Complacent	Exciting	Impressed	Numb	Secure	Tingly
Amused	Composed	Exultation	Impressionable	Optimistic	Sedate	Tolerant
Anger	Concerned	Fanatical	Impulsive	Over the edge	Seduced	Tormented
Angry	Confused	Fascinated	In a dither	Overflowing	Seductive	Tortured
Anguished	Congenial	Fascinating	In a flurry	Over-wrought	Seething	Touched
Animated	Content	Fear	In a pickle	Pain	Selfish	Tranquil
Annoyed	Cool	Fearful	In a stupor	Panic	Sensational	Transported
Anxiety	Copasetic	Fearing	In a trance	Paralyzed	Sensual	Trepidation
Anxious	Coping	Fiery	In purgatory	Passionate	Sentimental	Troubled
Apathy	Cordial	Flared up	Inattentive	Passive	Serious	Twitchy
Appealing	Cornered	Flattering	Indulged	Patient	Sexual	Uncomfortable
Appeasing	Creative	Flushed	Indulgent	Peace of mind	Sexy	Unconcerned
Appetizing	Crucified	Flustered	Inept	Perky	Shaken	Unconscious
Appreciation	Crushed	Fluttery	Infelicitous	Perplexed	Shielded	Uncontrollable
Apprehensive	Cursed	Foaming at the mouth	Inflexible	Perturbation	Shocked	Under pressure
Ardent	Cushy	Forbearance	Infuriated	Perturbed	Shutter	Undone
Arduous	Cut down	Fortitude	Insatiable	Petrified	Shy	Unfeeling
Argumentative	Dainty	Frantic	Insensitive	Pine	Silly	Unhappy

Armoured	Dazzled	Fretful	Insouciant	Piquant	Simmering	Unimpressed
Aroused	Dazzling	Frigid	Inspired	Pitied	Sincere	Unruffled
Arrogant	Defensive	Frisky	Interested	Placid	Sinking	Used
Astounded	Dejected	Frustration	Intimidated	Plagued	Smug	Vexed
Attentive	Delectable	Full	Intrigued	Pleasant	Snug	Victim
Avoidance	Delicate	Fuming	Inviting	Pleasing	Sober	Victimised
Awkward	Delighted	Fun	Irrepressible	Pleasurable	Sobering	Vivacious
Beaten down	Demure	Funny	Irritated	Pleased	Soft	Volcanic
Beautiful	Depressed	Furious	Irritation	Pressured	Solemn	Voluptuous
Bemused	Desirable	Galvanized	Jaunty	Prey to	Sombre	Vulnerable
Betrayed	Desired	Gay	Jealous	Pride	Sore	Warm
Bewildered	Desolate	Genial	Jittery	Protected	Sorrow	Warm hearted

End of Part 1



Reflections

I hope you found the first ten elements informative and useful.

Happiness. It is a term we throw about without much thought these days... my guess is that you think you know what is meant by saying someone is happy.

We all hope to be happy and live a 'good life'— whatever that means! You may have pondered yourself on what the term actually means. Philosopher's and truth seekers all over the world continually ask and look for answers to the question.

I hope that this first part has inspired your thinking. Each of the components, together with the end of section exercises should have been a source of discovery as to how you arrived at your present state of happiness and fulfilment.

The really exciting part of this work comes next!

Part 2 builds upon How You Got Here and introduces you to 10 Powers you can utilise to get you from where you are now to the level of happiness where you really want and deserve to be.

Without further ado, let's start your exciting journey.

The Truth Will Set You Free

Acquire the happiness
you wish for yourself

Steve
Bennett

Part 2 – 10 Powers To Happiness





BRIDGE
the **GAP**

Where
You
Are
Now

Where
You
Want
To Be

CONTENTS - PART 2 - POWER TO HAPPINESS

THE POWER OF YOUR BRAIN

Understand, in simple terms how your wonderful brain is constructed and can be made to work for you, how your every thought leaves an impression and how changing your thoughts will change your experiences of happiness. Discover what parts of the brain have an impact on your emotional state of happiness.

THE POWER OF YOUR MIND

How to interpret the instruction manual of your mind and unleash your phenomenal power to change your circumstances through an understanding of your levels of consciousness. How thoughts are transferred and attracted and their related influence on the happiness you experience in life.

THE POWER OF ENERGY

Realising the importance of the role that energy plays in attracting more happiness into your life. Through examples you will learn how thought energy is scientifically recognised throughout the modern world as a powerful means of attracting more of the happiness you want.

THE POWER OF AWARENESS

By developing self awareness of your thoughts, beliefs and actions, you will be able to identify the changes you need to make to attract and reveal more happiness. This chapter will help you explore and increase your self awareness that will lead to self acceptance.

THE POWER OF ACCEPTANCE

Discover how acceptance and in particular, self acceptance, can transform your life and directly improve your experience of happiness in life. Learn how to increase your acceptance, the greater your acceptance the happier you will become. Acceptance leads naturally into the immensely powerful trait of appreciation.



THE POWER OF LOVE

If the first nineteen chapters contain the building blocks of happiness, learn how love, the greatest power of all is the cement that holds them all together. The phenomenal healing power of love is the strongest and most intense power of them all.

THE POWER OF RELATIONSHIPS

Your relationships with other people undoubtedly contribute the majority of happiness or unhappiness you will experience in life. Understand the vital role of healthy personalities, combining the knowledge of the forgoing chapters to create wonderful, healthy relationships that will contribute immensely to your growth and happiness.

THE POWER OF GOALS

Harness the combined powers to focus in on what you really want to be, have and do in your life, with the incredible power of goal setting. Release your fears and set goals to turn your dreams of happiness into reality.

THE POWER OF ATTRACTION

Armed with the immense combined power of the chapters up to this point, you are now ready to understand the greatest life changer of them all, the power of attraction. Learn how to attract more states of happiness and repel states that have led to all of your unhappiness.

THE POWER OF APPRECIATION

Focused attention on your powerful energy of appreciation, of self, others and the world around you, will take you to new levels of happiness beyond your current experience.



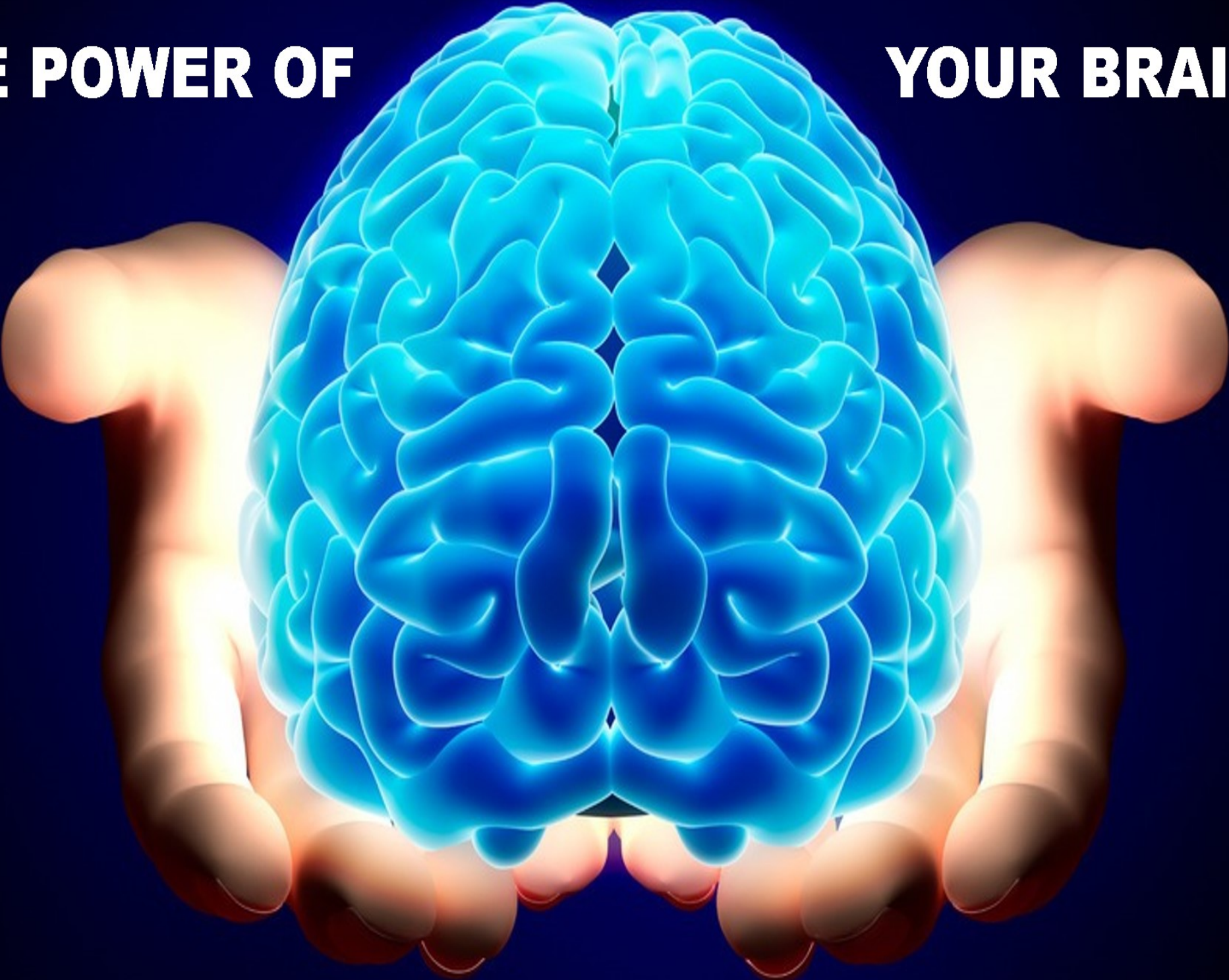
Coming up in the next section

THE POWER OF YOUR BRAIN

Understand, in simple terms how your wonderful brain is constructed and can be made to work for you, how your every thought leaves an impression and how changing your thoughts will change your experiences of happiness. Discover what parts of the brain have an impact on your emotional state of happiness.

THE POWER OF

YOUR BRAIN



1 – The Power Of Your Brain

As our happiness is so intrinsically linked to the thoughts that occupy our mind, it is useful to discover, in simple terms, how thoughts work, how they are processed within our brain and how we can control their use to our advantage in our mind.

For many years I have been fascinated (at a lay mans level), with the workings of the brain, how our thoughts are processed and how the quality of our thoughts impact on key areas within the brain that affect our emotions, behaviours, physical, mental and spiritual states.

I have tried to reproduce here, a simple understanding of how the key elements inter-relate. I am immensely grateful to Steven Holland of www.hiddentalents.org in the USA for his kind permission to use his wonderful graphic images and the content of his website, which contained by far the best information on the workings of the brain, in a language even I could understand.

As the chapter title suggests, this section will cover the simplified workings of the brain and the process of thought.

You have three brains

It may come as a surprise to you to learn that you have three brains, each one having evolved after the other.

At the base of your skull is what we will call the “Primitive” brain. It is the part of your brain that keeps you breathing and your heart beating. It controls some of your more basic reactions, like whether to fight or take flight in the face of danger and controls your sense of territory, explaining the discomfort you may experience when someone invades the personal space of your comfort zone.

Next to evolve was your “Middle” brain, possessed by mammals. Recent research has shown how important this brain is to learning. The middle brain controls your hormones, your immune system, your sexuality, your emotions and an important part of your long term memory. It is no co-incidence that your emotions and long term memory are controlled from the same middle brain.

When something involves strong emotions, it is usually well remembered. Can you remember your first kiss with that someone special, or where you were when you heard that someone significant had died? It also reinforces the fact that enjoyment and fun are important parts of learning, involving as they do, so many positive emotions.

To try and picture the “three brain” image, make a fist with your left hand. Now wrap your right hand over the top of this fist. Your left wrist represents your primitive brain, your left fist is your middle brain and your right hand wrapped over it is your “New” third brain.

Your third brain is quite remarkable. This brain is what is known as grey matter and has all the capacity you will ever need to learn and remember anything you want.



To get your brain capacity into perspective, consider this. As it grows in the womb, a 12 week human embryo develops 2000 brain cells a second. An adult bee – which can do some pretty sophisticated stuff, like building a honeycomb, calculate distance and direction to signal the location of pollen to its companions – has a total of 7000 brain cells. That’s the number of brain cells a human embryo grows in about 3 seconds !



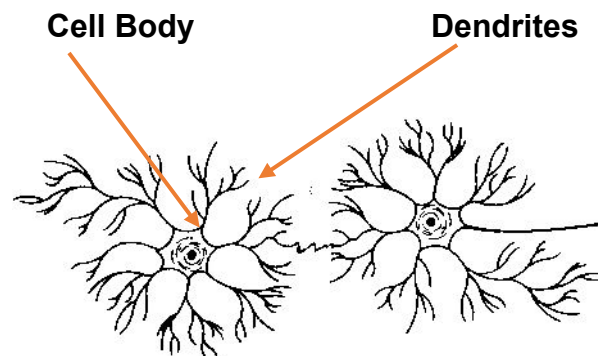
Indeed, the incredible capacity of the human brain has only recently been realised. You have about 100 billion brain cells, a number almost impossible to visualise. It is twenty times the entire population of the world.

Every thought leaves a trace



Research supports the view that what we believe in the form of a thought, has a physical impact upon our brain. A brain cell looks a little bit like a small octopus, as in the diagram. The cell is in the centre, with tiny threads that branch out. Each time something reaches one of your senses (sight, sound, touch, smell) it creates a a thought or impression that travels out from a brain cell along one of the little branch like threads, called “dendrites” (from the Greek, meaning branch).

Each thought we have contains electrical energy that creates a physical pathway along a dendrite, very much like the groove on the old long playing vinyl records. The record player needle is like the thought, the groove is like the dendrite or pathway. Once a new pathway or dendrite is created by a new thought, whenever that thought is brought to mind, it will always use the same dendrite. If a thought (or belief) is repeated over and over, the pathway is well used, the dendrite becomes enlarged. If unused, the dendrite withers.



This explains the human tendency to keep having the same negative and positive thoughts over and over again. The thoughts of your thinking mind flow down the pathways of least resistance, the biggest dendrites, operating like motorways. It becomes clear then, that because 70% of our thoughts are negative through conditioning, we could create through these “motorways”, easy routes where negative thoughts can fly around the brain and influence the way we behave. A research experiment was conducted many years ago on the brain of Albert Einstein, perhaps the most gifted thinker the human race has ever known. After his death, examination of his brain revealed that it was no larger than the average brain and did not contain any unique features that are not present in your brain or mine. What was discovered was that his brain showed significantly more electrical dendrite activity than normal.

When a thought passes along a dendrite, it leaves an impression mark, similar to a scorch mark. The degree of scorching indicates the degree of brain activity in life.

When we consider this, we realise that we really can change the outcomes of our lives by replacing the negative thoughts and limiting self beliefs with more positive alternatives.

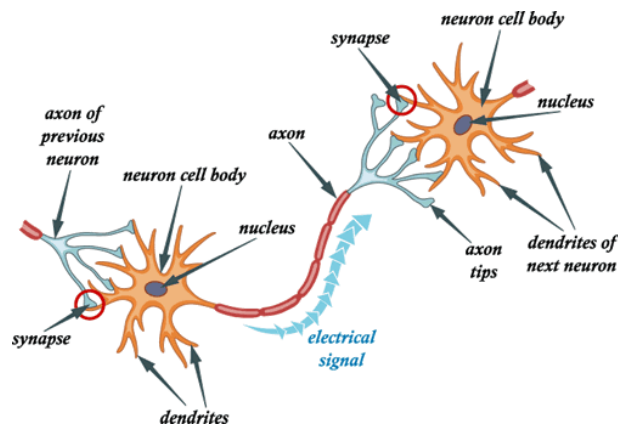
Simply then :-

- As each separate thought travels down its own dendrite, then positive dendrites can be encouraged to thicken.
- Eliminating negative thoughts allows the negative dendrite to wither from misuse.
- So the result can be that it becomes easier and easier to live life with a positive outlook once these initial changes have been achieved.

What better incentive to cleaning up our self talk, our inner critical voices, allowing no room for limiting beliefs and maximising our likelihood of achieving, through our thoughts, beliefs and behaviour the happy and fulfilled life we are all seeking.




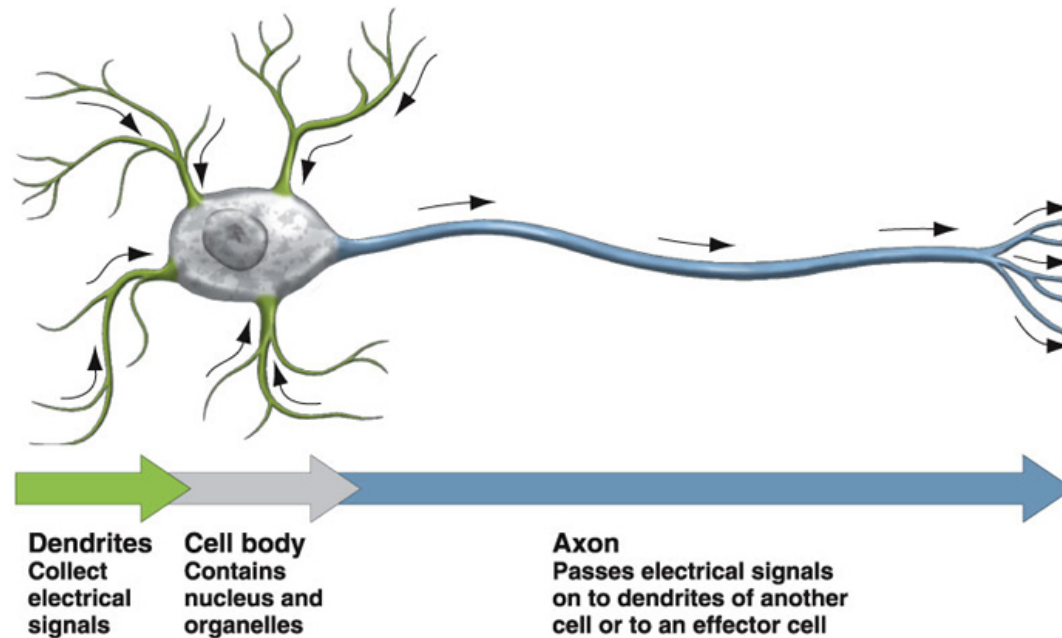
We become what we think about most of the time. We are what we think.



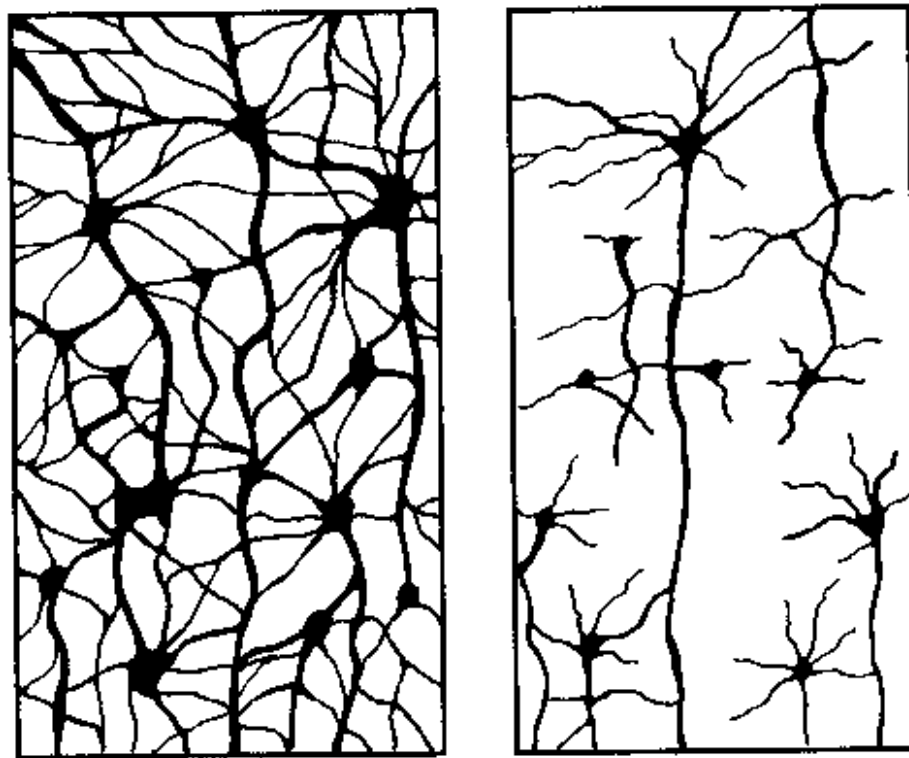
Think of someone you love deeply. Your warm and loving thoughts are created in the cell body and then pass outward along a dendrite, connecting with other dendrites. As the electrical “charge” of your thought reaches the dendrite of an adjoining cell, a “spark” is created in the brain called a synapse. The journey of thought can be followed in the diagram above. The more associated thoughts you have, the more adjoining cells are energised by that thought.

Journey of thought and the perception cycle

 Your thoughts of happiness are wonderfully powerful electrical signals, that create so many more associated powerful thoughts. It doesn't take an Einstein to see, that with conscious effort, negative thoughts can be replaced with happier, more positive ones, that will keep firing off, cell to cell. Remember the “Perception Cycle?”. By replacing those erroneous, out-of-date or simply wrong beliefs, with constructive, positive and happier ones, we set off a chain of events, started by your new perceptions. Your perception becomes a conscious positive thought travelling along dendrites in the brain, connecting to cells in your “middle brain”, where happy emotions and feelings are created. Firing wildly now, your thoughts have become emotionally charged, sending action thoughts to your “new brain”. The emotionally charged feelings inspire you to take warm loving action that inspires happier, loving responses. And it all started with a thought.



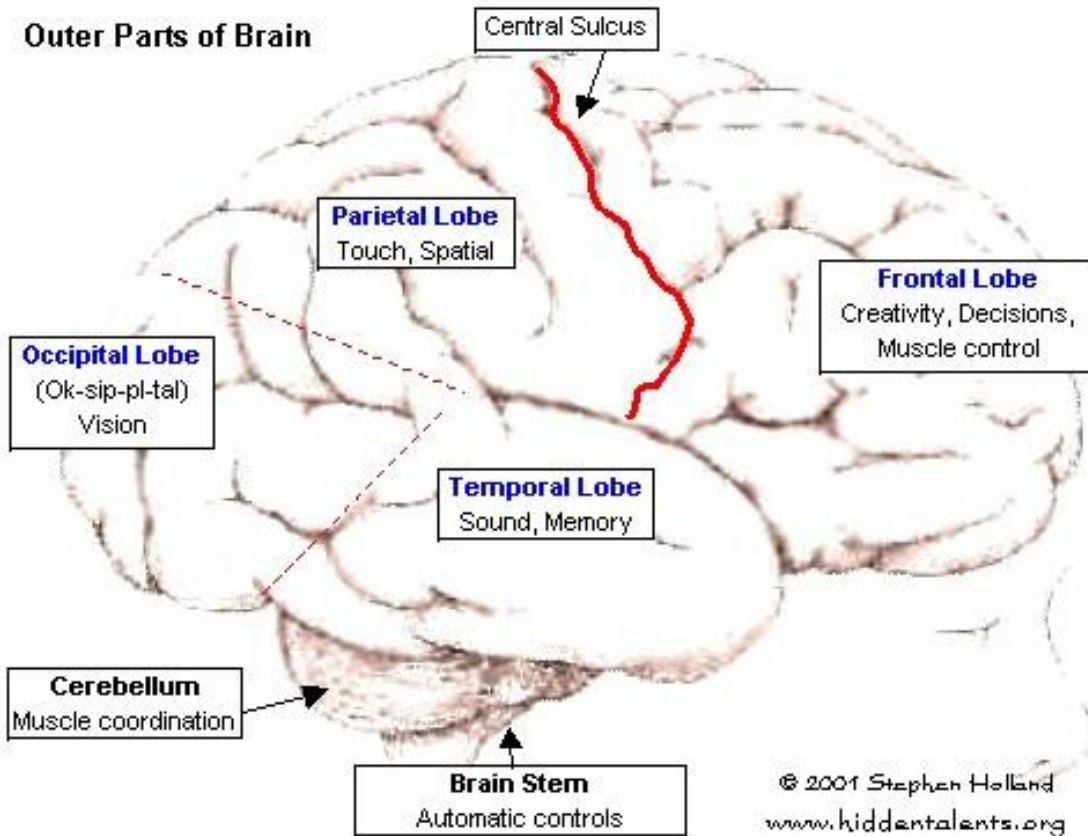
A closer view illustrating the journey of a thought.



ACTIVE INACTIVE

The small diagram above, illustrates the difference between a brain that is actively engaged in thought, with busy neural pathways, and a brain that is less active.

Outer Parts of Brain



These are traditional names for areas of the brain. They are *very important to learn* for anyone talking about the brain. We will use these terms often.

The **Central Sulcus** (sulcus=groove) is the functional division between the front and back of the brain.

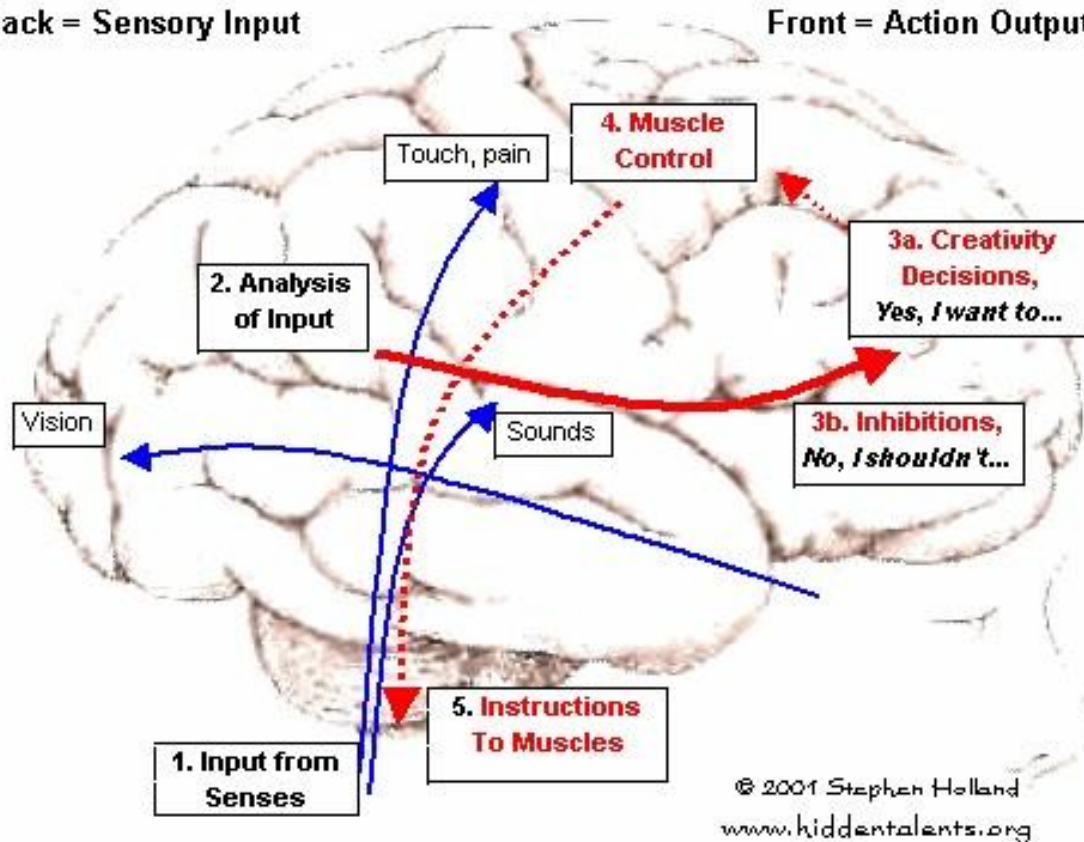
The **Lobes** were named after bone plates of the skull before people knew how the brain worked.

The **Brain stem** is a complicated net of connections of sensory and motor nerves, and controls many instinctual operations such as walking, breathing and eye movement.

The **Cerebellum** at the back of the brain stem controls muscle coordination.

Back = Sensory Input

Front = Action Output



(1.) Senses go to the back of the brain, where

(2.) They are analysed for importance. For example, the back of the brain analyses the sound of a siren by comparing it with past memories and learning, to determine what kind it is, how far away it is, and so on. If the back of the brain determines that the siren is important, the information is passed to the front of the brain for decisions.

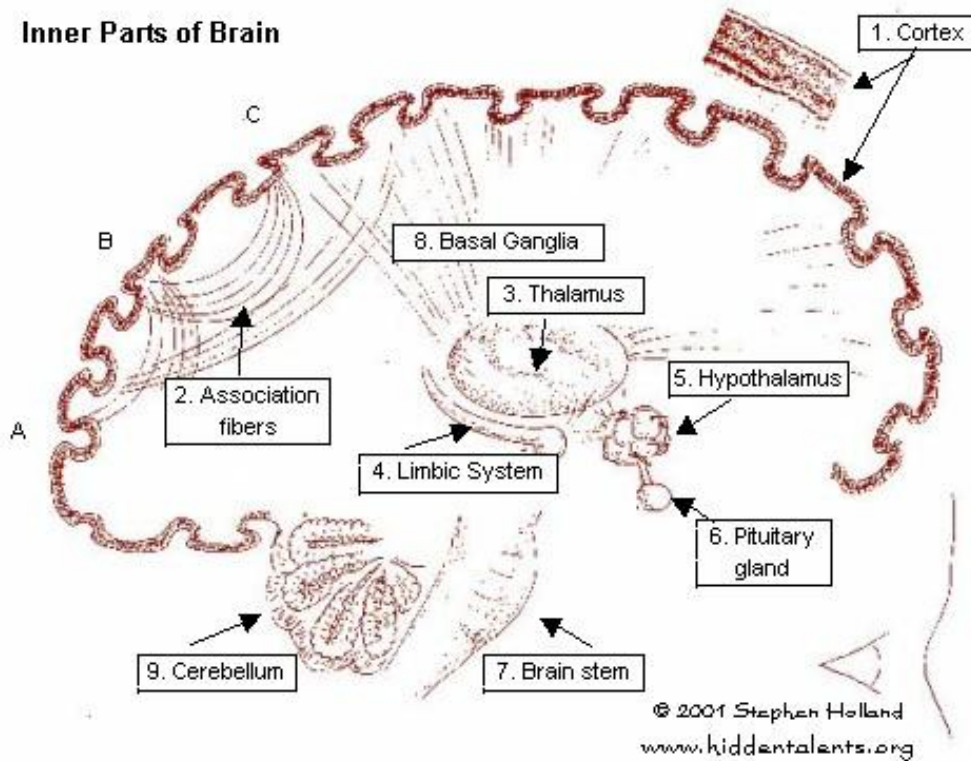
(3a.) The central frontal lobe is the "Yes" area, putting together plans of action. This is also the creative area to make new plans. "Let's skip school and run after the fire engine."

(3b.) The lower frontal lobe above the eyes is the "No" area, which has learned inhibitions. "No, we should stay in class."

(4.) If the "Yes" impulses are stronger, then the message is sent to the "premotor" area. This is where we learn how to do things, such as sneak quietly out the door.

(5.) The actual muscle control signals are automatically sent down to the muscles.

Inner Parts of Brain



(1) The **Cortex** is a layer about the thickness of an orange peel, and is the actual area where most "thinking" takes place. The cortex has many specialized patches. It can be also thought of as the "unconscious mind" because most patches of the cortex work automatically. For example, your sensory areas work 24 hours a day, monitoring incoming sounds and skin signals (your vision areas don't get signals at night, so use dreams to keep active).

(2) **Association fibres** carry information from one patch of the cortex to another. The vision patch (A) will process what comes from the eye to see lines and shapes, then pass it on to patch (B) which determines distance and motion, and thence to patch (C) which is designed to recognize objects.

(3) The **Thalamus** is the master control centre of the brain. It acts a Chief Executive Officer or CEO of the brain, monitoring all senses and actions.

(4) The **Limbic System** is important to memory. For example, it can add "emotional tags" of "danger" to memories of snakes.

(5) The **Hypothalamus** is the master centre for emotions and instincts, such as fear, hunger, thirst, pleasure, love and anger, and it also regulates body temperature.

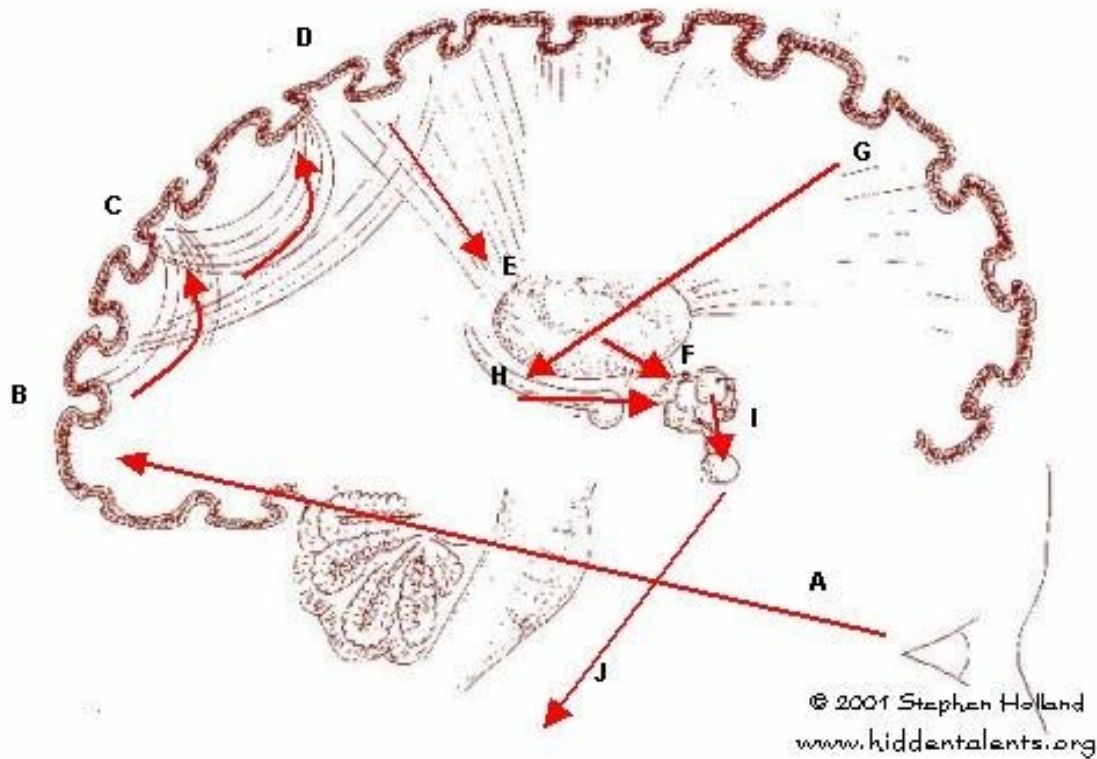
(6) The **Pituitary Gland** translates nerve signals into chemical signals. Fear emotions in the hypothalamus can trigger the pituitary gland to produce hormones to prepare the body for "fight or flight."

(7) The **Brain Stem** is a complex network of wiring for sensory and muscle nerves. It automatically controls eye movement, breathing, etc.

(8) The **Basal Ganglia** is a network of nerve connections around the thalamus. It is like a gateway with a guard. The "yes" area of your frontal lobe may want you to grab the pizza off your friend's plate, while the "no" area tries to inhibit the action. The thalamus "conscious centre" or "will power" responds to whichever signal is stronger and controls the muscle signals via the basal ganglia, a "go / stop" effect. During Parkinson's Disease, this area doesn't work properly, resulting in go/stop shaking

(9) The **Cerebellum** controls body balance, muscle coordination, and fast muscle movements. If it is not working well, then you may be awkward and clumsy in sports, and type slowly with lots of mistakes.

Visual and Emotional Paths



An Example



(A) Your eyes see a snake. The image is sent back to (B) where the **visual cortex** sees lines and shapes. The information then goes to (C) where the cortex analyses distance and motion. Cortex area (D) analyses the shape and determines that it is a snake. The cortex signals the **thalamus** (E) that a snake is close by. The **limbic system** (H) determines from memory that "snakes=danger." The thalamus and limbic system trigger the *fear* emotion in the **hypothalamus** (F), which tells the **pituitary gland** (I) to send out appropriate hormones (J) to prepare for fight or flight.

The hypothalamus is "blind" and doesn't know whether the snake is real or imaginary! **If you imagine, remember, just see a picture, get tricked by a rope, or dream an image** of a snake anywhere in the cortex (G), the limbic system senses a "danger" tag on the memory of snakes, and may automatically trigger the hypothalamus fear response, perhaps waking you up with an adrenaline rush.



Conscious mind : 10%

1. Analyzes
2. Thinks and plans
3. Short-term memory

Sub-conscious mind : 90%

1. Long-term memory
2. Emotions & feelings
3. Habit patterns , relationship patterns, addictions
4. Involuntary bodily functions
5. Creativity
6. Developmental stages
7. Spiritual connection
8. Intuition

Left and Right Sides of the Brain

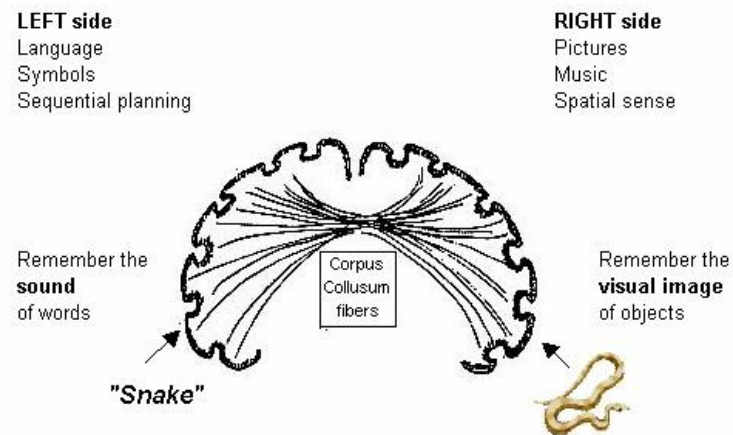
The **Right** side is the **animal brain**, specializing in what is important to animal survival, such as:

- **Visual images** -- basic observation
- **Face images** -- recognizing a special individual
- **Spatial sense** -- remembering where the nest is
- **Music** -- remembering bird songs, mating calls, etc.
- **Learning actions** -- how to hunt for food, or attract mates

The **Left** side is the **human brain**, with features almost unique to humans. Very little of this specialization has been identified in the non-human world, including apes. Examples include:

- **Sequential planning** -- originally for *tool use*, now useful for important things needed for human survival, such as planning committee meetings, and writing scripts for TV soap operas.
- **Symbols** -- originally useful for making *hand signs* to indicate a mammoth over the hill, now useful for important modern functions such as road signs and calculating income tax.
- **Language** -- originally useful to communicate using *grunts* and belches to indicate a good meal of bear steak, now useful for important functions such as political speeches and Email.

Connections : The **Corpus Callosum** is a bundle of fibres that connects the left and right sides of the brain.



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The Left "Human" brain

The right brain is the "animal brain" and analyzes the environment for the sights and sounds useful for survival. In essence, animals are almost 100% "right-brained." Humans have kept the animal talents on the right side, but have modified the left brain for language and tool use.

The following is a summary of talents found in the left brain. Each talent is a complex network of different processes beyond what is mentioned here, but injuries or strokes in these areas would result in serious loss of these specific talents.

Language Sounds

Sound input in the human left brain is specialized for discriminating the sounds of language. As children grow in the first few months, their sound patch in the temporal lobe is hearing the sounds of people talking, and remembering that certain sound patterns seem to always match certain objects and actions.

Humans can make very fine distinctions in sound, and therefore meaning. For example we can distinguish the difference in sound of "sat" and "sad." Instead of one bird song meaning "territory," we have pages of words on a estate agents contract. (If complexity of vocabulary and grammar is a measure of human evolution, then this implies that, *on the average*, left-brained women who talk a lot are more "human" than most men who do more grunting, and lawyers, poets, and talk-show hosts may represent more evolutionarily advanced, human careers.)

Books give children exposure to much more complex vocabulary, and proper grammar, than children will ever hear from oral language in normal family or school life. This is especially true if parents read to the children, which gives young children access to language and ideas years ahead of their own reading ability. Encourage your children to *read, read, read!!!!*

Vision and Reading

Vision in the human left brain is specialized for reading. The left brain learns to see arrangements of lines we call alphabet letters.

For example...

1. The visual cortex looks for simple things such as " l o / "
2. Then the brain learns to perceive arrangements of lines as letters "dbpqv "
3. Then the brain learns to perceive arrangements of letters as words

Phonics and Spelling

We think in the sounds of a language -- and can even think with a foreign accent. Reading is merely a visual gimmick tacked onto our *oral* vocabulary and grammar. It is common to have people who can speak but not read; it is impossible to have a person who can read but not understand the same language when spoken.

Children at age 6 years have a good *oral* vocabulary and grammar. Also, their visual cortex has usually developed enough to distinguish the *visual* shapes of letters. Now they are ready for reading.

There is a special part of the cortex, called the "angular gyrus" which has evolved to match sounds with letters. (A "gyrus" is simply a fold in the cortex that bulges up, while a "sulcus" is a valley.) This is the area so important for spelling.

Existing oral vocabulary -----> phonics <--- visual perception of letters
||
ability to read

The angular gyrus develops from about age 6 to 9, then it is mostly finished for most people. Done. If children are exposed to good phonics training in early schooling, they will tend to be much better at spelling and reading. For example, the term "*word attack skills*" means using phonics to sound out letters until they trigger a match with the sound of a word already in the brain.

Grammar

Grammar is the *spatial sense of vocabulary*. This is especially true of English, which developed a relatively simple grammar system that depends upon spatial order much more than endings or gender.

As a child grows, the brain soaks in whatever sounds it hears which we call vocabulary and grammar. After age 10, the vocabulary and grammar parts of the brain are mostly finished growing, and the thinking parts of the brain in the frontal lobe continues growing, building upon the foundation of grammar and vocabulary learned in childhood.

Vocabulary --> Grammar --> Concepts --> Creative thinking

Body Senses

Body senses, such as touch, pain and limb position, are similar to the right brain, except that **the left brain senses the right side of the body**. However, in the left brain they are important for some forms of symbolic thinking (next section).

Symbolic Relationships

The spatial area of the brain, in the parietal lobe, senses complex arrangements. In the left brain, this area works with symbols, not just visual shapes. Examples include...

Right / Left. The body senses tell a child which foot the mother is touching. Vision shows which foot the mother is pointing to. Now the mother says the words, "Put on your *left* shoe." Eventually the child's brain matches up the word "left" with a certain side of the body. More advanced learning will allow the child to match the word "left" with map symbols and the world of navigation so he can say "According to the map, we should make a left turn." This matches lines on a map with the left side of his body.

Reading Clocks. The parietal lobe matches up the sense of time with symbols of a clock face.

Mathematics involves a variety of talents. A concept such as "add" must involve a child seeing the difference between one and two cookies on a plate. The parietal lobes on both sides of the brain work together on math. However, the **left** brain will tend to work harder on **algebra** (which is a lot like language grammar), while the **right** brain will do most of the **geometry** work. **Mental arithmetic** is strongly in the **right** brain because symbols must be moved around in a visual-spatial way.

Creative Ideas

The creative area of the *left* frontal lobe rearranges words, concepts, symbols, and memories into new patterns. In effect, this allows us to think up new things to say.

When we think about something, we are usually using oral language in our mind. We can rehearse a speech, dream of a conversation, imagine a poem, and remember what someone said on the phone. We can even think with a foreign accent. Most of this goes on in the frontal lobe above our eyebrows.

Clues that this area is well-developed are indicated if a person is...

- "quick-witted" -- making fast associations of ideas and words
- good at improvising speech -- thinking of "what to say" impromptu
- good at carrying on an "intelligent" conversation instead of "small talk"
- good at philosophizing with abstract concepts -- "why do we exist?"

Inhibitions and Worry

The lower frontal lobe, above the eyes, has the job of stopping a person from getting into trouble through wrong actions. On the *left* side this means not saying the wrong thing at the wrong time. Because most of our thinking is oral language, this area is important for "**talking to our self**" and **worry**.

If the area is too strong, then a person may worry so much that they are afraid to do or say anything. Shyness is a survival mechanism for avoiding trouble. If it is weakly developed, or injured, a person may say inappropriate things, such as swearing too much or talking too much. Remember, the goal of this area is to keep a person from trouble via the mouth, so if the person is losing friends by what he says, then the inhibition area is not working well.

The Premotor area

The Left premotor area, in upper left front of the forehead, keeps track of sequential patterns -- words, symbols, ideas, that come one after another. This is highly important for humans with symbolic thinking.

The area primarily would have evolved for planning tool use -- how to use tools in a sequential way to accomplish symbolic goal. Because the motor nerves cross, this left-brain premotor area controls the **RIGHT HAND**. Humans are "handed" because one side of the brain specialized to do sequential operations. Most humans have symbolic language in the left brain, the reason why most humans are Right-Handed!

Key talents where this area is important include:

1. **Tool use** - doing a sequence of operations with the right hand.
2. **"Logical"** thinking - putting ideas together in sequence, so one follows another
3. **Cause and effect reasoning** - a basis for scientific thinking and "how-to" analysis
4. **Grammar** - Thinking, speaking and writing language in a sequential way to follow rules.
5. **Rules for playing Games** - what to do in what order, for a logical result. (However, many games like chess also have a strong right-brain component of patterns.
6. **Following recipes and instructions**
7. **Awareness of time**, and possibly the passage of time in comparison to other events. (For example, when people are using this part of the brain for intensive sequential analysis, such as how to do something on a computer, time awareness seems to fail, and they will say, "I lost track of time."

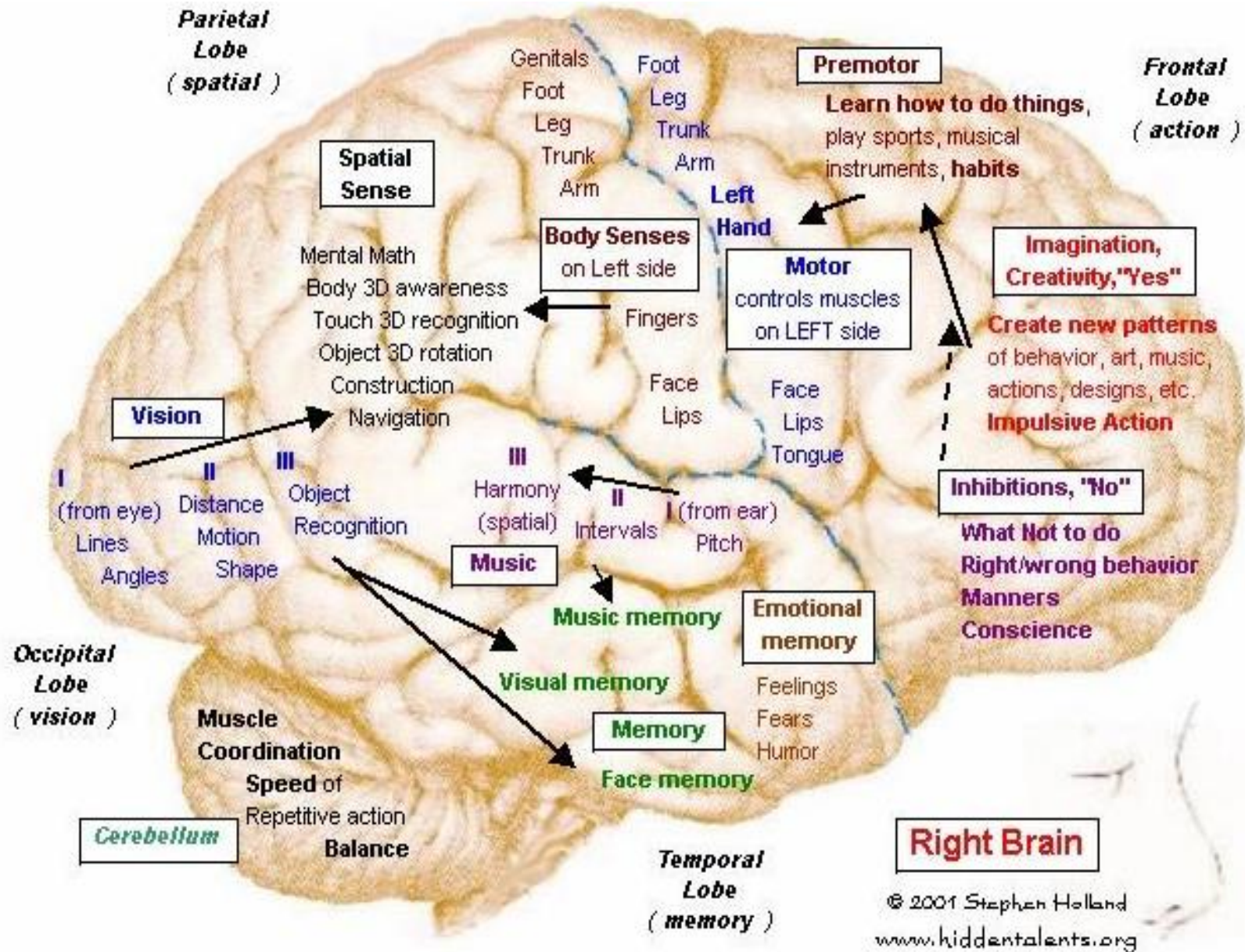
The Motor area

In the Left-brain, this area puts into practice the instructions from the left-brain pre-motor area, but controlling the **Right Side of the body**. This of course covers the **Right hand**. Because the Left side of the brain is language based, the Motor area also controls strongly the instructions to speak language. (*Stuttering* may involve confusion between the left and right Motor and Pre-Motor areas trying to control the single language ability.)

The Speech area

This seems to be a highly developed part of the general motor area, which evolved to handle the difficult muscle control needed for speech creation.

Talents in the Right Brain



The Right "Animal" brain

The right brain is the "animal brain" and analyzes the environment for all the sights and sounds useful for survival. In essence, animals are 100% "right-brained." Humans have kept the animal talents on the right side, but have modified the left brain for language and tool use.

The following is a summary of talents found in the right brain. Each talent is a complex network of different processes beyond what is mentioned here, but injuries or strokes in these areas would result in serious loss of these specific talents.

Vision

Animals must be very concerned about their visual environment, both for food and danger. Therefore, this area is one of the oldest and best developed areas of the brain. Most animals can see shape, colour, motion perception, depth perception, etc.

Humans have added left-brain symbolic meaning to the visual images, such as the word "rabbit" in the left brain to match the image in the right brain, or an art critic trying to analyze the meaning in a Picasso painting.

The Spatial Sense

The spatial sense helps animals see objects in their mind, the "**Minds Eye**." For example:

(A) The **Object-Spatial** sense allows animals to "**rotate**" an object in their mind, imagining what it looks like from different angles.

This is very useful to a cat to analyze where a mouse is hiding, mentally consider the mouse's path, and decide where to sit to be in the best position to ambush it.

Human craftsmen use this talent extensively to build houses, design jewellery, fix cars, etc. (In your mind, imagine opening the door of the cabinet under the kitchen sink -- what would you see?) This part of the brain is also used by humans to juggle math symbols for mental math (calculate "608 x 22 =" in your mind).

(B) The **Navigational-Spatial** sense allows animals to keep track of where they are in a larger environment, using the spatial relationship of landmark clues. Bees can fly home in a "bee-line" using the sun as a landmark, even compensating for changes in the angle to the sun as it changes within a few minutes during the time they are in the hive or on the flowers. In the hive, scout bees *symbolically translate* their navigational knowledge into the language of dance - different movements are "read" by other bees telling them what direction the new flowers are in relation to the sun's angle, how far away they are, and how good the source is.

Humans use this talent to find their car in the car park, and remember how to drive their cars through a maze of city streets to get home after work. (While inside a shopping precinct, can you point in a "bee-line" to directly where your car is?). We symbolically translate locations into maps, pointing with our fingers, and using location and distance names. To imitate the bee's symbolic dance, we might use symbolic language: "You'll find a very good coffee house if you go that way over three roads and turn left."

Music

Music is an extension of sound talents used for animal communication, such as bird songs.

Birds must be able to analyse the pitch, melodies, intervals, rhythm and harmonies of bird songs to determine if the song is of the same species, if the song is a territorial or mating call, and which individual is singing. Animals as diverse as humpback whales, parrots, and dolphins have intricate sound patterns for communication.

Humans add more complexity with left-brain symbolism that can analyze music into chromatic scales, the "key of D major", choruses, four-part harmony, etc.

Body Senses

Body senses includes touch, pain, and limb position. Because the brain is "blind," it must use these senses to learn about the body carrying it. One important sense is "**proprioception**," which uses sensors in the joints to tell where a limb is (Close your eyes and then try to keep track of your arm as you move it around). Humans use this proprioception sense when doing numerous activities, including sports, dance and musical instruments. If this area is weak, then a piano player will reach out with his arm incorrectly and hit the wrong notes on the keyboard, and a gymnast wouldn't know where her limbs were very well.

Memory

Memory processes are not well understood, but we know that the location for many memories are in the temporal lobe. The right temporal lobe has mostly visual memories and non-verbal sounds (bird songs, your pet dog, music, etc.).

Face Memory is so important that the brain has a special place for it, at the bottom of the right temporal lobe. As a child, you were exposed to many faces, and your brain learned an "average" face. Your brain remembers individuals by how they differ from the average. In fact, the brain defines a "beautiful" face as an "average" face because it has no deviations or defects.

Animals developed this feature to tell friend from foe, and identify family members. Humans see each other as individuals but may not identify cows well, but the cows know each other as individuals and think most humans look the same.

Emotional Memory is a special feature of the front of the temporal lobe. It stores emotional tags on memories as a way of determining the importance of the

memory. A pet dog may have "pleasure" emotions associated with its memory, while the dog down the street may have "danger" emotional tags. The sight of each dog's image may trigger the emotions, or thinking the emotions may trigger the images.



Emotional tags learned very young can become the basis of phobias, racial prejudice, and tribal warfare, and are very difficult to change in adults.

The Creative "Yes" area

The central frontal lobe creates new ideas and patterns from the raw material in memory and senses.

Creativity is a talent that is based on the strength of other talents. The **field of** creativity depends upon which patches this area is strongly connected to, such as art, dance, music, architecture, etc. A person with this area strongly connected to the face memory patch may be good at organizing social relationships. This area is also the "**Yes**" or "**Go**" centre. It's job is to think up an action (which may or may not be creative). People who have a strong Go centre will tend to say "Why not?" and be the first to do wild or dangerous things. People with weak Go centres will tend to be lazy and unmotivated.

The "No" or Inhibition area

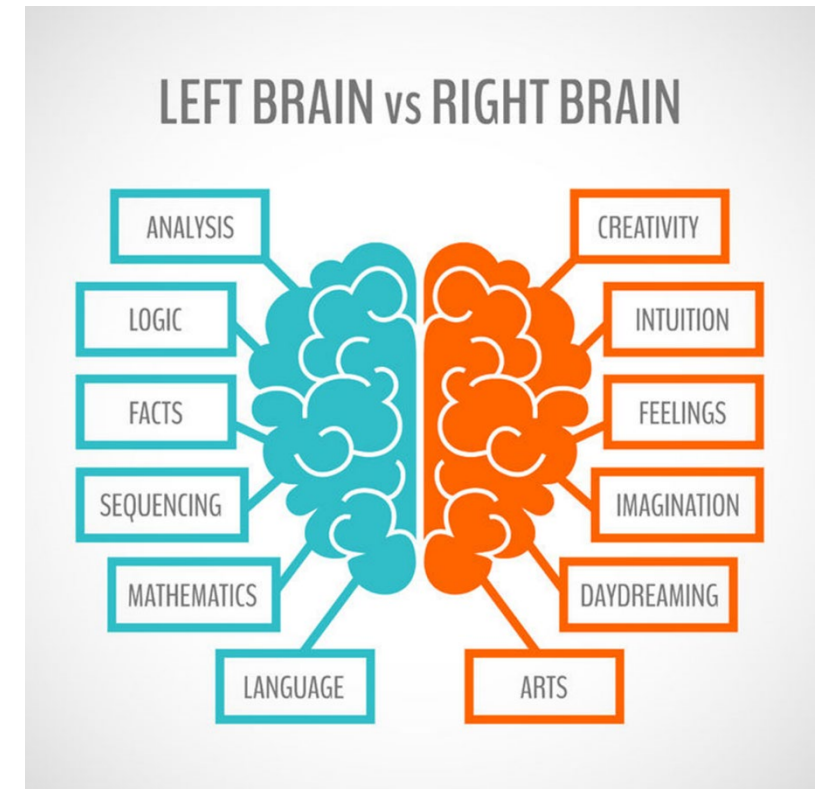
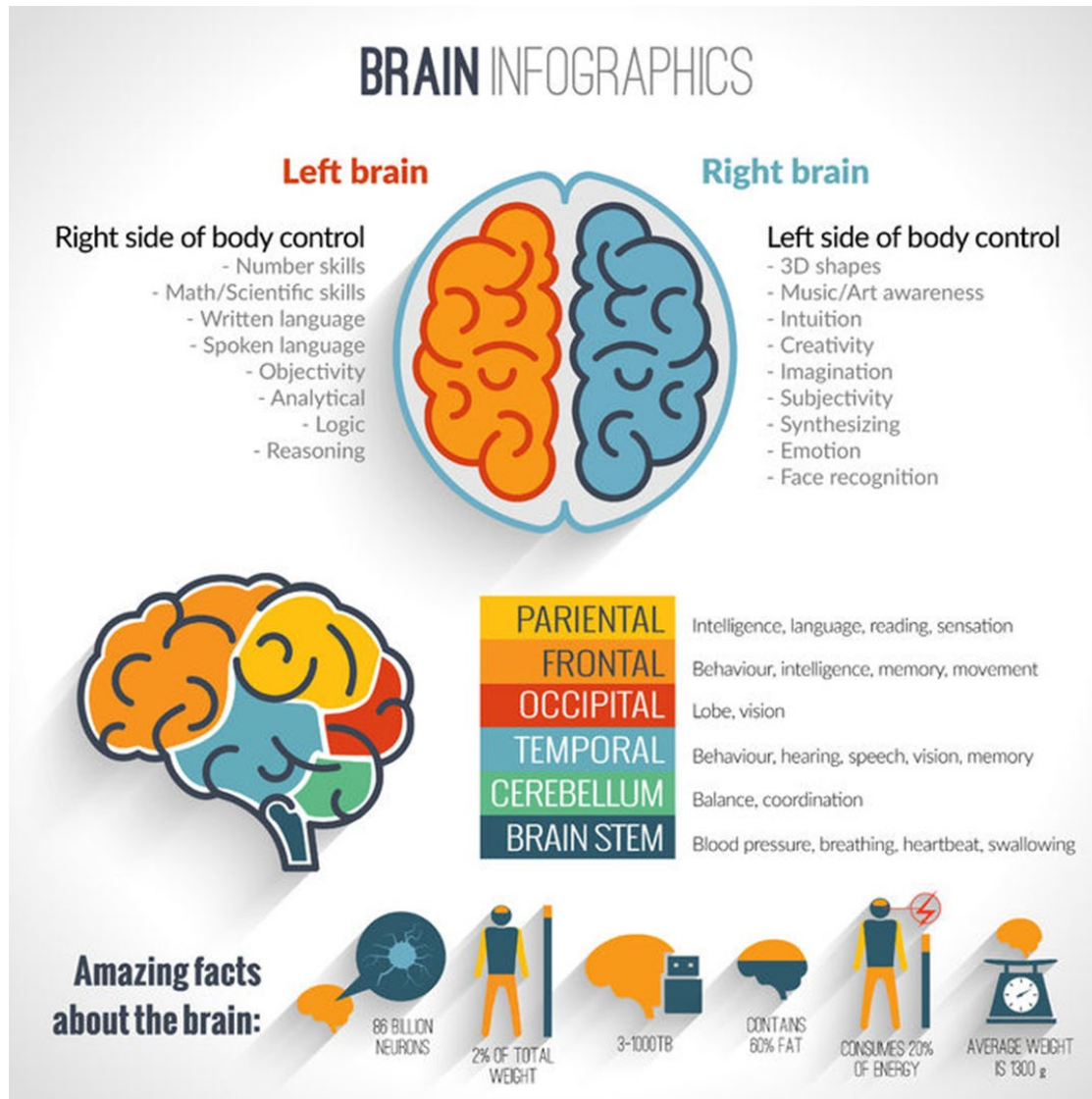
Inhibition is in the lower frontal lobe. It's job is to inhibit the "Go" centre, thus striking a balance, and protecting people from acting in a way that can lead to danger. It is a self-protective talent. This is where we learn what is right and wrong behaviour, store our conscience, and learn social manners (correct behaviour).

If this is naturally weak, or not well developed, then a person will have low inhibitions, and perhaps anti-social or criminal behaviour, which may put the person in danger.

A person with a strong inhibition talent will tend to think "no" to new ideas and suggestions, thereby over-protecting themselves. Unfortunately, this aspect can also bother other people, such as teenage children or employees, who are excited with new ideas or plans.

Animals that stay in groups will have the most need for learning inhibitions, and therefore be the most trainable. Individuals in a pack of wolves or dogs, a group of apes, or a tribe of humans, need to learn "social behaviour" to survive well. Solitary animals such as house cats don't need to learn many inhibitions. This can explain why dogs become so sociable and trainable, while house cats can't be trained well (lions in Africa live in groups, so may be more trainable than house cats).

Are you left or right brain dominant?



Your Brain On Music

Listening to music causes the brain to release dopamine, a feel-good chemical.



Music acts as a **distractor**, focusing the attention away from negative stimuli to something pleasant and encouraging.

Music has the **ability to alter** breathing and heart rate.

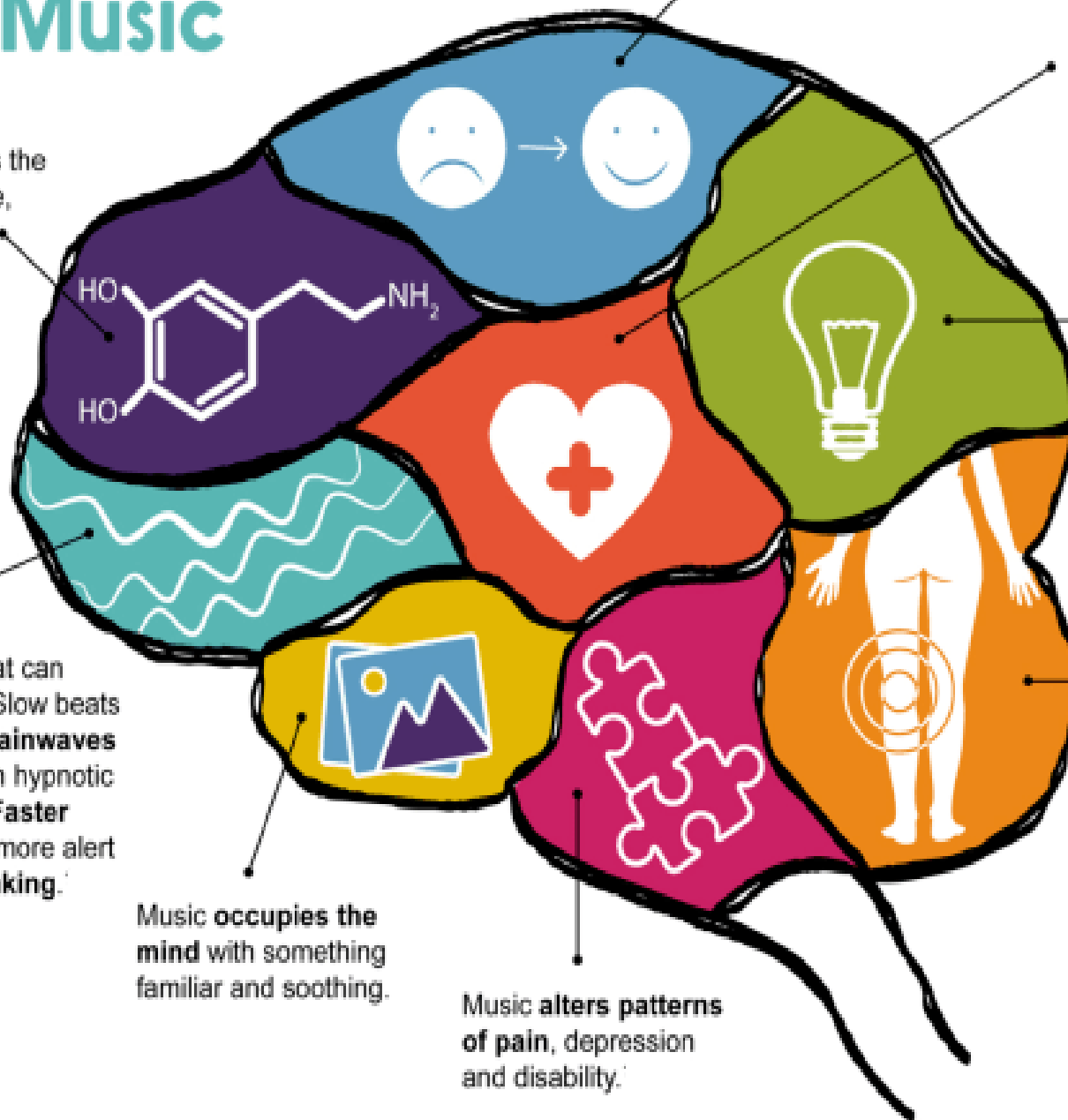
Music also has the power to **improve your state of mind**. This helps keep things like depression and anxiety at bay.

Music with a strong beat can stimulate brainwaves. Slow beats encourage the **slow brainwaves** that are associated with hypnotic or **meditative states**. **Faster beats** may encourage more alert and **concentrated thinking**.

Music occupies the **mind** with something familiar and soothing.

Music alters **patterns of pain**, depression and disability.

Music can help **reduce the perception of pain**.



The Premotor area

The premotor area is where muscle action is learned, through practice.

This is the key area for learning actions, such as learning to fly, catch mice, dance, swing a tennis racket, play a piano, or shuffle cards. When a behaviour is thoroughly learned, it becomes a habit. Interestingly, some muscle action can be practiced mentally.

If this area is strong, then people learn complex actions quickly, such as a new dance step. If it is weak, then people learn slowly, and need to practice a lot.

The Motor area

The motor area is like a puppet master controlling individual muscles by pulling strings (the premotor area is the puppet *master*, and the creative area writes the *script*).

1. Creative area ----- "I *want* to hit the ball in the right boundary"
2. Inhibition area ----- "I better *not* miss the ball"
3. Premotor area ---- Remembers *how* to swing a bat through practice
4. Motor area ----- Sends impulses down to the arm muscles
5. Cerebellum ----- Makes muscle movements smooth and graceful

A person with many neurons devoted to this will tend to have more precise control of individual muscles, which is useful in craft work and playing musical instruments.

The nerves cross going to the brain, so the right motor area controls the left side of the body, such as the left hand. Left-handed people operate from the right side of the brain.

Injuries or strokes on the right side of the brain make the left side of the body paralyzed.

The Cerebellum

The cerebellum at the back of the neck coordinates muscle motion. The motor area sends a command to reach for a glass of water. If the cerebellum is well developed, then it intercepts the muscle signals and modifies them so that the hand slowly accelerates smoothly to start with, then slows down smoothly as it gets near the glass. If the cerebellum is weak, then the arm may shoot out awkwardly and knock the glass over.

A good cerebellum action produces...

1. **Fluid, graceful, cat-like motion.**
2. **Good balance**
3. **Speed of repetitive motion** (important for typing speed and playing music)

A **weak** cerebellum can show up as being **awkward, clumsy, falling easily, and typing slowly.**

Brain-Intensive Activities

Einstein is often quoted as saying that "We only use 5% of our brain." This is wrong. Many activities use much more of the brain. (Einstein knew almost nothing about the brain, because at the time no one knew much.)

When a study was conducted of how different activities used different talents, the results were surprising. Some activities normally considered "simple" in fact were very brain-intensive, using far more than 5% of the brain. Some of the highlights are...

1. Cooking

Cooking a large meal, such as a Christmas Dinner for a large family, uses nearly 100% of the brain. Almost every patch of the brain is firing away, like light bulbs flashing on and off all over the head.

2. Hockey

American hockey players are often cartooned as dumb hunks of muscle. In fact, hockey is probably the second most brain-intensive human activity. *Cooking needs more talents, but hockey needs faster-acting talents.* It is also mostly right-brain talents without much language needed.

Brain Wave States

There are five states of awareness that our brain goes through. They are known as brain wave states and can be measured by a sophisticated piece of medical equipment known as an electroencephalograph machine (E.E.G.). This machine measures the electrical activity taking place within the brain and enables scientists to ascertain what level of awareness a subject has achieved.

Brain Waves

Brain waves are oscillating electrical voltages in the brain measuring just a few millionths of a volt. There are five widely recognized brain waves, and the main frequencies of human EEG waves are listed in the table along with their characteristics.

1. Gamma Concentration
2. Beta Anxiety dominant, active, external attention, relaxed
3. Alpha Very relaxed, passive attention
4. Theta Deeply relaxed, inward focused
5. Delta Sleep

The Electroencephalogram, or EEG, picks up brainwave activity which corresponds to different mental states, as shown in the diagram opposite.

DELTA rhythms exist when we are asleep.

THETA is a light, sleepy dreamlike state.

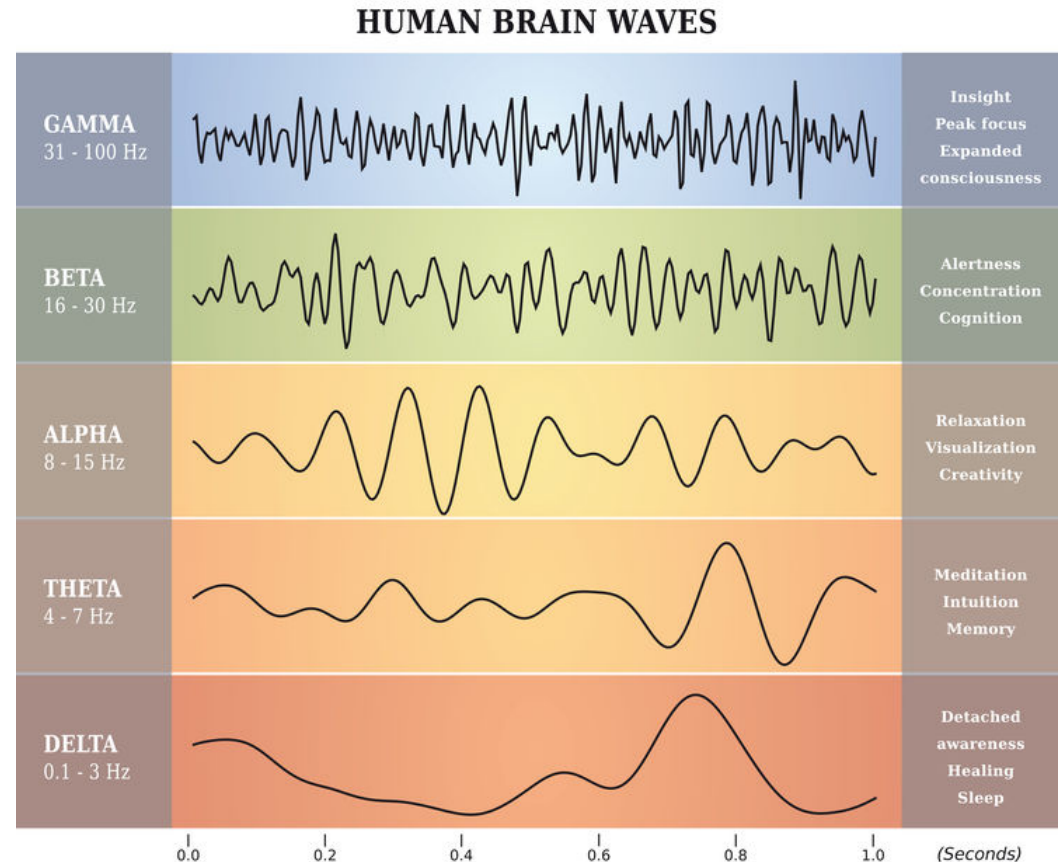
ALPHA is a deep physically relaxed state of emotional calm, even daydreaming.

BETA is the wide awake, day-to-day conscious state.

GAMMA is the most focused state of concentration

When we are wide awake and alert we are in the Beta State. Our conscious mind is fully active and ready to analyse any information it receives. If we are performing a difficult task that requires a lot of concentration our brain would almost certainly be in either the Beta or Gamma states.

As we start to relax our brain wave cycles start to relax also.



Should this state of relaxation become deep enough, our brain enters the Alpha state. This state is often referred to as the meditative state, the Zen state, the daydreaming state, or the trance state. Although we are not actually asleep, we are also not really awake. We are aware of things around us, perhaps we can hear noises or people talking, but they appear to be very distant. In this state the conscious mind has effectively fallen asleep, and our subconscious mind remains in control of our Autonomic Nervous System.

In this state, any suggestions given to us would pass straight into the subconscious mind. We are effectively hypnotised.

With further relaxation, we would fall into a light sleep, this is the Theta State, and from here we would normally fall into a deep sleep known as the Delta State.

Under normal circumstances, we all pass through these four stages when we fall asleep, and then move back through them in reverse order as we awaken. Medical science has proven that we must all spend a certain amount of time in the Alpha State each day to function properly.

However, if drugs are used to induce sleep, we will normally move straight from the Beta State to the Delta State effectively missing out the other two. Continued use of these drugs can seriously affect our Nervous System causing a downturn in our general health, often leading to depression and withdrawal.

We all suffer from insomnia from time to time, but if the symptoms persist then it is wise to seek help. Hypnotherapy is an ideal solution for this problem as the we can simply drift from hypnosis into natural sleep. No Drugs, No Problem.

THE BRAIN IN LOVE



Falling in love is a truly strange experience. You become utterly, inexplicably obsessed with one person. You feel a spike of pleasure whenever you get a text or email from them and spend as much time with them as humanly possible. You see the good in them, but not the bad.

To neuroscientists examining brain architecture, love looks surprisingly like addiction.

Not everyone goes through the experience of being in love, but many do, and it's one of the most distinctive parts of being a human. Until recently, though, neuroscience largely ignored love as a topic of research. "Most neuroscientific research has been devoted to negative symptoms — depression and addiction, instead of joy," says Donatella Marazziti, an Italian psychiatrist who has studied neurotransmitter levels in the brains of people who've recently fallen in love.

Helen Fisher, a Rutgers University researcher who's used MRI and other brain imaging techniques to examine both romantic love and long-term attachment, says that "it's a new idea to accept that there are even brain systems associated with love in the first place."

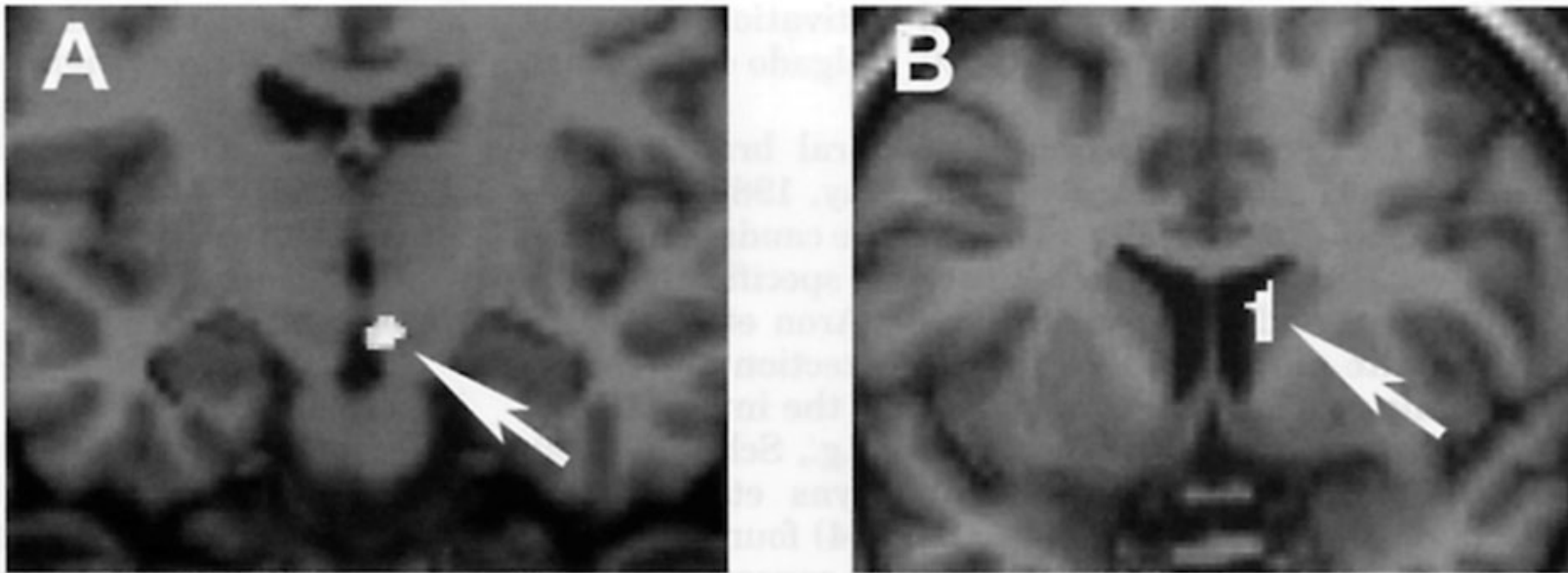
As a result, the study of love is pretty new and the phenomenon is still largely a mystery. The studies that have been conducted are relatively small, and they only hint at the neurological basis of love — they don't fully define it.

Still, here are a few interesting things that scientists have learned so far.

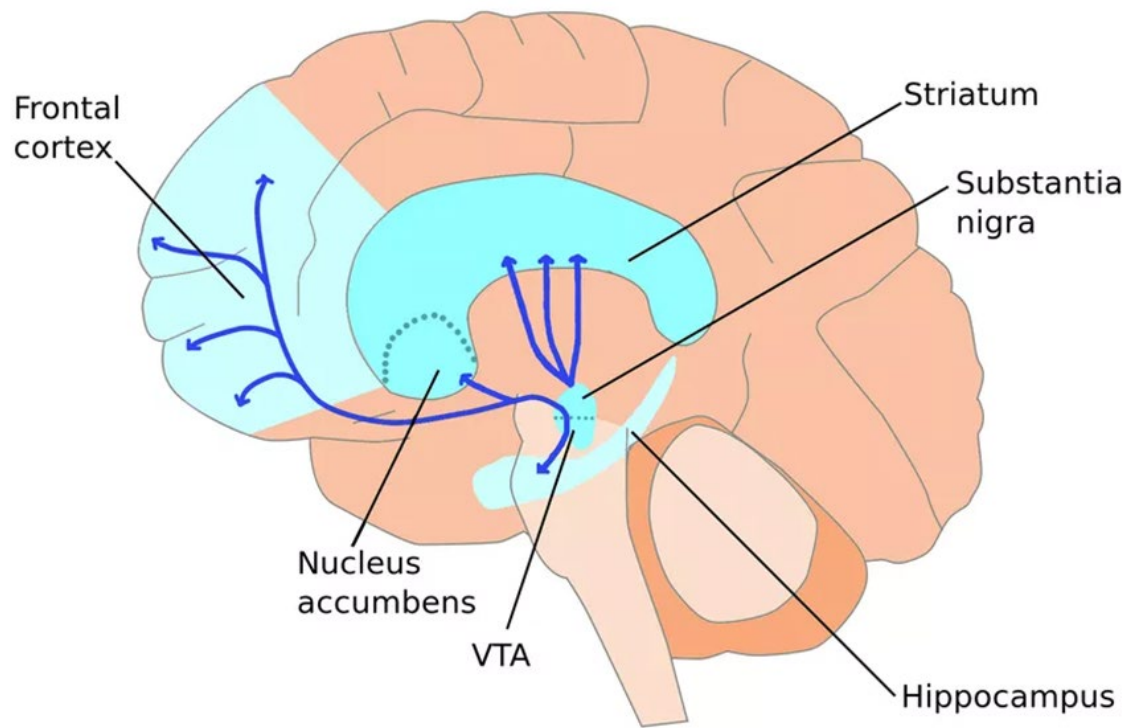
1. The first stage of romantic love is a bit like a drug addiction

Fisher distinguishes the early torrent of romantic love and the longer-term, calmer attachment phase that follows. She found that a brain in the initial stage of love looks surprisingly like a brain experiencing a drug addiction.

"When we put people who've just fallen happily in love into a brain scanner, we find heightened activity in a few different brain regions," she says. "The big ones are the ventral tegmental area — the VTA — and the caudate nucleus." The scans compared participants' brains when looking at photos of their lovers, versus photos of random acquaintances. And participants who'd scored higher on a survey that measured feelings of love, moreover, had proportionately more activity in the VTA and caudate nucleus.



Experiments show that people in love have elevated activity in the VTA (left) and caudate nucleus (right). (Fisher et. al. 2005)



The VTA secretes dopamine, which travels to other parts of the brain and leads to feelings of pleasure. (Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology)

These are both core parts of the brain's reward system: areas that release the neurotransmitter dopamine to other parts of the brain, triggering feelings of pleasure. Heightened activity in the VTA in particular has been associated with all sorts of addictions — whether nicotine, alcohol, heroin, or gambling — with each dose causing a fresh spike of dopamine.

This, Fisher says, explains the feeling of obsession many people experience when falling in love. "It's what gives you the elation and the craving that is basic to romantic love." She sees the early stages of love as more of a drive to be fulfilled — like hunger and thirst — than a stable, permanent emotion.

2. Falling in love seems to reduce your ability to be judgmental

Other brain-imaging work by Samir Zeki, a neurobiologist at University College London, might explain a related aspect of falling in love: the way new lovers only see the positives in each other.

When Zeki has put people who have fallen in love inside of fMRI machines and shown them photos of their lovers, he's detected reduced activity in the amygdala — a pair of brain regions that are involved in decision-making. Amygdala activity is typically heightened during fearful or stressful situations, and research suggests that we use it when making social judgements and trying to determine if other people are lying.

Reduced amygdala activity in lovers, Zeki believes, may make them less prone to making negative judgements and distrusting each other, facilitating a sense of intimacy.

3. There are similarities between falling in love and OCD

In experiments at the University of Pisa, Marazziti and colleagues have studied levels of serotonin — a neurotransmitter associated with feelings of contentment — in the brains of people who said they fell in love in the previous six months.

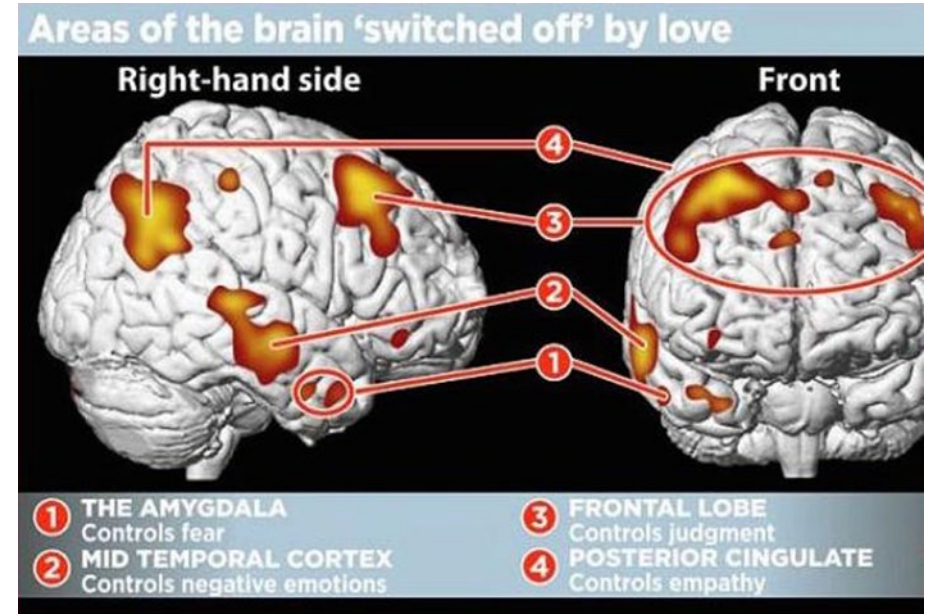
Low serotonin levels may lead to the obsessive, jealous aspects of love

Given that we think of love as a positive emotion, it's a bit surprising that she found reduced levels of serotonin in these people, compared to controls. Even more surprising, though, is that they were as low as other study participants who had obsessive compulsive order — so low, she says, that "my biologists came back to me and assumed that the readings were from people who suffered from OCD."

It's well-established that people who suffer from obsessive compulsive disorder have reduced serotonin levels, likely contributing to extreme feelings of anxiety. When it comes to love, Marazziti writes, a lack of serotonin may lead to the obsessive, irrationally jealous behaviour we see in some people.

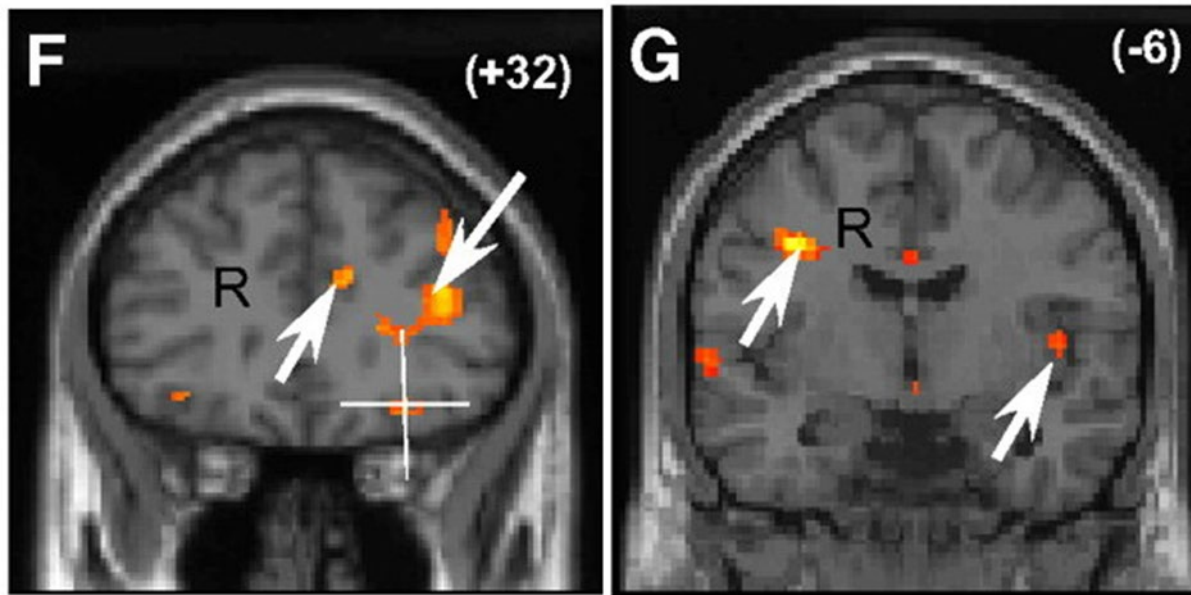
4. Getting rejected is a bit like going through withdrawal

Fisher has also scanned the brains of people who said they were in love with people who'd rejected them. Given that love shares some characteristics with addiction, it might not be a surprise that when they looked at photos of their beloveds, their brains looked like addicts going through withdrawal.



(Samir Zeki)

"When you're rejected in love, we still find activity in the VTA — you're still madly in love with that person, after all," she says. "But we also find elevated activity in other brain regions linked with craving, and in a part of the brain associated with the distress that goes along with physical pain."



Rejected lovers, in other words, appear to retain the same obsessive focus on their object of desire, but are unable to have it fulfilled. One positive aspect of the study, though, was that the more time that had passed since the participants' rejection, the lower activity was in another brain region associated with attachment.

Scans of people rejected in love revealed elevated activity in the anterior cingulate (left arrow in image F) and the insular cortex (right arrow in G), both areas associated with physical pain. (Fisher et. al. 2010)

5. Long-term attachment is neurologically different from early-stage love

Fisher and other researchers distinguish between these successive phases of love for a good reason — in terms of both behaviour and brain activity, they look somewhat different.

Her fMRI studies of couples who'd been happily married for decades found that, when they looked at photos each other, activity increased in brain areas distinct from those identified in the study of new lovers. Activity was elevated in the VTA — just like in new lovers — but also the ventral pallidum, an area associated with maternal attachment in animal studies.

This, Fisher says, may be what's responsible for the long-term, persistent feeling of attachment between people in a committed relationship. "The feeling of attachment is really very different from the feeling of romantic love," she says. "Romantic love is giddiness, elation, euphoria, energy. When you're feeling a deep sense of attachment, you're calmer and more contented."

It's still uncertain why people transition from the first phase of love to the second phase of attachment, but Fisher hypothesizes that they're driven by separate evolutionary mechanisms. The initial flood of obsessive love evolved, she thinks, in order to get you to focus on a single person in order to reproduce. The second phase of attachment, by contrast, evolved to link you to another person for an extended period of time, in order to raise a child.



(Shutterstock.com)



Helen Fisher: the brain in love

Extracted from Dr Fishers excellent Red Talk

https://www.ted.com/talks/helen_fisher_the_brain_in_love

Why do we crave love so much, even to the point that we would die for it? To learn more about our very real, very physical need for romantic love, Helen Fisher and her research team took MRIs of people in love -- and people who had just been dumped.

I and my colleagues Art Aron and Lucy Brown and others, have put 37 people who are madly in love into a functional MRI brain scanner. 17 who were happily in love, 15 who had just been dumped, and we're just starting our third experiment: studying people who report that they're still in love after 10 to 25 years of marriage. So, this is the short story of that research.

In the jungles of Guatemala, in Tikal, stands a temple, Tikal Temple I. It was built by the grandest Sun King, of the grandest city-state, of the grandest civilization of the Americas, the Mayas. His name was Jasaw Chan K'awiil. He stood over six feet tall. He lived into his 80s, and he was buried beneath this monument in 720 AD. And Mayan inscriptions proclaim that he was deeply in love with his wife. So, he built a temple in her honour, facing his. (Tikal Temple II). Every spring and autumn, exactly at the equinox, the sun rises behind his temple, and perfectly bathes her temple with his shadow. As the sun sets behind her temple, it perfectly bathes his temple with her shadow. After 1,300 years, these two lovers still touch and kiss from their tomb.



Tikal Temple I



Tikal Temple II

Around the world, people love. They sing for love, they dance for love, they compose poems and stories about love. They tell myths and legends about love. They pine for love, they live for love, they kill for love, and they die for love. Anthropologists have found evidence of romantic love in 170 societies. They've never found a society that did not have it.

But love isn't always a happy experience. In one study of college students, they asked a lot of questions about love, but the two that stood out to me the most were: "Have you ever been rejected by somebody who you really loved?" And the second question was: "Have you ever dumped somebody who really loved you?" And almost 95 percent of both men and women said yes to both. Almost nobody gets out of love alive.

How many people have suffered in all the millions of years of human evolution? How many people around the world are dancing with elation at this very minute? Romantic love is one of the most powerful sensations on Earth.

So, several years ago, I decided to look into the brain and study this madness. Our first study of people who were happily in love has been widely publicized, so I'm only going to say very little about it. We found activity in a tiny, little factory near the base of the brain called the ventral tegmental area. We found activity in some cells called the A10 cells, cells that actually make dopamine, a natural stimulant, and spray it to many brain regions. Indeed, this part, the VTA, is part of the brain's reward system. It's way below your cognitive thinking process. It's below your emotions. It's part of what we call the reptilian core of the brain, associated with wanting, with motivation, with focus and with craving. In fact, the same brain region where we found activity becomes active also when you feel the rush of cocaine.

But romantic love is much more than a cocaine high - at least you come down from cocaine. Romantic love is an obsession, it possesses you. You lose your sense of self. You can't stop thinking about another human being. Somebody is camping in your head. Wild is love. And the obsession can get worse when you've been rejected.

So, right now, Lucy Brown and I, the neuroscientists on our project, are looking at the data of the people who were put into the machine after they had just been dumped. It was very difficult actually, putting these people in the machine, because they were in such bad shape.

So anyway, we found activity in three brain regions, in exactly the same brain region associated with intense romantic love. What a bad deal. You know, when you've been dumped, the one thing you love to do is just forget about this human being, and then go on with your life - but no, you just love them harder. As the poet Terence, the Roman poet once said, he said, "The less my hope, the hotter my love." And indeed, we now know why. Two thousand years later, we can explain this in the brain. That brain system - the reward system for wanting, for motivation, for craving, for focus -- becomes more active when you can't get what you want. In this case, life's greatest prize: an appropriate mating partner.

We found activity in other brain regions also -- in a brain region associated with calculating gains and losses. You're lying there, you're looking at the picture, and you're in this machine, and you're calculating what went wrong. What have I lost? It's this part of the brain, the core of the nucleus accumbens, that is becoming active as you're measuring your gains and losses. It's also the brain region that becomes active when you're willing to take enormous risks for huge gains and huge losses.

Last but not least, we found activity in a brain region associated with deep attachment to another individual. No wonder people suffer around the world, and we have so many crimes of passion. When you've been rejected in love, not only are you engulfed with feelings of romantic love, but you're feeling deep attachment to this individual. Moreover, this brain circuit for reward is working, and you're feeling intense energy, intense focus, intense motivation and the willingness to risk it all, to win life's greatest prize.

So, what have I learned from this experiment that I would like to tell the world? Foremost, I have come to think that romantic love is a drive, a basic mating drive. Not the sex drive -- the sex drive gets you looking for a whole range of partners. Romantic love enables you to focus your mating energy on just one at a time, conserve your mating energy, and start the mating process with this single individual. I think of all the poetry that I've read about romantic love, what sums it up best is something that is said by Plato over 2,000 years ago. He said, "The god of love lives in a state of need. It is a need, it is an urge, it is a homeostatic imbalance. Like hunger and thirst, it's almost impossible to stamp out." I've also come to believe that romantic love is an addiction: a perfectly wonderful addiction when it's going well, and a perfectly horrible addiction when it's going poorly.

Indeed, it has all of the characteristics of addiction. You focus on the person, you obsessively think about them, you crave them, you distort reality, your willingness to take enormous risks to win this person. And it's got the three main characteristics of addiction: tolerance, you need to see them more, and more, and more; withdrawals; and last: relapse. So, one thing I would like the medical community, and the legal community, and even the college community, to see if they can understand, that indeed, romantic love is one of the most addictive substances on Earth.

I would also like to tell the world that animals love.





There's not an animal on this planet that will copulate with anything that comes along. Too old, too young, too scruffy, too stupid, and they won't do it. Unless you're stuck in a laboratory cage -- and you know, if you spend your entire life in a little box, you're not going to be as picky about who you have sex with, but I've looked in a hundred species, and everywhere in the wild, animals have favourites.

As a matter of fact, ethologists know this. There are over eight words for what they call "animal favouritism:" selective perceptivity, mate choice, female choice, sexual choice. And indeed, there are now three academic articles in which they've looked at this attraction, which may only last for a second, but it's a definite attraction, and either this same brain region, this reward system, or the chemicals of that reward system are involved. In fact, I think animal attraction can be instant -- you can see an elephant instantly go for another elephant.

And I think that this is really the origin of what you and I call "love at first sight."

Our newest experiment has been hatched by my colleague, Art Aron - putting people who are reporting that they are still in love, in a long-term relationship, into the functional MRI. We've found exactly the same thing. They're not lying. The brain areas associated with intense romantic love still become active, 25 years later.

There are still many questions to be answered and asked about romantic love. The question that I'm working on right this minute is, why do you fall in love with one person, rather than another? I never would have even thought to think of this, but Match.com, the Internet dating site, came to me and asked me that question. And so, I've spent the last three years on this. And there are many reasons that you fall in love with one person rather than another, that psychologists can tell you. And we tend to fall in love with somebody from the same socioeconomic background, the same general level of intelligence, of good looks, the same religious values. Your childhood certainly plays a role, but nobody knows how. And that's about it, that's all they know. No, they've never found the way two personalities fit together to make a good relationship.

So, it began to occur to me that maybe your biology pulls you towards some people rather than another. And I have concocted a questionnaire to see to what degree you express dopamine, serotonin, estrogen and testosterone. I think we've evolved four very broad personality types associated with the ratios of these four chemicals in the brain. On this dating site that I have created, called Chemistry.com, I ask you first a series of questions to see to what degree you express these chemicals, and I'm watching who chooses who to love. And 3.7 million people have taken the questionnaire in America. About 600,000 people have taken it in 33 other countries. I'm putting the data together now, and at some point -- there will always be magic to love, but I think I will come closer to understanding why it is you can walk into a room and everybody is from your background, your same general level of intelligence, good looks, and you don't feel pulled towards all of them. I think there's biology to that. I think we're going to end up, in the next few years, to understand all kinds of brain mechanisms that pull us to one person rather than another.

Women tend to get intimacy differently than men do. Women get intimacy from face-to-face talking. We swivel towards each other, we do what we call the "anchoring gaze" and we talk. This is intimacy to women. I think it comes from millions of years of holding that baby in front of your face, cajoling it, reprimanding it, educating it with words.



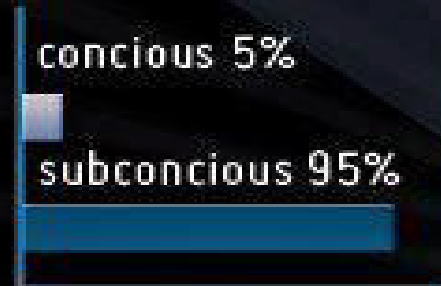
Men tend to get intimacy from side-by-side doing. As soon as one guy looks up, the other guy will look away.

I think it comes from millions of years sitting behind the bush, looking straight ahead, trying to hit that buffalo on the head with a rock. I think, for millions of years, men faced their enemies, they sat side-by-side with friends.

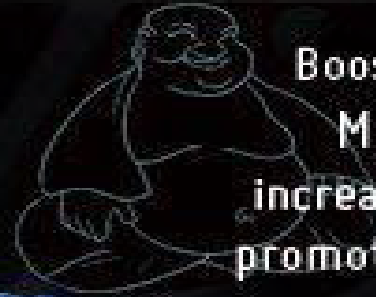
So my final statement is: love is in us. It's deeply embedded in the brain. Our challenge is to understand each other.

THE POWER OF YOUR AMAZING BRAIN

The conscious mind controls our brain only 5% of the day, whereas the subconscious mind has a hold of our thoughts 95% of the time!



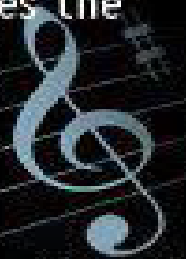
You have 70,000 thoughts per day



Boost your brain power with Meditation, it's proven to increase IQ, relieve stress, and promote higher learning levels.



Listen to Music
Studies have proven that listening to music strengthens the brain and literally changes the structure.



Thoughts Are Real

Your thoughts cause biological and physiological effect - Your body responds to mental input as if it were physically real.

66.66667% FAT

Your brain is two-thirds fat. Myelin, the protective sheath covering your neurons is 70% fat. Eating fatty fish, green leafy vegetables, olive oil, avocados, chia seeds, flax seeds, and nuts, replenish your neurons and brain cells.



Loss of fatty acids EPA and DHA are linked to depression, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's



Coming up in the next section

THE POWER OF YOUR MIND

How to interpret the instruction manual of your mind and unleash your phenomenal power to change your circumstances through an understanding of your levels of consciousness. How thoughts are transferred and attracted and their related influence on the happiness you experience in life.

You have power over your **mind** -
not **outside events**. Realize this,
and you will find strength.

– *Marcus Aurelius*



2 – The Power Of Your Mind

For five thousand years, the wisest men and women of each civilisation and generation have searched for the secrets of human potential. More progress has been made in uncovering the secret in the last one hundred years, than in all the centuries that went before it.



The secret of all human potential, in health, happiness, prosperity and fulfilment is to be found in the human mind.

The workings of the human brain are truly remarkable. If our brain is the hardware, then our minds are the most incredible piece of software you could ever imagine.

For many years now, we have accepted the principles of the conscious and subconscious mind. Prior to the human race arriving this level of acceptance and understanding, I suspect that the concept of conscious and subconscious activity within the brain was simply too incredible for our underdeveloped brains to consider, let alone accept.

Before any new idea or concept is unanimously accepted and embraced as fact, the nature of the human brain is to reject it out of hand as unlikely, improbable or simply untrue.

Fifty years before each life changing new discovery or invention is revealed, the majority of us would not have thought them possible, it was simply beyond our level of comprehension.

If we had been alive in the early 1900's, how many of us would have embraced the possibility of man landing on the moon, or the existence of the internet, let alone what can be achieved with computers? Going back further, how remarkable would the electricity have seemed to those who had previously relied on gas lamps? Advances in technology have been so rapid over recent years, that it is now possible for a surgeon, with the aid of computers and robotics, to perform an operation without actually being in the same country as the patient, let alone in the same room! And yet, we now accept these spectacular advances in human achievement as routine.

If more advances have been made in the last one hundred years, the advances in the last thirty years have been truly phenomenal. This is the information and technology age and the two combined have advanced human potential to a staggering level.

Very little is now beyond the grasp of man.

Many discoveries, inventions and achievements are as a result of commitment and dogged determination, improving on existing prototypes and through what seems to be almost a process of natural development.

Many though, have their origins in a form of inspired “infinite” intelligence that, although cannot yet be explained to the satisfaction of man, nonetheless have their place in history.

Napoleon Hill was one of the most committed researchers in the field of human development. In the early part of the twentieth century, he spent twenty years of his life tracking down and conducting in depth interviews of 504 of the most successful people in the United States. He was commissioned to do this by Andrew Carnegie, who pioneered the American steel industry and was later responsible for the emergence of libraries. Mr Carnegie wanted Hill to discover what traits were shared by each of these men and women, what common factors did each possess that could be collectively responsible for so much success?

Among the people Hill researched were :-

Henry Ford

John D Rockefeller

Thomas Edison

Theodore Roosevelt

George Eastman

Wilbur Wright

F W Woolworth

William Wrigley jr

Alexander Graham Bell

The full list reads like the “Who’s who” of the United States in the early part on the twentieth century.

So what traits-in-common did all these remarkable people possess that contributed to each of their success? Well, the full answer to that can be seen in Hills’ bestseller, “Think and Grow Rich” (which incidentally has very little to do with riches).

For the purposes of this project, and in particular this chapter, the most significant trait that each of them disclosed, was a belief in the existence of a super-conscious mind, a sixth sense. That is, acceptance of the existence of a higher self, a source of intelligent inspiration and communication beyond the constraints of our current traditional thinking.



The worlds’ greatest thinkers and most creative people have acknowledged the infinite power and wonder of the super-conscious mind. Ralph Waldo Emerson, the philosopher and poet called it the “over soul” saying “we lie in the lap of an immense intelligence that answers our every need”, saying that when we receive insights from this source, we recognise them as coming from a place far beyond ourselves and our own limited minds.

Napoleon Hill referred to it as “infinite intelligence,” the universal storehouse of all imagination and creativity. He proposed that the ability to access this storehouse was the significant trait that contributed to the success of the hundreds of people he interviewed through his years of research.

Carl Jung, the Swiss psychoanalyst, rival of the famous Sigmund Freud, called it the supra-conscious mind, declaring that it contained all the wisdom of the human race, past, present and future. Many labels have been attributed to it, the “universal subconscious mind,” “universal mind,” “God-Mind” and the “creative subconscious”.

Whatever it is called, its existence provides the potential for limitless accomplishment.

Understanding of the super-conscious mind is in its infancy, much as the sub conscious mind was one hundred years ago.

Famous examples of practical use of the super-conscious

There are famous examples of the super-conscious mind being the source of true creativity in man.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson confessed that his best works seemed to flow through him as if “writing themselves”. His works remain among the most beautiful and inspirational in the English language.
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart could see and hear the music “appear” in his mind and was able to write it down, note perfect, the first time.
- Many of the famous composers, including Beethoven, Bach and Brahms accessed the super-conscious mind when composing their greatest pieces that have since become timeless.

- Thomas Edison, who was responsible for over 1000 patented inventions, including the electric light bulb and the first phonograph (machine to record sound for the youngsters among you), regularly tapped into his super-conscious mind for the solutions that would lead him to a successful invention.
- Michael Faraday was never trained as a scientist, in fact he started life as an assistant to a book binder. What he did have was a voracious appetite for knowledge and he made appointment of reading the books he bound. One night he awoke with his mind overwhelmed with scientific formulae. Unaware of the significance of the information “being fed” to him, he wrote pages of scientific formula and calculations down on paper. The notes were later examined by a reputed scientist and it was discovered that the work was based on knowledge that had never existed before. The work was to form the basis of the entire electronic age that we now enjoy.
- Nikolai Tesla, considered the greatest electrical genius of his age, constructed electrical motors piece by piece in his mind, was able to take them apart in his mind and reassemble them until they would work perfectly. He could then go into his workshop and build a perfectly working electrical machine or motor that worked first time. Tesla was attributed with the honour of having produced the first electric motor.



The man who is often acknowledged as the greatest thinker of the last century was Albert Einstein. Einstein was a firm believer in the super-conscious mind, the infinite intelligence source that we refer to. The following is extracted from one of his articles, “The World As I See It” :-

The harmony of natural law...reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection.

There is something about the universe -- an elegant order in the way everything fits and unfolds, an inexplicable beauty in its living patterns, and the mysterious depth and expressiveness of it all -- that reminds us of the brilliance we see in the works of great artists, scientists, engineers, and saints.

Some people believe that human intelligence is the pinnacle of natural evolution and can outdo anything nature has to offer -- and that there is no God, and that nature has nothing remotely resembling consciousness or intelligence. Others say that nature's (or God's) brilliance is greater than any human intelligence -- ultimately awesome in its scope and endlessly surprising in its details -- and that human intelligence is a small but elegant expression of this larger intelligence and has much to learn from it.

I find myself in this latter group -- those who sense some kind(s) of universal intelligence. To some degree, this is a matter of faith. To some degree, it seems that the evidence surrounds us.

For those of us who see things this way, I suspect it honours universal intelligence more if we contemplate it, share our sense of it, and tap into it rather than argue about it with others who see things differently.

Across the world, enlightened scientists, eminent philosophers, religious and spiritual wise men and women are acknowledging the presence of a “sixth sense”, an infinite world of intelligence and energy beyond that contained in our individual minds.

Christians see a higher intelligence they call God's plan, or the will of God. Taoists see a higher intelligence they call the Tao, the Way of Nature. Meditative traditions speak of cosmic consciousness. Most indigenous peoples consider all of nature to be intelligent and alive. Scientists speak of natural laws -- and

some are now researching what they call complex, adaptive systems - systems that respond to the world around them, in ways that look a lot like learning. The whole process of evolution is clearly a learning process, a developing of new variations that work better, or work in new environments. Some people see evolution as the dynamic unfolding Great Story of the Living Universe and consciously celebrate and learn from it.

Creativity is not the only tool in the toolbox of the super-conscious. It is also said to be the source of limitless free energy. It is the source of the surges of mental and physical energy that course through you in moments of extreme excitement, desire or even imminent danger.

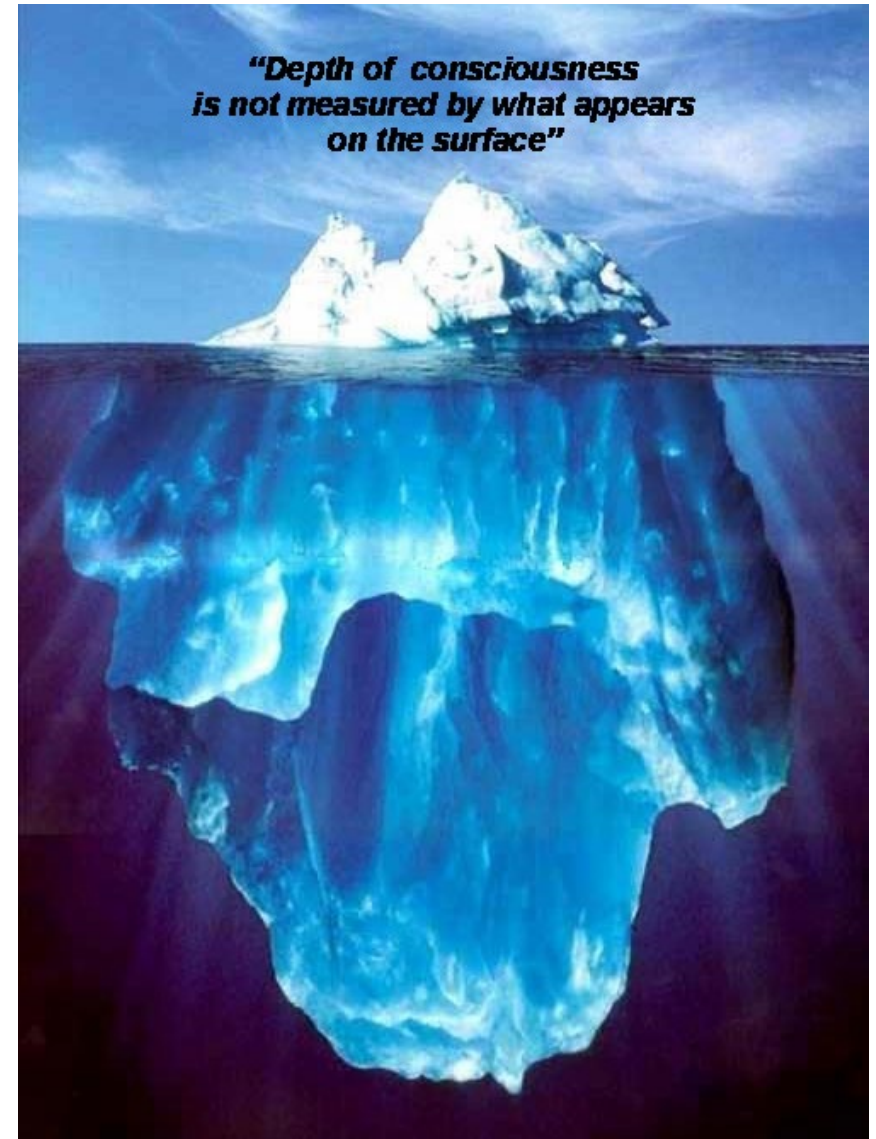
In Florida a number of years ago, a 68 year old grand-mother was working in the kitchen of her home. Her 40 year old son was working under his car which was jacked up. Suddenly, the jack gave way and the car fell onto his chest. He was in imminent danger of being killed. Hearing his cries of pain, she dashed out of the house and acted immediately. Grabbing the front bumper, she lifted the car off her sons' chest, saving his life. Two neighbours witnessed the event. When asked about it later, she denied the event. She had completely deleted the incident from her memory because it was so far beyond what she knew her physical strength would normally allow her to do.

They say a picture paints a thousand words. The largest part of an iceberg is out-of-sight, underwater – only one seventh to one ninth is actually visible above the surface. The largest ones tower as much as 400 feet above the surface of the ocean, with as much as 3000 feet concealed beneath water level.

What has this to do with the mind?

It's a great comparison with the levels of consciousness in our minds. Your conscious mind is represented by the visible element of the iceberg above the water line. Your subconscious mind is represented by the much larger, supportive part below the surface.

But the largest part of our consciousness, as with the iceberg, lies outside of the known, measurable area. The infinity of the sky and space above the iceberg, is representative of the area we know least about, the infinite intelligence of the super-conscious mind.

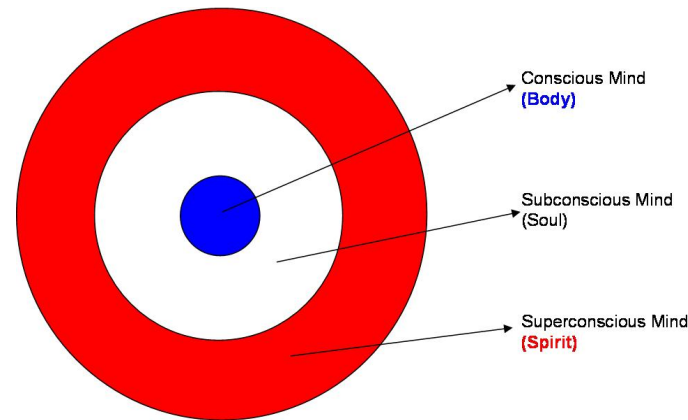


You have three minds

Technically speaking, each of us only has one mind. But this one mind has 3 parts to it: the conscious mind, subconscious mind and super-conscious mind. The first two minds are within us, but the super-conscious mind is 'without'. It is the mind of our extended self.

Conscious mind

Your conscious mind is the only part of your mind that thinks. That's why most people use their conscious mind power to solve problems and to achieve their goals.



However, the conscious mind power is limited, when compared to the subconscious mind power and super-conscious mind power. **The most important conscious mind power is the power to decide.** It has the power to decide what information to enter (and be retained by) your subconscious mind, but most people are not exercising this power. Instead, they let rubbish enter their subconscious mind. Garbage in, garbage out.

Your conscious mind also has the power to reprogram your subconscious mind, mainly through repetition. For instance, remember the first time you learnt to drive a car, when you had to consciously think of which pedal to step and which gear to select? But now, you no longer have to consciously think of these actions. They have become automatic, i.e. you are able to do it subconsciously. Through repetition, you have programmed your subconscious mind. Once it is in your subconscious, it becomes automatic.

While it's true for driving a car, it is also true for achieving success in life.

Subconscious mind



Your subconscious mind is enormously powerful. When you use it properly, it can help you to move more rapidly toward the achievement of your goals and desires than you ever dreamed possible. You can use your subconscious mind for creation or destruction - for good or for evil. You can be a prince or a pauper, depending on the way you operate it. To fulfil your potential, you must learn how to access it at will - and use it for your purposes intelligently and constructively.



We are often convinced that the only way to make money is to work longer hours or even harder at the work. Eventually we learn that the belief that we can only improve our life by longer hours and harder work leads us down a blind alley. The answer is to work smarter - to use more of our mental powers than our physical powers to achieve our goals. Successful people are those who have learned how to operate their conscious and subconscious minds in harmony enabling them to get the things they want far faster and with much less effort. This discovery changes the focus of our efforts and the direction of our entire life.

Your subconscious mind plays many different roles in your life. We can classify its functions into 5 different areas.

1. It maintains and balances the well-being of our body. That's why our body is self-healing in nature. It has the power to heal any form of diseases you can think of. It is the fundamental of all so-called alternative therapies.
2. It protects us and sometimes our love ones, from emergencies or dangers.
3. It is the mega-memory bank. It stores all our past experiences.
4. It is like a magnet. It has the power to attract things that resonate with its beliefs.
5. It is like radar. It sends and receives information to and from the super-conscious mind. This is the function that we are going to discuss further in a moment

Your sub-conscious mind contains everything you have ever received into your mind by way of the senses, every smell, every taste, every feeling, everything you have ever seen, done, heard and thought. There are some that even declare that your sub conscious contains memories of sensations and experiences that occurred before you were born into this world. Under hypnosis, patients have been able to remember events and feelings from earliest childhood, memories that their conscious power of recall would not permit to surface.

Super-conscious mind

Napoleon Hill called it the **Infinite Intelligence**. Scientists including Carl Jung called it the **Universal Mind**. Some books or metaphysics gurus sum everything up as the **Unconscious Mind**. The term **Super-conscious Mind** is widely used by Brian Tracy, and I prefer to use this description.

What's important is what it can do for you.

- There is only one super-conscious mind (the **Universal Mind**), to which all of our minds are connected.
- It helps you to make good decisions, since it has **Infinite Intelligence**. It has all the answers you want to every question imaginable.
- It is the source of all true invention and creativity. Great inventors like Thomas Edison and Albert Einstein mastered the technique of receiving great ideas from the super-conscious mind. Where else you think they get all their innovative ideas from?
- It helps you achieve your goals. This is the function that I will talk more in a later chapter.

The superconscious mind is like a mega computer that orchestrates the activities in every little computer connected to it. By impressing your goal upon your subconscious mind, your super-conscious responds accordingly. The energy vibrations you create ensure that the right people will start appearing in your life, opportunities will come and lessons will be provided to strengthen you if necessary. Everything will be set in motion to help you achieve your desire. Once you truly understand the concept of super-conscious mind power, you will realize that success is no longer a matter of luck.

The proper mental approach

Your super-conscious mind operates most effectively when you apply a mental attitude of faith and acceptance. Confidently expecting that your problems will be solved, obstacles removed, and your goals achieved, is the mental approach that intensifies the rate of the energy vibration of your thought and causes your super-conscious mind to function at its optimum level for you.

It is only when you are completely relaxed about the intended outcome of a given situation that matters will begin to resolve themselves. Expect the unexpected. The outcome, however, will always be everything that you ask for, and sometimes it will exceed your expectations. Strangely though, it seems that the simpler the instructions you give it and the harder you "don't try," the more effectively your super-conscious mind works in bringing you the things you desire.

Faith

Napoleon Hill called faith, the “chemist of the mind”. When faith is blended with thought, the subconscious mind received the vibration, transforming it into its spiritual equivalent, and transmits it to the infinite intelligence of the super-conscious mind.

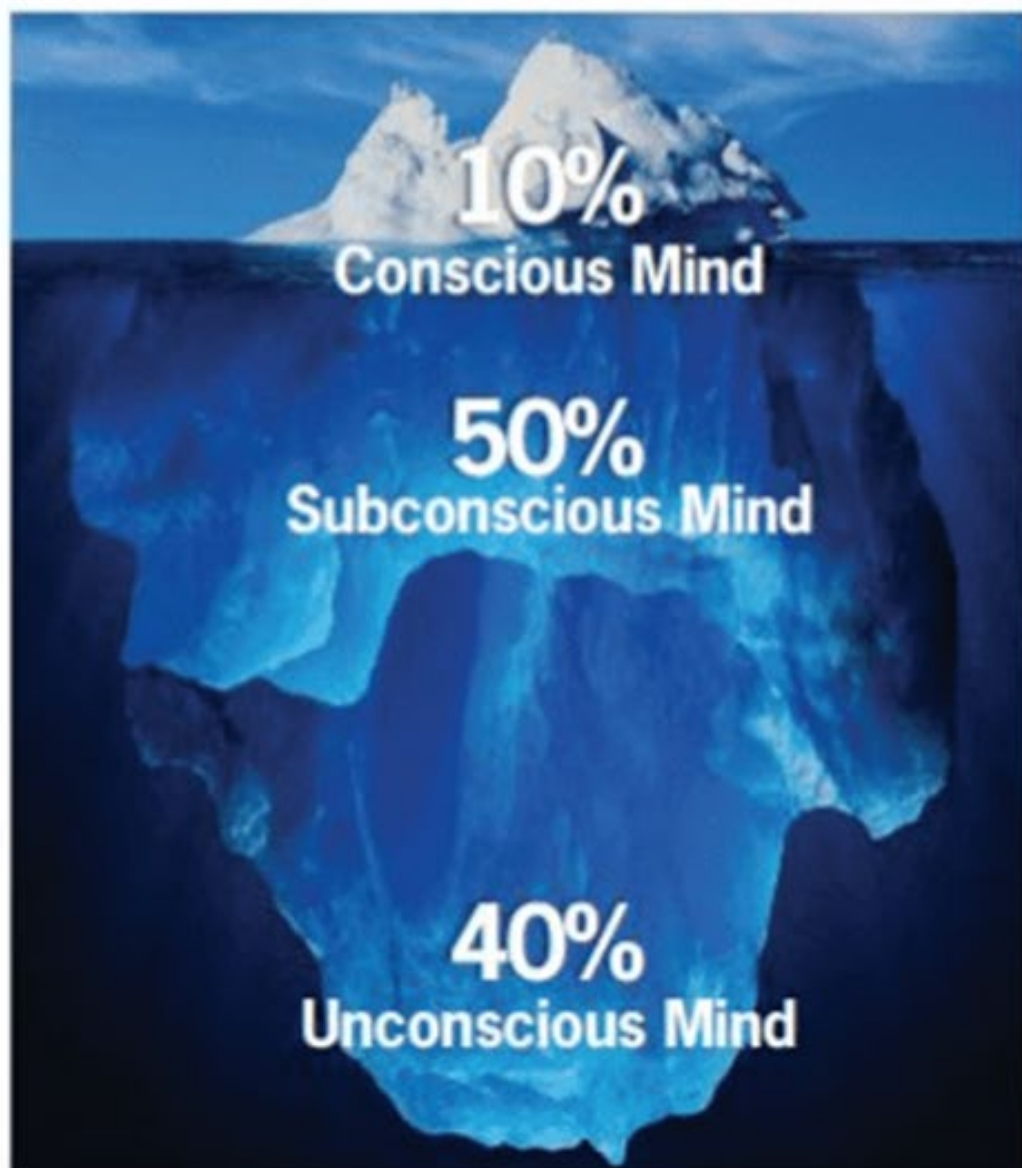


When faith, love, desire and thoughts are directed toward the super-conscious mind they are the most powerful combination known to man. With faith in the process, and in the ultimate power of the mind mixed with love and directed thought, anything is possible. Without faith, we are at the mercy of weakened desire and misdirected thought.

All great men and women are people of faith. They develop the almost childlike ability to entrust themselves to the goodness of the universe, with the simple faith that everything will unfold as it should, in its own time. They have an attitude of calmness and confidence and a belief that there is a power greater than themselves that is helping them. All strains of negativity, anger, worry or impatience shuts down your super-conscious mind, diminishing your powers. It confuses the messages you are sending from your conscious to your subconscious mind. Destructive emotions of any kind interfere with the calm, positive attitude your super-conscious requires for optimal functioning.

The Human Mind *and* How It Works

The mind is like an Iceberg with positive and negative thoughts, memories and beliefs.



Conscious Mind Controls:

- Always available & accessible information
- Willpower
- Decision Making
- Thinking Logically

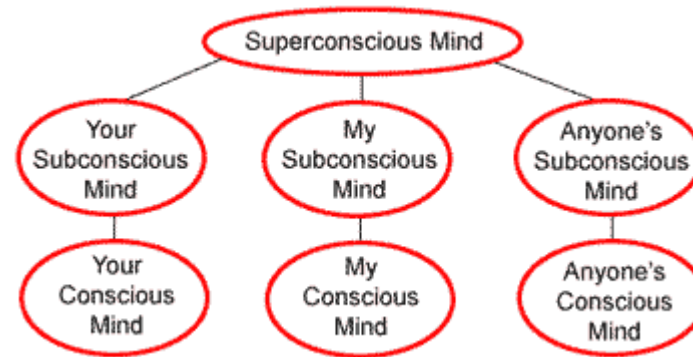
Subconscious Mind Controls:

- Data you have to dig to access
- Reoccurring thoughts
- Behaviors, habits & feelings
- Recent memories

Unconscious Mind Controls:

- Memories, Beliefs & Habits from age 0 - 7
- Traumatic Stored Events
- Phobias & Addictions
- Information that's kept hidden, locked & resists change
- Overriding information stored in other two areas
- You & Your Life

The relationship between the conscious, subconscious and super-conscious mind looks something like this.



Your conscious mind is connected to your subconscious mind, which in turn is connected to the super-conscious mind. Same goes for my mind as well as anyone's mind.

From the diagram, you can see that we are all connected at the super-conscious level, through our individual's subconscious mind. The conscious mind is not connected directly to the super-conscious mind. **We rely on our subconscious mind to send and receive information to and from the super-conscious, infinite intelligence and energy source.**

The experience you need

The super-conscious mind is the source of all life, knowledge, creativity and energy. It therefore knows, when you ask something of it, if you are properly prepared and fully ready to receive it. The super-conscious mind cannot send you your hearts' desire, unless and until you are properly prepared to receive it. You cannot skip rungs of the ladder your super-conscious mind will step in and send you the experiences you need to ensure you are in the full state of readiness.

An example of this are lottery winners. So many that come into instant fortunes, or unexpectedly inherit wealth are not adequately prepared for it and lose it almost as quickly as they acquired it, hence the saying "Easy come, Easy Go".

This is a very important point. If you receive anything before you have prepared yourself mentally to receive it, and how responsibly you will deal with whatever comes your way, then you will not be able to hold onto it. Fortunes have been lost as a result of the recipient being mentally, spiritually, emotionally or physically unprepared or unready to deal responsibly with it. I speak from personal experience on this point.

However, if you prepare yourself gradually, growing and maturing as a person internally as you increase your capacity to produce externally, when you finally reach the stage in life you were want to be, as a result of money, vibrant health, the true love of your life, a successful business or career, or a healthier attitude, then and only then, will you be equipped to hold onto it indefinitely.

One step beyond

Almost all the great successes and happiness in life, the greatest loves, the greatest achievements, the most significant discoveries, is to be found “One Step Beyond” what you might consider to be your greatest failure in that area. Almost all of the great men interviewed by Napoleon Hill confirmed that it was when every outward sign suggested they should give up that they were the closest to actually acquiring what they desired. Faith and persistence will prevail.

It is almost as if your super-conscious mind is giving you one last test, to check that your level of desire is “white hot”, that this is really what you want.



Almost everything worthwhile that you have accomplished in life will have been preceded by difficulties, disappointment and temporary failure. There is no such thing as failure, there are only results. You may want better results and that’s ok, but a result only becomes a failure when you finally stop trying and give up when there remains an opportunity to succeed.

We could all learn lessons in patience from the super-conscious mind. Where we are anxious to “have it now”, the super conscious mind will not allow it until we are truly ready. If all of the lessons that must be learned along the way have not been learned, if all of the experiences that must be gained have not been gained, the super-conscious mind will send you back over the lesson until you finally get it. Whether it relates to money, love, relationships, business or health, in fact any area of life, your super-conscious mind will only allow you to proceed when it knows you are truly ready.

Creative visualisation is a tremendously effective way of accessing the super-conscious mind, and brings into play, elements of every chapter you will have read in this project. I will not try to kid you, the process although simple, cannot be short circuited. The Law of Attraction comes into play here, the quality of what you put into something will have a direct effect on the quality of what you receive in return. Once again, garbage in = garbage out.



As your conscious mind impresses your desire upon your subconscious mind, your subconscious mind will impress it upon the super-conscious mind which will then conspire to make it happen. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Once you make a decision, the universe conspires to make it happen".

Defragment your mind

Fragmentation: the process or state of breaking or being broken into fragments.

Defragment: to reduce the fragmentation of a file by concatenating (linking) parts stored in separate locations on a disk

In terms of the way it stores and recalls information, the human mind is often compared to the hard disk of a computer. Allow me to explain by way of illustration.

In the world of the computer, when programs and files are added to its hard drive, files become fragmented when the data is written to disk and there is not enough contiguous space to hold the complete file. Storage algorithms on the computer break the data apart into chunks so that it will fit into the available space on the drive. You may even be familiar with 'defragging' your computer to improve its performance.

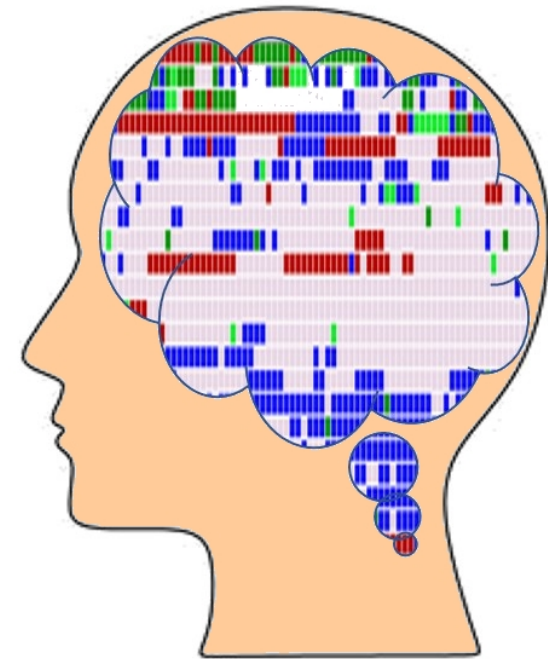
Defragmentation moves the data blocks on the hard drive around to bring all the parts of a file together. Defragmentation reduces file system fragmentation, increasing the efficiency of data retrieval and thereby improving the overall performance of a computer. At the same time, it cleans the storage and provides additional storage capacity. www.techopedia.com

Similarly, in the brain, our brain stores every piece of sensory data we receive in what we see, hear, feel, taste, smell and experience, forming memories. We get loads of fragmented data because of all the sensory inputs the brain receives every second, and because of the massive shifts in emotions we feel on a daily basis. This makes your brain feel full, slows your processing and recall speed down.

In computing, the defragmentation process increases the efficiency and retrieval of files and data.

In the world of the human mind, with all of our ideas, decisions and emotions, we can also 'defrag', and improve our efficiency of recall of all the sensory information we have stored and here's how:

1. Use a notebook, or anything else you will write in and keep for reference.
2. Set a timer for 30 minutes.
3. Make sure that you will not be interrupted. Turn off your phone, your TV, your computer.
4. Perhaps even set the mood by lighting a candle, burning incense and playing soft music in the background. Silence is also fine.
5. Start writing and no matter what you do, do not stop writing until the time is up.
6. Write out whatever is on your mind - and keep writing as you think.



7. In the beginning, you may not know what to write so simply write – “I do not know what to write”. You may write this out a few times but at some point, you will start to write at the same speed as you are thinking.
8. Once you have completed the time, read through what you have written. The majority of what is on your page might mean nothing, however, there will be important learnings that stand out – use a different colour pen to circle or highlight those.
9. Write down the top 3 to 5 learnings. If they are actionable, you might even have written the solutions. Take note – and act!
10. Do this every 3 to 6 months.

Your Mind – The Human ‘Hard Drive’

The capacity to remember the past is an integral part of human existence. Without it, you would not be able to drive to work, hold a meaningful conversation with your family, read a book or prepare a meal. Understanding what memory is and how it works is a fundamental goal of modern neuroscience.

Many thousands of years before the advent of computers, Plato famously compared our memory to one of its predecessors, a wax tablet that is blank at birth and slowly takes on the impression of the events from our life. Only in the past hundred years have psychologists developed techniques to study our recollections of the past. What is clear is that the human memory is a lot more complicated than Plato had imagined.

The human brain and the mind within it are the most complicated yet incredible objects in the known universe. How the brain and mind function together is a fascinating area of neuroscience filling many books on the subject so we will not delve too deeply here. That’s for later chapters in a later book.

A baby’s brain development is a complex process that continues throughout pregnancy. At just six weeks, the embryo’s brain and nervous system begin to develop, although the complex parts of the brain continue to grow and develop through the end of pregnancy, with development ending around the age of 25.

The brain begins with the neural tube, formed in the first month of the embryo’s growth. The neural tube closes around week 6 or 7, at which point the brain separates into three parts: front brain, midbrain, and hindbrain. These three parts will eventually develop into the specialized parts of the brain, and the cerebrum will fold into the left and right halves of the brain.

From the time the neural tube closes, around week 7, the brain will grow at a rate of 250,000 neurons per minute for the next 21 weeks. Ultrasounds can reveal the embryo moving as early as 6 weeks after conception (or 8 pregnancy weeks), detecting the electrical impulses that govern movement and indicating that the brain is beginning to function. The 1st trimester lasts from the moment of conception and up to 13 weeks. During the first trimester, the brain develops rapidly and makes up nearly half of the fetus’s weight. For comparison, by the time a baby is born, the brain is only 10 percent of their body weight. In the first trimester, the brain will grow millions of neurons, which connect across synapses to direct movement and growth.

The communication between neurons is what helps the fetus learn to move, although during the first trimester mother probably won’t feel any movement. In the second trimester, the fetal brain begins to direct the contraction of the chest muscles and movement of the diaphragm. These are kind of like practice breaths and are controlled by the brain stem. Sucking and swallowing begin around week 16, and by week 21, the fetus can swallow amniotic fluid.

During the second trimester, the fetus is still testing out movements, kicking and stretching. At some point between week 16 and week 20, the fetus should be large enough that mom can feel the baby kick. These movements are directed by the cerebellum. At this point, the fetus develops the full range of specific fetal movements. In the second trimester, the fetal brain begins to direct the compression of the chest muscles and movement of the diaphragm. These are kind of like practice breaths and are controlled by the brain stem.

The fetal brain stem is almost entirely developed by the end of the second trimester. This part of the brain is located just above the spinal cord. The nervous system has developed enough to detect loud noises from outside — mom may feel the baby startle when there's a loud clap of thunder or a car honking. The baby will start to identify the sound of mom's voice and may turn its head up toward the sound. Finally, the brainwaves that occur during sleep, controlled by the hypothalamus, begin occurring around week 28. Baby will begin experiencing sleep cycles, including REM sleep, the stage where dreaming occurs.

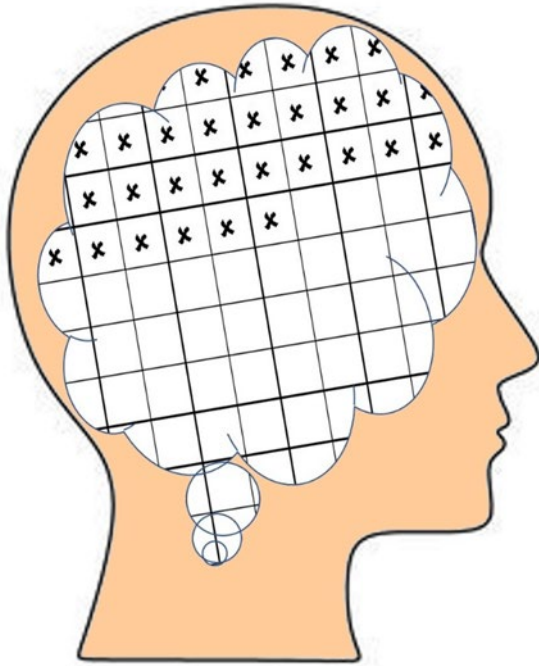
The third trimester

Brain development in the third trimester is marked by the rapid development of neurons in the brain and explosive growth. The baby's brain will triple in size during this time, growing from a little over 3 ounces to almost 11 ounces at birth. The cerebrum will begin to develop grooves and ridges and separate into the left brain and right brain. The cerebellum is the fastest-growing part of the brain in the third trimester. This is the part responsible for motor control, so baby will begin to move more, wiggling fingers and toes, stretching, and kicking.

Brain development in the third trimester is marked by the rapid development of neurons in the brain and explosive growth. Your baby's brain will triple in size during this time, growing from a little over 3 ounces to almost 11 ounces at birth. The baby is large enough that mother will notice quite a bit of movement, some of which may be a little uncomfortable. In addition, the fetal sensory system shows integration and functionality during this period.

The baby's brain will grow five main parts, each responsible for a different aspect of directing the body and (eventually) the mind and decision making:

1. The cerebrum is responsible for thinking, feeling, and memory. It's the largest part of the brain and contains the cerebral cortex and the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain.
2. The cerebellum is responsible for directing the body's motor control, from moving arms and legs to the fine motor skills of pinching and grasping.
3. The brain stem controls the vital functions that keep the body alive. These are mainly involuntary systems like heartbeat, blood pressure, and breathing. It also controls the digestive process, although hunger cues come from elsewhere.
4. The pituitary gland is in charge of releasing most of the hormones in the body that direct the metabolism, ovulation, growth, and more.
5. The hypothalamus regulates body temperature, hunger and thirst cues, sleep, and emotions.



From the earliest evolution of a baby's brain, it is adding sensory experiences to the hard drive of its mind. Everything it senses, feels, hears, tastes, experiences will start filling up the storage cells with memories.

DID YOU KNOW? Touch is the first sense to develop. The developing foetus responds to touch of the lips and cheeks by 8 weeks and to other parts of its body at 14 weeks. The sense of taste may develop by 12 weeks and that of sound at 22-24 weeks. (Reference: Hepper, P., "Unravelling our beginnings", *The Psychologist*, 18:474-477, 2005.)

A child's brain is a magnificent engine for learning. A child learns to crawl, walk, run and explore. A child learns to reason, pay attention, to remember, but nowhere is learning more dramatic than in the way a child learns language. As children, we acquire language -- the hallmark of being human. Every one of these experiences and memories fill boxes in the storage cells of the mind.

In nearly all adults, the language centre of the brain resides in the left hemisphere, but in children the brain is less specialized. Until babies become about a year old, they respond to language with their entire brains, but then, gradually, language shifts to the left hemisphere, driven by the acquisition of language itself.

When examining the adolescent brain we find mystery, complexity, frustration, and inspiration. As the brain begins teeming with hormones, the prefrontal cortex, the centre of reasoning and impulse control, is still a work in progress. For the first time, scientists can offer an explanation for what parents already know - adolescence is a time of churning emotions, and poor judgment. Why do teenagers have distinct needs and

behaviours? Why, for example, do school students have such a hard time waking up in the morning? Scientists have just begun to answer questions about the purpose of sleep as it relates to the sleep patterns of teenagers.

The latest discoveries in neuroscience present a new view of how the brain ages. Overturning decades of dogma, scientists recently discovered that even into our seventies, our brains continue producing new neurons. Scientists no longer hold the longstanding belief that we lose vast numbers of brain cells as we grow older. The normal aging process leaves most mental functions intact and may even provide the brain with unique advantages that form the basis for wisdom. The aging brain is also far more resilient than was previously believed.

Can the brain run out of storage space?

As the storage cells of our mind fill up, it is not uncommon to experience mental overwhelm until sleep and rest perform the miracle of defragmentation. This explains how confusion becomes clarity as our brains sort and resort the experiences and memories we collect. The good news is that there seems to be no limit to the knowledge that can fit into a brain. As far as scientists have discovered, no one has ever run out of storage space. However, whilst brain cells do not wither, cognitive skills slow down when a brain is so full that it takes longer to recall and sift through, like an overused computer hard drive.



Coming up in the next section

THE POWER OF ENERGY

Realising the importance of the role that energy plays in attracting more happiness into your life. Through examples you will learn how thought energy is scientifically recognised throughout the modern world as a powerful means of attracting more of the happiness you want.

THE POWER OF ENERGY



3 – The Power of Energy

When I started studying the power of thought almost twenty years ago, I really wanted to believe what I was reading. Was it really possible that our thoughts were this powerful? That they consisted of vibrating electrical energy that attracted like thoughts and circumstances into our lives? Back then, there was little, if any scientific support for the words written by so many eminently wise, respected and famous people.

I remember reading James Allens' "As a man thinketh", written at the turn of the twentieth century. As I read, I found myself spiritually believing, but if I am honest, intellectually doubting. I read phrases like :-

- *"A man is literally what he thinks"*
- *"All that you accomplish or fail to accomplish with your life is the direct result of your thoughts".*
- *"Our life is what our thoughts make it. A man will find that as he alters his thoughts toward things and other people, things and other people will alter towards him".*
- *"You are today where your thoughts have brought you; you will be tomorrow where your thoughts take you".*

James Allen 1864-1912, British-born American Essayist, Author of "As a Man Thinketh"

The concept that a thought was electrical energy, that mixed with emotion, was a powerful force of attraction and influence, was beyond my simple logical brain.

So, I kept my thoughts and spiritual beliefs to myself, until I could locate enough strong scientific evidence to support them. Thankfully, human intelligence has moved on in leaps and bounds in recent years, and the evidence now exists that supports what the wise philosophers were saying all along. This chapter presents a selection of that evidence for you to make up your own mind.

The Energy Around Us

We've all noticed how the energy of an entire room can change whenever certain people enter it. Gemma lifts up your mood with her upbeat attitude and makes you feel good all day. Gordon on the other hand, may make you feel like running for the emergency exit.

Each and every one of us brings energy to our co-workers, loved ones, and even the stranger in line behind us at the supermarket or cashpoint. It would serve us all well to realise that the energy we radiate affects others' lives, and we need to be responsible for it.

The following are ways to recognise what we're putting out there, how to deal with people who don't, and why it's so important:

Vibrate Responsibly

Ask yourself this question: "Are you taking responsibility for the energy you're bringing to others?" If you've had a tough day, does *everybody* hear about it from you? Does everyone *know* how rotten and unfair you think your life is? When you come home from work, school, or wherever, does your family immediately sense whether you've had a good day or a bad one? (Believe me, they do... They can feel your energy.)

We live on a vibrational planet, and everything on the planet vibrates, including people. We either put out a high vibration or a low vibration. A high vibration results from feelings of happiness, love, respect, and positivity. A low vibration comes from the emotions of anger, depression, stress, and negativity. When you come home to your family or go to work each day, recognise how your vibration affects and influences the degree of joy or sadness in other people's lives. Step back and check yourself: What type of energy are you carrying from place to place, person to person? Is it going to enhance another's well-being or deteriorate it?

If you radiate a positive, high vibration, and someone comes into contact with you who is radiating a negative, low vibration, you have a choice. The choice is either to 1. maintain your alignment with that positive vibration by politely excusing yourself from them or staying and deciding not to attach to their petty dramas, or 2. lower yourself to the other person's negative vibration, letting their drama change your mood for the worse. For those times when you encounter particular individuals who, without fail, push your buttons, no matter how hard you try to remain centred, remember that when you start getting all worked up, those people are teaching you how to find peace. They are testing you. You can pass the test by learning to be peaceful as an alternative to anger or frustration - accepting that they are who they are, and it is what it is - to keep you on the right track.

Join the Club

Have you ever noticed how certain people gravitate toward each other? In social and work circles they are often called "cliques." For instance, if you look closely enough, you'll tend to see that people who are always complaining about something seem to be friends with other complainers. Those who are rather judgmental usually hang out with people who also hold critical views. Consequently, folks who like to laugh and just have fun normally get together with others who have similar interests and share their sense of humour. To put it another way, animal rights organisations don't attract members that enjoy hunting, and hunting clubs don't attract vegetarians. However, angry people do attract other angry people, and happy people do attract other happy people. Individuals who are on the same vibrational level are magnets to one another.

Therefore, be the type of person you would like to attract to yourself. Be the kind of person you'd like to have as a friend. Take a moment and look around you. What clubs have you joined?

The Ripple or 'Butterfly' Effect

Let's look at the big picture. When we contribute to a shift in another person's energy, either positively or negatively, it actually affects humanity on a much larger scale. The concept referred to as the butterfly effect has been embraced by popular culture, where the term is often used to emphasize the outsize significance of minute occurrences. In the 1990 movie Havana, Robert Redford, played the role of Jack Weil, a gambler with a knack for mathematics and proclaims to his co-star, Lena Olin, that "a butterfly can flutter its wings over a flower in China and cause a hurricane in the Caribbean."

The Butterfly 'Ripple' Effect



When you "throw out" that one smile or helping hand to someone who needs it, you spark a ripple effect. Creating change in a person's energy toward the positive raises their vibration. In turn, they will then affect whomever they come into contact with, and so the effect multiplies.

Conversely, one rude comment can spark the ripple effect in a very negative way. Who knows just how many people could end up shifting into a lower vibration because of something you said or did without even thinking about the consequences?

Everything we say and do does matter. We have a lot more power than most of us realise.

So, let's choose to be more self-aware and really stop and think about our words, our actions, and our attitudes before we combine our energies with the energies of others. Are we communicating things that are really meaningful and necessary? Do our words and behaviours build people up or tear them down? Let's be thoughtful and considerate of the lives of those around us and bring the positive energy to each other that we all truly deserve.

The Evidence



Physically, we are all energy, and everything within and around us is made up of energy. We are all part of one great energy field. Things that we perceive to be solid and separate are in reality just various forms of our essential energy which is common to all. We are all one, even in a literal, physical sense.

The energy is vibrating at different rates of speed, and thus has different qualities, from finer to denser. Thought is a relatively fine, light form of energy and therefore very quick and easy to change. Matter is relatively dense, compact energy, and therefore slower to move and change. Within matter there is great variation as well. Living flesh is relatively fine, changes quickly, and is easily affected by many things. A rock is a much denser form, slower to change, and more difficult to affect. Yet even rock is eventually changed and affected by the fine, light energy of water, for example. All forms of energy are interrelated and can affect one another.

Energy Is Magnetic



One law of energy is this: Energy of a certain quality or vibration tends to attract energy of a similar quality and vibration.

Your thoughts are a form of energy that vibrate at a speed determined by the emotional intensity that accompany them.

Thoughts and feelings have their own magnetic energy that attracts energy of a similar nature. We can see this principle at work, for instance, when we "accidentally" run into someone we've just been thinking of, or "happen" to pick up a book that contains exactly the perfect information we need at that moment.

Form Follows Idea

Thought is a quick, light, mobile form of energy. It manifests instantaneously, unlike the denser forms such as matter.

When we create something, we always create it first in thought form. A thought or idea always precedes manifestation. "I think I'll make dinner" is the idea that precedes creation of a meal. "I want a new dress," precedes going and buying one; "I need a job" precedes finding one, and so on.

An artist first has an idea or inspiration, then creates a painting. A builder first has a design, then builds a house.

The idea is like a blueprint; it creates an image of the form, which then magnetizes and guides the physical energy to flow into that form, and eventually manifests it on the physical plane.

The same principle holds true even if we do not take direct physical action to manifest our ideas. Simply having an idea or thought, holding it in your mind, is an energy that will tend to attract and create that form on the material plane. If you constantly think of illness, you may eventually become ill; if you believe yourself to be beautiful, you become so. Unconscious ideas and feelings held inside of us operate in the same way.

The Law of Radiation and Attraction

This is the principle that whatever you put out into the universe will be reflected back to you. "As you sow, so shall you reap." What this means from a practical standpoint is that we always attract into our lives whatever we think about the most, believe in most strongly, expect on the deepest levels, and/or imagine most vividly.

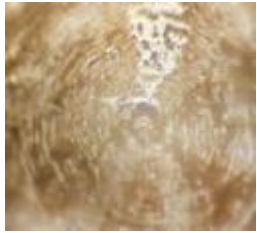


When we are negative and fearful, insecure or anxious, we often attract the very experiences, situations, or people that we are seeking to avoid. Your friends, your family, your relationships, your job, your problems and your opportunities have all been attracted to you because of your habitual way of thinking in each area.

Water Molecules

Masaru Emoto, from Japan, has photographed, with a high powered microscope, the crystalline structure of water from pristine mountain streams and springs and found that they form beautiful geometric designs in their crystalline patterns. Polluted and toxic water from industrial and populated areas show distorted and randomly formed crystalline structures.

Emoto then went on to experiment with the effect that words would have upon the structure of water and found that positive words make beautiful crystalline structures in water molecules, like the pristine mountain stream water. However, heavy rock music, destructive thoughts and feelings such as hate, anger, worry, frustration and fear make the water molecules look cloudy and dirty, with very little structure.



1. Distilled Water



2. Appreciation



3. You make me sick

1. A randomly selected sample of distilled water
2. Water crystals formed in the presence of the words “Love and Appreciation”
3. Water crystals formed in the presence of words “You make me sick, I want to kill you”.

If the differing vibrating energy frequencies of words can have this dramatic effect on water, imagine the impact on your life, (the human body is 75% water), of purposefully directed doses of appreciative vibration. This research is documented in Masaru Emoto’s book “*The Hidden Messages in Water*” Negative thoughts and feelings also cause energy blockages in our meridians and chakras, this can cause disease in the human body. It is only when we realise that all things at their source are energy, and that all things, **INCLUDING THOUGHT ENERGY**, can interact with each other at that level, that such a phenomenon can make sense to us.

Have you ever felt miserable, then entered a room full of joyous vibrant people and found your energy and spirits uplifted by the atmosphere? Up to 60% of the human adult body is water. According to H.H. Mitchell, Journal of Biological Chemistry, the brain and heart are composed of 73% water, and the lungs are about 83% water. Little wonder then how our energy is influenced by the positive (and negative) energy of others.

Head – Heart Entrainment

Nowhere is the incredible energy power of appreciation more noticeable than through our most basic of functions, the beating of our hearts and the workings of our brains. In the research experiments that follow, the impact of the energy of appreciation is unmistakable.

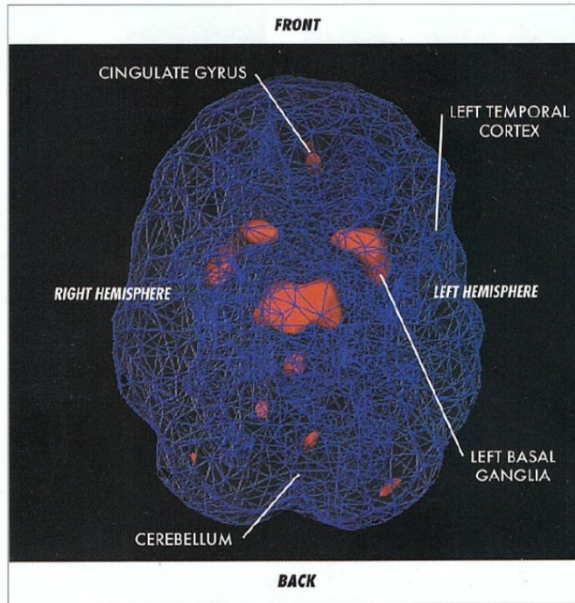
Entrainment is the process whereby one frequency of vibration aligns with or matches another.

A chaotic, disordered heart rhythm can result from feeling negative energy emotions such as anger, fear and jealousy. This can cause a physical chain reaction, with blood vessels contracting, blood pressure rising and increasing the possibility of heart disease and stroke. Harmonious heart rhythms support good cardiovascular health, enhancing the immune system and improving hormonal balance. Harmonious rhythms of energy have been identified when we are experiencing loving, appreciative feelings.

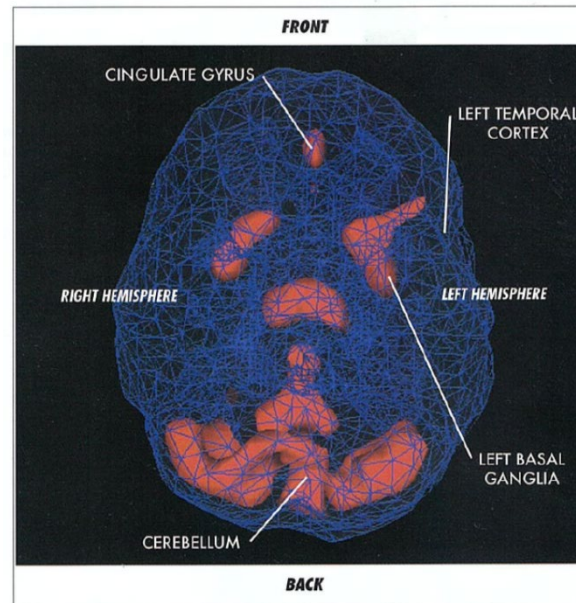
In his book, “Healing the Hardware of the Soul”, Dr Daniel Amen studied the brain differences between sadness and happiness, which was reported in the American Journal of Psychiatry in 1995. Dr Amen, a psychiatrist and neuroscientist, demonstrated how our thoughts and feelings impact directly upon our

brains capacity to function. Using a neuro-imaging technique called the SPECT scan, he was able to identify the connection with blood flow to the brain and behavioural patterns.

Your Brain on Negativity



Your Brain on Appreciation



The two figures illustrate images of :-

- (1) blood flow to the brain when experiencing negative thoughts and feelings, and
- (2) blood flow to the brain when experiencing appreciative thoughts and feelings

Negative Thoughts. Reduced blood flow to the brain. The cerebellum controls integrated movement in severely impaired. The left temporal lobe, containing the Basal Ganglia, doesn't receive enough blood flow and results in anxiety, fear and emotional instability. More vulnerable to jumbled thought, disrupted memory, rage, dark thoughts, anger, frustration, distress and destructive behaviour.

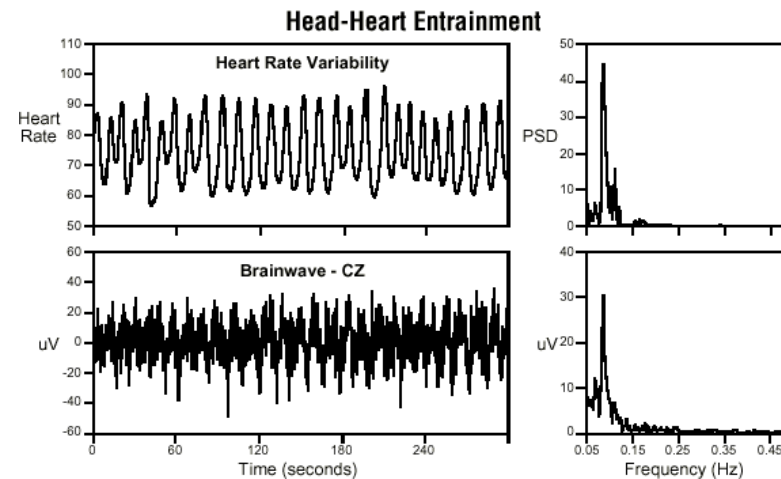
Appreciative Thoughts. Increased blood flow to the brain. In particular to the Cerebellum for co-ordinated movement and Basal Ganglia to increase adaptability. Thoughts become more clearly focused, memory is intact. Less susceptible to the negative emotions listed above.

Entrainment explains phenomena that might otherwise seem baffling. When you walk into a room of depressed people, their negative thought energy has its impact of resonance in your brain and sure enough, after a while, you're depressed. Conversely, when you walk into a room of happy, joyous people, you feel happier. This is entrainment in action.

A roomful of people have a collective vibration that will generally be stronger than your individual frequency of vibration, so your vibration becomes entrained to theirs, pulling you toward a vibration of sadness or cheerfulness, unless you actively resist it.

The benefits of the energy of appreciative loving thoughts should be clear to see.

In the figures below, research illustrated 'peak' points at which heart rhythms and brain waves synchronise, or harmonise while experiencing sincere appreciation. At this stage of harmony, the heart and brain are at their calmest and most powerfully effective.



Illustrates the entrainment that can occur between the HRV and EEG waveforms. The left hand graphs show the time domain signals for the HRV and the EEG (brainwaves), while the right hand panels show the frequency spectra during the entrained state. Note the large peak at the entrainment frequency (~0.12 Hz) in both the HRV and the EEG while the subject is in the entrained state.

Key findings: As people learn to sustain heart-focused positive feeling states, the brain can be brought into entrainment with the heart.

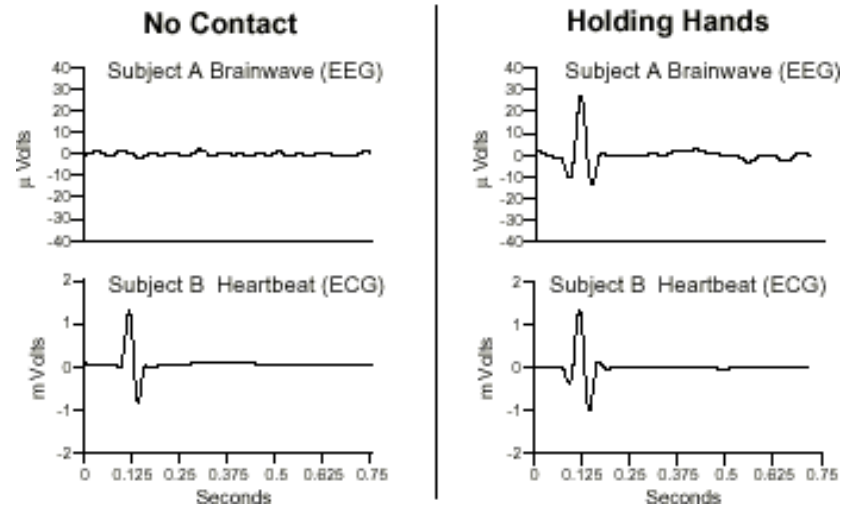
The concept of an energy exchange between individuals is central to many healing techniques. This concept has often been disputed by Western science due to the lack of a plausible mechanism to explain the nature of this energy or how it could affect or facilitate the healing process. The fact that the heart generates the strongest electromagnetic field produced by the body, and this field becomes measurably more coherent as the individual shifts to a sincerely loving or caring state, prompted the investigation of the possibility that the field generated by the heart may significantly contribute to this energy exchange.

These diagrams on this and the previous pages were taken from a study performed by the Institute of Heartmath in California, presenting a sampling of results which provide intriguing evidence that an exchange of electromagnetic energy produced by the heart occurs when people touch or are in proximity.

Signal averaging techniques are used to show that one person's electrocardiogram (ECG) signal is registered in another's electroencephalogram (EEG) and elsewhere on the other person's body (See diagram below for an example). While this signal is strongest when people are in contact, it is still detectable when subjects are in proximity without contact.

The Electricity of Touch

Heartbeat Signal Averaged Waveforms



Heartbeat signal averaged waveforms showing a transference of the electrical energy generated by Subject B's heart which can be detected in Subject A's EEG (brainwaves) when they hold hands.

This figure shows the positive effect of the exchange of energy experienced when we hold hands and experience the pleasure of “connection”. Entrainment explains how your heart rhythms align your brain waves to them. When were in a deep state of appreciation, our brain waves come into harmony with our heart rhythms (precisely at 0.1Hz, the point at which our heart rhythms complete one cycle every ten seconds).



The Pendulum Principle

The phenomenon of entrainment was discovered quite accidentally by Christian Huygens, a notable physicist, in the seventeenth century. Huygens was the inventor of the pendulum clock, and coined the term entrainment after he noticed, in 1666 that all the pendulums were swinging in unison, which baffled him, since he had not set them to do so. He then deliberately set the pendulums swinging at different rhythms, only to find that they soon again began to swing in perfect synchronisation, led by the pendulum with the strongest rhythm. The accepted explanation for this is that small amounts of energy are transferred between the two systems when they are out of sync, in such a way as to produce negative feedback. As they become more in sync, the amounts of energy gradually reduce to zero. In the realm of physics, entrainment appears to be related to resonance.

There is an example of this in music, called the principle of sympathetic resonance. If you have two pianos in a large room and you strike the note C on one piano and then walk across the room to the other piano, you will find that the string of C on the other piano is vibrating at the same rate of vibration as the C string on the first piano. By the same principle, you will tend to meet and become involved with people and situations that are vibrating in harmony with your own dominant thoughts and emotions.

Another example from human biology is the tendency of the menstrual cycles of women living together to coincide. In this case it is possibly pheromones that are transferred rather than energy.

To prove the truth of “what you give is what you get,” try the following experiment that Peter Tomkins describes in *The Secret Life of Plants*.

Plant three identical seedlings in three different pots, with an identical amount and type of potting soil in each pot. Place the pots side by side, so the three plants receive the same light. Feed and water all three plants with identical amounts. The only variance in their treatment is that you talk to each plant differently.

To the first plant say only appreciative things, such as “What a wonderful little seedling you are. Look at how delicate your new leaves are, how strongly your little roots hold to the earth.”

To the second say nothing.

To the third, say only mean and unappreciative things, such as “What a pathetic excuse for a seedling you are. You’re disgusting. You’re not worth the earth I planted you in.”

Sounds crazy, but over time, the appreciated plant will grow healthy and strong, the neutral plant will grow fairly well, and the unappreciated plant will be stunted and fair poorly.

Like truly does attract like.

Life As An Exchange Of Energy

Every contact you have with other people, with other living things, is an exchange of energy. Sometimes this exchange is palpable. You feel a surge, almost like an electrical charge, when you shake the hand of a person who has an outgoing personality and great vigour, or the warmth of love surround you when you hug a loved one.

We "read" these energy exchanges, and use them both to communicate with and make assessments about each other. What do you notice about a couple that tells you they are deeply in love? They might walk along or sit together, holding hands, touching and sharing each other's physical space so they appear to be more as one than as two. As you get near, you can feel the energy of their togetherness like you might feel the charged air beneath a high-tension power line. This is such wonderful energy that you might feel like walking past this couple again, just to connect with it!

Energy You Give To Others



You give energy to others nearly every moment of the day, in each interaction you have with someone else. When this process stays a fairly balanced give-and-take situation, you don't notice much about it. You give and you receive, and your energy stays supportive of you physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

When the balance shifts to giving more than to receiving, you might feel tired, rundown, and edgy. Everyone around you wants, wants, wants. No one seems to care what *you* might want or need. This constant demand drains your energy, and it's no longer sufficient to support your body, mind, and spirit.

You might start to see indications of this in your health and attitude. You could become more susceptible to the "office bug" and assorted minor ailments. You might find yourself clumsier than usual, and prone to small injuries as a result. It's not that these problems are your fault. Rather, you're not able to resist them. You might even feel like your energy is being taken away from you, withdrawn from you, instead of you willingly giving it. We speak, sometimes, of people who "suck us dry." These people have such intense needs that they draw energy from those around them but have little to give back to make the process a fair exchange.



Beware the energy vampires! these are the people and everyone knows at least one—who draw energy from you the instant you are in contact in person, over the phone, even by e-mail, the psychic vampire seems to "plug in" to you and drain you dry.

Dealing with Energy Vampires

Energy vampires do not steal your blood but rather, your precious energy. They drain you emotionally and psychologically. They frustrate you with their repetitious, self-indulgent, attention-seeking ways.

Underneath, they are often bitter, angry and resentful... and they want you to share their pain. They want your pity. They don't respond well to constructive feedback, they want attention. They don't want to take responsibility, they want you to take that. They blame anything and anyone but themselves for their situation, almost revelling in their own victim like misery. Day in, day out they produce the same result; no change.

They bring others down. They have a gift for finding the negative. They are emotionally exhausting to be around. They inhabit our work places, our families, our schools and they exist in every corner of society.

Energy vampires are not to be confused with the vast majority of people who simply need help, support, direction and care... who are serious about working on themselves and their situation. They are also not to be confused with people who are genuinely looking for answers (not attention or sympathy) and are prepared to accept responsibility, be accountable and be proactive.

The people I'm talking about here are relentless in their negativity and are so deeply entrenched, they are beyond your help.

I am at my happiest when I am working with people to help them confront and deal with their issues and create their own version of “happiness”... but I will not let people monopolise my time and energy and I won't buy into their negative attitude, when it is clear they won't take necessary steps to help themselves when they can. I don't care how messed up someone's life or situation is, if they have a good attitude, I'll try to help them.

It's great to be a giver, a carer and a feeler, but now and then we need to take a stand with certain people.. because if we don't, we begin to suffer and then nobody wins.

Identify the vampires in your life, acknowledge the impact they have on you and make a resolution to change the way you communicate with those people. Don't buy into their it's-not-fair-nobody-understands-me-I'll-never-do-it excuses. Feed it and you'll create a monster.

Be courageous. Tell them that you will not have the same conversations about the same issues any more. This sounds harsh, but some Vampires need to be avoided. Don't give them too much time.

Ask them questions like "so you've identified the issues, tell me how you can change things for the better?" If they refuse to even consider looking for a way out of their situation, don't be sucked into their downward spiral of despair.

If you have a vampire who is in your life to stay, family perhaps, create some rules of engagement... "I will not talk about 'these' issues again until I see you doing this." Choose friends and acquaintances wisely. Make sure you spend time with people who will drag you up, not down. You need to keep your tank full not running on empty. Spending lots of time with Vampires is draining and unenjoyable.

Increase Your Three Types of Energy

Most successful people can be characterised as having very high levels of energy. Since energy is the fuel with which everything is achieved, there seems to be a direct relationship between energy levels and levels of accomplishment. It is hard to imagine a tired, burned-out person achieving much in life. On the other hand, energetic, positive, forward-moving individuals seem to get and enjoy far more of the things life has to offer than does the average person.

Physical Energy is Basic

We have been led to believe that there is basically one kind of energy. We supposedly replenish this energy by sleeping at night, and during the day, we use it up again. It is as though we are machines powered by batteries, and each night we recharge our batteries for seven or eight hours. However, there are some problems with this view of energy. The biggest problem is that it does not deal with the fact that there are actually three different kinds of energy, each of which is necessary for maximum performance.

The three main forms are physical energy, emotional energy, and mental energy. Each of these energies is different, but they are interrelated, and they depend on each other.

Physical energy is raw energy, coarse energy, bulk energy. Your physical energy is what you use to do physical labour. It is the primary energy applied by men and women who earn their livings by the sweat of their brow.

The Source of Enthusiasm

The second form of energy is **emotional energy**. This is the energy of enthusiasm and excitement. This is the energy that lends sparkle to the life of an individual. This is the energy that is necessary for feeling love, happiness, and joy. Largely, it is your emotional energy that makes life enjoyable for you. In fact, almost everything you say and do is determined in some way by an emotion, either positive or negative.

The Requirement for Creativity

Mental energy is the energy of creativity, of problem solving and decision making. You use mental energy to deal with everyday chores, plan your day and your week, and learn new subjects. Your level of mental energy is a major determinant of the quality of your life.

Conserve Your Best Energies

The reason why most people fail to realize their potential in life and work is because they burn up their energy at the emotional level, or the physical level; therefore, they have very little energy left over for mental activities. Most people burn up their emotional energy through the expression of negative emotions. Negative emotions are like a fire that burns up their energy so quickly that they have very little left with which to think positively and constructively. In fact, one five-minute uncontrolled outburst of anger or worry can burn up as much energy as an average person would use in eight hours of work.

Your job is to think continually about how you can stay calm and positive, and work smoothly and efficient, so you can have more mental energy to do the things that are most important to you in life.

Here are three things you can do immediately to put these ideas into action:

1. Take time to identify the different ways that you either use up or deplete your levels of physical, emotional and mental energy. How could you improve in each area?
2. Be sure to get plenty of healthful, nutritious food so you can keep your physical energy at high levels. This is the key to all other energies.
3. Look for ways to conserve your emotional energies by being more relaxed and optimistic in the face of daily problems and disappointments.

The more energy you have, the happier and more productive you will be.



Perception Cycle Exercise

60,000 Thoughts A Day

1. Identify an aspect of your life you want to change. It may be a habit, behaviour, a thought, procrastination, attitude whatever it may be.
2. Now you have to establish a communication with that part of you which needs a change. It is very simple. Put yourself in a relaxed state what we call it the Alpha State. Relax every portion of your body, your muscles and focus on the breath. If any other thoughts interrupt just ignore them. Don't worry. Thoughts are always there. An average person has 60000 thoughts a day. Most of them are the same thought you had yesterday. The time you were born till the time you die you can't do anything about your thoughts. But you can alter your thoughts any time.
- 3..Very carefully listen to your self talk. Ask why that particular behaviour is given much importance. What is the ultimate goal to have the behaviour. Find out what benefits you have achieved having that behaviour. Now see what happened from the time you started till now and see the positive and negative. Now visualize in your screen of your mind what was it like before the particular behaviour started. Where you happy, relaxed, calm and serene? If so see how your situation has changed. If you are nervous, anxious, frightened and depressed start to compare your past happiness with the present pain and suffering.
4. Now create an alternative behaviour to change your present situation. It can be anything. You can change your negative thoughts to positive one. Instead of hatred and anger you can create in your imagination love and happiness. The choice is yours. Use your creative imagination.
5. Now the part of you that was responsible for the old behaviour is responsible for generating the new behaviour. It is like anchoring love and serenity to your past hatred and restlessness. Once again use your creative imagination.

Spend 15 minutes in the morning and 15 minutes at night for 28 days to change a particular behaviour. Listen to your self-talk and make changes which will enhance your life.



Coming up in the next section

THE POWER OF AWARENESS

By developing self awareness of your thoughts, beliefs and actions, you will be able to identify the changes you need to make to attract and reveal more happiness. This chapter will help you explore and increase your self awareness that will lead to self acceptance.

**Power
Of
Awareness**



4 – The Power Of Awareness

Self-awareness



For you to experience self-acceptance, you must first develop self-awareness. You need to understand why you think, feel and act the way you do. You need to be aware of the impact of the formative experiences of your life. You need to understand how and why you have become the person that you are today.

Only when you achieve a higher level of self-awareness can you move to a higher level of self-acceptance. You must be more aware of who you really are before you can accept yourself. And it is only with a high level of self-acceptance that you can enjoy self-esteem, the key to a happy, healthy personality.

Self Awareness is having a clear perception of your personality, including strengths, weaknesses, thoughts, beliefs, motivation, and emotions. Self Awareness allows you to understand other people, how they perceive you, your attitude and your responses to them in the moment.

We might quickly assume that we are self aware, but it is helpful to have a relative scale for awareness. If you have ever been in a car accident you may have experienced everything happening in slow motion and noticing details of your thought process and the event. This is a state of heightened awareness. With practice we can learn to engage these types of heightened states and see new opportunities for interpretations in our thoughts, emotions, and conversations.

Why Develop Self-Awareness?



As you develop self-awareness you are able to make changes in the thoughts and interpretations you make in your mind. Changing the interpretations in your mind allows you to change your emotions. Self-awareness is one of the attributes of Emotional Intelligence and an important factor in achieving success.

Self-awareness is the first step in creating what you want and mastering your life. Where you focus your attention, your emotions, reactions, personality and behaviour determine where you go in life.

Having self-awareness allows you to see where your thoughts and emotions are taking you. It also allows you to see the controls of your emotions, behaviour, and personality so you can make changes you want. Until you are aware in the moment of the controls to your thoughts, emotions, words, and behaviour, you will have difficulty making changes in the direction of your life.

Self-Awareness in Relationships

Relationships are easy until there is emotional turmoil. This is the same whether you are at work or in your personal life. When you can change the interpretation in your mind of what you think you can change your emotions and shift the emotional quality of your relationships. When you can change the emotions in your relationships you open up entirely new possibilities your life.



Having a clear understanding of your thought and, behaviour patterns helps you understand other people. This ability to empathize facilitates better personal and professional relationships.

Develop Self Awareness

Self awareness is developed through practicing focusing your attention on the details of your personality and behaviour. It isn't learned from reading a book. When you read a book you are focusing your attention on the conceptual ideas in the book. With your attention in a book you are practicing not paying attention to your own behaviour, emotions and personality.

Think of learning to be mindful and self aware as learning to dance. When learning to dance we have to pay attention to how and where our feet move, our hands and body motion, what our partner is doing, music, beat, floor space, and other dancers. Self awareness isn't learned from books and dancing isn't either.

If you have an emotional reaction of anger or frustration, you notice many of the thoughts and small triggers that build up towards those emotions. You also notice moments when you can change the interpretations in your mind, or not believe what you are thinking. In this heightened awareness you instinctively make better choices in your thought process long before an emotional reaction or destructive behaviour.

Making changes in your behaviour is much easier to do when you catch them early, before the momentum of thought and emotion has gathered steam. The changes in your mind, and behaviour become simple and easy steps when you *develop self-awareness*.



Self-awareness relates to *what* you are not *who* you are. Understanding your true self is the key to unlocking your real potential. Keep an open mind and try not to pre-judge the information until you have had a chance to verify it from other sources and work with it in your own life.

Science has proven that our world is composed of pure energy. This energy is intelligent and operates according to specific *designs* or patterns. Some designs are fixed and remain constant while others are in a state of constant change. It is through our interaction with this *energy* that we gain control over our conditions and *results*. Improved results are waiting and the ball is in your court.

The centre of your universe begins and ends with you. You are the source of everything you experience. You are foundation and common denominator to all aspects of your life, including your environment, your relationships, and your belief system. Without you, your world would cease to exist. Therefore, if you want to make any real and significant changes to your life, the only place to start is with yourself.

You must first know what materials you have to work with before creating the life you want. You have to have self-awareness before moving into self-acceptance. Once that foundation is established, you can then build yourself anew using your wants and desires as the building materials to shape yourself and your world.

Awareness is the first step in the recreation process. As you grow in self-awareness, you will better understand why you feel what you feel and why you behave as you behave. That understanding then gives you the opportunity and freedom to change those things you'd like to change about yourself and create the life you want. Without fully knowing who you are, self-acceptance and change become impossible.

Having clarity about who you are and what you want and why you want it, empowers you to consciously and actively make those wants a reality. Otherwise, you'll continue to get "caught up" in your own internal dramas and unknown beliefs, allowing unknown thought processes to determine your feelings and actions.



If you think about it, not understanding why you do what you do, and feel what you feel is like going through your life with a stranger's mind. How do you make wise decisions and choices if you don't understand why you want what you want? It's a difficult and chaotic way to live never knowing what this stranger is going to do next.

Who's the expert?

When we want good, solid information, we turn to the experts. So, who are you going to turn to for information about yourself? Who's the expert?

You!

Does a friend, a therapist, a minister, your hero, your spouse, your parents know more about you than you? They can't. You live in your skin and mind 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year. Day in and day out. No one is closer to you than you!

The answers are all in there, perhaps all you've needed to solve your riddles is a useful question.

Using Questions To Be More Self Aware



Our quality of life can be improved by the quantity and quality of questions we ask of ourselves and the honesty with which we answer them. Questions can help you become more self aware. Are you your house or the district where you live? Are you your job? Are you what you look like? The answers to these questions are only reflections of who you are to the outside world. But it's just that, a reflection of your inner self. To go below the surface, the questions need to be more meaningful.

Think of the questions as being in layers. Each level or layer of questioning takes you closer and closer to the “core of your being.”

Example of Layers

What type of people do I enjoy spending time with?

Well...they have to be open-minded people. I really enjoy their company.

Why do I enjoy being with open-minded people?

Because then I can explore lots of different ideas. I enjoy searching for answers. And if they're open-minded, the exploration can go anywhere!

What do I mean by “exploration can go anywhere”?

I mean I can investigate all the big questions in life like...Why are we here or where do emotions come from?

How does being with open-minded people assist me in exploring those questions?

Well...if they're open-minded they won't make fun of my ideas.

Why is it important to me that people not make fun of my ideas?

Because it feels like my ideas are..well...me. I don't like being made fun of.

Why don't I like being made fun of?

Because then I feel shitty about myself.

Why would I feel shitty about myself if people made fun of me?

Because they're not accepting me for who I am!

Why do I feel low if others don't accept me for who I am?

Because it means I'm not OK.

How does others not accepting me mean I'm not okay?

Hmmmm.... I guess it doesn't have to mean that.

As you can see, the further down in the questioning process you go, the more you can tap into why you do what you do and who you are. It will take time for you to go through all the questions if you keep digging down each layer. Feel free to refer back to this example when answering the questions.

Tips On Answering Questions

Awareness is the first step in the creation process. As you grow in self awareness you will better understand why you feel what you feel and why you behave as you behave. That understanding then gives you the opportunity and freedom to change Without knowing who you are, self acceptance and change become impossible.

Be As Specific As You Can

General answers will only give you a general sense of who you are. The more specific your answers, the more impact they'll have on your life and you'll have a much clearer picture of yourself. I can not emphasis this enough. Be specific. Be specific. Give specific answers. When you think you've been pretty specific, make it even more specific.

Questions, Not Judgments

Don't ask yourself these questions with a judgmental tone. They're not accusations, or calls for you to defend yourself. They're questions to help you discover who you are. Be honest, gentle, and non judgemental. No one has to see your answers. This is between you and you, and no one else.

Letting It Flow

If while answering the questions you come up with your own line of questioning, then definitely follow it. (You're the expert here.) Also, if you answer, "I don't know", to any of the questions, give yourself the freedom to take a wild guess. The guess will allow you to continue. You know more than you think you do!

Be Totally Honest

Honesty leads to true awareness, but it requires courage. It's the courage to face what you fear or find difficult to accept about yourself. When you summon the courage to take ownership of your actions, thoughts, and feelings, you will recover the blueprint of your life. You'll be able to face your fears and find the inaccurate beliefs that created them.

*"We make our world significant by the courage of our questions,
and the depth of our answers." - Carl Sagan*

When answering the questions that follow, see if you are substituting rationalisations or justifications for your genuine feelings. Check inside and see if you are asking yourself "How SHOULD I feel?", rather than "How do I really feel?". Monitor if you are speculating intellectually about the answer, rather than getting in touch with what you are thinking or feeling.

Know that in the past you had reasons for being dishonest and that those reasons may no longer be useful or serve your best interests. Know whatever you discover about yourself, you can handle with ease and acceptance. Trust that the information you uncover will in some way lead to a greater sense of peace about yourself and that the answers to the questions will take you by the hand, and lead you to where you want to go.

Becoming honest is an act of self renewal. What a sense of freedom you'll feel when you're able to admit to yourself..."I want this, or think this, or feel this because I'm afraid that...[fill in the blank]. This is the first step toward discovering hidden fears. What a wonderful place to know where you are! It's difficult to reach a destination, when you don't even know where you're starting. You need only to gather your courage and look for your beliefs you have about yourself and your world. The rewards of doing so will lead you to places of happiness you never knew existed.

The pages that follow are filled with questions. They are divided the questions into the following categories: Social, Emotional, Significant Relationship, Spiritual/Ethical, Financial, Career, Personal, and Personal Definitions. They're worded in a way to help you get a clearer picture of who you are. It is often said that the quality of the lives we choose for ourselves is dependant upon the quality and depth of questions we are prepared to face up to and answer about ourselves. Clarity is the goal here, but remember, have fun with the questions. This isn't intended to be a struggle!

Social

- What type of people do I enjoy spending time with? (intelligent, open-minded, out-going, self-righteous, reflective, quiet, funny, a bit sad, optimists, readers, pessimists, thinkers, sports-minded, active, perceptive, debaters, joke-tellers, etc.)
- Why do I enjoy those specific qualities in people?
- Do I seek out people similar as I, or different from me? Why is that?
- Do I have many friends as I just described? Why or why not?
- How many close friends do I want based on the amount of time I have?

- What would those close relationships look like? What would be the biggest aspects? (talking, shared activities, working on projects together, laughter, storytelling, playing games, etc.)
- What are two of the most favourite things I enjoy doing with others?
- Where have I met most of the friends I currently have? (family, work, community, childhood, online, etc.)
- What does where I met these friends tell me about myself?
- Why am I still friends with those people?
- What is the single biggest attitudinal change I'd like to make when with people? (be more myself, be more out-going, be more honest, initiate more conversations, be more comfortable, be more open, be funnier, interrupt less, initiate more activities, etc.)

Emotional

- List three situations and/or times when you were the most happy in your life. Specific instances...What elements were present when I felt that way? How was I feeling about myself during those times?
- What do I fear most in my life right now? Why? What would it mean if that happened?
- When do I feel the most angry or frustrated? What is it about those situations that I feel that way?
- What is my definition of love? (not Oxford English's)
- What are my primary beliefs about love? (it's easy, scary, short-lived, feels good, not possible, difficult, etc.) Where/when did I acquire those beliefs? Do I still believe them? Why or why not?
- Do I have much control over my emotions? Why or why not?
- What emotions do I want to feel most of the time?

Significant Relationship

- If NOT currently in a marriage/life partnership/relationship
- What specific characteristics do I want my ideal life partner to possess? (generosity, open-mindedness, funny, gentle, strong personality, quiet, organized, similar beliefs about politics, finances, parenting, etc, fun, honest, similar goals, attractive, playful, out-going, etc.)
- Why do I want them to have those characteristics?
- How would I feel if I never had a life partner? Why would I feel that way?

If currently in a marriage/life partnership/relationship

- Am I completely happy in my current relationship? Why or why not?
- What is the biggest problem I see in the relationship?
- In what way would I like my partner to change? Why is that important to me?

- Could I be happy if that person did not change? Why or why not?
- What did I appreciate about this person when I first met/knew them?
- What do I appreciate about them now?
- Why are those qualities important to me?
- What is the single biggest attitudinal change I could make that would enhance this relationship?
- Do I experience growth and intellectual compatibility with this person?
- How does the future look with this person? Will I experience growth and stimulation with this person beyond what the relationship presently offers?

Spiritual / Ethics

- Do I believe in god? If not, how do I believe the universe operates? Why do I believe that?
- How has my childhood effected my beliefs about God/or lack there of?
- What characteristics do I believe God possesses? Why do I believe that?
- What is my relationship with this God/Universe?
Is it the relationship I want? Why or why not?
- In what way does my spiritual beliefs effect my day-to-day life?
- Do I have a code of conduct that I follow? If no, do I want one? Why or why not? If yes, what is it and why those codes?

Financial

- What beliefs did I “take on” from my parents in regards to money? (it's difficult to get, it's scarce, you should only have so much, it's easy to make, having it /not having it says something about me, live for the moment, give it away, I'll never have enough, it's a secret, saving is important, etc)
- What does money mean/represent to me? (security, aliveness, freedom, love, peace of mind, etc)
- Do I feel peaceful or anxiety in regards to money? Why do I feel that way about it?
- How much money do I feel I deserve to make a year? Why that amount?
- What would it mean to me if I made more or less than that amount? Why do I believe that?

Career

- What types of things did I enjoy doing as a child? (building things, drawing, sports, writing, solving puzzles, being with animals, my chemistry set, organizing games, talking, anything physical, playing house, cowboys and Indians, etc) Do I do anything today that has similar qualities to it?
- How do I currently earn my livelihood? How did I come to be so employed?
- What was present during the times I loved my work?
- What were the elements present in those situations?

- Am I currently doing the type of work I love to do?
- If not, what type of work would I like to do?
- If yes, what would have to change for me to enjoy it more?
- What attitudinal change could I make to enjoy it more?
- What has stopped me so far from pursuing the type of work I love?
- Do I want to continue allowing that to stop me?
- What could I do to change that?
- What is my definition of success? (not Oxford English's)


Personal

- What skills have I acquired that I'm proud of?
- What accomplishments am I proud of?
- Beginning when I was a child, what are the 10 most significant events in my life?
- Why did I make them significant?
- What period of my life do I like most? Why?
- What period of my life do I like least? Why?
- What are five of my greatest strengths?
- What do I desire most right now? Why do I desire that?
- If I was to receive an award, what would I want that award to be for?
- Why that?
- If I was to pick out a general theme that showed up often while answering these questions, what would that theme be?
- What does it mean?
- How do I feel about that?

The true self

The image that you see in the mirror is not you, it is your body. It is the magnificent vessel that you occupy as a human being. This is the instrument that you use to observe, navigate and interact with the outer world but it is not you. Now, focus your attention on your thoughts. The chatter that you hear in your mind is not you either. It is the activity of your conscious mind, the voice of your ego. These messages are a reflection of your current self-image and are not necessarily in your best interest. Quiet the voice of your ego and observe your feelings. What you feel is a communication from your subconscious mind and represents your current reaction to your environment.

You are that which is observing your thoughts and feelings.

 You are an intelligence, a form of pure energy. This is your true self and the centre of your inner world. You are an extension of the infinite intelligence of the universe that you may refer to as God, Buddha, Higher Self, or the Divine. You are by design kind, nurturing and loving, a focal point for the creative intelligence of the universe. Intuition is your source of true inspiration, enthusiasm, and motivation. You must however be aware of your true essence before you can fully experience the abundant life that is your birth right. This awareness is known through a higher consciousness. Through higher consciousness you gain control over your ego and the outer world by living in harmony with our world.

The true self is our spiritual essence or energy. It is the transcendent, perfect, unchanging part of ourselves. When, through higher consciousness, we encounter our true self, we re-evaluate the ego. In our meeting with the true self, we retain the sense of the ego as a still valid part of ourselves. The ego is no longer our only centre of identity and its importance downsizes to being simply one element of many in the psyche, still powerful and important as a "manager", but it is not in control.

Understanding your true self on an intellectual level does not in itself produce results. You must internalize this knowledge and apply it in your life for it to become the guiding wisdom that transforms your reality. Your company and our world is a collection of individuals urged on by the loving presence within. The whole behaves precisely as its individual parts. When you make the shift in consciousness you are contributing to the transformation of our world.





Coming up in the next section

THE POWER OF ACCEPTANCE

Discover how acceptance and in particular, self acceptance, can transform your life and directly improve your experience of happiness in life. Learn how to increase your acceptance, the greater your acceptance the happier you will become. Acceptance leads naturally into the immensely powerful trait of appreciation.



"Happiness can
only exist in
acceptance."

~George Orwell

5 – The Power of Acceptance



Self-Acceptance



You don't have to change what you are or what you have to be happy, but instead change the emotion you are expressing. If you are expressing anger then you will feel angry. If you express jealousy or guilt, then you will feel jealousy and guilt. If you are expressing love then you are likely to experience happiness and fulfilment. Think back to different times in your life and make a note of what you were expressing. We often associate feeling happy with who we were with what we had, or what we were doing. Those external things and people were not making us happy. It was the love we were expressing at the time that fulfilled us.



Studies show that people who are happy are spending time doing the things they love, with people they love, and working on things they are passionate about. The common element is not the things they achieve, or what they are doing. The common element that creates happiness is that they are expressing love in all those instances. They are expressing love to who they are with or for what they are doing.

Self acceptance is the first step toward expressing love for yourself. If trying to “be something different” creates an expression of self rejection, then the solution is to create an expression of self acceptance. Saying this in words is simple, but doing this is not necessarily easy.



Self acceptance is being loving and happy with who you are NOW. Some call it self-esteem, others self-love, but whatever you call it, you'll know when your accepting yourself cause it feels great. Its an agreement with yourself to appreciate, validate, accept and support who you are at this very moment, even those parts you'd like to eventually change. This is important...*even those parts you'd eventually like to change*. Yes, you can accept (be okay with) those parts of yourself you want to change some day.

If acceptance is so beneficial, why do we resist it?

If acceptance feels so good and is so good for us, then why don't we accept ourselves? The answer is motivation. We use our lack of acceptance (punishment because it feels bad) as motivation to get us to do, not do, be, and not be what we think we should. Many people believe that if they accepted themselves as they are, they wouldn't change or that they wouldn't work on becoming more of who they want to be.

Typically, we **judge** ourselves unfavourably with the hope it will motivate us to change. We hope if we feel bad enough about ourselves, that maybe that will motivate us to change. Does this work? Sometimes, but only short term. Most times all it does is cause us to feel bad which saps the energy you might have used to make changes. It can be a vicious cycle. It works exactly counter to what you wanted to do.

“Acceptance allows change. The 'acceptance mode' includes everything, even my judgments. It allows me to be okay now, even before I reach my goals.”

“When you begin to accept yourself the way you are right now, you begin a new life with new possibilities that did not exist before because you were so caught up in the struggle against reality that that was all you could do.”

So if it doesn't work, why do we keep doing it? Because we hope it will work. And if you don't know any other way to change, what options do you have? We've been conditioned to believe that in order to change, we need to first feel bad about it. That if we're accepting and loving of that particular quality, that we won't do anything to change the situation, which is not true! You don't have to be unhappy with yourself to know and actively change those things you'd like to change about yourself. Acceptance is actually the very first step in the process of change.

Think of acceptance of yourself like being okay with where you live now. You may want a bigger house one day. You may dream about that new home. But there ARE advantages to living in a smaller home if you only took the time to think about it. It is possible to be happy with the home you're in now, while still dreaming and working to make your new home a reality.

The acceptance process

Acceptance exists at the core of your being. It is your default status. In order to reach this base level of acceptance, you need only remove the items laying on top. To do this, you must first identify all the things you do not accept about yourself. Then, one by one, eliminate them by **examining and questioning your beliefs** around that issue.

- Know yourself and **your beliefs**
- Take a good hard look at your **honesty level**
- Know you are **doing the best you can**
- Relax your **value judgments**
- Examine your **guilt**
- Understand your **motivations**
- **Ask yourself questions** about what you don't accept

Society & Acceptance

Like happiness, society has some rather bizarre notions about self acceptance. On the one hand we have psychologists telling us it's good to improve our self-esteem while at the same time, society says we shouldn't have too much acceptance and appreciation for ourselves. We are encouraged to be humble and show humility. Do you know the definition of humility?

humility : the quality of being without pride, voluntary self-abasement.

pride : proper self-respect, a source of great satisfaction for which one feels some responsibility, a sense of satisfaction with one's achievements.

abase : to degrade, to humiliate, lowered

WHY would anyone value humility? Why would it be good to degrade and humiliate yourself as well as lack self-respect and feel no sense of satisfaction or responsibility for your achievements? How could this be beneficial for anyone? What is it about someone feeling "too good" about themselves that bothers us so? Yet our culture promotes humility as a desired virtue. It doesn't make sense.

Accepting Yourself Unconditionally

Self-acceptance begins in infancy, with the influence of your parents and siblings and other important people. Your own level of self-acceptance is determined largely by how well you feel you are accepted by the important people in your life.

Your attitude toward yourself is determined largely by the attitudes that you think other people have toward you. When you believe that other people think highly of you, your level of self-acceptance and self-esteem goes straight up. The best way to build a healthy personality involves understanding yourself and your feelings.

This is achieved through the simple exercise of self-disclosure. For you to truly understand yourself, or to stop being troubled by things that may have happened in your past, you must be able to disclose yourself to at least one person. You have to be able to get those things off your chest. You must rid yourself of those thoughts and feelings by revealing them to someone who won't make you feel guilty or ashamed for what has happened.

The second part of personality development follows from self-disclosure, is self-awareness. Only when you can disclose what you're truly thinking and feeling to someone else can you become aware of those thoughts and emotions. If the other person simply listens to you without commenting or criticising, you have the opportunity to become more aware of the person you are and why you do the things you do. You begin to develop perspective, or what the Buddhists call "detachment."

Now we come to the good part. After you've gone through self-disclosure to self-awareness, you arrive at self-acceptance. You accept yourself for the person you are, with good points and bad points, with strengths and weaknesses, and with the normal frailties of a human being. When you develop the ability to stand back and look at yourself honestly, and to honestly admit to others that you may not be perfect but you're all you've got, you start to enjoy a heightened sense of self-acceptance.

A valuable exercise for developing higher levels of self-acceptance involves doing an inventory of yourself. Your job here is to accentuate the positive and minimize the negative.



Think of your unique talents and abilities. Think of your core skills, the things that you do exceptionally well that account for your success in your profession and in your personal life right now.

**LEARNING
SELF-
ACCEPTANCE**



Think about your future possibilities and the fact that your potential is virtually unlimited. You can do what you want to do and go where you want to go. You can be the person you want to be. You can set large and small goals and make plans and move step-by-step, progressively toward their realization. There are no obstacles to what you can accomplish except the obstacles that you create in your mind.

Accepting does not mean allowing yourself to be abused, or the abuser. The acceptance I am speaking of is stepping back for one moment, and watching your emotional reaction to any situation where you feel resistance. Once you stop, and look at yourself as if you were on a movie screen and say: “Look at how I am reacting. Look at what I’m feeling because of this situation. The moment you can catch yourself and “become the watcher”, you immediately disengage yourself from the emotional drama of the situation. Then, you can accept it just for what it is. As soon as you accept it, you are no longer in pain.

Your suffering has been transformed into freedom from suffering. You can then look at the situation with some measure of objectivity, and if you can’t laugh at it, you can at least come to peace with it.

Going back to an analogy to nature, suppose you have a small rose bush in your garden. You WANT it to bloom, and give you one hundred perfect roses. It blooms, and gives you two instead.

Do you stomp, scream, and rip the rose bush out of the ground by its roots? No. You accept that this is what you received. Perhaps it wasn’t yet ready this season to bloom, as you want it to. Perhaps it will never bloom. It has nothing to do with YOU!

It is the same with people. The way they are, is simply the way they are. Circumstances are the way they are. It is in this moment that you can make a decision based on awareness, stemming from acceptance, as to a course of action or inaction that will serve your best interest.



You cannot make a beneficial decision based on awareness when you are caught in the drama of resisting what is, now. However, once you accept what is, now, you are then free to face whatever it is you are seeking, or avoiding.

Accepting Yourself No Matter What

I struggled with unconditional self acceptance for many years, and now that I’ve found out “how” to fully accept myself, unconditionally, I wanted to pass this information on to you so that you can know exactly how to go about it, and feel the self love that you deserve.

First and foremost, the old luxury of negative self talk, self condemnation, put downs, and self degradation must cease, permanently. That means that you are no longer allowed to cut yourself down. If you notice something about yourself that you would like to improve, that is perfectly fine. However, this area does not mean your core self and entire being are worthless.

If you were knocked in your earlier years, or if you are being knocked today by others, please know in no uncertain terms that the perceptions of others have absolutely nothing to do with you.

If *anyone* knocks you, in any manner, in any way, it is not about you! It is about the other person's perceptions. Now, if *you* knock yourself, somewhere along the line you bought into the false belief that "if only you were such and such," you would be worthy. If only you had this or that, then you would feel whole and complete. Guess what? Such and such and this and that will *never* make you feel worthy, whole and complete. Because once you attain whatever "it" is, your mind would find yet another reason to feel worthy, and the vicious cycle would go on.

It is high time you take a solid inventory of everything within you that is lovable, worthy, and genuine. Do you care about others? Are you honest? Here are a few more qualities that you might genuinely have within you: Generous, sympathetic, courageous, intelligent, capable, determined, trustworthy, ethical, loving, warm, sensitive, feisty, sense of humour, compassionate, perseverance, humanitarian and kind. You might also communicate well. Be well organized, or detail oriented.

Every time you knock yourself, become consciously aware of it. Just catch yourself, and without judgment, replace the negative (habitual) comment with one that is more truthful and positive about you.

It's easy to destroy. It's easy to allow all kinds of negative thought run rampant within your mind. It's also just as easy to consciously turn the tables, and transform the flip side of the negative comment you have made about yourself. It only takes conscious awareness, and practice.

It takes practice, and a lot of practice at that.

The same is true of your view of Self. If you have created conditions before you can feel worthy, then you have placed a lie into your mind. If you are overweight, and put yourself down because of it, I can assure you that there are plenty of people that are quite thin that also feel unworthy, because they wish they weighed more!

Nothing on the outside will ever make you feel whole and complete. You never need the validation of another person to feel worthy. The only validation you will ever need about your worth as a spiritual human being is your own.

If someone compliments you, simply say Thank you. Stop yourself from saying: "Oh, no I'm not" when someone tells you something that is kind. Furthermore, never take a compliment or an insult too seriously, because this too has nothing to do with you, and everything to do with the other person's perceptions.

I used to be so hard on myself. Always wanting to feel "good enough." It has taken 20 years to find my worth from the inside out, and to stop judging or comparing myself to others. Each person on our planet is special. We have to learn to place ourselves on equal footing with all of humanity. So I am no better and no worse than a person living on the street. We are all equal.

I used to think if I had a 28" or 30" waist that would make me more acceptable to myself. I then realised that when I got down to a 30" waist, I was no happier because of it. I realised that clothing is made in all sizes, and I do not have to look like a film star or sports personality to feel more acceptable to myself. Once

I gave myself permission to be good enough, just as I am, the self judgment stopped, and so did the inner feelings of inadequacy. There are many people that have it all on the outside, and still feel inadequate deep down within. I was no exception.

However, once you really turn that around, and fully accept yourself, even with your so-called flaws, then you can begin a journey that is filled with love, and joy, rather than disharmony within.

No matter what you think will make you more worthy, find an example of someone else that has that exact condition that you do not judge. Then, stop judging yourself completely.



You can only feel the joy of life when your mind is free from self imposed limitations and negative judgment. Be an example of your radiant self that does lie within, by being and sharing you greatest inner qualities, and bring those out. Focus on all of the good that you are, so that you will always feel good enough and accept yourself no matter what.

Healthy alternatives to irrational thinking about unconditional love and acceptance

Irrational: You should always obey rules, accept limits, meet another's expectations and conditions before you can expect that other to accept and love you.

Healthy: Following rules, accepting limits, and meeting expectations and conditions are often necessary for survival in this world but are not necessary conditions to be accepted and loved by others.

Irrational: Parents should require their children to obey their rules, accepting limits set, and meet up to the expectations and conditions set for them before the parents show acceptance and love for the children.

Healthy: Parents first need to accept and love the child because the child exists. Only once the child feels this acceptance and love will the child more likely obey the rules, accept limits, and meet the expectations in a healthy way.

Irrational: Using unconditional acceptance and love to get others "to do" for you is manipulating others to benefit yourself. It is a destructive behaviour.

Healthy: If you want people to do things for you, all you need to do is to offer them unconditional acceptance and love.

Irrational: There is no such thing as unconditional acceptance and love. There are always strings attached somewhere.

Healthy: It is possible to accept and love a person unconditionally with no ulterior motive.

Irrational: You must be perfect in everything you do or others will not accept or love you.

Healthy: You are a human being subject to failings, and mistakes. You deserve to be accepted and loved not because you are you.

Irrational: It is impossible to accept and love another and at the same time be emotionally detached.

Healthy: By being emotionally detached you do not automatically cease your acceptance, care and love of another. It only means that you are separating yourself from the destructive elements of the relationship so as not to get hurt.

Children Learn What They Live

*If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.
If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.
If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to feel shy.
If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.
If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.
If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.
If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.
If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.
If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.
If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.
**If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,
he learns to find love in the world.**
Dorothy Law Nolte, Ph.D*

In order to unconditionally accept and love yourself and others you need to:

- **First:** Identify what are the conditions which you force others to meet before you are accepting and loving of them.
- **Second:** Analyse these conditions and expectations which you set for others in order to identify why they block you from being unconditional.
- **Third:** Analyse if these conditions are reasonable, rational, or realistic and develop healthy alternative scripts which free you up to be more unconditional with others.
- **Fourth:** Recognize that the limits and rules of appropriate behaviours which you expect others to conform to are rules for survival, decency, getting along, coping, productivity, sense, and order but are not the determinants of freely accepting and loving them.
- **Fifth:** Practice eliminating any conditions as you face others and attempt to accept and love them freely, generously, and with no limitations.
- **Sixth:** Emphasize with others that it is because you love and accept them so entirely and freely that you want them to experience the positive or negative consequences of their own actions and that such consequences do not affect your acceptance or love of them.
- **Seventh:** Clarify that "tough love" is the continuous unconditional acceptance and love of others but yet holds the target of such love to be fully personally responsible for their own actions and the consequences of those actions.

*I do my thing and you do your thing. I am not in this world to live up to your expectations, and you are not in this world to live up to mine.
You are you and I am I and if by chance we find each other, it's beautiful.*

Three Men

A woman came out of her house and saw 3 old men with long white beards sitting in her front yard. She did not recognize them. She said, "I don't think I know you, but you must be hungry. Please come in and have something to eat."

"Is the man of the house home?", they asked. "No," she said. "He's out." "Then we cannot come in," they replied.

In the evening when her husband came home, she told him what had happened. "Go tell them I am home and invite them in!" The woman went out and invited the men in. "We do not go into a House together," they replied. "Why is that?" she wanted to know.

One of the old men explained: "His name is Wealth," he said pointing to one of his friends, and said pointing to another one, "He is Success, and I am Love." Then he added, "Now go in and discuss with your husband which one of us you want in your home."

The woman went in and told her husband what was said. Her husband was overjoyed. "How nice!," he said. "Since that is the case, let us invite Wealth. Let him come and fill our home with wealth!" His wife disagreed. "My dear, why don't we invite Success?" Their daughter-in-law was listening from the other corner of the house. She jumped in with her own suggestion: "Would it not be better to invite Love? Our home will then be filled with love!"

"Let us heed our daughter-in-law's advice," said the husband to his wife. "Go out and invite Love to be our guest."

The woman went out and asked the 3 old men, "Which one of you is Love? Please come in and be our guest." Love got up and started walking toward the house. The other 2 also got up and followed him. Surprised, the lady asked Wealth and Success: "I only invited Love, why are you coming in?"

The old men replied together: "If you had invited Wealth or Success, the other two of us would've stayed out, but since you invited Love, wherever he goes, we go with him. Wherever there is Love, there is also Wealth and Success!"

What is acceptance?

Acceptance is an intuitive perception that, although we may not know the reason for the existence of something, it has a right to exist and a place in the grand scheme of things.

Acceptance is a willingness to allow our natural outflow of vitality toward people, we don't damn the person by attempting to dam this flow of life energy. Regardless of our material circumstances with this person, he or she is entitled to that connection. We don't put them out of our heart.

Acceptance is a state that can co-exist with contrary states, in both our viewpoint and our actions. Acceptance is a psychological function. We can accept something regardless of our thoughts, images, or feelings, our liking or disliking, our approval or disapproval.

We can accept something while simultaneously trying to change it. Acceptance, in contrast to denial, lets us look directly at the other persons viewpoint while comparing it to our own. Acceptance is generally considered to be a passive state, but it is actually an active state.

We accept our desire to change unpleasant conditions, while we simultaneously accept the reality that those conditions exist. We do not passively submit to those unpleasant conditions. Instead of passively stagnating with our denials and hatreds and avoidances, acceptance lets us see our potentials in whatever is presented to us, and it allows us to explore those potentials whole heartedly.

When we accept all parts of ourselves, we develop understanding and compassion toward people who are expressing those same traits. We can protect ourselves more effectively now, because we understand unpleasant traits, having seen them within ourselves and therefore maintain our composure when we see them in others.

In self acceptance, we gain an honest, balanced view of ourselves, because we discern both the potential and the ego, all traits and their opposites. We don't create a distorted self image. Self acceptance is easier if we differentiate between ourselves and our actions, thoughts, energy tones, and imagery. We are not what we do. There is a connection and a responsibility between ourselves and those elements, a bad action does not make us a bad person. We may dislike certain things that we do, but we don't dislike and shame ourselves for whatever we do in any given moment. With this overview, we know that we are capable of a large range of behaviours. It is our responsibility to control our ego to ensure that we behave in a socially acceptable fashion.

The benefits of acceptance

When we accept a facet of life, it is now available for our use and enjoyment.

Perhaps we formerly rejected and hated people who had a particular skin colour. If we accept their presence in the world, we can set aside the hatred and explore their value to us as friends, business contacts, or simply as individuals whose differences are not threats but are interesting. Acceptance affirms the validity of other people, therefore we also consider the validity of their viewpoints, and gain new information and perspectives.

Every part of us contributes to our performance. When we accept, understand, and use all parts of ourselves, those parts cooperate to create our successful life. Our anger can be helping us to rightly defend ourselves. We tend to reject a part of ourselves that is ineffective, frustrating, or embarrassing. That part has those traits only because it is misunderstood, undeveloped, or ineptly expressed. We can accept it, and try to understand and enhance its qualities. In self acceptance, we allow ourselves to express our various aspects such as being outgoing or reserved, responsible or happy-go-lucky, generous or protective.



When we accept who we are, we can be ourselves, allowing our natural personality and warmth to emerge. We are creative and fun loving. We are not judging ourselves and others, therefore they are comfortable with us and with themselves, so they permit their own personality and warmth to emerge.

When we accept ourselves, we listen and respond to criticism as mere feedback and we objectively agree with it or reject it. There is little or no pain, defensiveness, or embarrassment, because our foundation is in our self acceptance, not in whatever acceptance we receive from other people. In many cases, their criticism is not so much a statement regarding us, as it is a statement regarding their values for their own life. Those values are being imposed on us, and we may have no obligation to comply with them, particularly if the criticism is nothing more than an attempt to manipulate us via the granting or withholding of their approval. In order to function in society, we do need to conform to social protocol, but we can discriminate between the confirmation that we need from other people and the confirmation that can come only from ourselves. If we seek all of our validation from other people, we create the destructive condition of co-dependency.

Acceptance is associated with the energy vibrations of contentment and calm. We still have our feelings of liking and disliking, however we generally do not experience indignation when the world does not conform to our preferences.

Repression causes emotional numbness, in contrast, acceptance of emotions allows us to use and enjoy them. The extent to which we repress one emotion is the extent to which we repress all emotions. When we refuse to feel love, we also reduce our capacity to feel true happiness.



When we embrace acceptance we stop consuming energy in pointless battles against the people and circumstances that cannot be changed, and we don't waste emotional energy via hatred and self hatred.

If we are not accepting, we can encounter stress, and stress related illnesses. The excess stress arises because we are fighting circumstances that we cannot change. The stress is literally the energy that we cannot discharge because we are pushing against immovable objects such as circumstances that are to be accepted rather than changed.

Through acceptance we accept our body's reality, the reality that a human body requires adequate nutrition, rest, exercise, and medical care.

Developing Acceptance

In choosing the benefits of acceptance :-

We cultivate energy tones such as relaxation, contentment, and pleasure with self affirmations such as . "I accept the challenges of life." "I accept myself as I am and I want to be even better.", "I find a satisfying place for myself in the world as it is.", "I enjoy the variety of life."

We can visualize ourselves being calm in a situation that usually triggers excessive stress or judging. We act as if we are accepting of the unalterable conditions.

Intuition can tell us which situations are to be changed, and which situations are to be accepted as they are. Our intuition can then tell us how to change things, or how to accept the things that cannot be changed.

If we believe that we are an honest person, our potential contains our capacity for dishonesty. As we discover the traits of our potential, we discover traits that we have repressed or denied. When we learn to accept the traits in our potential, we can still leave them there so that we can continue to think of ourselves as an honest person, but now we are aware of the traits of dishonesty in our potential. Once we are aware we can consciously decide not to use or project them.

We can accept our past. Some people say, "If I had to live my life again, I'd do it the same". This is retrospective self acceptance, a realization that their life unfolded in the way in which it needed to unfold, despite any complaints that they had along the way. If we adopt this perspective now, rather than waiting for the wisdom of age, we accept our problems as part of our education and maturation. Problems come to our attention because they reveal something within us that needs to be recognized, understood, and then properly administered. To accept whatever we are at this moment is to trust this process.

Self acceptance and self esteem are two separate functions. We can still accept ourselves while still trying to do better to meet our values.

Self acceptance has no standards or values, and it needs no justification. We can have self acceptance no matter what we do.

We justify our self esteem by affirming that our behaviour corresponds to our values.

We can explore our projections and the repressions from which the projections arise. The traits that we do not accept in other people are the traits that we do not accept in ourselves. If we feel anger toward our rowdy neighbours, part of that anger can be our envy of their wildness if we have not accepted the wild streak in ourselves.

We acknowledge that the world exists as it is, despite our preferences to the contrary. If we feel that life has purposes and meanings and values that are greater than those that we can comprehend and which are all for our ultimate benefit, we trust the process. If we do this we relinquish the stress causing notion that we are somehow responsible for the universe. Therefore we do not become opinionated and judgmental.

The Serenity Prayer

God, grant me serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and wisdom to know the difference, living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time, accepting hardship as a pathway to peace. Taking this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it. Trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to your will, so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next. AMEN

*“Of all the judgements we pass in life none is as important as the one we pass on ourselves. The most empowering thoughts you can have are those of peace, joy, love, acceptance and willingness. Powerful, joyful, loving thoughts stem from your willingness to allow the world to be as it is and acceptance of that. Your feelings are your feelings, accept them don't deny them. - **The Six Pillars of Self Worth***

Acceptance is the key to so many things, so many problems and self-made problems in our own lives. Whether it be accepting others who are different than you are, or the fact of some betrayal; whether it be accepting the changing winds of fortune and fate, or of the fickle nature of love -- ACCEPT IT. If you cannot change it, then why not accept it? That is one of the keys to life's happiness - and to reducing strife with others. Loves will come and leave; people will be born and die. Terrible tragedies will befall us in our lifetimes. THESE THINGS ARE NATURAL, AND YOU CAN DO NOTHING TO CHANGE THEM. Therefore, it is up to you to learn to accept them, to help those others when you can, if you can, and to leave the rest alone.

Acceptance can be hard to stomach sometimes, especially when it comes to accepting the harder things in our lives. I have been cheated and lied to many times in this life. I can accept that, and that some people are prone to that type of behaviour. Therefore, I accept them like that. I know that they may sometimes be lying to me; therefore, I examine what they say more carefully. But do I like them any the less, or refuse to be friends with them because of it? No. I merely accept that they have this human weakness and are prone to it; they have not changed in any other way. I may apply caution when relying on honesty and principled behaviour from these people, but I would not block them out of my life unless the behaviour became so chronic that it placed either of us in danger. It is merely my perception of them that has changed -- and I chose to remain friends despite, and because of this thing - this acceptance of this person, warts, faults, and all. And in doing so, in this acceptance of them, I have lost nothing; they have lost nothing, and we are all therefore happier and wiser for it.

Acceptance is a key. Use it. And use it wisely.





Coming up in the next section

THE POWER OF APPRECIATION

Focused attention on your powerful energy of appreciation, of self, others and the world around you, will take you to new levels of happiness beyond your current experience.



**Power
Of
Appreciation**

6 – The Power of Appreciation

What Is Appreciation?

When we have gone through the process of increasing our awareness and then moved forward into the phase of acceptance, the next step toward experiencing greater happiness is through sincere appreciation.

Traditionally we have been conditioned to understand appreciation as something we “must” do. Parents, family, teachers, in fact everyone we have human contact with, program us through experience to be appreciative and grateful in life. It is human nature to resist when we feel forced to do anything, so as a consequence, appreciation is all too often squeezed out of us rather than being expressed as the sincere and genuine feeling of gratitude.

Guilt is all too often used as a tool to engineer appreciation out of us, especially during our childhood years. “You take me for granted”, “You don’t appreciate what I do for you”, “You don’t appreciate what you have” are all familiar expressions.

As a result, in the adult world, the power of sincere and genuine appreciation is all too often overlooked, and the power it contains to generate happiness is missed.

The paradox is that because we have been conditioned to express appreciation, we have also been conditioned to expect it in return for our acts of kindness, generosity, courtesy, care and love.

How do you feel when you have repeatedly shown acts of kindness or care and received no gratitude, appreciation, recognition or acknowledgement in return? I would venture to suggest that you feel unappreciated.

When you're shouting “You don't appreciate a thing I do for you!” to your kids, what you mean is “You aren't grateful for what I do for you. You don't value what I do for you. You don't see its worth, how meaningful or important this thing I do for you is.”

Previously, we’ve all experienced feeling unappreciated by employers, girlfriends, boyfriends, family members, spouses, friends, lovers, colleagues, in fact just about anybody you have ever come into contact with. You feel that what you're offering isn't valued by the person you're offering it to, and therefore they aren't grateful for it.

What happens when you do feel appreciated? Your spirits are lifted! You feel you are important and worthy, competent and happy. You have the same effect on others when you show your appreciation.

The previous chapters have talked about self-awareness and acceptance. Bringing all we have learned up to this point, the clear pathway to happiness through appreciation is simple, and similar to an expression you will find in the relationships chapter later.

“Enter into the spirit of appreciation for what you can give, not to receive”

When we learn to accept that others may not have travelled so far along their path toward happiness as we have, we can more readily accept that others may not be as equipped and prepared to express appreciation as we are.

When you make the conscious decision to overturn all your childhood resistance to appreciating, and start expressing it sincerely when it is due, you will experience a wealth of increased happiness in your life.

When you do so, without the expectation of appreciation in return, when it does come, you will appreciate appreciation so much more!

When you deliberately focus on appreciating someone or something, you nurture, express support and love. As a result, they—and you—are transformed and the world between you is a much happier place.

Appreciation on the surface appears to be a self-less act, when in fact it can be viewed as a selfish act, benefiting the giver. Selfishness tends to get a “bad rap” but in reality it is misunderstood. When you adopt an “attitude of gratitude”, the more you give, the better it feels for you, the happier you will feel because you are recognised as an appreciative person. It feels good folks! Everyone wins with appreciation, the giver and the receiver, it just doesn’t make sense why anyone shouldn’t adopt it as a personality trait until it becomes a part of your character.

Appreciation is a Powerful Transformative Energy

I discovered that appreciation has an extremely powerful transformative energy that changed my life from good to great, from traumatic to joyous, from struggling to successful. Embracing the characteristic of appreciation changed my very approach to life and living.

Learning how to use this energy can transform your life too. This energy comes not from your usual guilt-bound appreciation, not from appreciative platitudes, or even from your heartfelt appreciation but from a very different type of appreciation.

What style of appreciation can transform your life? It's appreciation that consists of two vital elements, gratitude and valuing. It is this combination of gratitude and valuing that gives appreciation its remarkably powerful energy.

Gratitude

Gratitude fills your heart with receptive energy. You feel or express gratitude after something pleasing has happened. A friend helps you out of a scrape, you are grateful. You notice the beauty and good things in your life and the world around you, you are grateful.

Valuing

The valuing aspect of appreciation is what introduces its phenomenal energy. When you find yourself valuing something or someone, you use your mind to think of it, or them and **why** it or they matter to you, what it is worth to you. In the commercial world, when something appreciates, it grows in value. The same is true in our lives and relationships with others. A house is just bricks and mortar until it is filled with the people and possessions you cherish, and then it is a home.

Later in the chapter, we will explore meaningful appreciation, that take your simple “thank you’s” beyond mere platitudes. The essence of sincere meaningful appreciation is contained in one word . . . “WHY”. Why am I grateful?

“Thank you for my flowers”

“Thank you for my flowers, they really came at the right moment, I was feeling sad about something and they really cheered me up”

Can you see the difference? You didn’t just say thank you, you went on to say how the gift made you feel. A little thought and a few sincerely meant words are extremely powerful in bringing happiness to the lives of others and as a result, to you too.

Consciously choosing to express appreciation of the value of the people and things in your life is what makes it possible for you to use this energy of appreciation positively. The good news is that you can choose to value someone or something before they have contributed anything at all to your life.

Positively valuing and consciously expressing appreciation transforms gratitude from an after-the-event expression of feeling to a before-the-event deliberate and positive application of energy.

Appreciation as Energy

You will recall the chapter on energy talked in some detail about the power of appreciation. You may wish to flip back to the Power of Energy and the water experiments of Masaru Emoto to remind yourself of the scientific basis for viewing appreciation as an accepted source of human energy.

When you start to think of appreciation as an energy you can use intentionally and proactively, to increase the levels of happiness you want in your life, it becomes a whole new concept.

You can continue to consider appreciation as you may always have done, as a response to something you are grateful for, or you can embrace its potential and see appreciation for what it really is, an energy source that can be harnessed for any number of uses, such as:

- Using appreciation to reduce your stress levels, to improve your general health and sense of well-being, to enhance the effectiveness of your immune system, generate more energy, and promote faster healing.
- Using the energy of appreciation to increase your satisfaction and happiness in the home and at work, to improve your relationships and increase the love in your life, to minimise conflict and foster greater cooperation.
- Using appreciation to improve low self-esteem or develop better self-confidence, and to manage change or trauma more easily.
- Attract increased abundance, success and happiness by focusing your appreciative energy.
- Attract new relationships, love and friendships into your life using the power of appreciation.

Appreciation used intentionally and sincerely can renovate just about any experience, no matter how testing, into one you value and become grateful for. Understanding and applying your energy of appreciation can literally transform your life for the better.

Getters generally don't get happiness, givers get it. You simply give to others a bit of yourself, a thoughtful act, a helpful idea, a word of appreciation, a lift over a tough times, a sense of understanding, a timely suggestion. You take something out of your mind, decorated in kindness from your heart, and put it into the other persons mind and heart.

By giving a few words of sincere appreciation to someone who is lonely or discouraged you can literally transform the experience of a persons day. You may forget tomorrow, the kind words you said today, but the recipient may cherish them for a lifetime.

If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn. If children live with praise, they learn appreciation. - Dorothy Law Nolte

Appreciation is a wonderful thing, it makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well.

“To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; to leave the world a little better; whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is the meaning of success”. - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Appreciation can make a day, even change a life.

Your willingness to put it into words is all that is necessary.

Most of us walk around on autopilot, in vibrational neutral most of the time. We're not deliberately focusing our thoughts and feelings, we're just letting them ramble. This is why it feels like people or situations can “make” you feel a certain way. What's really happening is that in the absence of your own strongly focused vibration, you are being “entrained” by another person's or situation's vibration. Their strongly focused vibration simply aligns with that part of your frequency of vibration that is even weakly similar to theirs, and sure enough, you end up feeling differently.

Conversely, entrainment explains why when you deliberately respond to a situation with a powerfully focused energy, you will be responded to in kind, if no resistance is met. “Like attracts like” “what goes around, comes around” and “what you give is what you get” reflects this scientific reality. We live in a universe of vibrating energy, so whatever energy you give off, such as energy of appreciation, will support and encourage experiences of like energy.

As you proactively engage with people and events with a sense of appreciation, you entrain or attract more positive experiences, and your life becomes happier. As you become happier, appreciating becomes easier, especially when you realise that appreciating is what brought you this happiness in the first place. The direct and unmistakable result of appreciation is happiness. Appreciation begets more appreciation. The more it’s used, the more we find ourselves spontaneously doing appreciating and the more opportunities seem to come our way for using it.

The energy of appreciation is a vital part of our search for happiness in life. Appreciating proactively, we can learn how to appreciate most effectively to receive the benefits of our hearts desires.

Power of Appreciation

Start by valuing and being grateful for what you already have.

Then you launch your desire vibrationally with clarity, focus and intention, all the while replacing any negative thoughts with positive thoughts. The Perception Cycle is a particularly useful tool for this.

Too often when we have less of something we want, we dismiss what we do have. If you think, “My bills are too high” you are expressing dissatisfaction with your current income. You aren’t appreciating what the money you now have can do for you, instead you pay attention only to what it can’t do. Focused on lack in this way, you become critical of your current condition, oblivious to the fact that this mode of thinking is contributing to your problem.

Such an attitude makes it difficult to attract anything different. As long as your vibration around money, for example, is critical, blaming and dissatisfied, you will focus your energies negatively on other money problems. You cannot attract more pounds if you don’t appreciate the pounds you already have. Instead, think, “I am grateful that my current income can pay some of my bills.” Now you are aligning with a positive vibration about money. Appreciating the pounds you do have with enthusiasm, will most rapidly bring more pounds to you. If you have only one pound coin to your name, treasure it. If you have a fortune, even as you want more, treasure it. Develop a sense of value and gratitude for the money you have, no matter how little or how much.

“Wait a minute” you will say. “If I am satisfied with this one pound coin, won’t I get stuck with only this one measly pound coin?” Not if you’re launching a vibration of desire for more. Don’t confuse the vibration of the specific desire you are launching with the vibration of your general appreciation for money. Appreciating the money you have is the foundation from which you can successfully launch appreciation for the money you desire. It is not the end of the story.

If you have none of the things you desire, so that you are not simply trying to attract more, but are starting from scratch, its even more important to have a positive appreciation of the things you want. For example, just because you don't have any money, that doesn't prevent you from valuing and being grateful for money in general. So, if you think "I have no money at all, I'm worthless", delete those thoughts immediately shift your focus quickly to affirmations such as, "Other people attract money, so will I" and "Money is a wonderful thing, I can feel the deliciousness of it." The affirmations you create, consciously or unconsciously will help sustain your positive vibration around your desire.

Once you value and are grateful for what you already have, it's time to launch your desire vibrationally.

In a place where you won't be disturbed or distracted, sit comfortably, and close your eyes. Think about all that you value in the thing that you wish to attract. Think about the good things it will do for you and how it will make you feel. Remember to attach emotion to your thoughts to enhance the results. Think in personal intimate terms that have true meaning for you.

Using the money example, don't think in general terms, such as "It'll let me travel", but be more personal and specific: "Pounds for that holiday to I want to take". Be grateful, with all your heart, for the wonderful things your desire will bring to you. Cherish the good feelings of security or comfort, for example, that "more pounds" holds for you. Be grateful for these good feelings. Focus on appreciating the thing you desire with great intensity.

Feel your appreciation in this way-alternating between valuing, cherishing, treasuring, and being grateful with all your might for three to five minutes. Let it be done, your vibration of appreciation has been launched, and it will seek to align with that which will fulfil your vibration. Appreciation attracts more things to appreciate.

If you could keep a clear, focused vibration of appreciation as just described, there'd be no more to say, your desire would come winging back to you with surprising speed. However, what frequently happens is that intrusive thoughts and feelings get in the way of launching a clearly focused vibration.

For example, there you are, appreciating away, and in creeps the "what if" syndrome: "What if this doesn't work?" "What if nothing happens?" "What if I'm not doing this right?" The list is endless. These "what ifs" reflect worry, fear or doubt, and sometimes all three at once. Worry, fear and doubt do not mix well with appreciation. It's hard to genuinely value and feel grateful for an experience when you are simultaneously worrying about it, fearful about it, or doubting it. Your vibration becomes weak and as such cannot harmonise with the thing you seek.

If you allow worry, fear or doubt into your vibration of appreciation, you will create a self-fulfilling prophecy. You won't be able to attract your desire to the degree you want, because your vibration will not be strong enough. When worry, fear or doubt crosses your mind as you're mightily trying to launch your desire, simply say, "I don't need to think about that now." And go right back to valuing and being grateful for the thing you desire.

You can examine those worries, fears and doubts and work through them, replacing them with positive thoughts, using the perception cycle, to support your appreciative intention.

Congratulations ! You're launching your desire! Now you're ready to receive it. Now you're ready to work your appreciation.

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Appreciate The Moment . .

Once you've launched your vibration of appreciation for that thing you desire, anticipate its arrival with joy and enthusiasm, and constantly look for signs of its coming into your life. In the example of attracting abundance, this doesn't mean to look for £50,000 under your pillow tonight. Nor does it mean that someone will walk up to you with a cash gift. What it does mean is that your vibration of appreciation will begin to attract experiences, situations and people that align in some way or another with the thing you seek. Your job is to "work" your appreciation: to be alert to the unfolding of your desire, to take appropriate actions to further it, be open to the sometimes surprising vibrations you'll attract, and to consciously choose attitudes and feelings that support your desire.

For example, the vibration of your "cash requirement" will begin to align with experiences you have, you may overhear a conversation that gives you an idea about how to attract more customers or money, or you may see an advert that reminds you about something you could do to generate more cash, or you may be given an opportunity with a difficult but wealthy person everyone else has found too difficult to handle.

Here's how you start working your appreciation. Whenever something comes along that is even remotely connected with the fulfilment of your desire, appreciate it, value it, and be grateful. Be on the lookout for such events, and act on them.

For instance, when you overhear a conversation that gives you an idea to generate more cash, don't just file it under "good ideas". Be aware that this idea may be a path toward your £50,000 desire. Act on it.

When the advert reminds you of the idea to generate more cash, take action.

And when you're presented with that difficult wealthy individual, don't think "just my luck, another impossible to please, never spends a penny customer". Instead, appreciate the opportunity: "I might just be able to turn them around with my charm, who knows? It's worth a try".

So, be alert to the infinite number of ways vibration will start aligning with your desire, once you get on track mentally. Value the ideas and opportunities that come your way, be grateful for them and act on them.

Appreciation doesn't stop once your vibration of appreciation has been launched. Appreciation is both your intention and your initial action as you vigorously launch your vibration of appreciation.

Appreciating you

The more you appreciate those you love, the more you will find to appreciate. Practice appreciating them when all is going well, so you will have a good stock of things to appreciate that will help you through the rough times. Appreciation is not a guarantee of there being no rough times, but it does allow us to get through them a little more easily, with less hurt or damage, often emerging on the other side with a stronger, richer relationship. We can all be experts at amplifying the negative, its only when we use that power to amplify the positive that we can turn situations around.

It's important to maintain a balance of appreciating ourselves and the ones we love. Value our own position, boundaries and desires, and at the same time value our loved one's positions, boundaries and desires.

Appreciation shouldn't turn you into a "Yes dear, whatever you say" robot. It doesn't mean you always agree with them. Balanced appreciation of yourself and the other person means that in any given circumstance, you take into careful consideration both your partners and your own valuable self, desires and preferences. Neither person should be short changed.

Appreciation puts you in charge of your feelings

Sometimes in a relationship, you feel like a victim of love, always at the mercy of your partner's moods or emotions. If he's nice, you feel good; if she's nasty, you feel bad. When this happens, you are emotionally reactive to your partner, instead of maintaining your personal emotional integrity. Appreciation can help you keep your good feelings going regardless of your partners current emotional state.

If your partner is in a bad mood for example, simply let him go through it. Keep on an emotional even keel by reminding yourself of all that you value about him, about the relationship and about yourself. Switch your focus to whatever does make you feel good and appreciate that good feeling so as to strengthen and renew your own vibration of appreciation. Since you're not feeding your partners bad mood vibrationally by feeling bad because of it, his bad mood vibration can dissipate more readily.

As tempting as it may be to moan and groan and feel sorry for yourself when he/she is being less than his wonderful self, it is vibrational suicide. Your self pitying complaining will feed his mood and the vibration generated will be all about negativity, inevitably attracting more negative results. Diffuse the power of his/her negative vibration by ignoring it, and maintaining your own appreciative stance.

It is not always easy but it is always rewarding. Using appreciation as your primary focus does not mean you should ignore serious problems. If their version of a bad mood is to wreck things or be violent, or become abusive, appreciation of yourself means that you take immediate charge of your well being. Leave if you have to, don't subject yourself to dangerous behaviour. Even in extreme circumstances you don't have to let their inappropriate behaviour dismantle your vibration of appreciation. Instead, focus your appreciation on yourself, your well-being and the steps you take to care for yourself.

Expressing more appreciation

In order to build more satisfying relationships with the people around you, express more appreciation, delight, affirmation, encouragement and gratitude.

Because life continually requires us to attend to problems and breakdowns, it gets very easy to see in life only what is broken and needs fixing. But satisfying relationships (and a happy life) require us to notice and respond to what is delightful, excellent, enjoyable, to work well done, to food well cooked, etc.

It is appreciation that makes a relationship strong enough to accommodate differences and disagreements. Thinkers and researchers in many different fields have reached similar conclusions. Healthy relationships need a core of mutual appreciation.

Expressing more appreciation is probably the most powerful and rewarding of the steps described in this project, and it is one of the most demanding.

To express gratitude in a meaningful way, a person needs to actually feel grateful, and that often involves looking at a person or situation from a new angle. Expressing appreciation involves both an expressive action and an inner attitude. My hope for this chapter is that it will help to explore and express more appreciation in your life and savour the rich rewards it will bring.

Appreciating Your Way Through Difficult Times

Considered on a wider level, part of the problem of suffering and oppression is that people who are oppressed tend to become obsessed with the source of their suffering. Whether the oppressing force is mounting debt, an alcoholic parent, a serious illness or traumatic relationship, the oppressor tends to become the central feature in the person's life story. In this context, the practice of gratitude can be seen as a deep resistance to having one's life taken over.

Moments of gratitude, and expressing more appreciation for one another, do not have to mean that we are saying everything in life is just fine. Quite the contrary, in opening ourselves to experience even the smallest delight and gratitude we can be gathering strength to change what needs to be changed in our lives.

Ultimately, it is even possible to give thanks for one's troubles. More growth is experienced through painful experiences than joyful ones. The difficulties of our lives, after all, challenge us to become deeper people, more aware and more compassionate. We would not grow without them. I doubt that it is productive to preach to others that they should be more grateful for their painful challenges. This lesson is best taught by our own example. By practicing gratitude in many small ways, we can learn from our own life experience how to beyond our pain and suffering.

A romantic wedding scene set against a stunning coastal backdrop. In the foreground, a bride in a white gown and a groom in a blue suit are captured in a tender embrace, their faces close together. The bride's long veil flows in the breeze. To their right, a white church with a large, prominent dome topped with a cross stands on the cliffside. The church has several arched windows and a smaller dome in the background. The sea stretches out behind them, with dark, silhouetted islands and a small, isolated island visible in the distance under a clear, bright sky. In the bottom right corner, vibrant pink flowers add a splash of color to the scene.

Appreciate The Moment . .

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Here we explore one possible way of expressing appreciation more proactively, consciously and with more clarity.



Perception Cycle Exercise

Exploring the appreciation process

The most effective form of appreciation I have experienced involves a three-part process.

1. Identify the “sense” that experienced the appreciation
2. Pinpoint the feeling you experience
3. Identify the reason for that feeling, the “because”

Sense	Feeling	Because
When I saw the flowers	<i>I felt so grateful to you</i>	They reminded me of how kind you are to me
When I tasted the pasta	<i>I felt so proud of you</i>	Of how good you are at cooking
When I heard you reading the kids the story	<i>I felt so happy</i>	I know how much the kids love hearing you tell stories
When you bought me that xxxxx	<i>I felt so appreciated</i>	You put so much thought into buying me an original gift that meant something to me
When you called me	<i>I felt so relieved and happy</i>	I had been worried about you
When I saw you looking so stunningly beautiful tonight	<i>I felt overwhelmed</i>	It reminded me of how proud I am of how well you look after yourself
When you just sat and listened to my problems without saying a word	<i>I felt reassured and loved for myself</i>	You didn't judge or condemn me, you showed unconditional love

The significant element of three part appreciation is that the appreciator shares the details of her or his experience of the other person's action. These are quite different statements than saying "You are wonderful!", "You are such a great guy.", "You are the greatest cook in the world.", "You are so beautiful." and so on. Although such statements sound like the highest praise, there can be a big gap between what they intend to express and how they are actually received by others. Here are some reasons why.

Firstly although these are positive judgments, they still put the recipient in the position of “being judged” and the praise giver in the position of judge, which is not necessarily the way you intended. Many people have experienced an unhappy lifetime of being judged by others, sometimes harshly, sometimes erratically, with the effect of making all judgments an unpleasant experience.

Secondly, notice how in the "You are so beautiful" type statements the person doing the appreciating has disappeared. These are actually very impersonal statements. There is no "I feel" to anchor the feelings and give personal meaning to the appreciative feeling. One popular song by the Hollies said it better by saying "Sometimes... all I need is the air that I breathe and to love you," which would bring the listener much closer to the speaker's experience. This is a moving statement of appreciation because it connects the "I" with the "you" very creatively in the same sentence.

And finally, "You are wonderful" type statements are often vague and may lack descriptive richness and meaning. The person being appreciated has to do a lot of mental work trying to figure out exactly what about them is being appreciated. It would be more informative if I were to say something like "I love the way you take care of your figure." or "I love the way you show so much love" By comparison, you can hear how the three part appreciations say much more than that.

I hope these ideas, examples and arguments have intrigued you about the possibilities of expressing deeper appreciation to the important people in your life, in the universe that sustains us all, and for all the simple things that could delight us if we let them. Part of that process involves seeing with new eyes, standing back from the struggles and troubles of everyday life and making time and space to notice what is good, healthy and delightful.

The reward for all this effort will be that the people you like will really understand **WHY** you like them. You will not always need the three part method, but mastering it to the point where you can produce them sincerely at a moment's notice, to the point where you truly "know it by heart," will greatly expand your vocabulary of appreciation with the natural consequence of increased happiness in your life and the lives of those you appreciate most.

What does it for you? What ‘floats your boat?’

One of my passions is photography. Oftentimes, I am appreciating an image I am framing in my viewfinder so deeply, I almost forget to press the shutter!

I hope you enjoy the images, my appreciation of moments in time captured in this chapter, as much as I was thrilled taking them.



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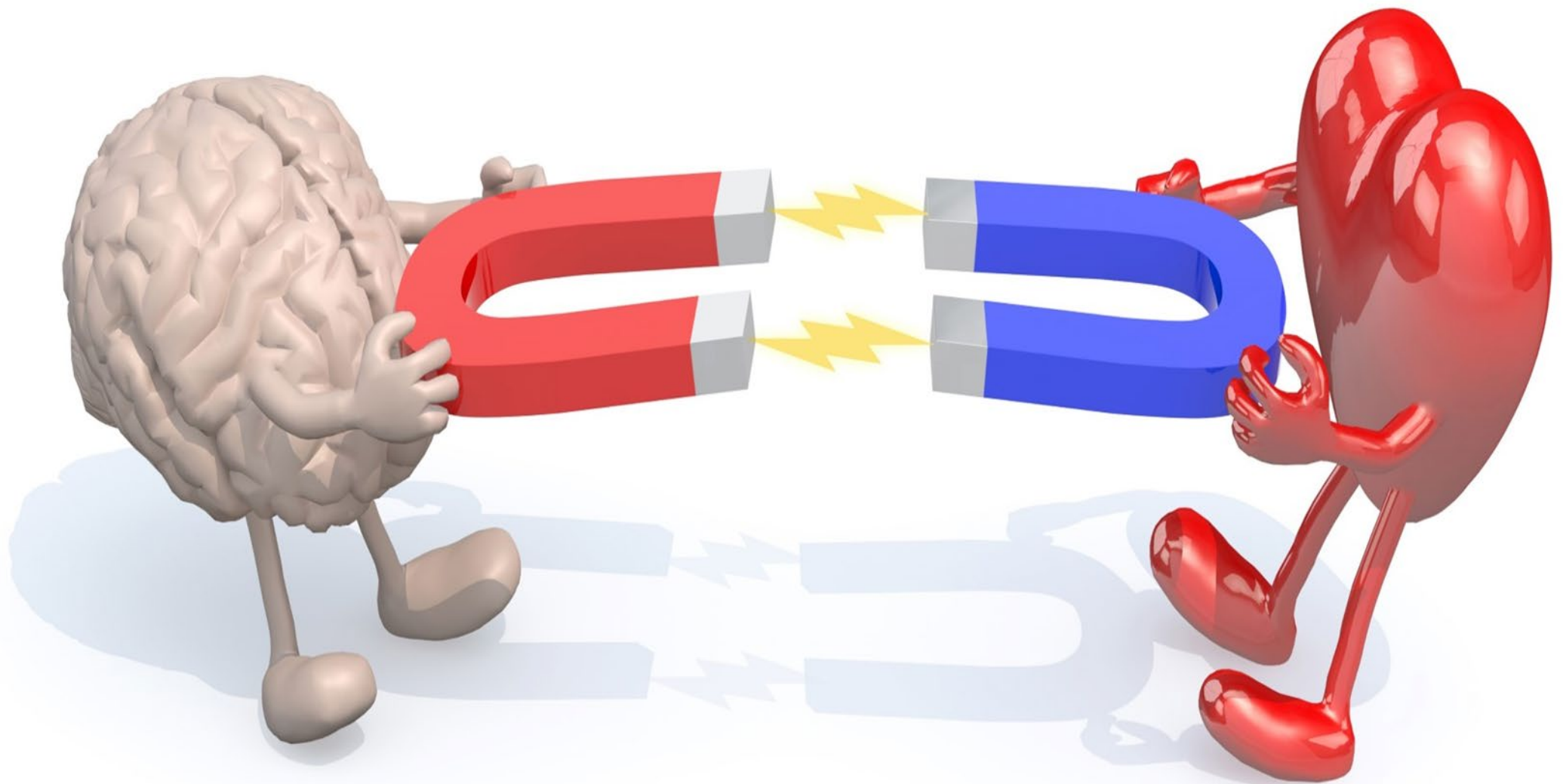




Coming up in the next section

THE POWER OF ATTRACTION

Armed with the immense combined power of the chapters up to this point , you are now ready to understand the greatest life changer of them all, the power of attraction. Learn how to attract more states of happiness and repel states that have led to all of your unhappiness.



THE POWER OF ATTRACTION

7 – The Power of Attraction

The Law of Attraction transfers energy from the spiritual to the physical. Your own thoughts and desires begin the process by attracting energy and biologically transferring that energy into form.



The greatest teachers this world has ever known have told us that the law of attraction is the most powerful law known to mankind. Great thinkers and philosophers have referred to it over and over again, so many wise words were uttered generations before the scientific advancements we have seen in recent years.



Your thoughts are energy vibrating at a speed determined by the level of emotional intensity you are feeling about the thought. The more excited, or fearful you are, the more rapidly your thoughts emanate out from you and attract similar people and situations back into your life.

Hundreds of books have been written about the law of attraction. Mainstream religions including Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam have all referred to it in their writings. illustrious characters from history, such as Shakespeare, Beethoven, great thinkers like Plato and Socrates, Emerson and Hugo have all shared it in their teachings. Such credence is now given to its power, that many people world-wide believe it is at the core of understanding human nature.

World renowned respected speakers and authors such as Brian Tracy and Rhonda Byrne refer to the law of attraction, when they explain that we are all living magnets, attracting people and experiences into our lives that are in harmony with our most dominant thoughts.

Have you ever noticed that the happy people you know seem to attract other happy people? A wealthy person seems to attract more money through creative ideas and opportunities. You may know of people who created massive wealth, lost it all, and within a short time regained it again. Whether they were aware of it or not, in the first instance, these people created wealth because their dominant thoughts focused on wealth. All or part of the reason for their losing it, was as a result of fearful thoughts of losing their wealth being allowed to replace their dominant thoughts of prosperity. Only when they replaced their poverty conscious dominant thoughts with thoughts that attracted wealth, were they able to create situations and opportunities that restored their position.

You are the person you are, in the place that you presently find yourself, with all that you have, because you attracted everything into your life, especially because of your thoughts.

Your friends, family, relationships, job, problems and opportunities have all been attracted to you because of your habitual way of thinking in each area.

Attraction works everywhere, ALL the time. You can have more, be more and do more because you can change the way you think and the person you are. You can discipline yourself by keeping your thoughts on what you do want and refusing to think about what you don't want. The more you think of yourself

and you're your life as uniquely blessed and important, the more you attract to yourself the ideas, opportunity and people that will make your dreams come true.

Remember the chapter on energy and the example of sympathetic resonance? If you have two grand pianos in a room and strike the note C on one piano, you will find that the C string on the other piano is vibrating at the same rate of vibration as the first. Ever wondered why you struck up instant rapport with someone? Well, by the same principle, you attract, meet and become involved with people and situations that are vibrating in harmony with your own dominant thoughts and emotions.

How many times have you been thinking about a friend and then suddenly, the phone rings and it's the person you were thinking about! You may decide to do something and immediately start getting ideas and assistance. You attract harmonious people and experiences like a magnet.

As you look around at every area of your life, positive or negative, you will see that your entire world is of your own making. And the more emotion you attach to a thought, the greater will be the rate of vibration and the more rapidly you will attract people and situations in harmony with that thought into your life.

Don't hold yourself back because you don't know how to get from where you are to where you want to be. It's not necessary for you to have all the answers before you begin. As long as you're clear about what you want and the kind of people you want to be associated with you'll draw the events and people into your life.



Have you ever started thinking about something you were unhappy about, and the more thought you gave it, the worse it got? That is because the law of attraction is completely neutral. It can help you or cause you more pain, it all comes down to the dominant thoughts you allow to occupy your mind. Like attracts like remember, so the more thoughts of the same "flavour" you permit to roam around in your mind, the more you will attract.



*Sow a thought and you reap an act;
Sow an act and you reap a habit;
Sow a habit and you reap a character;
Sow a character and you reap a destiny.*



You can have, be do more because you can change the person you are by substituting your negative dominant thoughts with more constructive ones. You can discipline yourself by keeping your thoughts on what you want and refusing to think about what you don't want.

- **There is more than enough** prosperity, wealth, abundance, goodness, in the universe for everyone on this planet.
- Your thoughts are like magnetic orders to the universe. If you say to yourself, “I’m never going to find someone to love”, that is the order that the universe takes from you and that is **what you will get**.
- You don’t necessarily have to know how things that you want will come about. You simply have to know what you want, ask for it, believe that it **WILL** come about and then receive it. **To BELIEVE** is the key here.
- Negative thoughts yield negative circumstances in your life.
- Positive thoughts yield positive circumstances in your life.
- You have to feel good about all of this. If you feel like changing your thought patterns and being positive is a chore, then it won’t happen. You have to **want this**, believe it and feel good about it.
- **Gratitude is the key** to having abundance in your life. You can only get new things when you are grateful for the things in your life that you already have.

When we vibrate at a higher frequency we close the gap between our physical being and our spirit. When the gap gets smaller we feel more love and we have less fear. Everything we desire flows to us more easily.

We are not so much matter as we are energy particles. We are energy particles vibrating at various frequencies. We create all the form around us through the law of attraction. When we send out energy in our thoughts, we attract energy back to us that is like energy.

Thoughts are energy. Quantum Physics says that all that exists in the physical and non-physical realm are particles of energy that react and rearrange in accordance with our thoughts and expectations.

Thoughts: The secret of attraction is that you create your reality by what you think and by what you feel. Everything is vibrational energy, including your thoughts and you attract those things that you are in vibrational resonance with. Your vibration is your feeling. It is your thoughts and feelings that attract your experiences. The more you experience the “feeling” of having what you want, the more you will have it. Higher vibrations and feelings is the means by which your desires will materialise more freely. The more positive feelings you can experience about yourself and your desires, the easier and faster you'll experience your desires spontaneously manifesting into your world.

Emotions: Emotions help you create your reality. When you believe in something, love and cherish it, you can create it more freely. You have the power to magnetically attract anything your heart desires. If there is anything you want to create more of, focus upon it. Whatever you turn your attention to, you will create. What we give out, we get back. The energy you give out is the results you get. Imagine what your life would be like if your mind could always be focused on thoughts that were filled with joy, peace, love, abundance and feeling successful! Whenever you feel good, you are in vibrational harmony with your desires.

Emotion is energy and energy attracts like energy. Your feelings and emotions create your reality. That is why it’s vital to choose songs and music to listen to, that cause you to feel as you would when you are experiencing your desires as reality. If you listen to songs and music that cause you to feel feelings that are

not consistent with experiencing your desires those feelings attract those conditions into your life. The same principle applies to the company you keep, the television shows that you choose to watch, the materials that you read and the things you talk about. Choose to engage in things that generate in you, the feelings that represent the experiences you want. Be careful what you allow yourself to believe and think about with emotion . . . whatever you consistently think and feel about, you will draw into your life as if by magnetism.

In short, you attract your own experiences, good and bad. Of course you can allow yourself to experience every kind of feeling just for the experience of it. Listening to sad songs of lost love and watching heart breaking movies sometimes helps us to cherish the positive and happy things in life a little more. It's ok to engage in such things some of the time. Just make sure that your dominant emotional experiences are in accordance to experiencing what you actually desire.

Faith: When you really have faith about something, you feel it. Faith is a feeling that has a vibration that attracts. A person with a higher vibration will manifest their desires more easily, freely and effectively than someone who experiences a lower vibration. Our vibrations go up and down with our moods throughout the day. That is why it is important to be conscious of how we are feeling and keep consciously choosing to feel appreciative, loving and positive. If you did nothing else but ask yourself, 'How do I feel right now?', and keep bringing yourself back into feeling good, everything else would fall into place.

Vibrational Energy of Specific Feelings: Remember how we learned in the Energy Chapter, that appreciative feelings have a positive effect on our vibrational energy?

The following are examples of feelings and attitudes emit a higher vibrational frequency that resonates with your positive desires and attract them freely:

- Happiness
- Joy
- Bliss
- Passion
- Trust
- Courage
- Appreciation
- Compassion
- Gratitude
- Awareness
- Kindness
- Love
- Peace
- Admiration
- Acceptance
- Freedom
- Certainty
- Confidence
- Faith
- Optimism
- Hope

The following feelings and attitudes emit a lower vibrational frequency that attracts negative events and push your desires away:

- Condemnation
- Guilt
- Worry
- Doubt
- Disappointment
- Resentment
- Fear
- Passionless
- Insecurity
- Doubt
- Hesitation
- Mistrust
- Jealousy
- Sadness
- Anger
- Ignorance
- Impatience
- Denial
- Despair
- Take for granted

It is almost impossible to achieve any type of success with negative feelings. You have to constantly fight and push them out of your awareness. Nothing comes easily. Anything you might gain in that way won't last. On the other hand, feelings of higher vibrations attract success almost effortlessly. Of course you still have got to do something. However you don't have to force anything. You go with the flow and your intuition leads you to opportunities and people you might never have experienced or met.

There are three main states of vibration that you can resonate at.

The lowest is the state of unhappiness.

In this state you feel depressed, overwhelmed, bored, angry, heavy, helpless and so on. Your world is full of rain and darkness, and that is what you tend to create.

The middle is the state of monotony.

In this state, you operate on automatic pilot. You just do things because you should do them. You are like a robot that is following orders. The world appears to be pretty cloudy and boring. When you operate predominantly at this frequency, you tend to create more of the same old thing.

The highest is the state of joy.

At this frequency, you feel fully alive and on fire. You are excited about everything that comes your way, and you are in the flow. Your world is full of sunshine, and good cheer. You operate from inspiration, and desire. When you operate at this frequency, you naturally attract your heart's desires.

You can control your feelings with your thoughts. Positive thought and feeling is high vibration. What you resonate, you accumulate. You can still make progress even when your vibrations are low but it would not be as quick, easy and rewarding as it would be when your vibrations are high. Keep your vibrations high to manifest what you want freely in life. Anything in motion will continue in motion, unless an opposing force emerges to neutralize it. Feeling positive emotions means you are allowing your desires to flow towards you without resistance.

You can choose to be happy by choosing to think happy, positive thoughts. Focus on what you are happy about and appreciative of. **ASK** for what your heart truly desires. Imagine **RECEIVING** it and then imagine the pleasure you would feel if your desire is a reality now. Allow yourself to **FEEL** the pleasure, excitement, exhilaration, joy, gratitude and happiness now. Whenever you feel good or happy, you become a powerful magnet to rapidly attract your desire.

Whenever you think or do anything that causes you to feel even the slightest bit better than how you were feeling a moment ago, you will cancel out whatever negative energy you were generating before. Every moment is a new beginning and you can use it to create reality afresh and anew with full power always. When you think of something that you do not like, then in that moment think of something else that you are happy about to neutralize the negativity and turn it into a positive.

Sometimes negative feelings are a cause for action if they are valid. To deal with your feeling of fear, worry and doubt in the moment, simply think about what you are going to do about what you are thinking and then let go, or do it immediately if you can, so that your mind can rest on the issue. Be happy and your situation will automatically change for the better.

- Fear is low vibration and excitement is high vibration
- Failure is low vibration and success is high vibration.
- Like vibrations attract, opposite ones repel.
- When you fear failure, you attract it towards you.
- When you fear success, you push it away.
- When you are excited about what you do, you become more likely to succeed and less likely to fail.
- The difference between fear and excitement is joy.
- Your true desires are high vibration.
- When your emotional vibrations are high, you attract and manifest your true desires more freely.
- When your emotional vibrations are low, you attract and manifest things that you do not truly desire.
- Your true desires are the state of the source which is abundance, freedom, love, power, awareness and total success in everything.

When your vibrations are consistently high, you will attract the object of your desires more freely. The more enthused, excited, and emotionally charged you are about something and the better it feels, the faster you'll see it show up in your life. Higher vibrations are connected to divine life and they will attract all the good things you divinely desire.

Consistency and frequency of vibration is key to attracting your true hearts desire. In this chapter and in the chapters on energy and appreciation, you have seen how appreciative thoughts encourage higher rates of vibration which in turn, mean higher speeds of motion of energy.

The materialisation of your hearts desires, is energy moving into form. Things take longer to materialise on the physical plane because it exists at a lower rate of vibration.

Our thoughts materialise as things instantaneously on the mental plane, before manifesting correspondingly on the physical plane. When you allow yourself to experience higher feelings consistently and consecutively, over a period of time, your world will become a much better, wonderful place.

Happiness is a choice, you can choose to start attracting happiness in any moment, why not right now?



**The
Magical
Power of
Attraction**



Coming up in the next section

THE POWER OF GOALS

Harness the combined powers to focus in on what you really want to be, have and do in your life, with the incredible power of goal setting. Release your fears and set goals to turn your dreams of happiness into reality.



8 – The Power of Goals

*“A man or woman without a goal is like a ship without a rudder.
Each will drift and not drive. Each will end up on the beaches of despair, defeat and despondency.”
Zig Ziglar, “See You At The Top” 1974*

What Are Goals - Why Have Them?

A goal is a target to aim for, something that when achieved will enhance your life in some way. It is a statement of positive intent, something you are absolutely committed to, and something you work towards by taking daily action.

Can you imagine a football match that had no goalposts or nets, or a race with no finish line? Simplistic perhaps, but it wouldn't work would it? Without the goals or finish line, the whole purpose of the match or race is lost. Without goals, your life lacks purposeful direction – or at the very least it's extremely diluted.

Goals, quite simply are :

- What we want to BE
- What we want to HAVE
- What we want to DO

Which at this point in time:

- We are NOT
- We do not HAVE
- We are not DOING

The purpose of this final chapter is to bring together all that you have learned before, combined with your own experience and knowledge, to give you tools to turbo-boost your goal setting ability, so that you may more purposefully attract what you want into your life that will enhance your experience of happiness.

A valuable starting point is to revisit the roles and areas section of the chapter on human needs. Look at where your shortfalls were. This should help you to determine what you want to be, have and do that will bridge the gap from where you are now, to where you ideally would want to be.

It is important from the outset that you be as specific and detailed as you can regarding what you want. With a definite, specific goal, you can more accurately visualise exactly what it is that will make you happy, and more likely to attract it into your life with the appropriate action.

As the quote at the beginning states, without goals you drift through life, effectively giving up control and therefore, allowing other people or outside events to shape your destiny. This can in turn lead to frustration, anger, stress and even depression. Would you rather create your own destiny, or be a part of someone else's?

While many people have goals relating to their work, few spend time setting goals for all the other areas of their lives.

Some people will associate having goals with material possessions i.e. a mansion with a pool, lots of money, a sports car, designer clothes etc. However for people who are not motivated by such possessions, the mere idea of setting them puts them in conflict, because they may not be aware that goal setting is holistic, covering all elements of life. There's nothing wrong with material goals, but in order to achieve that balanced life we talked of earlier in the project, goals need to be set in all areas, for example, family, friends, social, health, spiritual, financial, health and well-being, significant other and physical environment.

This may be your first foray into goal setting or you may have tried before without success. We will look at the common reasons why people fail in their efforts to set and accomplish goals later. By deliberately placing goals toward the end of the project, we have provided ourselves with the best opportunity to acquire as much contributory information as we can before sitting down to complete this life changing exercise.

Use the Power Of Your Subconscious Mind To Set Your Goals

Your subconscious mind cannot distinguish between truth and fantasy, or right and wrong – it simply accepts verbal input from your conscious mind as absolute truth regardless of the reality. It repeats and replays the commands you give it. All you need to do therefore, is convince it that your desire already exists.

We have explored the power of the human mind in an earlier chapter and you might wish to revisit those pages to boost your efforts in goal setting.

It is estimated that the average person has between 30,000 to 60,000 thoughts a day. Please understand that every thought you have is either moving you towards your goals and who you want to become or it moves you away from them. There is no neutral position. Every thought counts. That's quite frightening when you realise that of those 30,000 to 60,000 daily thoughts, approximately 85% are repeats from the past – and of that 85%, through our conditioning and lack of prior thought control, more than three quarters of them are negative!

The subconscious mind is like fertile soil – it will accommodate and germinate any seed you consistently plant there, be it positive or negative! This adds new meaning to the term “Be careful what you think about!”. As they say in computer language “garbage In – garbage out”. If negative seeds are planted consistently, you mustn't be surprised when negativity is what comes back. Happily, the same can be said for positive seeds. If you plant positivity, that's what you will get back.

The steps towards effecting positive, permanent change are simple – that is not to say it's easy; it requires consistent daily work. Left unattended, the human mind works within your own personal “comfort zone”, and unless you train it through the habit of thought, it will continue to feed back what it always has – and steer your life in the direction it has always gone.

“If you keep on thinking the same things in the same way, you'll keep on getting the same results.”

Feed your mind with the idea that what you desire already exists, and it will heighten your awareness to opportunities around you that are consistent with your goals. Attach emotion to the thoughts of desire and you will amplify those vibrational thoughts of attractive energy to bring about your desires that much faster. Attraction into your life of circumstances, ideas, events and people that harmonise with your most dominant thoughts and desires then comes naturally. Remember :

“You become what you think about most of the time”.

Types of goals

So, we've established what goals are and why it's important to have them – it's also important to have different types of goals. Why? Quite simply because we have different areas of our lives to balance, and some journeys take longer than others.

For example, clearing the clutter in your living room is a goal that should take no more than a few days (one hopes!), whereas leaving law school with a goal to becoming a fully-fledged High Court barrister or Queens Counsel, will take a number of years.

The best way to split goals is :

- Short term (1-3 months)
- Medium term (3 months to 1 year)
- Long term (1 – 3 years)

That's not to say that any goal which takes longer than three years is not to be considered – it is. You need to really think about your long term vision for your future, because one day you'll arrive there and unless you are working on shaping your future right now, those goals and visions will always remain somewhere out in the distance. These goals need to be ‘chunked down’ into time frames starting from today.

Goals into plans of action

Working backwards from your year three target, establish what needs to be done in year 3, then year 2, then this year. From your list of what needs to be achieved this year, break it down into what needs to be done in the fourth quarter, the third quarter, the second quarter, and then in the next three months.

From your three month list, break it down into what needs to be done in the third month, the second month, and then this month. From your ‘this month’ list break it down into what needs to be done in the fourth, third, second and finally this week.

From your goal list, schedule your daily tasks, write them in a weekly planner or diary and tick them as they are accomplished. Any unaccomplished goals should be transferred forward into the next period. Do not punish yourself for goals you haven’t been able to achieve yet, learn from the experience and move on.

Ensure that your short term goals are feeder goals to your medium term targets, and likewise your medium term goals are feeder goals to your long term targets.

Goals can be separated into:

- Go up goals
- Give up goals
- Deficiency goals

Go Up Goals

These are primarily growth goals, something you wish to attain – a new job, promotion, personal development, studying new subjects, becoming an author. They are goals that when achieved will move you upwards in your life – towards being the person you wish to become, doing the things you want to do and having what you desire in life.

In an ideal world, everyone you know would support you in these goals, but the sad fact is that your friends and family may try to prevent you attaining your goals (sometimes knowingly). People who know you may either not want to see you fail or get hurt, saying such things like “Don’t bother trying, then you won’t have to deal with failing”, or “Are you sure?”

Indeed, some may deliberately or secretly wish to sabotage your efforts, because they actually have a vested personal interest in keeping you where you are now. They could become jealous of you achieving the things you set out to do, or perhaps couldn’t cope with the dynamics of a friendship where you have clear boundaries and don’t allow them to influence what you do any more. Some will be happier with your less accomplishing self because they feel threatened or insecure by your newfound success and achievement.

The moral is very simple – be extremely selective about who you choose to share your ‘go-up’ goals with. Share them with people who absolutely have your best interests at heart, and are willing to support, help and motivate you in the achievement of your ‘go-up’ goals.

Give Up Goals

These encompass such things as becoming a non smoker, losing weight, reducing alcohol intake, excessive spending, victim or caretaker type behaviours – basically ridding yourself of destructive habits.

It's a good idea to let everyone know your 'give-up' goals, or ideally a friend who shares the goal so you can encourage each other. If you want to give up smoking, the more people you know, the more likely it is that someone will be around to keep you to your goal-plan when you get the urge to light up.

Deficiency Goals

These are the ones that only become goals when something is taken away from you, or when you realise not having this has an extreme detrimental effect on your life and happiness. For example – your health. Many people take their health for granted, eating and drinking exactly what they want, not taking supplements, not exercising, not getting regular medical check-ups etc. The attitude is, "I'll start my fitness campaign tomorrow" and tomorrow never comes. But one day the heart attack comes, and assuming they survive, health becomes their no 1 priority – it never got a look in before!

Five Essential Elements Of Goal Achievement

You will have come across the mnemonic **SMART** if you have been introduced to goal setting previously. It is used extensively in training sessions and means that when setting goals they should be:

S pecific

M easurable

A greed or action oriented

R ealistic

T ime phased

Make each goal **SPECIFIC** – not "I want to be richer" – how much money specifically £100,000 in investments and £50,000 in cash? What is rich to you may be totally different for someone else. "I want to end world hunger" is not a specific goal whereas "I see myself working for an international relief agency" is a specific goal.

Set **MEASURABLE** goals. This is easy with goals such as weight loss or financial goals but "I want to be a better salesperson" is unquantifiable. What does "better" mean to you? "I am becoming a better salesperson who will meet and exceed the target of a 10% increase in the coming financial year is **SPECIFIC** and **MEASURABLE**.

S

- **Specific**: State exactly what you want to accomplish (Who, What, Where, Why)

M

- **Measurable**: How will you demonstrate and evaluate the extent to which the goal has been met?

A

- **Achievable**: stretch and challenging goals within ability to achieve outcome. What is the action-oriented verb?

R

- **Relevant**: How does the goal tie into your key responsibilities? How is it aligned to objectives?

T

- **Time-bound**: Set 1 or more target dates, the “by when” to guide your goal to successful and timely completion (include deadlines, dates and frequency)

Goals need to be **AGREED** or **ACTION-ORIENTED**. “If you fail to plan, you’re planning to fail” and if you don’t take action, it will never happen.

Decide what goals are **REALISTIC**. Realistic, does not mean something that you would ordinarily do – that is not a goal. If goals are not challenging, they don’t stretch you, the feeling of real achievement doesn’t happen, and you get bored easily. However if they are virtually impossible, you may become disheartened at your perceived lack of progress and fulfil your own prophecy of “I never achieve my goals.”

There is nothing to say that you cannot become a millionaire, but to set a goal to be one by next Monday when you’ve got £5 in your pocket today is not realistic – (unless your numbers come up on the Lottery, and then that’s not a goal within your control, that’s relying on Lady Luck!)

If you’re a 45 year old man, you will never be the youngest person to run the mile in under 4 minutes, however fit you are – and someone’s already done that anyway. You could however, set a goal to run a mile 10 seconds faster than you have before.

Goals need to be **TIME-PHASED**. Basically, you need to put dates next to when you want to have achieved your goal, and dates for milestones along the way. Be careful though, that the milestones do not become millstones around your neck. These target dates also feed into what needs to be done this month, this week, and today – and need to be written in your planner or diary.

12 elements for goal achievement

As well as the five elements already described, the following steps **must also be** incorporated:

1. **BE PASSIONATE** about your goal which must be personal. Live it, breathe it, taste it. Make it your 'Magnificent Obsession'. Thomas Edison was passionate about finding a way to produce incandescent light with the use of electricity. He did not give up. It is reputed that he was once asked how it felt to have failed 700 times. His reply was "I haven't failed, I've discovered 700 ways how not to do it".

2. Always state your goals in the **PRESENT TENSE** and in the **POSITIVE**. "I will give up smoking" is neither. 'Giving up' suggests the loss of something - regardless of whether it's healthy or not - and most smokers will on the whole claim categorically that they enjoy smoking. "I will" also suggests some date sometime in the future - the subconscious mind disregards this because it only accepts present tense information and it doesn't know when to 'deliver' for you.

You can effect subconscious change only by communicating in the language it understands, the present tense. This comes from the theory of cognitive dissonance, which states that when you hold two psychologically inconsistent thoughts, you experience dissonance, or a sense of tension and inharmonious feelings. The subconscious, in an attempt to reduce the discomfort of the conflicting messages, does everything it can to create the most recently imposed suggestions or self-talk.

Using present tense. You are telling to your subconscious mind to start working today.

A goal that is not written down is merely a wish. All the 'golden formulae' for goal-setting agree that your goals must be **WRITTEN DOWN**.

3. **Keep a GOAL JOURNAL.** This should contain each of your goals, together with the reasons why you want them, and how they will feed your Core Values. Allocate at least one page for each goal and date it at the top. Record your progress - this will show you where you started from, how far you've progressed, and where you still have to go.

Set aside a time and place every week to transfer your daily/weekly actions into your Goal Journal - this will keep you on track and keep you motivated when you realise just how far you have come. Choose a journal or folder that evokes passion, something that you want to use and handle regularly. Writing goals on scraps of paper gives the message that they are somehow unimportant - your subconscious will receive that message and act on it (or not, as the case may be).

REVIEW your goals and your progress regularly. Write a summary of your goals on a **GOAL CARD** which you carry with you always. Read your Goal Card every morning and every evening - if you do something regularly, at the same time, in the same way, it will soon become a habit.

Allocate time for this daily review session, think about your goals, see them in your mind as you read. Revisit your Goal Journal each week and record the progress made. If, during the week you have taken no action toward your goal, write **nothing** in big red letters. (If you have done nothing for more than one week, it's time to question the validity of your goal).

As time goes on, you may find you need to update one or more of your goals -your priorities may change. Make the necessary adjustments in your Goal Journal. Of course, the best update session of all is when you have achieved that which you set out to do and you can put a big tick next to it! Time now for a reward and to replace it with a new goal.

4. Use the Goal Journal to record the **AFFIRMATIONS** you will be using to re-train your subconscious. Affirmations are statements used to re-programme your subconscious mind. Remember the 4 'P's and make them:

- **POSITIVE**
- **PROVOKING EMOTION**
- **PRESENT TENSE**
- **PERSONAL**

Positive	As the mind thinks in pictures, it has difficulty processing a negatively stated goal. It's not possible for the mind to picture you not doing something and by using positive affirmations you shift the mind from concentrating on what you don't want to what you do want.
Provoking Emotion	The more feeling you blend with your self-talk, the faster it impacts your subconscious. Use words you wouldn't ordinarily use - passionate, bold and fun - that'll pique the interest of your subconscious mind! Make the affirmations emotionally relevant to you.
Present Tense	The language your subconscious mind understands is present tense - it doesn't understand or acknowledge the past or the future. Speak its language and it will understand - tell it consistently and it will act. Feed it with the idea that the condition you desire already exists. The most powerful words in the English language come after the words "I am". Use "ing" words such as receiving, deserving, acquiring - these are verbs conjugated in the present, suggesting that it is actually happening at this very moment "Now" is another good word to emphasise present tense.
Personal	Affirmations that you create yourself, which are personal to your life, values and goals are most effective. Until you get used to the language by all means borrow some, then edit to personalise them.

Just as reviewing your Goal Card daily will make it a habit, you need to get into the habit of saying your Affirmations daily. The more you feed your subconscious mind, the quicker it gets the message and starts to work in alignment with your goals. Use something you do every day as your trigger to repeat your affirmations e.g. in the shower, whilst shaving, while making the kids' sandwiches for school etc. You know what your daily routine is - find what works for you, but you **must do this**. Your mind responds to sensory input, so you can say them out loud, sing them, stand in front of a mirror and maintain eye contact with yourself while saying them, write them down as you say them, make a recording to play in your car or when exercising. Experiment and play with this to find the ideal mix. Whatever you choose to do, to reprogram your subconscious software, you need to be repeating each affirmation at least 10 times a day.

5. As your mind primarily thinks in pictures, use **VISUALISATIONS**. We are all capable of day-dreaming, using our imagination to conjure up pictures of what we'd like e.g. that date with the person you haven't quite had the courage to ask out yet, driving a brand new car, laying on a beach. When you know specifically what your goals are, take time to picture precisely what you want.

Make your vision as crisp, colourful, detailed and big as possible in your mind. Add in the sounds, smells and feelings associated with the vision. Engage all your senses, if you have a goal for a new car, take it for a test drive so when you visualise you can smell the leather, see the walnut dashboard, feel the response as you accelerate. Be very specific, for example, visualise a shiny black convertible Mercedes with cream leather interior and alloy wheels, not just a new car.

Once again, make visualisations a daily habit - have a specific time and place to totally relax and take yourself into your vision. Also throughout the day, take time out to daydream.

6. As well as writing your Goal Journal, you can create a **TREASURE MAP**. This is a visual representation of what it is you want to attract into your life. If you want to move to your ideal house, cut pictures out of magazines of exactly the sort of house you want, (or use photographs), the sort of garden you want, pictures from interior design magazines for the type of kitchen, bathroom etc you want. Use visual reminders of the amount of money you need to make this dream a reality - if you've ever received one of those pretend cheques from Readers' Digest, get it copied and enlarged. Keep your Treasure Map in full view so you will see it constantly.
7. Enlist the **SUPPORT** of people who can help you achieve. This could be working with a coach or buddying up with a like-minded friend(s) to meet regularly for update sessions to keep each other on track, encourage each other, and celebrate together.
8. Establish what **SKILLS TO ACQUIRE**. What do you need to be doing to become the person who will achieve your goals? Do you need to enrol in college, what books do you need to read, which seminars will you attend, will you join a networking group, see a style consultant etc?
9. Bearing in mind you are now telling your subconscious that you are already in possession of your desires by daily use of affirmations, visualisations, treasure maps, and always using the present tense, it's time to **ACT AS IF**. This basically means acting in a fashion that presents to yourself and the outside world that you are already the person you wish to become. This does not mean deceiving people, doing anything illegal or getting into debt by borrowing money to buy your dream car or house, or running up the credit card bill buying designer clothes if you do not have the wherewithal to make the repayments. It can mean acting confidently when meeting new people, using a Mont Blanc or gold pen instead of a Bic biro, using your money to buy one good, designer suit instead of cheap quality clothes.
10. You need to truly **BELIEVE** you are already successful before success becomes yours. Instead of the old saying "I'll believe it when I see it", change to "**I'll see it when I believe it**". If you don't seriously believe, then you will sabotage your own efforts.
11. When you **THINK** as a successful person thinks, **ACT** as a successful person acts, and **BELIEVE** you are successful, then as sure as the earth orbits the sun, you will **BECOME** successful.
12. Don't forget to **REWARD** yourself along the way to achieving your goals. Your Goal Journal will show how far you've come, it's up to you what the milestones are and the type of reward. If you're halfway to your ideal weight, going out for a slap-up meal is probably not how you'd celebrate, but going to the theatre or buying the latest novel by your favourite author could be. It's entirely up to you. This part of the process must not be missed out - it's what keeps you going when things get tough, and it's what makes it fun.

THE IMPORTANCE OF VALUES-BASED GOALS

No goal achieved will give you true fulfilment unless it is congruent with your personal values. It is imperative that you establish your hierarchy of values before contemplating setting goals in the relevant areas of your life.

There are many books, workshops etc on goal-setting and you may have your preferred method. Return to the section on values. Establishing core values is your first step before goal setting.

"You must intensely desire that which you seek i.e. love, because you will automatically attract to you that which you love. It is impossible to desire something strongly that is not congruent with your basic values in life as you cannot love that which you do not value".

Think of a salesperson who lists 'Family' at the top of their Values and 'Health' second. They have a goal of being the top salesperson in their field, earning £200,000 per annum. In order to achieve the goal, they choose to travel for 10 months of the year, working 14 hour days, eating fast food for lunch and business dinners with clients in the evening. When they are at home, they play golf with the MD and the rest of the time they sleep or watch TV. What conflict exists here?

Stephen Covey's quote of *"climbing to the top of the ladder of success then realising it's leaning against the wrong wall"* comes to mind.

Now go back to the **Values Chapter**, and if you haven't completed the exercise to establish your Core Values, do so now.

THE PATHWAY TO GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

And so we come to the PATHWAY to Goal Achievement. All that is written above is contained in the mnemonic **PATHWAY**:

P URPOSE

A TTITUDE

T RUST

H ONESTY

W AY FORWARD

A CTION

Y OU DESERVE IT!

Purpose

To live your life 'with purpose' means having goals that are congruent with your values, goals you have absolute passion for, your 'magnificent obsessions'.

Attitude

Everything to do with what you say in your self-talk, your affirmations, replacing limiting beliefs with positive belief statements.

Trust

You must first believe before you can become. Trust in the Universe, God, your higher self, and your ability to succeed.

Honesty

Be totally honest with yourself. Do you **really** want this and are you prepared to **do all that is necessary**? Are you being realistic in your time-frames? Is this really **your** goal, or someone else's? You must continue to work on your self-awareness on an on-going basis. If you've done nothing towards your goal for more than a week, is it still a valid goal?

Way forward

The Action Plan

- Establish your hierarchy of values.
- Establish areas in your life to set goals - short, medium and long-term.
- Create your Wish List.
- Start your Goal Journal.
- Write down your goals - present tense, positive and specific.
- Create your Goal Cards.
- Create your Affirmations - PPPP formula.
- Use visualisation techniques daily.
- Create your Treasure Map(s).
- 'Chunk down' into what needs to be done daily, weekly, monthly.
- Review your goals every day.
- Update your Goal Journal weekly.
- Set aside time each week to transfer your daily actions (for the following week) to your weekly planner.
- Enlist the support required.
- Decide what knowledge you need to acquire.
- Decide what character traits you need to develop.

Action

As the advertising slogan for Nike says, 'Just Do It'. All the planning in the world will not get you to achieve your goals unless you take consistent action in accordance with your plan. This is consistent use of your affirmations, visualisations, review structure - weekly sessions with your coach or 'goal-buddy', and 'acting as if'. Every little step you take builds on the last to create a cumulative growth effect, until before you realise it, you're taking giant strides.

Tony Robbins says; *"we overestimate what we can achieve in a year, and underestimate what we can achieve in a decade."*

You deserve it

Don't forget to reward yourself for your achievements. Set milestones along the way and celebrate!

The power of passion – a magnet for your goals

Let's explore a topic provides rocket fuel to living an authentic happy life and accomplishment of goals. We are talking about the power of passion.

Do you wake up every day feeling excited and eager to embrace whatever is in store for you - regardless of whether your day will be filled with exciting new possibilities or challenges for you to grow? Or are you more like the millions of people who live their lives in autopilot mode with hectic lifestyles that don't permit them opportunities to explore their dreams and experience true happiness?

People who live with passion have a strong sense of their identity, what they want, and what they're here to do. They live in the now and experience success, live joyfully, have fulfilling relationships, and enjoy miracles daily because they are living in alignment with their values, dreams and purposes. Passion is the driving force behind the reason you are here. It is the key to connecting to your spirit and discovering your divine purpose. It fills you with confidence, heals your wounds, guides you to be true to yourself and gives you the courage to succeed in spite of any obstacles.

Everyone has a reason for being here - especially during this crucial time in history as we are in the process of giving birth to a new world. Each one of us has the potential to make a difference by becoming whole, connecting with our spirit, and living with passion. Do you experience:

- Filling your day with activities you have to do rather than want to do
- Feelings of being overwhelmed or frustrated by life
- Feelings of general discontent, anger, hopelessness, pain, worry etc
- Going through the motions of life with little satisfaction
- Feeling drained of energy, always tired or recovering from illness
- The same nagging problems repeating over and over again in your life
- Drug, alcohol, and cigarette addictions, eating disorders, excessive spending

Any or all of the above are symptoms of disconnected passion.

Some people even have everything they ever desired yet still feel as though it's not enough and that something is missing. These feelings of discontent can be vague or it can feel like you're out of control and they will not subside until you discover why you are here and begin to take steps to live the life you are meant to live.

Don't just "pretend" to be busy - be passionately absorbed in your life! Don't just say you're "not available," be available when you are able to be available, because you have other priorities in your life, and waiting by the phone is not one of them!

When you act from your passion, you do not need to call on your reserves for energy or initiative.

Causes and Cures for Lost Passion

There are many causes for lost passion. Let's take a little time to review some of the most common causes and what you can do to combat them. Work long or unusual hours and after a short while, you will feel as if your job runs you. You'll keep your passion at a high level if you work early or work late hours - but not both.

Another cause for lost passion is becoming "too busy" by filling your day with non productive tasks. You engage in a lot of "busy work." Don't procrastinate by putting things aside for tomorrow that could be completed today. Eliminate or delegate! Rekindle your passion by shedding non productive endeavours and delegating low-priority responsibilities to others.

Just as too much work can drain your passion, so can too much free time! Too much time on your hands causes your priorities to become distorted. You can avoid this by scheduling meetings into clusters for greater efficiency.

Stress is a major passion drain. However, much stress is self-imposed. You begin fighting the "solo battle." Your "self talk" includes statements like, "Why do I have to do it all? ... Nobody cares but me! ... Can't anyone do anything right but me?"

DON'T QUIT

*When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all uphill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.
For life is queer with its twists and turns,
As every one of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about,
When he might have won if he'd stuck it out.
Success is just failure turned inside out,
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt.
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far.
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit,
It's when things seem worst that you must not quit!*

You think no one else knows how tough it is. Combat the loss of passion that comes from carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders by sharing that weight with others. Develop a partnership with others with whom you can develop creative strategies and solutions to reduce your stress.

Planning for passion includes planning your activity. Take a serious look at your life, see what it looks like. If you've lost your passion, it may be that life has become routine for you. You've gotten tired of "the same old thing." Add excitement by adding new activities. Most importantly, get involved in something bigger than yourself. Create a purpose for your life that includes more than just earning a living. You will eagerly put your heart and soul into a purpose you love and believe in.

Commit to Passion

Is passion missing in your life? Do you want to bring it back? If so, commit to start with your heart. Do not deny the feelings that arouse passion within you. Accept them and move forward with them. Have **big** dreams. Don't let anyone else tell you what your dreams ought to be. Your dreams are yours alone. Henry David Thoreau wrote:

"When one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavours to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours."

You are capable of greatness and entitled to it, but you and only you can bring it about. By embracing your passion and committing to your passions, you are vowing to take control of your life, and to create a self-fulfilling future of happiness and fulfilment.

Passion is what life is all about.

People are attracted to our glowing energy and passion.

People are attracted to our highest and best. When you display "need" or sadness, or clinging, or even an unconscious attitude of seeming as if you must have their attention, or togetherness, this sends off signals that are picked up as needy, clinging, desiring, as well as an unspoken energy that somehow you are less than complete without a certain person in your life. This is not attractive or desirable.

What kind of people are most attractive and desirable? Those that are radiating a glowing and genuine self-confidence; people who have a solid and authentic sense of self, people that radiate inner strength, dignity, self-respect, and passion. People that know who they are, why they are here, have clear boundaries, as well as healthy and authentic methods of personal communication. People with a backbone that can also be gentle. In short, people that are genuinely shining from within.

A diamond does not need another diamond to shine. When we “let go” of another person and genuinely carry on with passion about our life, we begin to glow or shine like a diamond. The other person somehow “senses” this, and “feels” our shining energy. Now you’re attractive, because you aren’t tugging any longer. You are glowing, and this is the reason the other person comes back – they truly find your glowing radiance attractive, admirable, and desirable.

The big news is that this cannot be faked, or played as a game. You can’t “try to get” another person and simultaneously be an independently glowing and radiant diamond. Your sense of self must be real, and your need for the other person truly has to be replaced with all that you create in your life, from the inside out that brings you authentic joy. People are not our possessions. We do not “own” anyone, we each belong to the universe. The more you “want” to be with the other person, the farther away you are going to push them. The greatest thing to “want” is personal freedom and a renewal of mind that authentically changes your view to one where you have a deep appreciation for who you are, along with a complete release of any self-judgment or recrimination, as well as releasing any judgment on the other person.

People are all diamonds deep within. The true nature of humanity is of light and goodness. Some people may just have different preferences, or they may have wounds from traumatic situations earlier in life where they took on self-protective methods to cope, and don’t really know how to be in a healthy relationship. So there cannot be blame, but only compassion. By understanding this, it can help to free you from pain if a relationship of any kind is not going according to your preferences. You have to live according to your preferences, and truly “let go” of trying to get another to see your perspective. People have to come to their own realisations in their own time. Sometimes they may never come to realisations, or grow at the rate you would like them to. However, you are not in this life to try to get others to see your view. All you can do is live your view for you, and set an example by being your highest and best, as well as seeing that you are here to make a difference in this world, however large or small.

Always say “yes” to what the universe is showing you, and realise that there is a gift of growth and awakening behind any seeming negative situation. Do not fight it, but welcome and embrace it. Then you will come to inner peace with it all, which is the greatest way a life can be lived – with inner peace.

Be grateful if someone leaves your life, and thank him or her for any difference they have made. Once you view the situation as the gift that it is, you are truly free. This is an exhilarating feeling. Then, should fate or the course of life show you the return of someone you were once dearly close to, you can take it extremely slowly to see if you choose to open the door again.

Every choice must be made according to the genuine truth in your heart. Your choices must reflect your highest and best views for all concerned, while you maintain a solid sense of self, along with care for all others. Should someone return to you after you have parted, it is perfectly okay to let him or her know that you aren’t sure if you want to be together again. It is okay to wait, and carry on with your life, rather than rush into anything.

The Art of Living with PASSION

So, what are you passionate about - what do you care deeply about?

Though passion comes from the heart, living it is also an act of the will. Everyone can live with passion. Perhaps you're wondering how.

Look Inside. Your passion is as personal as your fingerprint. No one can thrust passion on you. Nor can it be conjured up. It's there, inside, just like your heartbeat. It's the thing or things that really matter to you, that you pound the table over.

Listen to Others. Receiving compliments and encouragement - believing and embracing them - can give us that extra push to pursue our passions.

Turn Pain Into Passion. Positive reinforcement isn't the only thing that fosters passion. In fact, many say it is born out of pain. It can be the pain of a life that seems to be going the wrong way.

Willing to Pay the Price. When you care deeply about something, that caring invokes commitment and risk. Grace is a dancer. The fluid grace of seemingly effortless movements is only achieved by spending half her life working out. "At 34, I've had to sacrifice a lot. Dancing gives me a wonderful sense of internal life." Grace also dances to "impart life and pleasure" to other people.

Her advice: "You have to live fully what you love doing. There are always obstacles in the path of what and who you really love. Barriers and difficulties. Everything comes for a reason, for us to grow and learn".

If you discover you're passionate about something you're not currently working at, do you have to disrupt your life to pursue your "new" passions? What about the constraints of time and money? Even the best things in life - relationships with family, children, loved ones - can have a way of sidelining our passion.

In the ebb and flow of life, one passion may fade, only for another to take its place.

That's how it has been for Grace. Over time however, marriage, pregnancy and financial constraints have kept her from pursuing her lifestyle with unbridled abandon. Still, she finds an outlet for her passion - at least for now - She enjoys encouraging her boys in their amateur dramatics, who, "If it brings me and my sons together," she says, "it means quality time and good parenting."

During this season of life, family is her main passion. Her own painful past heightened her desire to invest her best in her loving relationships. "I come from difficult relationships, so I try to make it balanced for my children. I spend quality time with them, teach them things they wouldn't learn on television".

"Someday, I'll get back to my other passions," says Grace. In the meantime, she dances with her children in the kitchen. She dreams of one day owning her own business. And she keeps her heart set on living passionately. "A lot of people have a stiff upper lip, especially women. It is important for your quality of life to have passions. You should let them out."

Compassion - A Powerful Doorway to Personal Growth

We often hear about needing to show compassion for others, but what about compassion for oneself? The next few paragraphs are about the problems that occur when we are compassionate toward others but not toward ourselves.

What if there was one choice you could make that would change everything in your life for the better? Actually, there is. It's the choice to move out of judgment and into compassion for yourself and others.

Compassion is defined as a deep caring for the pain of others, often accompanied by a desire to help. There is nothing that feels more wonderful and comforting than experiencing another's compassionate response to our painful feelings and experiences.

However, it's interesting that compassion is never defined in terms of oneself. Yet, compassion is one of the greatest gifts we can give to ourselves. In fact, when we give compassion to others but not to ourselves, we often end up feeling alone, worn out, and uncared for.

A lack of compassion for oneself and others is a major cause of inner and relationship unhappiness. In terms of personal growth, if you were to just focus on making compassion your highest priority - both for yourself and for others - you would find yourself progressing toward happiness, peace and joy more rapidly than you can imagine.

We move into compassion for ourselves when we know that we have very good reasons for our feelings and behaviour, and into compassion for others when we know that others also have very good reasons for their feelings and behaviour. These good reasons are the fears and false beliefs that we have absorbed from our growing up years that create our painful feelings and our defensive behaviour.

Moving into compassion for yourself starts with noticing your self-judgment. Judgment is the opposite of compassion. When you judge yourself, you are telling yourself that you are wrong or bad for your feelings or behaviour, rather than that you have good reasons. Each time you realise that you are judging yourself, consciously open your heart to compassion for yourself. When your intention is to be compassionate rather than judgmental, you will discover that it is not as hard as you think to shift from judgment to compassion.

Moving into compassion for others is similar. Begin to notice your anger, irritation, judgment, resentment, or resistance toward others. These negative feelings are the opposite of compassion. Once you notice these feelings, you have the choice to open to caring, understanding - to compassion.

Each time you find yourself in judgment for yourself or others, instead of judging yourself for judging, move into compassion for the judgmental part of you. If you judge yourself for judging yourself or others, you will stay stuck. If you embrace with compassion the judgmental part of yourself, you will find yourself gradually becoming less judgmental and more compassionate.

Each time you are compassionate with yourself and others, it becomes easier next time. You will discover that focusing on compassion for both yourself and others will move you toward the peace and joy you are seeking. It all comes from your intent - to protect against pain with your controlling behaviours, such as anger, guilt, blame and judgment, or to learn about loving yourself and others. When your deepest desire is to become a loving human being, opening to compassion is a powerful doorway to that path.

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT . . .

USING CREATIVE VISUALISATION TO IMPROVE YOUR LIFE AND SET GOALS

What matters most



Is how you see yourself

Creative visualization (CV) is a type of mindfulness exercise that can be used to promote happier states in every area of life. Visualisation is the process of putting together visual mental imagery of what you are wanting to manifest. Consequently, you can start to gain emotions associated with the desired image associated with the desired image. Simply, creative visualisation is where you visualize what you want and experience the emotions or feelings you would have if it were true.

This can then help you to put your goals and desires out into the Universe and start to feel motivated to achieve them. Much like a board of your visions, but the imagery is in your mind, not physical, although both creative visualisation and a physical vision board have very similar purposes.

CV can be extremely powerful using the mind's eye to create detailed images of what you want to manifest. This can help you to feel more positive and motivated to achieve these goals. After visualising, you should feel inspired and ready to take action towards your goals.

There is nothing new in these powerful techniques. They have existed as far back as I can make out – since time began. Perhaps the way I have put them together is different, but that's all.

The assumption I make is you are nowhere near your potential no matter how successful or how challenging your life is right now. I will also assume that, due to our education system, you mainly use the left side of your brain. Some of you will, of course, be fairly creative and will use the right side of your brain more than most other people, but I firmly believe that by working to develop more of the right side of the brain – together with managing your stress, becoming more positive and learning to set goals – you will sense a dramatic change in how you experience life.

6 benefits of Creative Visualisation techniques.

1. Reduces stress

Even just taking the time out of your day to be still, silent and relaxed when visualizing can help to reduce your stress and help you feel more positive. Visualisation is a form of relaxation just like meditation. Because you would normally be visualizing positive situations, it can naturally help to quieten your mind and keep you feeling relaxed.

2. Increases Focus

Just like meditation, you can actually increase your focus and concentration by sitting down and visualising. When you perform a task such as CV you are forgetting your troubles from the day and any worries you might have about the future. This gives you a chance to just focus and concentrate on your visualisations.

3. Gain Self Confidence

When you visualise, you are normally picturing yourself achieving success and experiencing positive situations. This means that your self-confidence can increase, as you would be starting to believe in yourself and that your visualisations could come true. The more that you visualise yourself doing amazing things, the more confident in yourself you can become.

4. Brings You Joy

Even though the visualisation may not be real right now, even the thought of it can spark joy in your life. This is because your mind won't know the difference between the visualisation and reality. This means that you can experience the joy and excitement you would feel if it were real, which only makes your visualisations stronger.

5. Gives You Inspiration

Just like with our confidence, visualisations can also give us a big dose of inspiration too. When we visualise our goals and dreams, we become inspired to make them happen. This inspiration can spur us to actually take action towards our goals. If we can see our goals in a visualisation then it inspires us to make sure we will see it in our reality as well.

6. Improved Relationships

As CV can help you with positivity, motivation, confidence, and inspiration, it can also help you with improved relationships. This could be with friends or a partner. As you visualise you become more confident in yourself and your abilities. This can help to improve your social life and relationships as your overall wellbeing will be improved.

WARNING

Creative Visualisation isn't for everyone. It is a Powerful tool for achieving positive results BUT it Does take focus and commitment. Proceed with the exercise ONLY if you are prepared to open your mind and suspend any scepticism or doubt.

For the readers who have decided to take this journey, congratulations. I feel sure you will enjoy the experience and reap its many rewards.

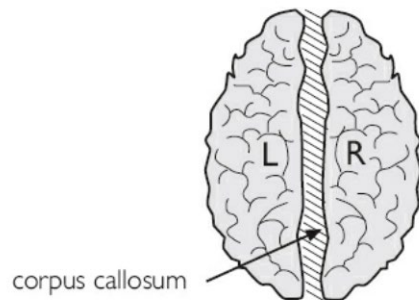
READY? – THEN LET’S GO!

The first stage of any exercise in creative visualisation is to enter a state of relaxation more conducive to ensuring the success of the process.

Relaxation Techniques

Relaxation is the natural response to stress, and once learned it is easy to use. It brings with it many outstanding extra benefits.

We must learn to use both sides of our brains as though we could stand on the corpus callosum of the brain and reach into both sides of the neo-cortex at will.



We know that the way to trigger right-brain thinking, i.e. imaginative, intuitive, creative thought, is by relaxing. Think about it – have you ever noticed how you tend to get great ideas when you are away from your workplace, on holiday, walking the dog, having a bath or even lying in your bed or sitting by the fireside?

By learning to relax and use the right side of the brain at will you will trigger greater use of your thinking capacity. I have also discovered that the same state of mind can be used to bring rapid change in performance and personal growth in all areas of life. You will learn how to use this state in many ways as you continue to read and then re-read sections of this publication you find most useful.

Read through the relaxation exercise that follows and then find a comfortable position, preferably in a quiet room, and practise it on your own. You may feel that reading it out loud and recording it to play back will assist you.

Exercise: A simple relaxation

Close your eyes and begin breathing in a regular and slow manner. We will now begin to focus your mind and body on relaxing into a healthy state of being. As I mention different parts of your body, concentrate on each one and focus your thinking on producing relaxation.

Concentrate on your scalp.

Repeat mentally after me: I feel my scalp ... I am aware of my scalp ... my scalp is relaxing ... I feel my scalp relax ... my scalp is very relaxed ... My forehead is relaxing ... I feel my forehead relax ... my forehead is very relaxed ... Now my eyelids begin to relax ... I can feel them become limp, almost heavy ... my eyelids are relaxed ... This relaxation is now spreading around my eyes and beginning to relax the muscles of my face ... I feel my face relax – very, very relaxed now ...

My mouth is relaxed ... I feel my mouth relax ... my tongue ... and now my throat begins to relax ... I feel my throat relax ... My head is completely relaxed, as my neck now feels the pleasant experience of relaxation flow slowly downwards to my shoulders ...

My shoulders are becoming very relaxed ... this warm feeling is getting deeper and deeper ... my shoulders are very, very relaxed ... This deep relaxation is now flowing into my arms ... my arms are becoming very limp as the upper muscles of my arms now relax ... all the muscles of my arms are becoming limp and deeply relaxed, right down to my fingertips ...

My chest and upper back are now relaxing ... a warm glow of deep relaxation completely relaxes my chest ... my chest is very, very relaxed ... This healthy relaxing glow continues to flow down into my abdomen and lower back ... The muscles of my stomach are very relaxed; very, very relaxed indeed ... My pelvic region now relaxes as the warm sensation continues to flow downwards as I become more and more relaxed ...

The relaxation now flows into my thighs ... the powerful muscles of my thighs are now completely relaxed ... right to the bones ... so relaxed, just like my upper body ... The feeling flows further, into my knees ... my knees are now very, very relaxed ... The relaxation is now spreading into my calves, becoming ever more relaxed, very, very relaxed, and on down to my ankles ... They are now relaxed, so relaxed ... and now to my feet ... my toes ... the soles of my feet and heels ... completely, completely relaxed ... I enjoy the wonderful benefits of complete relaxation now ...

When ready I am going to count from 1 to 7 to gradually readjust and come out of this healthy state of deep relaxation ... 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... now beyond the midpoint, when I open my eyes I will be wide awake and revitalised both physically and mentally ... 5, I begin to adjust my body ... 6, I prepare to open my eyes ... and 7, I open my eyes and am wide awake now, both physically and mentally alert.

It may seem on first reading the relaxation that it will take a long time to do. You will be surprised just how you feel about time once you've done it. Over a short period, even just a few practice sessions, you will be able to dispense with the above and achieve the same relaxation very quickly on your own. I use this approach and the rest of the techniques that follow to focus my mind completely in a matter of seconds or over a longer time – say 10 or 15 minutes depending on my situation and need. I practise this relaxation technique three times a day and it makes a wonderful difference.

The introduction of imagination

It's worth reminding ourselves that relaxation will assist to dissipate our physical stress and give us access to much more of our thinking capacity by accessing our right-brain faculties.

My aim with this technique is to teach you to relax both physically and mentally. This will reduce stress and trigger right-brain activity. Then, we will focus the right side of your brain and your expanded thinking on solving your problems, improving your performance and bringing any changes you desire into your life.

Imagination is an outstanding part of the right side of the brain. Einstein said: '*Imagination is more important than knowledge.*' He realised that if we use only the knowledge we have today we will produce no growth or fantastic future breakthroughs in any area of life. What we will be doing here is accessing storage banks of additional knowledge and creativity, previously untapped by conscious thought processes.

Once physically relaxed, I call this state 'stage 1 basic foundation', a state in which we can access – or, if you like, build on – the right side of the brain. I have found that taking a few seconds to imagine being somewhere relaxing assists this process and allows creative faculties to prepare themselves for what follows. The more I went through this ritual or pattern of behaviour, the more I seemed to understand at a deeper level what I wanted to achieve within my brain. It seemed to set up expectations of improved outcomes or performance.

Once **physically and mentally** relaxed you reach the state of stage 2 physical and mental foundation, or simply 'PM foundation'. You might imagine being in a state where you are standing on the corpus callosum between the two hemispheres of the brain, a point at which you could freely access both the left and the right side of the brain at once.

To develop the right hemisphere and to provide a means of access I learned to engage the imagination fully but in a controlled manner.

Repeat the relaxation process now.

Let the visualisation begin.

Imagine walking along a pathway with a river gently running alongside on our right. Up ahead there is a bridge spanning over the river. On this left side of the river, the landscape is bleak and there are grey clouds overhead. We can see that across the bridge, on the right side of the river there is an inviting lush green meadow where the sun is shining and the skies are blue. You will create or imagine this landscape – you can choose to remember a beautiful landscape from your travels or envision a totally imagined one.

We will call this landscape ‘the right bank of the river’ to associate it with the right side of the brain, and since we will be using the faculty of imagination it would seem to be an appropriate way to access the right hemisphere.

This is your CV, so in your own time, you will walk across the bridge and cross over onto the right bank. Now imagine standing on lush green grass and feel your feet on the ground. Overhead the sky is blue and the air is warm and fresh with the scent of a meadow. Fully engage all your senses in pretending you are there. The landscape stretches out before you. Do not limit your imagination: you can have friendly animals, wonderful flowers, trees, hills and even snow-capped mountains in the distance – it’s your visualisation, it’s all up to you.

The idea now is to stroll into the landscape, focusing your imagination as you go to create specific features of the land around you. As you continue to walk into the scene before you, you will be intent on finding a special location: an ideal place where you will build in your imagination a house, a very special house, a large house, a house of your choice and design. We will call it your ‘House on The Right Hemisphere’.

This imagined house will provide you with the structure for developing all the wonderful tools that will impact on so many areas of your life. I have taught this to thousands and thousands of people all over the country and, as you might expect, the range of houses and designs would do the world’s architects proud.

Clearly the house is up to you, it’s your creation. If it helps, look up luxury houses on the properties for sale websites - you will find many wonderful examples of potential House on The Right Hemisphere. Perhaps you will want to use a house you remember from some holiday or travel experience. You could incorporate a number of buildings into some fantastic combination. It really is up to you.

Inside this house we will create a number of rooms that you will use for focusing your thinking, where you will develop the power of your own creative mind. There will be a room that to manage your stress and produce instant energy. This room can be used to take away the physical elements of stress, such as a headache. There will be a room in which you will learn to sleep more peacefully, to improve your creativity and to solve problems. Another room will be





the place where you learn to set goals, a room that will cause you to break free of your limiting beliefs. Finally, you will develop your own rooms, as your results will open up your imagination and encourage a flow of ideas.

If all of this seems a bit adventurous – do not worry or be discouraged. Most of us tend not to be creative and actually have some degree of difficulty in using our imagination. You may wish to recall your childhood and just how fantastic your make-believe was back then.

The good news is that, with just a little practice, you will get better and better at imagining your house.



The House on The Right Hemisphere – Let's go there now!

Find a comfortable position in your chair, close your eyes and begin breathing in a slow and regular manner. Begin to focus your mind and body on relaxing into a healthy state of being. Again, as each part of your body is mentioned, concentrate on it and focus your thinking on producing relaxation.

Close your eyes and begin breathing in a regular and slow manner. We will now begin to focus your mind and body on relaxing into a healthy state of being. As I mention different parts of your body, concentrate on each one and focus your thinking on producing relaxation.

Concentrate on your scalp.

Repeat mentally after me: I feel my scalp ... I am aware of my scalp ... my scalp is relaxing ... I feel my scalp relax ... my scalp is very relaxed ... My forehead is relaxing ... I feel my forehead relax ... my forehead is very relaxed ... Now my eyelids begin to relax ... I can feel them become limp, almost heavy ... my eyelids are relaxed ... This relaxation is now spreading around my eyes and beginning to relax the muscles of my face ... I feel my face relax – very, very relaxed now ...

My mouth is relaxed ... I feel my mouth relax ... my tongue ... and now my throat begins to relax ... I feel my throat relax ... My head is completely relaxed, as my neck now feels the pleasant experience of relaxation flow slowly downwards to my shoulders ...

My shoulders are becoming very relaxed ... this warm feeling is getting deeper and deeper ... my shoulders are very, very relaxed ... This deep relaxation is now flowing into my arms ... my arms are becoming very limp as the upper muscles of my arms now relax ... all the muscles of my arms are becoming limp and deeply relaxed, right down to my fingertips ...

My chest and upper back are now relaxing ... a warm glow of deep relaxation completely relaxes my chest ... my chest is very, very relaxed ... This healthy relaxing glow continues to flow down into my abdomen and lower back ... The muscles of my stomach are very relaxed; very, very relaxed indeed ... My pelvic region now relaxes as the warm sensation continues to flow downwards as I become more and more relaxed ...

The relaxation now flows into my thighs ... the powerful muscles of my thighs are now completely relaxed ... right to the bones ... so relaxed, just like my upper body ... The feeling flows further, into my knees ... my knees are now very, very relaxed ... The relaxation is now spreading into my calves, becoming ever more relaxed, very, very relaxed, and on down to my ankles ... They are now relaxed, so relaxed ... and now to my feet ... my toes ... the soles of my feet and heels ... completely, completely relaxed ... I enjoy the wonderful benefits of complete relaxation now ...

Take a deep breath and relax ... I will now adjust and imagine that I am standing on the right side of the bridge that straddles the river ... I am facing a wonderful landscape ... I can feel my feet on the lush green grass ... overhead the sky is blue and the air is fresh with the scent of the meadow ... I can hear the sounds of this wonderful land before me ... I will shortly walk into the landscape, creating its scenery as I go in order to find the ideal location for my house ... I now begin this beautiful journey, giving myself some time to create the landscape all around me. [approximately 1 minute] I now focus my mind on the site where I will construct my House On The Right Hemisphere ... First I create the walls; their height and features are as I choose ... Now the windows ... The entrance is welcoming and attractive to me ... I have now created the outer construction of my House On The Right Hemisphere ... I will use it to achieve whatever I desire for my life ... I now leave the house and return to the river's edge ... I feel the lush green grass beneath my feet. I will shortly count from 1 to 7 and gradually adjust to come out of this healthy state of deep relaxation ...

The Entrance Hallway

The Central Hallway Relaxing the mind

In this session, you will again physically relax as before, and once on the right bank you will imagine walking towards your house there. You will go to the entrance, you will open the door and you will step inside. You will immediately create what we shall call the entrance hallway. As you continue to develop your right-brain faculties you will decide on the shape, the walls, the flooring, the decorative features and lighting. It is important to be creative at this stage, to imagine a welcoming, attractive space.

As the entrance hallway will lead to the many rooms within and the tools there, it is important that you make the entrance area welcoming, warm and attractive. You will find that you will become more creative as you continue to practise, so do not be too judgemental about your first mental efforts, you can add to them in due course.

How the house looks from each direction is again your choice. In the example below, the rear patio of the house looks out onto the sea, creating a relaxing area where you may allow your creative mind to wander.

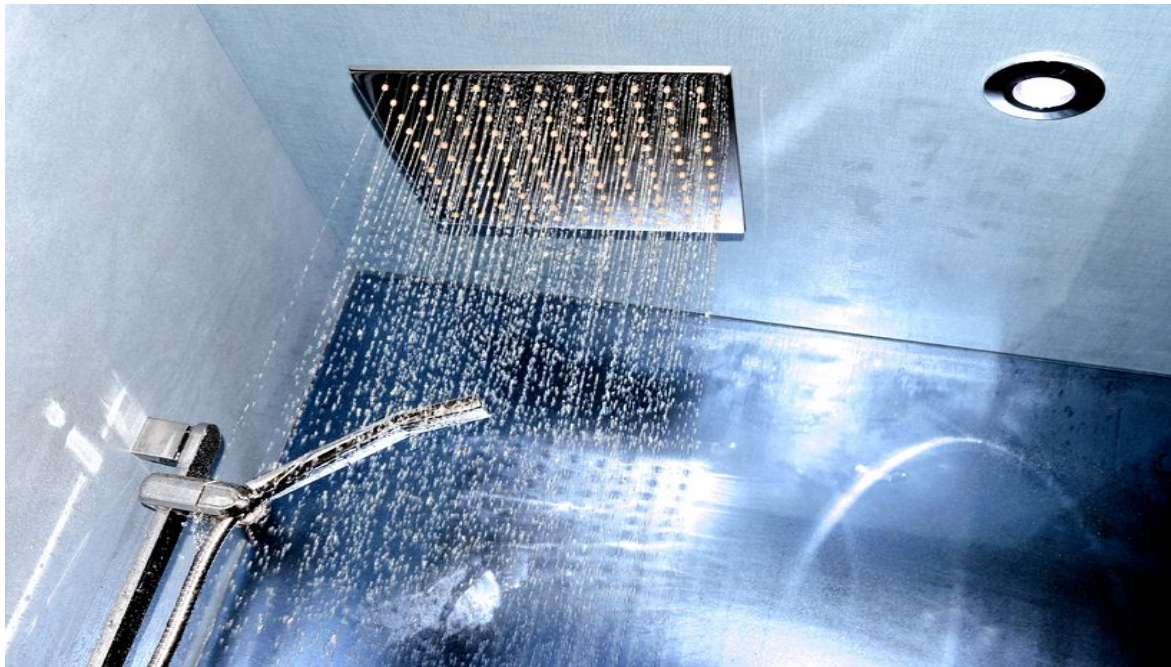


Next we will create the cleansing portal. As the name suggests, it cleanses us or prepares us for the rest of the rooms within the house. The use of this imaginary gymnasium is a vital part of the techniques, because it helps us with our personal energy.

The tools of the cleansing portal become very important here.

First we will construct an opulent showering area create an ‘instant mental state change’, where we can drain away the stresses of the day and replace any negativity with a vibrant and positive expectation. My idea here is to use the obvious symbology of cleansing to reinforce the positive messages we will give ourselves.

How your Cleansing portal might look



We will develop a pattern of thought that, through repetition, will automatically gain importance in its meaning and trigger the desired results. You will create a showerhead that when turned on will provide, in your imagination, a warm flow of spring water. This water will gently run through your hair and down over every inch of your body, which drains away mental fatigue while restoring vibrant life.

The cleansing shower will also produce bright sunlight, which you can imagine piercing into your brain and filtering out all the negativity that has been building up. Release any sense of lack – in your self or in your ability, opportunity or self-image. You can focus on classic human traits such as fear, pettiness, anger, envy or greed and just imagine them all being washed away. Simply drain away the negative build-up of the day. I suggest doing this in the evening before or after your meal. It will set you up for the rest of your time before sleep and you will become refreshed with abundant energy to enjoy your evening

to the full. We will take this imaginary shower before entering the rest of the house and it will become a part of the Standard Entry Exercise of the techniques.

The Solution Suite

The next room you will create is called the Solution Suite. It will be used for problem solving and for creating future histories and goals in your life. It is a powerful room, so it's important that you make it attractive in your mind. You will again decide on the shape of the room and the height of the ceiling, the decorative features, colours and lighting. On one of the walls you will erect the main tools. Along the top of the wall you will place three gigantic cinema screens that we will call the 'Solution Screens'

The central screen is for the 'now', one to the left for your future histories and one to the right for your past recordings.

The colour you choose for the screens is important. There is a psychology of colour associated with emotions we humans experience. I hope you will see why I selected the colours of my screens from the colour psychology extracts below.

Grey is the only colour that has no direct psychological properties. Grey is said to have Psychological neutrality. It is, however, quite suppressive. A virtual absence of colour is depressing and when the world turns grey we are instinctively conditioned to draw in and prepare for hibernation. Heavy use of grey usually indicates a lack of confidence and fear of exposure.

Red is a powerful colour. It is associated with Physical courage, strength, warmth, energy, basic survival, 'fight or flight', stimulation, masculinity, excitement, and passion. It has the property of appearing to be nearer than it is and therefore it grabs our attention first. Hence its effectiveness in traffic lights the world over. Its effect is physical; it stimulates us and raises the pulse rate, giving the impression that time is passing faster than it is. It relates to the masculine principle and can activate the "fight or flight" instinct. Red is strong, and very basic. It is stimulating and lively, very friendly. At the same time, it can be perceived as demanding and aggressive.

Yellow is the colour of hope. It is associated with Emotional characteristics of Optimism, confidence, self-esteem, extraversion, emotional strength, friendliness and creativity. The yellow wavelength is relatively long and stimulating. In this case the stimulus is emotional, therefore yellow is the strongest colour, psychologically. The right yellow will lift our spirits and our self-esteem; it is the colour of confidence and optimism.

I will assume you are relaxed and in a state of Physical and Mental Foundation, having performed the relaxation exercise.

Facing the centre screen you will place a comfortable chair (I use a luxury cinema chair), as you will now become the Producer and Director of your own Movies, deleting the memories of negative experiences, replacing them with positive movies of the life you want to enjoy. Within reach of the chair you will need a remote handset for operating the screens. Images will appear on screens at your command from a projector positioned behind and above your chair.



Before I explain how we use the solution suite, let's be clear about the positioning of the screens.

- The screen on the right is for your past experience, to be used to analyse a problem. Since this is a left-brain activity it seems obvious that if the eyes look to the right to do this then the left side of the brain, through the autonomic nervous system, will be engaged and therefore enhance your capacity to analyse.
- Likewise, by looking to the left for the future you will actually stimulate more right-brain creativity and be able to produce imagined futures and solutions.

Programming your future history

The technique, then, is as follows. Whenever you have a challenge and you seek to solve it or wish to set a goal, take some space, sit down and relax. Enter your House on the Right Hemisphere by the Standard Entry Exercise. Remember, solutions and creativity naturally spring forth when we are relaxed and away from the humdrum of daily life.

Have an imagined shower in your cleansing portal and enter your solutions suite wherever you have located it within your House On The Right Hemisphere.

Once there, it is a good idea to remind yourself of its layout: the three screens, the luxury chair, the projector and the remote-control handset. Sit in your chair and, with the remote control, pretend to project on to the central screen your current situation or challenge. The purpose here is to admit and accept that it does exist. If you can do this, you may find it easier to admit and accept your current situation or challenge. Or perhaps you wish to blame someone else, or you find negative emotions welling up from within. You will find it useful to take the remote control and turn down the intensity of the sensual information projected on the screen. For example, you can make the scene smaller and push it away from you into the distance. This will give you a feeling of control and will make the image less of a threat; you will now better be able to admit and accept it. Likewise, sounds, feelings and particularly emotions can be 'adjusted' in this way.

To make a more intensive study of the situation, you can project, for example, recent real-life experiences of the challenge – where and when it happened before, as well as who it involved – into your past on the right-hand screen. Often you will gain fresh insights and new perspectives on the issues you examine. Once you feel you have focused your mind and can admit and accept the current reality, then you can move back to the central screen.

Once again, project your current status on the central screen but now take your remote control and turn down all sensual information (sound, colours, etc.) until it all becomes a distant dot on the central screen. At this point press an imaginary delete button on your control and the dot disappears. Now you no longer have that challenge and you have just erased the programme from the bio-computer, the part of your brain creatively visualising.

Now project onto the left-hand screen and allow your mind to create and explore future histories, that is to say solutions. Once you have settled on the outcome you desire, in order to build the strength of the imagined future or goal, deliberately and fully establish this new programme in your brain. Specifically ask yourself what you expect to see when you achieve your goal. You will find that by intensifying the image – making the scene bigger and bringing it nearer – you will be more able to associate with the image. Make it brighter and freeze-frame the image in brilliant white light. Do the same with

the other senses, and be deliberate – what do you expect to hear? Particularly, how will you feel? Focus on the emotions that success will produce in this case.

In effect you will be ‘burning’ into your mind, just as information is burned onto a CD or DVD, the outcome you have established in a future reality. Programming works: the Gestalt will soon be established (In psychology, gestalt is something that has particular qualities when you consider it as a whole which are not obvious when you consider only the separate parts of it). People, places and opportunities will be attracted into your life as if by coincidence.

You must be specific with your outcome because this works, so be careful in your detail.

The brain prefers a specific goal in fine detail so that it can get to work to identify what is required to bring it about. You will find also that by being specific and by defining the outcome well you will be able to picture the goal better.

Your subconscious needs a vivid visual image in order to impact on it. You will find that intense emotional feelings will help to hold your attention on your future history. Remember, the correct approach here is to think BIG and not to be too concerned about how you are going to achieve your goal. The energy at this point has to be focused on convincing the subconscious that the future history has already occurred.

You know everybody is programming all the time anyway. The person who gets up on a wet and windy morning, gets caught in a traffic jam before getting to work and says to themselves, ‘I bet it’s going to be one of those days’, is programming a negative day. Indeed, the subconscious will be forced to focus the conscious mind on what apparently goes wrong and, of course, this person will fail to see any of the positive input that in truth is all around.

I programme most things, and guess what? I just keep getting the outcomes I desire in my life. If the programme doesn’t work out, as occasionally it doesn’t, then my attitude is, ‘there must be a good reason for this’, and I simply accept it and move on. Think about it. How often in your life has an event occurred that you were really disappointed by? Perhaps you believed it to be a major setback: maybe you didn’t get a job or failed to reach some necessary standard or whatever. Only now you look back and realise that something better occurred later and indeed the apparent disappointment was actually the best thing that could have happened.

Now, since we do not concern ourselves with HOW within the solutions suite but rather with the clarity of the outcome itself, it is vital that we have the correct attitude to the programme.

There are no limitations to the mind except those we acknowledge. Napoleon Hill

Once you get into programming and you see the results you will soon recognise a great truth: we are limited only by our own thoughts. Again this is why we must think BIG when it comes to setting our goals. The first requirement, though, is that you must have a massive desire for your outcome.

1. Desire

Nothing will happen if the desire is not there, since it is the source of energy that lifts you up and gets you towards your goal. The desire is what overcomes procrastination: it is necessary in order to break inertia and it is vital for building the momentum required.

The bigger your desire to achieve your goal, the more likely you are to achieve it. You really need to want whatever it is in your life. You will find you can build a strong desire by focusing your mind on the benefits that will come your way as you achieve your goal. I strongly advise you to write the benefits down; you can find them by thinking about the reasons you want a particular outcome in your life. Incidentally, constantly reviewing your future history on the left-hand screen will build the inner strength of your desire, especially if you have been specific in detail about your goal.

Anyone who has achieved knows that disappointment, setbacks and hurdles are met on the journey and at times it feels like it would be easier to give up. But if the goal is worth having then it is worth paying the price. At times when you doubt yourself and your belief is low, desire will keep you going. If you don't really desire the goal you set, then to put it simply you don't have one. Everyone I have met who has achieved, undoubtedly wanted to achieve their goal more than anything else.

2. Belief

Once the inertia is gone and you start to build your momentum towards the goal, you need a second element in order to bring about your success. You need the belief that you can and will achieve. You build this vital aspect by reviewing again your future history. In doing so your subconscious will adjust your comfort zone to a higher level. Once the new level is established you cannot fail to have a deep inner belief that the outcome is yours. You can focus your mind on belief by writing down why you deserve the goal you have set.

3. Certainty

Finally, you have to have a sense of certainty that it will occur. You simply know and indeed expect it to happen. You know it's on its way provided you do whatever has to be done on the journey with a sense of absolute certainty. In your programming, remember to focus in on the 'future' screen but as though it is happening now. To build certainty you need to decide to accept the outcome as you view it on the left-hand screen, to claim it unconditionally as yours.

If a goal is not achieved, or if someone gives up before the journey is underway, one or more of these three elements (desire, belief and certainty) is not what it should be or is missing. I recommend constantly checking your desire, belief and certainty to check that you are on target. If one of these three needs more energy to push it up then focus your mind on it. Review your benefits in the case of desire; check your sense of deservedness with belief; be certain that you have accepted your goals as belonging to you in your future present-tense programming.

Let's get into the House on the Right Hemisphere and construct this wonderful room – your solutions suite – before we take a closer look at how you can use it to fantastic effect in all areas of your life. As before, you may like to record the exercise and play it back to yourself.

Exercise: The solutions suite

Find a comfortable position in your chair, close your eyes and begin breathing in a slow and regular manner. We will now begin to focus your mind and body on relaxing into a healthy state of being. Once again, as I mention each part of your body concentrate on it and focus your thinking on producing relaxation.

Repeat the relaxation process now.

I now imagine the bright sunlight reaching deep within, filtering out and washing away all my limiting and destructive attitudes, particularly my negative thinking today ... Readjusting and turning off the shower I now step out, instantly dried and fresh with positive expectations ...

In a moment I will create my solutions suite, which is entered by a doorway I have chosen from the central hallway ... It will be used for problem solving and goal setting ...

I now leave my cleansing gym and enter my central hallway, the walls covered with images depicting times from my past when I have been at my very best ...

I now create the room that will house my solutions suite ... I decide on its shape, the height of the ceiling ... now the decorative features, colours and lighting ... On one of the walls, high up near the ceiling, I will place a time-frame for programming dates ... Suspended on the wall just below the timeframe I now erect three gigantic cinema screens: one in the middle for the now, one to the left for my future histories, and one to the right for my past recordings ... Facing the central screen I will now install a luxury chair ...

Now a projector and remote-control handset for operating the screens ... I will project images on to the screens for the purpose of setting goals and problem solving ... In future I will admit and accept that I have a challenge that I wish to address by projecting its current status on the central screen ... I can go into the past screen on the right to analyse ...

By using my remote control I can return to the central screen and turn down the image, feelings and sounds until it becomes an instant dot ... I can then imagine pressing a delete button to remove the programme completely from the screen ... Now, on the left-hand (future) screen I will explore alternatives before selecting the one I truly want for my life at this time ... I will make it bigger and bigger, bringing it closer to me before freeze-framing it in brilliant white light ... I will then have a future history ...

Regularly reviewing my future histories on the left-hand screen will build my desire, belief and certainty that I will achieve my goal or desired outcome ... I have now created my editing suite ... I will use it for attracting into my life the people, places and opportunities I need to achieve my goals ...

Exercise: How to make important decisions

The following concept is one of the most exciting ideas of all. It is based on the fascinating and inspiring book *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill, which is the bible for all people working in the field of personal development. *Think and Grow Rich* contains the results of Napoleon Hill's interviews with 504 successful men. Andrew Carnegie commissioned him to write it because he wanted the book to convey the secrets of success to others so they could become successful too. The interviews took Napoleon 20 years to conduct, and the resulting book has sold several million copies.

The whole book is awesome, but one part that really astonished me described Andrew Carnegie's imaginary board of directors. Each night, when he was about to fall asleep, he would imagine he was in a room with a big boardroom table. Around that table were seated some of the people who really inspired him. Carnegie was the chairman, the other people were the directors. Each night Carnegie would discuss his business plans with these directors, listen to what they had to say and ask their advice. And he would act upon it. It worked phenomenally well. In fact, having an imaginary board of directors was the biggest secret of success in the book.

Napoleon Hill decided to try it for himself, using a council of nine famous people including Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford and Charles Darwin. And it worked for Hill, too. When I read that, I knew I had to try the same thing. And now I want to teach you to do it, too.

Creating your 'Mastermind' board of directors

I started off with two directors, a man and a woman; Spend a couple of minutes thinking about who you would like to choose for your first two directors. You can choose someone famous from the past or present, someone you really admire in your personal life, a character from a novel or film, or anyone else who comes to mind. Trust your instincts about the people you think of. If you can't think of anyone at the moment, wait and see who arrives.

You may be surprised which personalities your creative mind chooses to assist you around the board table, making the decisions that will enhance your life experiences.

In the following exercise you will enter your House on the Right Hemisphere, have a shower and create the boardroom. When you next do the exercise, you will welcome in your



male director, followed by your female director, then you will have a short conversation with them. You will feel you are making up this conversation, but that is the right feeling to have, so trust what you are doing.

The boardroom

Find a comfortable position in your chair, close your eyes and begin breathing slowly and regularly. Take a deep breath and relax ... take another deep breath and relax ... take a deep breath and again relax. Gently touch the roof of your mouth directly behind your two front teeth with the tip of your tongue. Whenever you use the tip-of-the-tongue trigger like this, you will immediately enter your PM foundation level and access your faculties of concentration, imagination and intuition.

The tip-of-the-tongue trigger is a powerful programming tool that you can use for whatever purpose you desire. Take a deep breath and relax ... I will now imagine that I am standing on a river bank ... The river is behind me and I am facing a wonderful landscape. I can feel my feet on the lush green grass ... overhead the sky is blue and the air is fresh with the scent of the meadow ... I can hear the sounds of this wonderful land before me.

I now look towards my house and remind myself of its construction, the features of the walls, the red roof and the entrance ... I move forward now and into my entrance hallway, and on into my cleansing gym.

In a moment I will stand within my shower and cleanse away any negativity and underlying thought patterns. I now enter my showering area and turn on the flow, so that its imaginary cleansing action can commence ... I feel the warm spring waters running down my hair and over every inch of my body, draining away mental fatigue and restoring vibrant life. I now imagine the bright sunlight reaching deep within, filtering out and washing away all my limiting and destructive attitudes, particularly my negative thoughts. Readjusting and turning off the shower I now step out, instantly dry, and fresh with positive expectations.

In a moment I will create my boardroom, which is entered by a doorway positioned at my choosing ... I am now leaving my cleansing gym and entering my central hallway. The walls are covered with images depicting moments from my past when I have been at my very best. I am now creating the room that will house my boardroom ... I am choosing the size of this area and the height of the ceiling ... Now I am choosing the decorative features, the colours and the lighting ... I am installing comfortable chairs and a boardroom table of whatever size I choose ... I am now installing a full-length window with a door that opens on to my inner gardens and the landscape of abundance beyond. I will now leave the house and return to the river's edge.

I feel the lush green grass beneath my feet. Soon I will count from 1 to 7, and gradually adjust to come out of this healthy state of deep relaxation. 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... now, beyond the midpoint, when I open my eyes I will be wide awake and revitalised both physically and mentally ... 5, I begin to adjust my body ... 6, I prepare to open my eyes ... and 7, I open my eyes and am wide awake now, both physically and mentally alert.

Your Mastermind Directors

Using your board of directors You will gain the most from your board of directors if you are fully relaxed when you consult them, so it is always advisable to follow the Standard Entry Exercise first. However, as the previous exercise shows, you can also use the tip-of-the-tongue trigger to enter your House on the Right Hemisphere if you are short of time. Indeed, you can enter your house, use your shower and enter your boardroom in a couple of seconds if you need to consult your directors urgently. I often do this in meetings or when I am giving a course and am asked a question that I am unsure how to answer. I use the tip-of-the-tongue trigger, enter my boardroom and ask my directors for advice. I listen to what they have to say, then use this information to form my own reply.

This again is your creative visualisation. You get to pick the people who you believe can help you most overcoming your challenges, achieving your goals and reaching the level of fulfilment you desire. From the earlier sections in this work, using your core values to select goals and areas requiring improvements from your wheel of life, select the individuals you believe, that in an ideal world would be best equipped to help you.

I have been using my boardroom for many years, so I have collected quite a number of directors by now. I have twelve permanent directors, and one who drops in from time to time. My first woman director was a very personal choice, which I do not talk about. A second and third are also women, Barbara De Angelis, a famous author and psychologist on love and relationships, the other is Marianne Williamson who is the foremost authority, speaker and author on spirituality. The first male director I chose was Steve Jobs because I admired him so much. Next came Marcus Aurelius Roman emperor from 161 to 180 and a respected philosopher. Over the years I have added other people I truly admire – Brian Tracy and Tony Robbins, both motivational goal setting plain speaking gurus, Thomas Edison and Albert Einstein for their brilliant brains, Jay Abraham for his consummate business mind and the brilliant Simon Sinek, a modern source of inspiration and wealth of knowledge about anthropology and human behaviour. The director who drops in every now and then, is the anarchic comedian and actor Robin Williams who passed away in August 2014. He brings his unique brand of humour to the experience. Between them my directors give me fantastic advice, and knowing their works, I love visualising their conversations and banter. All twelve need not be present for every CV and I have many substitutes in the wings who bring their own area of expertise and character to the board meetings.

Summary

Establish which kind of thinking suits you best: visual, auditory or kinaesthetic. Use visual, auditory or kinaesthetic decision making whenever you have to make instant decisions. Create your board of directors. Remember, start with just one or two people – and feel comfortable with whoever turns up! Ask your board of directors for help and advice whenever you need it.

How to Find Your Own Purpose

Something motivates you to get up each day. That something says a good deal about your current central purpose in life. If you eventually get out of bed because you don't want to be sacked from your job, then your purpose has to do with money and security. If you get up because of what people might think if you didn't, then you are motivated by a fear of disapproval.

A person's life is *already* an expression of their purpose, whether this purpose operates consciously or subconsciously. If you are driven by a purpose you're not conscious of, then it's likely to have roots in **fear**. Motivation of this kind is usually conditioned into us, whether we like it or not.

Some people don't believe in purpose – “*just get on with life*”, “*take things as they come*” – these are common phrases, yet they are also clear descriptions of purpose masquerading as lack of purpose. The unspoken purpose here is continued physical survival. Basic survival and social conformity are common motivations, but why limit yourself to mundane, inferior soap opera scenarios when you can reach for the stars?

Conclusion

You have the ability to achieve all you could possibly want to be, do or have. Remember, however, that in order to HAVE, you first must DO something, and in order to DO something, you first must BECOME the person to whom success comes naturally.

'A goal is a dream with a date! Don't let fear get in the way of dreaming big:

*“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you **NOT** to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It is not just in some of us, it is in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others”.*

Marianne Williamson ~ 1952-, American Author of “A Return To Love” Lecturer on Spirituality



Coming up in the next section

THE POWER OF RELATIONSHIPS

Your relationships with other people undoubtedly contribute the majority of happiness or unhappiness you will experience in life. Understand the vital role of healthy personalities, combining the knowledge of the forgoing chapters to create wonderful, healthy relationships that will contribute immensely to your growth and happiness.

THE TRUTH OF YOUR MESSAGE
IS AMPLIFIED BY THE DEPTH
OF YOUR RELATIONSHIPS.



9 – Power of Relationships

Cast your mind back to the chapter on human needs. In that chapter we made a statement that is especially true of relationships and worth repeating here :-

“Anything that doesn’t grow dies, and anything that fails to contribute is eliminated and ultimately replaced”.

Bookshelves are crammed with books on the different types and aspects of relationships, articles abound with advice on how to make relationships happier and more successful, the internet is teeming with information by well-intended writers seeking to promote the benefits of relationships in our lives.



Extraordinary relationships are those in which the participants continually grow and contribute to themselves, the relationship, and each other. Without doubt, our human relationships with others contribute the majority of happiness and unhappiness we experience in our lives. For every happy or unhappy experience you will have, there will usually be another person involved, or the lack of another person or persons in a significant area of your life to influence the degree of happiness you enjoy.

In this chapter then, we will look at some of the different elements within the relationships we attract, and some of the considerations that have a positive or negative impact on our happiness.

Human Relationships

By their very nature, relationships are ALL personal, because they involve individual human traits, strengths, weaknesses, positive attributes and negative flaws. Relationships can be a joy or a drain, depending on the individuals and their respective personas. There is no absolute panacea for perfect relationships, no one set of answers to each problem that would result in perfection. In fact I would go as far as to say that a relationship without challenges, without imperfections, provides no opportunity for essential human growth. It is a basic law of nature that says that anything that is no longer growing is dying. The very best human relationships, those that have the best chance of survival, are those that have faced and overcome difficult situations together in a spirit of harmonious agreement and co-operation. These relationships have benefited from the growth experiences they have shared and the participants know that they can deal honestly with individual and shared issues in the future.

Because there will never be such an entity as a perfect human being, there will never be a perfect relationship. I am not suggesting that we should rip apart happily acceptable relationships looking for faults that don’t exist. Disagreement and conflict are a natural part of our evolutionary process. We learn little if anything from experiences that go absolutely perfectly, although we should enjoy and savour them when they do occur. Our real growth occurs when conflict arises and whilst respecting the feelings, opinion and thoughts of the other, we are able to learn and grow through acceptance of another point of view, even if we disagree with it. Acceptance of another point of view does not necessarily mean you agree with it, acceptance provides the atmosphere for growth.

As we have discovered in the human needs chapter, individual human growth is essential to our human development, and nowhere is there a greater opportunity for human growth than in the relationships we have with others.

The single most valuable thing to remember about relationships you enjoy, is that they contain YOU.



The relationships that bring us most fulfilment and genuine happiness are those where we are truly free to be our authentic selves, the authentic self that doesn't have to pretend, tell lies, or wear masks.

Any relationship that does not have its basis in honesty and complete individual authenticity, is at the mercy of the opposite traits of dishonesty, lies and deception. Truly happy relationships are those where the participants encourage each other to be completely truthful with one another, whatever that may involve. A relationship cannot be anything more than a pretence until the participants both arrive at this level of honesty.

The origins of our true self go right back to childhood, before we were corrupted by circumstances, events and other people who convinced us that it was normal, acceptable even, to wear masks, tell lies and practice deception to get through relationships with others. I'm not necessarily talking about blatant downright lies, complete fabrications of personality or criminal type behaviour here, but these traits start with what appear to be innocent, small indiscretions or "white lies" and once the habit is formed, CAN develop into worsened behaviour and before we know it, the line is so feint between the truth and deception that we barely know the difference.

My whole purpose when preparing and presenting this project is to deal with truth in the related areas of happiness contained in each chapter. We read so often and so many times find from experience, that only **the truth will set us free**. So many experiences in my life and the lives of others I have known, and from my years of research and life experiences to date have led me to absolute faith in this point. I have yet to see a set of circumstances, when they are truthfully and completely examined, where the absolute truth was not the most beneficial path for the parties involved.

"The truth will set you free, but first it will piss you off." - Mal Pancoast

"An unexamined life is not worth living" - Socrates - BC 469-399, Greek Philosopher of Athens



Anything that is not completely truthful and honest is a deception in whole or in part. This applies whether it is a relationship, an emotion, an action, a remark, a promise, in fact anything.

Let's not kid ourselves here. Not disclosing something to someone that your heart tells you, you really should, is as much of a lie as a blatant mistruth. By deliberately not disclosing something that is relevant to your current relationship with that person is deliberately misleading them. They will form a belief about you and the relationship that is not founded on complete truth. You may as well have told them the opposite of what actually happened or exists, because by saying nothing when you should have shared this information, the probability is, that they will believe the best until you tell them otherwise. We may kid ourselves that we're protecting them from hurt, or avoiding unnecessary conflict, but in reality, that conflict will erupt at some time in the future.

The more we perpetuate the myth that little white lies or even whoppers are ok, or are necessary to avoid pain or conflict, the thicker the mask we create between ourselves and our relationship partners, be they spouses, lovers, family, friends, colleagues or associates. So many relationships appear to the outside world to be ideal and happy, and indeed they truly could be, once they have crossed the painful bridge of truth and growth.

Authentic individual happiness is attained by facing up to the truths about yourself, accepting yourself for who you are now. You are not the thing you did, or words you said in a past life. You are you now. By accepting yourself and forgiving yourself you can move forward, better equipped for the growth you will inevitably experience.

Authentic relationship happiness is attained by both parties facing up to their individual truths together, accepting and forgiving if appropriate and moving forward with a clean slate.

Invariably, the depth, value and strength of your relationships will be directly related to the degree of open honest self disclosure you have shared with each person. The longer a relationship goes on with denial, deception and dishonesty, the more it will hurt the other person when the disclosure is finally made. But only from that point forward, can the relationship blossom into its full potential.

Clearly, you must decide the appropriateness of the disclosure. It wouldn't serve any useful purpose disclosing a personal matter to a business colleague who you have no personal relationship with. In other words, the most important person to whom a disclosure should be made is the person to whom it concerns.

Better the pain and growth of facing disclosures together, trusting that the other person will understand, accept and forgive (if appropriate) than perpetuate a pretence of a relationship. The alternative is to let the situation snowball, where one white lie mounts up on top of another, and the other party thinks he knows the real you, and behaves in accordance with what you have led him to believe. He is only following the map you have given him, you can hardly be surprised if he keeps getting lost along the way.

In practice and reality, we are entitled to our personal privacy. We may not wish to disclose everything about ourselves to another, even to our significant other. You have a right to that privacy, even within your closest relationships. A certain amount of mystery and intrigue is attractive in any relationship, but only you can determine the acceptable differences between mystery and dishonesty.

Let me pose a few questions about your relationships:

1. Think of **any** relationship in your life. Pick the response that is most true for you about the quality of communication that exists or existed. Is it:

- a) Completely honest, free flowing communication, open with no deceptions, masks or dark secrets or
- b) Contains elements of poor communication, some degree of deception, somewhat or significantly obstructed by mask wearing and an element of dishonesty

2. Describe the needy-ness that exists in your relationship, is it:

- a) Free or almost free of neediness, we are both independent people in our own right, who do not express a great deal of needy-ness.
- b) Contains some or a lot of needy behaviour, either from myself or the other person

3. Describe the expectations that exist in your relationship, are they :-

- a) Free from unrealistic expectations or the expectations are realistic based on what we both know we can contribute to the relationship
- b) Contains some or a lot of unrealistic expectations, these may be known or believed by either party as a result of poor communication.

It is now known that worldwide, the three big relationship killers (and this would apply to ANY relationship), are :-

1. **Communication.** A lack of it, poor quality of it or non-existence of it.
2. **Neediness.** Excessive, often manipulative levels of need.
3. **Expectations.** Poor communication often leads to one or other of the relationship partners having unrealistic expectations. When dashed, rather than accept they were unrealistic, resentments fester within the relationship.

Whatever the relationship, if negative aspects of one or more of the three exist in your relationship, take steps to confront and eliminate them.

Act on your feelings

If the beliefs on which your feelings are based do seem to make sense, then you may want to turn to your feelings as a guide to dealing with situations and people in all or some of your human relationships. For instance, if you find out that your frequent night-time anxiety attacks are caused by a profound hatred of your job, then you might want to think about changing your employment.

Similarly, if you feel something very strongly towards another person, and are clear that there is a sound basis for feeling this way, then you may want to tell him or her what you are experiencing. This, of course, is never easy, but there are ways in which you can ensure that the process is as productive and conflict-free as possible

How to tell people what you feel about them

- Always try to express your feelings in terms of how *you* feel, rather than in terms of what you think the other person has done wrong. This reduces the extent to which the other person feels that they are being "told off" and is less likely to evoke a defensive response.
- Always remember that how you felt about the way in which someone behaved might be very different from the intention behind their behaviour. Most of the time when we feel hurt or angered by someone, they were not intending to make us feel bad.
- Try not to see the sharing of feelings as a battle, in which one person is right and the other wrong, but as a dialogue in which you are attempting to overcome the miscommunications and misunderstandings that have occurred.

Remember that sometimes you'll be more capable of talking about your feelings than the person you are talking to. Men often assume women are better at expressing their feelings, but women can get blaming and defensive too, and sometimes you will need to be the one who keeps the dialogue on a non-combative footing.

Remember the golden rule – There are no rules

Too many relationships are ruined by there being too many rules. There are no rules, only guidelines. The more rules you create, the more that can inadvertently be broken, creating unrealistic expectations and ultimately resentment and upset.

Enter relationships to give – Not to get



When we enter relationships for what we can get out of them, we set ourselves up for disappointment with unrealistic expectations. When driven by rules about who should give what, and “I gave this, so you should give the same in return” is a certain path to ending relationships.

One of the most destructive elements that can arise in relationships is when one of the parties looks to the relationship to be the solution to all their problems. This tendency has the effect of disempowering both parties in the relationship. You must think of each relationship as a place to give rather than to receive.

Importance of human relationships

Your ability to get along well with other people will always play the most significant part in the happiness and success you enjoy in every area of your life. It follows therefore that the biggest single cause of frustration and unhappiness in life and in work is our inability to get along well with others.

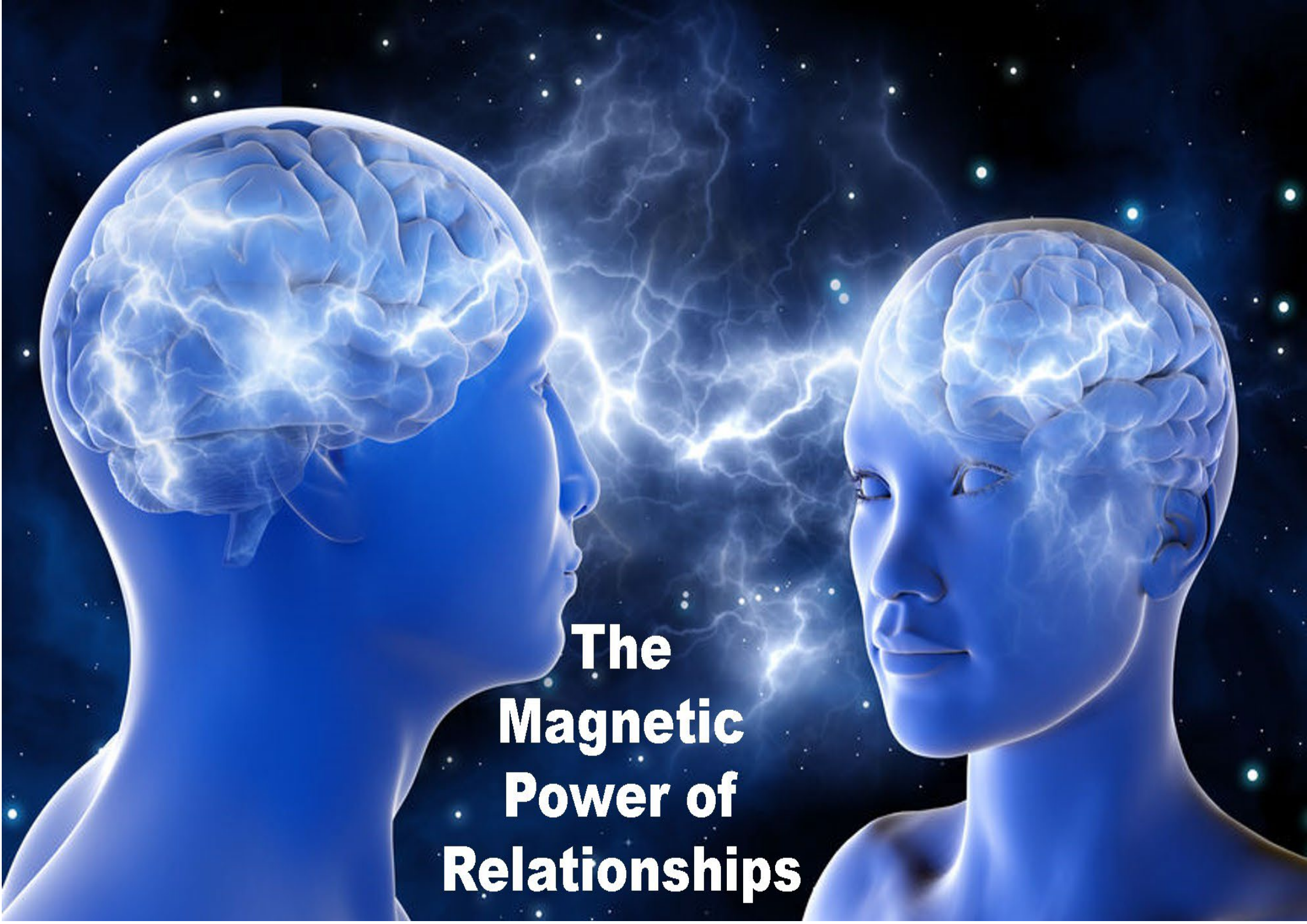
The majority of the joy you will experience will be related to your happy relationships with people, and most of your problems come from unhappy relationships with people.

Let's look at a few ways we can improve our human relationships and attract more happiness and fulfilment as a result.

Give what you want to receive



This principle is so simple and such an intrinsic part of human nature that it cannot be ignored.



**The
Magnetic
Power of
Relationships**

Quite simply, when you have decided what you want from a relationship, find a way of giving that component to the other person. It is human nature to reflect back to a person the very quality they are showing you.

If you want quality attention from someone, you will be more likely to receive it if you give quality attention, unprompted first.

If you want someone to be interested in you, express sincere interest in who they are and what they do, what pleases them, what irritates the life out of them. In showing your interest in someone, they will feel compelled to reciprocate.

If you want to share happiness with someone, discover what it is that makes them happy and deliver it. Bring happiness into someone's life and invariably, they will want to see you equally as happy.

If you want the respect of someone, show them sincere respect for an area you really do respect about them. Be specific, don't generalise. Mean what you say or don't say it at all. If you just say "I really respect you", They might think "What for?" and even ask you, so you must have a genuine reason for respecting the, and give it in detail.

If you want to impress someone, find something about them that genuinely impresses you and tell them. Again, you must sincerely mean it. If you do not and they spot your insincerity, it will create distrust.

If you want someone to believe in you, let them know you sincerely believe in them or have confidence in them. You get what you give. What you send out, you get back.

Everything you do toward another person has a rebound effect toward you. If you convey, insincerely, that you love someone, in some way, that insincerity will rebound back to you. However, every kind word, sincerely meant that raises the self esteem of someone will in turn, raise your own self esteem.

Regardless of how successful or happy a person may become, they will always need a degree of uplifting support for their self image. We` all need to feel valuable and valued.

There are some people in my life, who make me like the way I feel about myself when I am with them. I can't help but like those people because I feel more positively about myself when I am with them.

The happiest and most successful people are those who make other people feel good about themselves. When we go through life helping others to genuinely feel good about themselves, we attract opportunities and people in ways we could not previously imagine.

If you want to improve the quality of your human relationships, practice giving more of what you want to receive. .

Creating a healthy personality

The fulfilment and enjoyment you will get out of your human relationships is directly affected by the healthy personality you create for yourself. If you have the necessary elements of a healthy personality, people will be drawn to those elements and will want to be in your company.

Conversely, if you possess few or none of the characteristics of a healthy personality people will be less likely to feel the desire to want to be around you.

Some of the essentials of a healthy personality are :-

- The degree to which you deliberately **look for the good** in each person and each situation.
- The degree to which you can **freely forgive people** who have hurt you in some way.
- The degree to which you can **get along easily with many different kinds of people.**
- The degree to which you **like and respect yourself.** The more you like and respect yourself, the more you will like and respect others.
- The degree to which you consider **yourself to be a valuable and worthwhile person,** the more you will consider others to be valuable and worthwhile as well.
- The more you **accept yourself** just as you are, the more you accept others just as they are.
- The degree to which you have **high levels of self-esteem** will determine the level to which you will get along with almost anyone, anywhere and in almost any situation. Men and women with low self-esteem can only get along with a few people, and can't seem to maintain it for very long. Their low self-regard manifests itself in negative emotions and behaviours. They don't like themselves so they don't really like the intrusion of others outside of their comfort zone. As a result, people don't warm to them very much either.
- The degree to which you can **become an agreeable individual** to be around, able to converse on a variety of subjects, nodding and smiling with those you are talking to will affect how positively your personality is viewed. People like agreeable people. Disagreeable people lower the self esteem of people they encounter, and the tendency is set up in opposition to them or simply avoid them. "A man convinced against his will remains of the same opinion still." This does not mean you should become a "Yes-man", there are more diplomatic and gentle ways of getting someone to re-assess his view or opinion, without damaging their self-esteem.
- A characteristic that displays a healthy personality and also builds the self esteem of others is to **practice acceptance.** From birth, we humans have needed acceptance, and this carries forward into adulthood and our human relationships. We have an inbuilt need to be accepted (not necessarily approved of) by others that we meet. This is a good practice to get into for both parties in the relationship.
- Never underestimate the **power of your smile.** It is the best form of universal social acceptance known to man. Smiling displays acceptance which in turn boosts the self esteem of all who receive it. It costs you nothing and yet can reap so much in return, not least of which is a healthier personality even more attractive for the human relationships you want to have.
- The **power of appreciation,** an attitude of gratitude goes a long way to foster healthy relationships and build healthier personalities. A simple thank-you raises the self-esteem of others immeasurably. The happiest and most popular people are those who genuinely express appreciation and gratitude

for the things that happen to them and for everyone they meet. The power of attraction dictates that the more you express appreciation, the more things will appear in your life to be thankful for.

- The expression of **genuine approval**, when you feel it, is one of the most effective ways of enhancing the self-esteem of others. Whilst it is true that the only approval you really need is your own, it is human nature to feel uplifted when we receive unsolicited praise and approval from others. When you give approval, you receive it in return, as with all the other healthy personality traits we have detailed here.
- Whenever you **sincerely admire** someone for something they have accomplished, express it. Admiration is one of those feelings that, because of conditioning, we often find difficulty expressing. Our sub-conscious minds know this, and when someone expresses genuine admiration for our accomplishments, we not only feel proud of ourselves, but our respect for the person expressing it soars. It is as if we know that a degree of courage is required to express it sincerely. That only makes us appreciate the gesture and the person that much more.
- You pay someone the greatest mark of respect when you demonstrate that you are **paying attention** to them. The amount of attention you pay them is a neon indicator to them of how important they are to you. When you pay attention to someone, they feel valued and important and the opposite is of course true. A major cause of negativity in relationships of all types, is the feeling that we are either being ignored or not being granted the courtesy of the attention we deserve. Your degree of sensitivity to the attentive needs of others will significantly improve or impair your relationships and the way your personality is perceived.
- The best way to show that you are paying attention is by **active listening**. This cannot be cheated, you will get found out. Listening attentively and appreciatively builds trust and self-esteem faster than any other factor.
- Applying some, many or all of the above at some time in your relationships with others will significantly improve each of your relationships and naturally improve the health of your personality. Having paid the correct amount of attention, displayed acceptance and appreciation of the person, shown approval where it feels right, the final relationship and personality builder is to **express understanding**. You cannot do this fully and sincerely without attentive listening. Everyone has a right to an opinion or view that may differ from yours, if you cannot show approval or admiration, at least show acceptance and understanding of that view and their right to it. In doing so, you gain their respect, maintain their self-esteem and take pro-active steps towards building an ongoing healthy relationship.

A final word of caution. Only express appreciation, approval or admiration when you genuinely feel it. Insincerity in your attempts to raise the self-esteem of others will be detected and foster mistrust. The maxim is, if you can't say something positive or nice, don't say anything at all until you can.

The more of these principles you can apply yourself to embracing positively, the more likely it will be that your personality will be a healthy one, attractive to others and instrumental in forging healthy relationships with others.

Why do we want relationships?



Do you ever wonder why we seek to be in relationship with another person? Why do we have this built in desire to satisfy that craving? Where did it come from? This urge is not something we have to be taught. It comes naturally. And it feels so good. Why? Are we reacting to some basic animal instinct or is there a more profound, perhaps divine, reason for it all?

The highest feeling for the soul is to experience “Unity” or perfect love with its Source. Along the way towards unity it will begin to experience this desire for ultimate love in various ways, including relationships with others, romantic or otherwise. Our partnering with others, and the feelings that derive from it, is the soul's way discovering that loving relationships are the path to the eventual reunion with our source.

There is no doubt that relationships with others play a big role in our lives. I'm guessing now, but most of us will probably fall in and out of a serious love affair 3-6 times throughout our lives. Why does this happen?

Let's start off with the simplest, but most important reason for all relationships, including romance. We live in a material universe that is made up of opposites. This is an ancient, mystical teaching, which tells us that there is an opposite for everything that exists, including our feelings and emotions.

This is how we experience the world around us. If we could not make comparisons, we'd never be able to feel cold or hot, light or darkness, health or sickness, anger or joy, up or down, hatred or forgiveness, love or sadness, female or male, and so on.

Our presence on this planet did not happen by accident. The most important reason we are here is to experience and feel. By doing so, we have a constant reminder of the origins and who we really are. Then we will want to live and be what we remember.

Our souls want all experiences possible and the emotions and feelings that go with them, because it helps the soul find its way back to source. That is what your soul is really up to all the time. Trying to find and become its Source.

The most important way for us to awaken who we really are is through the relationships we have with others. The purpose of these interactions is to constantly remind us that we are spiritual beings having a human experience. And that we are not separate from one another.

As each of us goes through a inner transformation or inner awakening, our true spiritual nature and divine heritage will reveal itself to us. We can then start the journey home in earnest. Relationships, especially the romantic kind, are the best way to accomplish this. That's why they evolved.

Loving relationships can be very profound experiences. There is no doubt that falling “in love” with a special someone is one of the most intensely pleasurable feelings we can have. It serves to remind us that love is the highest emotion we can feel and the grandest experience we can have. We need to realize that seeking relationships and love with others is no different than seeking it with God. And it is the highest choice we can make.

Healthy Relationships



The single most important purpose of ALL the relationships you will ever have is to magnify your human experience of life.

Within each relationship, the question to ask yourself is : “Which emotion am I magnifying, the positive or the negative ones?” The answer you arrive at will reflect the happiness or unhappiness of that relationship.



There are many ways to make relationships as loving and rewarding as possible. Although they really apply to all relationships, there will be references that are clearly more applicable to relationships of the romantic kind...

- The way to have a lasting and fulfilling relationship is to use it for the purpose it was intended... to be and decide who you really are.
- Enter relationships to give, not to get.
- Unconditional love, which contains complete honesty and no judgment, should be the foundation upon which all your relationships are built.
- You can't love another if you don't love yourself.
- Expectations are relationship killers.
- When we expect the someone to do this or that and they don't, we get mad, resentful and disappointed. The relationship then suffers because of it.
- Another relationship killer is excessively needing someone.
- Neither partner should look to another to fill a void in themselves. Rather, in a process of mutual sharing, we should bring a completed sense of self to our partner.
- As soon as we need the other, the degree to which we need them is an admission that we are lacking in our own wholeness. It can also become an obsession, which throws the relationship out of balance. Control the urge to need. It limits and suffocates.
- How can we promise to love another for a lifetime, if we cannot love ourselves first?
- Always be honest with yourself. Never pretend. If either one of the two partners finds this difficult, then an imperfection is in need of balancing and healing.
- Do not believe that falling in love will make you happy and end your loneliness. Each of us must find happiness, balance and wholeness within ourselves first. Then we share this inner completion and happiness with the other.
- When a relationship ends, it may have been entered into for the wrong reasons; or for the right reasons before ego got in the way.
- Jealousy and competition have no place in a relationship. If it is present, something is out of balance within the individual and needs to be healed.
- When two people express their undying love for one another, that does not mean they own their partner.
- Total freedom, not limitation and restraint, is the key to successful relationships.
- Fear-based emotions have no place in a spiritual relationship.
- All sexuality within the relationship should be used to celebrate the love that exists. Sexuality can be as passionate as it can be sacred.

- Never let a relationship cause you to lose your identity or sense of Self. Relationships should empower, since they help to remind us who we really are.
- If you do not love yourself, others and your Source unconditionally, relationships will be a constant challenge. You can't give to others what you haven't yet learned to give yourself.
- Never feel you have to prove your love to the other. Just be yourself, imperfections and all. If that's not enough, the relationship will become fragile and out of balance.
- All relationships will end when they no longer serve the purpose of spiritual growth. When that happens, release each other with unconditional love and move on with your lives.

When we discuss deep, personal relationships, we are led to talk about unconditional love; because that is the eventual goal. And unconditional love cannot be experienced without help from the Source itself. With that help, it is possible one day to realize you have left possessive, dependent love behind.

Friendships



We all have friendships of different types, there are so many variables they should not be pigeon-holed. There is much written about the benefits of friendship, and it is such an individual expression between two or more unique individuals, that I would not venture to demean the wonderful value of friendships with endless paragraphs of predictable generalities. I found that the subject headings alone, seem to cover the essentials of friendship.

- Don't worry about knowing people, just make yourself worth knowing.
- Friends are those rare people who ask how we are and then wait to hear the answer.
- If you have to buy a person's friendship, it isn't worth it.
- True friends have hearts that beat as one.
- If you cannot think of any nice things to say about your friends, then you have the wrong friends.
- Make friends before you need them.
- If you were another person, would you like to be a friend of yours?
- A good friend is one who neither looks down on you nor keeps up with you.
- Be friendly with the folks you know. If it weren't for them you would be a total stranger.
- A friend is never known till he is needed.
- Friendship is a responsibility...not an opportunity.
- Friendship is the cement that holds the world together.
- Friends are those who speak to you after others quit.
- The reason a dog has so many friends is that he wags his tail and not his tongue.
- Pick your friends, but not to pieces.
- A friend is one who puts his finger on a fault without rubbing it in.

- The way to have friends is to be willing to lose some arguments.
- If a friend makes a mistake, don't rub it in....rub it out.
- Deal with other's faults as gently as if they were your own.
- People are judged by the company they keep and the company they keep away from.
- A friend is a person who can step on your toes without messing your shine.
- The best mirror is an old friend.
- The best possession one may have is a true friend.
- Make friendship a habit, and you will always have friends.
- You will never have a friend if you must have one without faults.
- Doing nothing for your friends results in having no friends to do for.
- Anyone can give advice, and yet a real friend will lend a helping hand.
- You can make more friends by being interested in them than trying to have them be interested in you.
- A real friend is a person who, when you've made a fool of yourself, lets you forget it.
- A friend is a person who listens attentively while you say nothing.
- You can buy friendship with friendship, but never with pounds.
- True friends are like diamonds, precious but rare; false friends are like autumn leaves, found everywhere.
- A friend is someone who thinks you're a good egg even though you're slightly cracked.
- Great friendships comprise a balance of the selfless with the selfish

Mayonnaise Jar And Two Cups of Coffee

When things in your life seem almost too much to handle, when 24 hours in a day are not enough, remember the mayonnaise jar and the 2 cups of coffee.

A professor stood before his philosophy class and had some items in front of him. When the class began, he wordlessly picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. He then asked the students if the jar was full.

They agreed that it was.

The professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He then asked the students again if the jar was full.

They agreed it was.

The professor next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He asked once more if the jar was full.

The students responded with an unanimous "yes."

The professor then produced two cups of coffee from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed.

"Now," said the professor as the laughter subsided, "I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important things---God, those you love and who love you, your children, your health, your friends and your favourite passions---and if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full.

The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house and your car.

The sand is everything else---the small stuff. "If you put the sand into the jar first," he continued, "there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff you will never have room for the things that are important to you.

"Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Love your loved one's. Play with your children. Take time to get medical checkups. There will always be time to clean the house and fix the broken dishwasher. Take care of the golf balls first---the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand"

One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the coffee represented. The professor smiled. "I'm glad you asked.

It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of cups of coffee with a friend."

Please share this with someone you care about. **I JUST DID.**



“There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting friends up.”



Coming up in the next section

THE POWER OF LOVE

If the first nineteen sections contain the building blocks of happiness, learn how love, the greatest power of all is the cement that holds them all together. The phenomenal healing power of love is the strongest and most intense power of them all.



**THERE CAN BE NO WORTHIER
PURPOSE THAN TO COMMIT
OUR LIVES TO THE POWER AND
EXPRESSION OF LOVE**

10 – Power of Love

"It is rewarding to find someone you love, but it is essential to love yourself.

It is quickening to recognize that someone is a good and decent human being,

But it is indispensable to view yourself as acceptable.

It is a delight to discover people who are worthy of respect and admiration and love,

But it is vital to believe yourself deserving of these things.

For you cannot live in someone else. You cannot find yourself in someone else.

You cannot be given a life by someone else. Of all the people you will know in a lifetime, you are the only one you will never leave or lose.

To the question of your life, you are the only answer.

To the problems of your life, you are the only solution."

What is
LOVE
?♥?♥?♥?♥?♥?♥?

As part of the research for writing this chapter, when I typed the word “love” into a search engine on the internet, it brought 15,430,000,000 results. There is an enormous amount of material available out there about love, a lot of it contradictory. Quite possibly, there is more written about this subject than any other on the planet. With all that information at our disposal you would be forgiven for thinking that by this stage of our human development, we would have conquered the mysteries of love. Thankfully that will never happen and it is the very fact that love remains a mystery to most of us, that gives love its eternal appeal.

Having spent many years studying the experience of happiness, I found that the information I gathered, from my own thoughts and those of others, ran into tens of thousands of pages of notes and research, enough to write a least one book on each of the chapters. Love was by far and away the most fascinating and infinite subject of them all.



Everything you will ever read about happiness and the meaning of life has its basis in love. Love colours every other area of your life. The degree to which you embrace and give love in your life will determine the levels of happiness you will experience. For that reason, I make no apology that this chapter on love is the most comprehensive in the project.



THE 8 KINDS OF LOVE

ACCORDING TO ANCIENT GREEKS



8 Different Types of Love

According to the Ancient Greeks



1. Agape: Selfless, Unconditional Love

2. Philia: Affectionate Love

3. Ludus: Playful love

4. Eros: Romantic Erotic love

5. Storge: Familiar Love

6. Philautia: Self-love

7. Pragma: Longstanding Enduring love

8. Mania: Obsessive Love

>>>>> see article for more detail <<<<<<

The ancient Greeks studied love and classified them into eight different types. They studied everything from public speaking to the stars in the universe. Love is something they were absolutely fascinated with. Let's take a look at the different types of love so you can better understand your own relationships.

Does love always make us feel all warm and fuzzy inside? Or does it sometimes cause us problems in our relationships? Well, the answer is both.

Humans are inherently selfish. We all want to “win” and to get other people to understand what we want. And unfortunately, that often results in two people who just don't understand each other. Because of that, their relationship suffers.

One key to healthy relationships is understanding the different types of love. Everyone gives and receives love differently. In addition to that, some people are much more capable of experiencing certain types of love than others.

1. Agape: Unconditional Love

First, we have agape love. This is an altruistic, selfless, unconditional love. The Greeks thought it was quite radical, perhaps because so few people seem capable of feeling it long-term.

Some people would describe agape as a type of spiritual love. For example, Christians believe that Jesus exhibited this kind of love for all humans. He was selfless and sacrificed Himself so that others could be rid of their sins. He suffered for the happiness of others.

Agape is universal love, such as the love for strangers, nature, or God. It does not depend on familiarity. Agape can be said to encompass the modern concept of altruism, defined as unselfish concern for the welfare of others. Recent studies link altruism with a number of benefits. In the short term, altruism leaves us with a euphoric feeling—the so-called ‘helper's high’. In the longer term, it is associated with better mental and physical health, as well as longevity. Altruism, or agape, helps to build and maintain the psychological, social, and, indeed, environmental fabric that shields, sustains, and enriches us. Given the increasing anger and division in our society, and the state of our planet, we could all do with quite a bit more agape.

Agape love is selfless love, the love for humanity. It is the closest to unconditional love. The love you give without expecting anything in return reflected in all charitable acts. It is the compassionate love that makes us sympathise with, help and connect to people we don't know. The world needs more Agape love.

This is an unconditional love of humanity that sees beyond the outer surface and accepts the recipient for whom he/she is, regardless of their flaws, shortcomings or faults. It's the type of love that everyone strives to have for their fellow human beings. Although you may not like someone, you decide to love them just as a human being. This kind of love is all about sacrifice as well as giving and expecting nothing in return. The translation of the word agape is love in the verb – form: it is the love demonstrated by your behaviour towards another person. It is a committed and chosen love.

Example of Agape love: The person in your life that is always giving to others and needing nothing in return. This is the way they show their love, and this is the way they are energized through love. By giving all that they have, and all that they are, to those around them, they find beauty in life.

2. Philia: Love of the mind

Also known as brotherly love, Philia represents the sincere and platonic love. The kind of love you have for your brother or a really good friend. It was more valuable and more cherished than Eros. Philia exists when people share the same values and dispositions with someone and the feelings are reciprocated. The hallmark of philia, or friendship, is shared goodwill. Aristotle believed that a person can bear goodwill to another for one of three reasons: that he is useful; that he is pleasant; and, above all, that he is good, that is, rational and virtuous. Friendships founded on goodness are associated not only with mutual benefit but also with companionship, dependability, and trust.

For Plato, the best kind of friendship is that which lovers have for each other. It is a philia born out of Eros, and that in turn feeds back into Eros to strengthen and develop it, transforming it from a lust for possession into a shared desire for a higher level of understanding of the self, the other, and the world. In short, philia transforms Eros from a lust for possession into an impulse for philosophy. Real friends seek together to live truer, fuller lives by relating to each other authentically and teaching each other about the limitations of their beliefs and the defects in their character, which are a far greater source of error than mere rational confusion: they are, in effect, each other's therapist—and in that much it helps to find a friend with some degree of openness, articulacy, and insight, both to change and to be changed.

Philia is shared experience. The love we feel for people we strive with, to achieve a shared goal – our co-workers, the players in a football or netball team, the soldiers in an army. The Greeks defined this kind of love as “affectionate love.” In other words, it is the kind of love that you feel for your friends. Ironically, the ancient Greeks thought this kind of love was better than Eros (sexual love), because it represented love between people who considered themselves equals.

While a lot of people associate the word “love” with romance, Plato always argued that physical attraction wasn't necessary for love. Hence, why there are many different types of love. This type in particular, is often referred to as “platonic” love – love without sexual acts. Philea love refers to an affectionate, warm and tender platonic love. It makes you desire friendship with someone. It's the kind of love which livens up the Agape love. Although you may have an agape love for your enemies, you may not have a Philea love for the same people. The translation of the word Philea is love in the noun – form: it is how you feel about someone. It is a committed and chosen love.

Example of Philia love: Two friends talk about how deeply they understand each other, and how that security and openness causes them to feel comfortable and taken care of.

3. Ludus: Playful love

Ludus is known as the “playful love.” However, a better way to describe it is the feeling of infatuation in the early days of romance. If you’ve been in love before, you know what I’m talking about. It’s the butterflies in your stomach, the giddiness you feel when you see your love walk through the door, and the feeling of never wanting to be without them.

Ludus is playful or uncommitted love. It can involve activities such as teasing and dancing, or more overt flirting, seducing, and conjugating. The focus is on fun, and sometimes also on conquest, with no strings attached. It’s the child-like and fun kind of love.

If you think about it; this generation loves Ludus more than anything else.

Ludus relationships are casual, undemanding, and uncomplicated but, for all that, can be very long-lasting. Ludus works best when both parties are mature and self-sufficient. The fluttering heart and feelings of euphoria; the slightly dangerous sensation.

Problems arise when one party mistakes Ludus for Eros, whereas Ludus is in fact much more compatible with Philia.

Studies show that when people are experiencing this type of love, their brain is acting much like it does if it was on cocaine. In other words, your brain is lit up and active just like someone who is literally high on a drug. It makes you feel alive and excited about life.

Example of Ludus love: Modern love at its finest, Ludus love is best described by thinking of two people who just want to have fun together, with little need for security or roots.

4. Eros: Romantic love

Eros is named after the Greek god of love and fertility. Therefore, it is usually associated with romantic, passionate, and physical love. It is an expression of sexual passion and desire.

The Greeks were actually quite fearful of this love, strangely enough. They thought that because human beings have an instinctual impulse to procreate, that this love was so powerful and it would result in a loss of control. Although the Greeks thought this kind of love was dangerous, it is still the kind of love that is associated with passionate, sexual love. Even in modern days, some people believe that this kind of love “burns hot and bright, but it burns out fast.”

Eros is sexual or passionate love and is the type most akin to our modern construct of romantic love. In Greek myth, it is a form of madness brought about by one of Cupid’s arrows. The arrow breaches us and we ‘fall’ in love, as did Paris with Helen, leading to the Trojan War and the downfall of Troy and much of the assembled Greek army.

Eros will have naked
bodies;
Friendship naked
personalities.

C. S. Lewis



Eros was the Greek God of love and sexual desire. He was shooting golden arrows into the hearts of both mortals and immortals without warning. Eros is defined as divine beauty or lust. Eros is mainly based on sexual attraction and it is where the term “erotica” came from.

Eros is a passionate and intense love that arouses romantic feelings; it is the kind that often triggers “high” feelings in a new relationship and makes you say, “I love him/her”. It is simply an emotional and sexual love. Although this romantic love is important in the beginning of a new relationship, it may not last unless it moves a notch higher because it focuses more on self instead of the other person. If the person “in love” does not feel good about their relationship anymore, they will stop loving their partner. It can turn into other kinds of love – like pragma – but it starts as romance and attraction.

Example of Eros love: A young couple that meets and immediately feels attracted, and lustful, towards one another.

5. Storge: Familiar Love

Storge (‘store-gae’), can be defined as “familiar love.” Although that’s a strange term, this type of love looks and feels a lot like philia – affectionate love felt between friends. However, this love is more like a parent-child love.

Just like philia, there is not physical or sexual attraction. But there is a strong bond, kinship, and familiarity between people.

It is a kind of family and friendship love. This is the love that parents naturally feel for their children; the love that member of the family have for each other; or the love that friends feel for each other. It’s based on natural feelings and effortless love. In some cases, this friendship love may turn into a romantic relationship, and the couple in such a relationship becomes best friends. Storge love is unconditional, accepts flaws or faults and knows forgiveness, acceptance and sacrifice. It’s committed, sacrificial and makes you feel secure, comfortable and safe.

Example of Storge love: Think about the kind of love your mother gives you, or your very best friend. It is rooted in friendship, and understanding, but there is also a deep emotional connection there.

6. Philautia: Self-love

Philautia is self-love. In our modern-day society, most people associate self-love with being narcissistic, selfish, or stuck on themselves. However, this is not what the ancient Greeks meant by self-love. Self-love is not negative or unhealthy in any way. In fact, it’s necessary to be able to give and receive love from other people. We cannot give to others what we don’t have. And if we don’t love ourselves, how can we truly love others?

Another way to look at self-love is by thinking about it as self-compassion. Just as you might show affection and love to another person, you must also show that same affection and love to yourself.

Philautia can be healthy or unhealthy. Unhealthy self-love is akin to hubris. In Ancient Greece, a person could be accused of hubris if he placed himself above the gods, or, like certain modern politicians, above the greater good. Many believed that hubris led to destruction, or nemesis. Today, hubris has come to mean an inflated sense of one's status, abilities, or accomplishments, especially when accompanied by haughtiness or arrogance. As it disregards truth, hubris promotes injustice, conflict, and enmity.

Healthy self-love is akin to self-esteem, which is our emotional appraisal of our own worth relative to that of others. Self-esteem and self-confidence do not always go hand in hand. It is possible to be highly self-confident and yet to have profoundly low self-esteem, as is the case with many performers and celebrities.

People with high self-esteem do not need to prop themselves up with income, status, or notoriety, or lean on crutches such as alcohol, drugs, or sex. They are able to invest themselves completely in projects and people because they do not fear failure or rejection. Of course, they suffer hurt and disappointment, but their setbacks neither damage nor diminish them. Owing to their resilience, they are open to growth experiences and relationships, tolerant of risk, quick to joy and delight, and accepting and forgiving of themselves and others.

The ancient Greeks divided Philautia into two kinds: There is one that is pure selfish and seeks pleasure, fame, and wealth often leading to narcissism and there is another healthy kind of love we give ourselves. Philautia is essential for any relationship, we can only love others if we truly love ourselves and we can only care for others if we truly care for ourselves. This is not vanity, like narcissism, but our joy in being true to our own values. The strength to care for ourselves so that we can in turn care for others.

Example of Philautia love: Selfish Philautia love is the kind of love that takes and does not give back in return. This is someone who only uses others to excel in life. Think about the social climbers of the world. On the other hand, the positive kind of Philautia can be seen in a couple that is a union, not a melting pot. They both do their own things, but they come together and support each-others' own growth.

7. Pragma: Longstanding Enduring love

The everlasting love between a couple which develops over a long period of time. Pragma was the highest form of love; the true commitment that comes from understanding, compromise and tolerance. It is pragmatic this is why it is referred to as "standing in love" rather than "falling in love" because it grows over time and requires profound understanding between lovers who have been together for many years.

Pragma is a kind of practical love founded on reason or duty and one's longer-term interests. Sexual attraction takes a back seat in favour of personal qualities and compatibilities, shared goals, and making it work. In the days of arranged marriages, pragma must have been very common. Although unfashionable, it remains widespread, most visibly in certain high-profile celebrity and political pairings. Many relationships that start off as Eros or Ludus end up as various combinations of Storge and Pragma. Pragma may seem opposed to Ludus, but the two can co-exist, with the one providing a counterpoint to the other.

The ancient Greeks define pragma as “enduring love.” In other words, it’s almost the opposite of Eros (sexual love). Eros tends to burn out quickly because of its passion and intensity. However, Pragma is a love that has matured and developed over a long period of time.

The kind of old married couples who have been together since their teenage years and still hold hands, well, that’s a great example of pragma. Unfortunately, this kind of love is somewhat rare to find – especially in society today. These days, low self-esteem, selfish neediness, lack of communication and unrealistic expectations mean that people rarely have the tolerance, patience or desire for love to grow over time. They aren’t prepared to wait, they want perfection and they want it now.

Example of Pragma love: Think about your grandparents, and how they have endured so much, but have always chosen each other. The love which endures in sickness and in health. The love which makes a friend care for their former school friend who has become vulnerable in later life.

8. Mania: Obsessive Love

Mania is not necessarily a good type of love, because it is obsessive. It’s the type of love that can lead someone into madness, jealousy, or even anger. That is because the balance between Eros (sexual) and Ludus (playful) is terribly off.

Many people who experience this type of love suffer from low self-esteem. They fear losing the object of their love, and this fear compels them to say or do some “crazy” things in order to keep them.

If not kept under control, mania can be very destructive.

In closing, there is, of course, a kind of crossover between the seven positive types of love, which keep on seeping and passing into one another. For Plato, love aims at beautiful and good things, because the possession of beautiful and good things is called happiness, and happiness is an end-in-itself. Of all beautiful and good things, the best, most beautiful, and most dependable is truth or wisdom, which is why Plato called love not a god but a philosopher: *‘He whom love touches not walks in darkness’*.

Types of Love, as we experience it today

All these types of love are in fact so relatable that you're bound to have experienced some of them.

1. New Love

This love is fun. You don't even realize you love them. It's more of a 'like,' honestly, because you'd never admit to yourself it's love. It's not a deep love, but more of a "call me back, and also don't get hit by a truck, thanks," kind of love. Regardless, it's a bundle of nerves and a whole bunch of fun at the same time. It's miserable because it can be taken away so quickly, but you're also just so hopeful it will last. It's the cutest of love, next to old peoples love, which I'll get to later.

2. Routine Love

You've been dating for a while, and you love each other. It's just a fact. There's a cosy comfort in this person. Routine sounds like it's a bad thing, but it's really not. It's simplicity. There's no questioning. There's no hiding your feelings for each other and it's great. They're right there for you, and you're right there back. There's comfort in that.

3. Infatuation Love

You love the idea of this person. You want them, but outside of that, there's really no connection. This love is often fleeting, a whirlwind. There's so much about this person that you want to be a part of, but low and behold, there's not much meat to the relationship now, is there? You love the thought of being with this person, and you want to be with them. But once you have them in your grasp, you realize that you aren't quite meant for each other the way you thought. This kind of love can be the one that breaks your heart in the easiest way.

4. Friend Love

You want to love this friend, but it's just not there. Like you love them, but you don't love them. It's just not there for you. You'd be perfect for each other, but they just don't get it going for you, hence why you're friends. But that's okay. You provide a different support for each other than a lover ever could.

5. Fake Love

You want it to work so badly. But guess what? It doesn't. So you force this idea onto yourself that this person is "good enough" for you and you are "good enough" for them, so you march along onto the beliefs handed to you during childhood about what you should be doing with your love life – fall in love, marriage, house, babies, etc. But maybe not with this person. If the realisation finally hits you like a steam train, cut it off and find yourself an "In It To Win It Love."

6. The "One" Love

They're it, the one. Plain and simple. It might take a while for you to realise it, but they're it. You might break up, get back together, break up again, etc, but at the end of it all, you realise that there is no one quite on earth like this person. You'd give everything for them. They're so perfect that you almost hate them for it, because you didn't think there would be a person in the world that could make you feel this way.

7. In It To Win It Love

You guys are in it. You're not giving up on this. You're partners in life. You can somehow watch this person throwing up and still want to have sex with them (much later). You've been through it, whether it is losing a job or having a child, buying house or the death of a parent...and they were there. They were supporting you the whole way through it. You couldn't imagine life without them.

8. Tragic Love

It ended and it shouldn't have, unrequited or somewhat one-sided. This kind of love is deeply embedded into your soul, and it passes through you slowly, but eventually you heal. You will always feel the pangs of this love, but it's never quite the same as it was before. You know this. Your love would never be the same if you were to be together again. Everyone knows this. No matter what you do or who you love thereafter, you'll always remember this person. Perhaps, in another lifetime, you'll be together.

9. Your Parents' Love

Now this can be taken two ways, the kind where your parents love you even if you totally screw up or the love they have for each other. I'm talking about the latter. Their love isn't always the best. They've fought. They've hugged it out. They've learned how to make it through their 20s, 30s, 40s and so on...and you've witnessed it all. They've made the biggest impression on how to love. It may or may not have messed you up, but it might've shown you what kind of love you're looking for whether it's the same or different from your own. From the earliest times we can remember, our experience of love is the love we witnessed and experienced between our parents, this is what love means and looks like to us. If the relationship was violent, contained emotional abuse or manipulation, do not be surprised to see these characteristics manifesting themselves in your relationships, until that is, you realise what is happening and fix it in your relationship. Conversely, if the emotion you experienced growing up was affectionate, positive, warm, selfless and compassionate, these are the traits you have likely inherited.

10. Unhealthy Love

Many will have that ex. They can't have you, so they want you. They finally get you, and they either abuse you, take you for granted or simply don't want you anymore. It's a vicious cycle. You may still care for them, because you had a different kind of love before. But it ended and while you may still care for each other, but it can never be again. Point blank. You're toxic to each other.

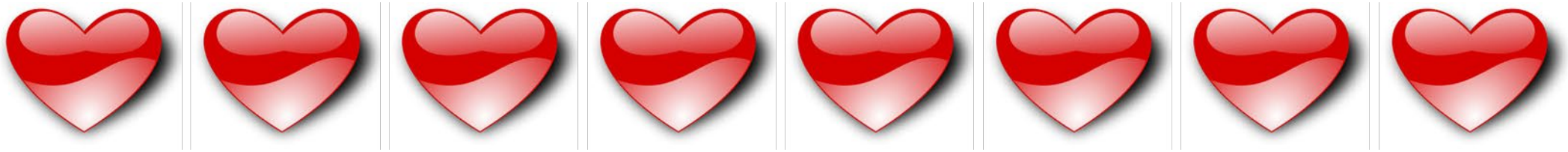
11. Old People Love

The cutest love of all, obviously. Who hasn't welled up watching two old people hold hands in the park? They've been through it all. Even the most garbage parts about a relationship, they stuck through it. They're more of a partnership than anything else. They've learned forgiveness, strength, perseverance through each other. It's a long love. It's a tragic kind of love because one must always go before the other, but they know that they'd never want anyone else by their side than their mate.

There are as many types of love in the world as there are types of people in it. Here is a list of other types of love and what they mean.

- **Tough Love:** This is a love that is strict and all about holding you accountable and responsible.
- **Unrequited Love:** This type of love is a lack of love from one partner. In other words, unrequited love is when someone loves someone else but the other person does not love them back. Unrequited love is “a love that is impossible because the person you love doesn’t love you back the same way.”
- **Obsessive Love:** This is a dangerous kind of love, one that can often lead to possessiveness and even physical harm. To obsessive lovers, love is mania. This kind of love is always referred to as “mania” love.
- **Forbidden Love:** These are the star-crossed lovers, the Romeo’s and the Juliette’s of the world. This love is almost always tragic, or it carries with it deep familial or cultural consequences. This love is strong, however, for those who choose to continue loving those whom they are forbidden to love, are clearly deeply connected and enamoured with their partner.
- **One-Sided Love:** This is different than unrequited love. When you are in a one-sided partnership, you have both entered into a relationship, but possibly due to upbringing or circumstances one party contributes more than the other. In some instances the other party seems to take advantage of that.
- **Constructive Love:** This kind of love grows you. It is the kind of love you have with your best friend, or a partner that consistently wants you to expand as a human being. This love calls you out on your flaws, but they do not judge you — they help you to become the best version of yourself.
- **Enabling Love:** This is the kind of love that turns a blind eye to the things their partner needs to work on. Often, family members or partners of those with addictions will start off with this love, until the situation requires more of them. Think about a mother giving her son money knowing that he will most likely spend it on harmful habits. Or a father overlooking problematic behaviour even though he knows that you are doing something wrong.
- **Competitive Love:** This usually exists between two highly motivated people and can show up in two different ways. In a negative light, two people cannot be happy for one another’s accomplishments — they are always in competition with each other. In a positive light, both people are competitive, but they support each other and push each other to succeed — they are motivated to be the best for each other.
- **Resentful Love:** This is the kind of love that usually exists in a relationship where one person has given up a dream or a career for another. Over time, they resent their partner for allowing them to make them their whole world and feel like they do not have much to live for outside of their relationship.
- **Everlasting Love:** This is the kind of love that lasts no matter what. It’s the love they write songs about. Distance and time can come between these two people, but when they see each other, the feelings flood back. They are always connected, even when they are not.
- **Artistic Love:** This love exists between an artist and the person who inspires them deeply. This love is often tumultuous because there is so much passion there, and it can often be one-sided or short-lived when the artist feels like they have found a new like mind in another human being.
- **Distant Love:** This is the kind of love that exists from a distance. When you love someone, but you never act on it. You don’t even truly know that much about them — you just feel deeply for them and would rather nurture that from a distance than ruin the fantasy of who they really are.
- **Explorative Love:** This is the kind of love that fills your bones when you touch down in a new city, or country, and you feel an overwhelmingly strong sense of home. You may not have been born in this place, but you are immediately sure that you belong there.

- **Momentary Love:** This is the kind of love that swells within you in the middle of moments; the kind of love that occurs when you are sitting with a friend and everything goes quiet. You look at them and your cells burst with happiness and gratitude for them. You feel lucky that they are in your life.
- **Switch Love:** This kind of love is like a light-switch. One moment, you are completely enamoured with someone. However, once they do something to hurt you, or they say something or act in a way that turns you off, suddenly, all feeling is lost for them. You are almost repulsed by them at this point and the relationship may even end as a result.
- **Curious Love:** This kind of love is never strong at first. There is a gentle curiosity that bubbles within you. You do not love this person, but you know you could grow to love them. You know that they would treat you well and you're curious to discover more about them.



In this chapter we will find out about the essentials of what love really is and what happens in our bodies that makes us fall in love. We'll also look at what attracts us to someone in the first place. Is it their pheromones, or do they just fit the right "love model?"

WHAT IS LOVE?



If you've ever been head over heels in love with someone, you will at some time have compared the feelings with those of addiction. As it turns out, scientists are discovering that a similar chemical process takes place with addiction that takes place when we fall in love. Love is a chemical state of mind that is part of our genes and influenced by our upbringing.

“When you look at love, you're looking into the face of appreciation.”

Throughout the history of mankind, we as a world culture have made love out to be mysterious, complex, difficult, and beyond definition. Maybe there's a fear that if we define it, it would somehow be less powerful... less exhilarating. Maybe we like the mystery of it. But is it really that complicated? Perhaps the complications surrounding love come from all the “stuff” we add on to this powerful emotion.

Romantic love both exhilarates and motivates us. It is also critical to the continuation of our species. Without the attachment of romantic love, we would live in an entirely different society that more closely resembled some of those social circles in the animal world. The chemicals that race around in our brain when we're in love serve several purposes, not least of which is the continuation of our species. Those chemicals are what make us want to form families and have children.

True love requires you to know a person very well. You must trust that person enough to have other friends of the opposite sex and know that they wouldn't do anything with the other person because they love you. This is what usually hurts the most; you lose that person's trust and respect. A true love cares about your inner beauty, not just your exterior beauty. It doesn't lock you up or control you. Love isn't selfish; it shares you and your qualities with others to enrich everyone's lives. The other person believes in you, making you yourself believe you're capable of that much more.



True love can be defined in one word **CARING**. **“C”=Concern**. This relates to an individual's concern for the other's well-being. You want the best for them. Your concern for them is unselfish. **“A”=Acceptance**. Unconditional love, you love them despite their faults. **“R”=Responsibility**. You make decisions about the relationship that will be best for everyone. You think before and after an action and take responsibility for the end result, bad or good. Remember if someone REALLY loves you they won't push you into doing anything you don't feel comfortable with. **“I”=Integrity**. You are honest and truthful with the other person in the relationship. You don't condemn the other person or make them feel bad about themselves. You see them for who they truly are and love them for it. **“N”=Nurture**. When you love someone, you want the best for them even if it doesn't benefit you in any way. Just seeing them happy makes you happy. You help them grow and mature into the best person he or she can possibly be. **“G”=Giving**. When you give, it involves a risk. For example, you go up to the other person and tell them you love them, you take a risk because you have no clue what their response will be. Both must give something to benefit another. In true love relationships more than any other, we should go into them to give rather than to get.

There are many differences between true love and infatuation, but what we all must remember is that we all go through stages in our lives where we think we are in love and we really aren't. It's often said that it's better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all. Even I know that, and I have not yet experienced my life to its fullest. If there is one thing I cannot stress enough, it would be that God will always be there to love each and every one of us, no matter what.

Essential elements of love

What do you feel when you love someone? If distilled down to its core components, what would those be? Yes, love is an emotion, a feeling, a wanting, and a “being”. We know it feels good, but what specific feelings, and desires are present when we feel love?

Love is Acceptance.

Acceptance is labelling someone as "okay" and having no desire to change them. Who they are is perfectly fine with you. You pose no condition on whether you will love them or not. This is unconditional love. When your love IS conditional, the moment they step outside your set of conditions, love evaporates.

Love is Appreciation.

Appreciation is one step beyond acceptance. It's when your focus is on what you like about another. We look at them and feel this sweeping appreciation for who they are, their joy, their insights, their humour, their companionship, etc. When someone says they are "in love" with another, they mean their appreciation is so enormous for this person that it consumes their every thought.

Love is Wanting Another to Feel Good.

We want the best for those we love, for them to be happy, safe, healthy, and fulfilled. We want them to feel good in all ways, physically, mentally and emotionally.

Love Pays Attention

We want to demonstrate to those we love that we are “there in the moment”, consciously aware of his or her existence.

Love Shows Affection

Regardless of how the other person may compare in some areas with others, we want to make it clear by our showing sincere affection that those we love are important to us.

Love Demonstrates Understanding

Understanding is demonstrating that we are sincere in wanting to identify how the other person feels and perceives the world, events and others around them.

Friendship


Before we can enter into a romantic relationship, and indeed after we have entered one, friendship must be the core element. True friendship means meeting a person’s true emotional needs, by means of the other elements shown here. Pure friendship is said to be the engine of romantic love.

Respect

If friendship is the engine of romantic love, that engine will not turn without the fuel of respect. As a race, we are motivated and stimulated to be in the company of people we truly respect. Respect is usually based on our perception of a persons self-reliance. The more capable a person seems to be of standing on their own two feet, the more we are likely to respect them. Conversely, the more dependent a person becomes upon us, the clingier they become, the more our respect for them evaporates. It is impossible to respect someone you can control like a puppet. Even when we are projecting an image of respecting them, to protect their image and reputation, subconsciously our respect for them diminishes and love deteriorates into pity.

Passion

We are not talking exclusively about sexual passion here. We are referring to the level of romantic desire that exists within us for that person, the fire that burns within us for that person. It is quite normal for levels of passion to go up and down dependent upon our feelings when we are with the person in different circumstances.



**Love is . . .
Quite
Simply**

**The Greatest
Power of
All**

Self Love – Where it all starts

Self-esteem and self-respect are the foundation qualities of the truly healthy personality.



The more you like or love yourself, the more you will like and love other people. The amount of love and respect you have for others, and they for you, is in direct proportion to how much love you have for yourself.

If you do and say the things that are consistent with loving yourself, it won't be long before you actually feel positive and loving toward yourself. Love is the mechanism that activates the very best that is in you, and in the people and situations around you.

Stages of love



Love grows and changes. The emotional stuff that brings couples together in the first place is different from the love that emerges five or fifteen years down the road. Loving relationships go through many stages. All are important and none can be by-passed if love is to flourish.

Mature love doesn't come into existence unless the relationship has evolved through earlier stages of attraction, romance, power struggle, acceptance and attachment.

Stage 1: Attraction

Our choice of mates is guided by unconscious factors that are the same for us all. Our unconscious leads us to a person who offers us the greatest opportunity to heal our childhood wounds. As the old Chinese saying goes:

“The greatest opportunity brings with it the biggest danger and challenge”.

The person we are most attracted to will very likely share some significant traits or characteristics with the parent who gave us the most trouble in childhood. If we follow the attraction through to a committed relationship, we will have the same conflict with our mate that we had with our parent. Obviously, we don't intentionally set ourselves up to have a repeat performance of our childhood unhappiness.

Unconsciously, though, we *do* choose the patterns that are most familiar to us from our youth. We are now adults and have greater personal strength and a better chance of standing up for our-selves than we had before. The learning and growing we must do to live in harmony with our partner is exactly the learning and growing that's required for repairing the damage of the past. That's what we mean when we say that the purpose of loving relationships is to heal childhood wounds.

Stage 2: Romantic Love

Love relationships usually begin with a strong physical and emotional attraction that produces a somewhat altered state of consciousness. Your brain is saturated with chemicals called *endorphins*, creating the sensations of intense pleasure that accompany infatuation. The exhilaration and sense of well-being are similar to feelings produced by vigorous exercise or eating something extremely pleasurable, like chocolate.

In this highly charged emotional state, you are likely to project images, expectations and ideals of the perfect mate onto your partner. These projections often have little to do with who your partner really is, but it's hard to tell because both of you are on your best behaviour. Overwhelmed with romance and passion, you are highly responsive to each other.

If all goes well, attraction turns into romance. Everything about them is intensified, while everything about school, family, job, exercise, and so on seems dull in comparison. Romantic love is a psychological and spiritual experience, but to be in love is to understand that we are also products of our biology.

Much has been written in both fiction and non-fiction about falling in love, and about the chemistry of falling in love. The ebb and flow of romantic love should not be misconstrued as a signal that you are in the wrong relationship. Romantic love is not mature love. Eye gazing, obsessing, daydreaming, and physical desire will change over time into something else. "What it *ultimately* changes into is up to the two of you, but as an immediate next step what it changes into is the power struggle.

Stage 3: Power Struggle

Infatuation and romantic love eventually subside and healthy relationships go through a period of power struggles as each partner tries to shape the other into the ideal mate. Many couples argue and fight their way through this. Some will avoid sensitive areas of conflict. If neither of you is ready to risk confrontation, your lives are likely to become more and more separate and devoid of intimacy and sharing. Even though you avoid open conflict, by agreeing at some level not to argue and fight, the tension and pain remain.

Some couples use guilt, blame and justification to try to control each other in an effort to recapture feelings from the earlier stages of the relationship. Both long for that period of infatuation when being together was fresh and exciting. Remember that it's normal to pass through romantic love and to experience conflict. It is simply the relationship growing. Confrontation is healthy. It builds understanding and helps your relationship mature. The challenge is to discover what can be changed in the relationship and what must be accepted.

The sooner you bring up issues when you feel hurt, taken advantage of, irritated, misunderstood, or ignored, the better for the relationship. Suppressing them keeps you a victim and only leads to hostility and feelings of separateness.

When you and your partner have been together for say, two to three years, some of the magic has worn off, and your partner begins to annoy you. Things you hadn't noticed before begin to grate on your nerves. You love them, but you wonder where the romance went. You are aware that you're not always in

harmony with your partner and it disturbs you. You can only change yourself in a relationship. Put your focus where you have control: on yourself, your behaviour, and your communication patterns. Changing your partner must never be the goal.

The costs of making a match with someone who shares traits with a parent, start coming into play. You may not have had some of your basic needs met in childhood, so you try to fix it now. However, your partner is not a willing team-mate. In fact, you *chose* him or her, in part, because he or she recreated the same difficulties you had in childhood.

Stage 4: Unconditional Acceptance

A healthy relationship moves beyond power struggles and control issues to unconditional love and acceptance. However, during the transition, partners must still confront and resolve issues, taking risks to make positive change wherever possible and accepting those conditions that cannot be changed. Differences are approached positively, not as things to brush over, hide or suppress.

Whenever two people get together, eventually some of the belief systems and personal habits of one will annoy the other, regardless of how much love there is. In healthy relationships couples learn how to resolve conflict.

At this stage, each person becomes highly aware of various traits in the other. Some you like and others you dislike, but you learn to accept the ones that cannot be changed. With good communication, you can almost always navigate your way to a more fulfilling relationship.

Stage 5: Attachment

The attachment, or commitment, stage is love for the duration. You've passed love of romance and are entering into real love. This stage of love has to be strong enough to withstand many problems and distractions. This is the stage of transition. Similar to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, if you have not successfully moved through the first four stages of love, inevitably, you will find yourself re-visiting them before you can happily proceed to the final stage of mature love.

Stage 6: Mature Love

This is the ultimate reward of committed love relationships. In mature love, the relationship continues to flourish from the processes and corrections put in place to meet the demands of the power struggle. The partners learn how to balance the requirements of closeness and separateness, how to create a sexual life that satisfies them both, how to solve problems effectively together, and how to talk and listen to each other so their differing points of view are understood and honoured. Understanding and acceptance become the most valuable assets. They use these new ways of relating to learn more about each other, especially where they have each been hurt and need help to heal. Finally, both partners know how to give love to each other, and how to receive the love that has been offered.

You can see how crucial the power struggle is in stimulating couples to do the work that needs to be done to reach the stage of mature love. But romance and attraction also lend some of their important elements to this stage of a relationship. The partners in mature love have learned how to instil their relationship

with gifts, compliments, appreciation, surprises, and treats of pleasure. They have re-romanticised their relationship. They look forward to giving gifts to each other, and graciously receive them. They are refreshed by the attraction they still feel for each other and have learned that in mature love, attraction is based on having a shared past and an ongoing shared present.

Love on the brain

The Chemistry of Love



There are a lot of chemicals racing around your brain and body when you're in love. Researchers are gradually learning more about the roles they play when we are falling in love and when we're in long-term relationships. **Estrogen** and **testosterone** play a role in the sex drive area. Without them, we might never venture into the "real love" arena.

Initial symptoms when we first fall in love include a racing heart, flushed skin and sweaty palms. Researchers say this is due to the **dopamine**, **norepinephrine** and **phenylethylamine** we're releasing.

Dopamine is thought to be the "pleasure chemical," producing a feeling of bliss. High levels of dopamine are also associated with norepinephrine, which heightens attention, short-term memory, hyperactivity, sleeplessness and goal-oriented behavior. In other words, couples in this stage of love focus intently on the relationship and often on little else.

Researchers use magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to watch people's brains when they look at a photograph of their object of affection. During research, scans showed increased blood flow in areas of the brain with high concentrations of receptors for dopamine, associated with states of euphoria, craving and addiction.

Norepinephrine is similar to adrenaline and produces the racing heart and excitement. According to Helen Fisher, anthropologist from Rutgers University, together these two chemicals produce elation, intense energy, sleeplessness, craving, loss of appetite and focused attention. She also says, "The human body releases the cocktail of love rapture only when certain conditions are met and ... men more readily produce it than women, because of their more visual nature."

Oxytocin

Oxytocin is released from the pituitary gland and bathes the brain and reproductive tracts of both women and men. This chemical increases our sensitivity to touch and encourages grooming and cuddling in both sexes. It also reduces stress-causing hormones in the body.

Oxytocin is released every time we hold hands or snuggle up close to someone. It bonds us with the people we love most, whether a lover, child, family member or friend. Studies show oxytocin levels peak for women when delivering a baby and breast-feeding, which are both actions that send oxytocin levels skyrocketing. A labour-inducing drug, Pitocin, is a form of oxytocin.

The oxytocin effect is more powerful in women, probably because it works in concert with estrogen (more plentiful in the female body) and is subdued by testosterone (higher in men). Research shows that men who regularly stimulate their mates' oxytocin levels are treated by those women with greater affection.

In romantic love, when two people have sex, oxytocin is released, which helps bond the relationship. Oxytocin is also associated with mother/infant bonding, uterine contractions during labour in childbirth and the "let down" reflex necessary for breastfeeding.

Vasopressin, an antidiuretic hormone, is another chemical that has been associated with the formation of long-term relationships. Oxytocin and vasopressin interfere with the dopamine and norepinephrine pathways, which might explain why passionate love fades as attachment grows.

Endorphins, the body's natural painkillers, also play a key role in long-term relationships. They produce a general sense of well-being, including feeling soothed, peaceful and secure.

Serotonin A shortage of this brain chemical is widely associated with depression. Antidepressant drugs such as Prozac are designed to increase serotonin levels, as can pleasant dinner conversations with your mate. In animal studies, high levels of serotonin encourage selectivity in mates while lower amounts are associated with less discriminating choices of mates and overly aggressive sexual behaviour.

Serotonin increases when you are feeling good about yourself, loving someone and being loved are among the best ways to feel that way.

Another possible explanation for the intense focus and idealising that occurs in the attraction stage of love, comes from researchers at University College London. They discovered that people in love have **lower levels of serotonin** and also that neural circuits associated with the way we assess others are suppressed. These lower serotonin levels are the same as those found in people with obsessive-compulsive disorders, possibly explaining why those in love "obsess" about their partner.

Love Junkies

There are those who may be addicted to that love "high." They need that amphetamine-like rush of dopamine, norepinephrine and phenylethylamine. Because the body builds up a tolerance to these chemicals, it begins to take more and more to give love junkies that high. They go through relationship after relationship to get their fix.

We Express Love Through the Power of Attraction

Within the brain, every mental activity consists of neurons (electrically neutral subatomic particles) firing in a certain sequence. An "Attractor" is an association of links that can overwhelm weaker ones. The limbic brain (i.e. the emotional brain) contains its emotional attractors, encoded early in life. If the early experience of a limbic network reflects healthy emotional experience, its attractors will serve as reliable guides to the world of workable relationships.

In human beings, an attractor's influence is not confined to its mind of origin. The limbic brain sends energy of emotion, in this case love, outward. Limbic resonance joins human minds together in a continuous exchange of energy signals and every brain is part of the network that shares information.

Limbic Attractors exert energy not only within the brain that produces them, but also on the limbic networks of others, calling compatible memories, emotional states and styles to each of them. Through the limbic transmission of emotional energy, a person can attract others into his emotional world. All of us, when we engage in this transmission and receiving of emotional energy, can fall under the influence of another's emotional mind.

The limbic transmitting of Attractors makes personal identity more malleable. The people to whom we are attached provoke part of our everyday neural activity. Ongoing exposure to one person's Attractors does not just activate neural patterns in another, it also strengthens them. Long-standing togetherness writes permanent changes into a brain's neural pathways.

The astonishing legacy of the human race is limbic revision, the power to rewire the emotional parts of the people we love, as our attractors activate certain limbic pathways, and the brain's memory mechanism reinforces them.

Who we are and who we become depends, in part, on whom we love.

Pheromones

Romantic love begins with attraction. You begin your romantic relationship when there is that feeling of attraction. But why are we attracted to some people and not to others? Let's examine the role played by pheromones.

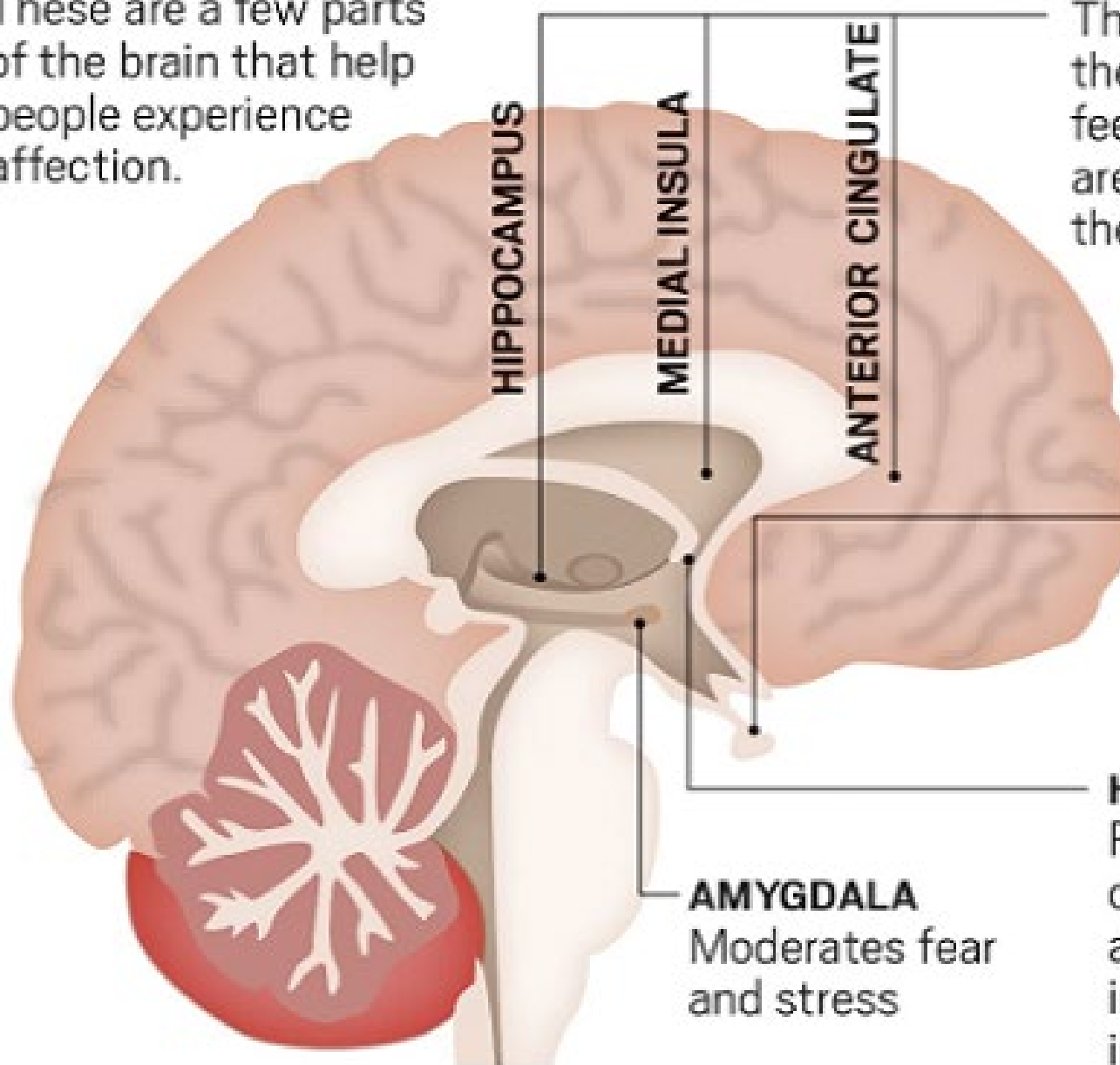
These are chemicals in the body that send signals to others through a subliminal passageway of scent. Scientists widely accept that animals communicate and mate by smell. It is also known that animals can be warned of impending danger by scent.

A study on pheromones in women's underarm secretion gives the most solid evidence for the existence of human pheromones. It has been suggested that our subconscious preference for certain pheromones might explain why we are only attracted to certain people.

Pheromones are not the only reason we are attracted to someone. Social and environmental influences, genetics and past experience contribute to who we are and who we find physically and emotionally attractive. Our genetics might play a role in whether or not someone is desirable avoid inbreeding or, at the other extreme, to avoid the loss of desirable gene combinations. Inevitably though, it is our brain that processes another individual's appearance, lifestyle, how they relate to past individuals we have met, and, possibly, their pheromones. Based on this information, we decide, within our brain, whether or not this person is worth getting to know.

WHERE DOES THE BRAIN LOVE?

These are a few parts of the brain that help people experience affection.



These three parts of the brain help regulate feelings of reward. They are also responsible for the development of love

PITUITARY GLAND
Regulates hormones and secretes them into the body

HYPOTHALAMUS
Produces dopamine, oxytocin and vasopressin, all of which are necessary in the process of falling in love

AMYGDALA
Moderates fear and stress

Defining Love



Love is our greatest need. What is the difference between love and attachment? How can we determine whether what we feel is love or attachment? How can we purify our love and move into a higher level of consciousness? These are some of the many questions that we need to answer in order to create happiness.

Love is perhaps more easily described by what it is not. Love is not fear, hurt, pain, jealousy, bitterness, hate, separateness, lust, attachment, aggressiveness, ego-centeredness, indifference, possessiveness, suppression - the list goes on.

Love can be perceived more easily through the effects that it creates. We cannot see the wind, but we can see its effects, such as the leaves moving, branches swaying, or the sound of air rushing.

What then are the effects of love? Love creates feelings of unity. We feel toward others as we feel towards ourselves. We are as interested in their welfare, happiness, success, health and spiritual growth as much as we are about our own.

Loving others means wanting them to be happy in whatever ways they are guided to their happiness. Love encourages understanding, compassion, forgiveness, happiness, excitement, peace, joy, fulfilment and a desire to be helpful in any way we can.

Love is the ability to let go of our self-interest and personal needs enough to really hear and understand the other's needs and interests. It means caring enough to sacrifice, when necessary, our own pleasures and desires when the other's needs are more important.

Our basic nature is love. However, our ignorance, mistrust, fear and attachment have buried it so deeply within us that it is sometimes difficult to find or maintain. Loving others steadily, in spite of their behaviour, is not easy.

Love Is NOT Need

We often use the word love when we really mean, "need". We say, "I love you." But, if we analyse ourselves deeply, we may come to realize we really mean, "I need you."

This is not the highest form of love. It is love mixed with need, attachment and addiction. If it were love in the purest sense and the other was happier by leaving us or even happier with someone else, we would be happy for him or her, not full of sadness for ourselves. Loving others means wanting them to be happy, healthy and successful in the ways that they are guided to be.

Love does not create the pain we feel when someone leaves us or rejects us. That pain is generated by our dependency upon that person for our security, pleasure or affirmation. Needs and attachments create fear, pain and suffering.

Love creates happiness, fulfilment and the experience of our True Selves

Love Is NOT Security

Love wants to give. Need wants to take. Sometimes what we are seeking to take is very subtle.

Whenever we feel pain, fear or anger in our relationships, it is because we believe that our needs are in "danger" of not being satisfied. When this happens, our "love" turns to hurt, disappointment, fear, resentment, loneliness, inferiority, or bitterness, and sometimes, anger, hate, rage and desire for revenge.

How can love become all these negative feelings? It cannot. The truth is that our emotion never was pure love to begin with. It was an "attraction" based to some degree also on need.

This does not mean that we should reject ourselves because we have seldom really loved purely. As we are not yet enlightened spiritual beings, how could we? It would be like rejecting ourselves because we are a flower bud, which has not yet blossomed. It is only natural that we cannot yet love unconditionally. This is our stage of evolution.

Freedom from Need

The first step towards opening our hearts to real love is to accept and love ourselves exactly as we are with all our weaknesses and faults. Only then can we proceed effectively.

The second step is to begin observing the feelings that are stimulated. Through self-observation, we can determine in which situations we love unconditionally and in which we are feeling "loving" with specific conditions.

Needing Security From Others

We look to others for security. We might seek security from our parents, spouses, siblings, children, employers, friends, ministers, spiritual teachers or others. We do feel love toward them, but often that love is based on the fact that they offer us a sense of security. If they start behaving in ways that obstruct our feelings of security or if they decide to leave or ignore us, will we still love them?

If our parents throw us out, will we still love them? Or is our love too tightly linked with the need for security? If, as parents we dream that our children will become wealthy and popular, will we love them the same if they become beggars or anarchists? Some parents will, others will not.

In each instance where we feel our heart closing, we need to discover what we fear. Most frequently we lose our love when we fear that our security, self-worth, freedom or pleasure are in danger. Only when we know that we can live without others can we really love them steadily.

Society is responsible for much confusion in this area. We believe that if we love others, then we must be totally dependent on them and should fear that our world would fall apart if something happens to them. This isn't love, it's insecurity. This is a lack of awareness of our inner spiritual nature and our ability to deal with life. It has nothing to do with love.

Needing Others for Pleasure

Our need for pleasure and affirmation can distort our experience of love. We create relationships that give us pleasure and affirmation as well as security. We may be dependent upon the other for money, shelter, sex, travel, clothing, encouragement, compliments, humour, tasty food, a clean house, comforts, or even his or her beauty.

Yet, if he or she stops providing these for us, or decides to provide them for someone else, do we carry on loving that person or do we feel hurt, disillusioned, and overcome with feelings of injustice, anger and resentment? If the relationship revolves around the condition that "I will love you as long as you provide my pleasure, happiness or excitement. If you stop, my feelings will change," this is not true love, it is conditional love.

Needing Others for Affirmation

We feel affirmed when others obey us. "You must listen to me and do what I say. I can control you. That makes me feel powerful and worthy. If, however, you stop doing whatever I say, I will stop feeling love for you."

This is a common problem for parents when their children start to grow up. This can also occur between spouses. A spouse might be suppressed at first, and the partner feels powerful and affirmed. If, however, the spouse begins to think and act independently, the partner begins to panic, becomes fearful and sometimes aggressive.

We also feel a sense of affirmation when someone needs us or is dependent on us. This can occur between parent and child, teacher and student, friends, or between the "care-taker" and the "needy victim." In these cases, the "needed" feels affirmed by and perhaps superior to the "needy". This is one aspect of co-dependency. Some of us find meaning in life because someone needs us or depends on us. If however, the other doesn't want to be the child, the student or the needy one anymore, do we feel the same attraction and love? If not, our love is mixed with our need to be "needed".

In such a case, we need to give, offer, and sacrifice in order to feel useful, worthy or boost our self-image. If this is the case, then all that we offer in these situations, all our sacrifices, are actually for ourselves and not for the others. That does not dismiss the fact that others may actually need us, or that we have genuine feelings of selfless love.

A further aspect of this attraction for affirmation is when we love those who tell us we are right. I love you because you agree with me, you are like me, you affirm me. If they change beliefs and convert to another political party, religion, or spiritual group, will we feel the same closeness and "love?" Perhaps yes, perhaps no.

Another aspect is infatuation. In this case there is a mutual (occasionally only one-sided) infatuation on the physical, sexual, emotional and sometimes mental level. This is a special attraction between two persons who excite, bring joy to and stimulate each other positively. This positive stimulation often has to do with the needs for security, pleasure and affirmation.

The couple then has the possibility of transforming into a steady form of unconditional love, or facing the sadness of conflict or separation. Sooner or later, we will come face to face with the other's various negative aspects, and if we cannot love them as they are, the relationship suffers.

Until we are able to love unconditionally, we will be unhappy, insecure and frequently in conflict with those around us. We will be able to do this only when we have matured sufficiently so as to experience inner security, inner satisfaction, inner freedom and a steady feeling of self-worth.

In other words, we can love *purely* only those who we do not need.

When we need others, we cannot love them unconditionally. This might be difficult to comprehend at first, but deep thought and observation will prove it to be true. Being able to love without conditions is a basic prerequisite for both a happy life and spiritual evolution.

Selfless Love for One Person

An essential stage in the evolution of love is being able to love others regardless of their behaviour. Probably the closest most of us have come to experiencing such love is towards our children. There are some parents who have totally selfless love for their children. They maintain steady love for their child even if he or she does not live up to the parents' expectations, even if he or she rejects and abuses the parents, and even if he or she becomes a dangerous criminal.

This love is not universal nor is it totally unconditional because there is one condition, that the other is my child and not someone else's. We might also experience this type of selfless love for a significant other person when he or she is our student or under our responsibility. This type of love often has to do with the role of feeling responsibility for someone. It enables us to accept all types of behaviour from others and continue accepting and loving them with understanding and compassion.

Intentional Love:
Displaying Selfless Love in a Selfish World



Universal Selfless Love

The next stage is to expand our feelings of unconditional love and acceptance to a wider circle of people and eventually to all beings - including animals, plants and insects.

We are focused on the temporary form being occupied by these beings; thus we feel a sense of sadness when they experience suffering or unhappiness, or if and when we lose them.

Those who experience this universal selfless love often choose careers or lifestyles that allow them to serve the whole in some way. They may join service groups such as the Samaritans, Peace Corps or other voluntary service organisations. They feel a need to express that love through actions which improve the quality of life for those around them, especially for those who are suffering, lonely or unhappy.

Their interest expands beyond the limits of themselves and their immediate family. They begin to realise that all beings are brothers and sisters in one spiritual family of all humanity. As their awareness grows, they perceive even animals, plants and insects as belonging to their family. They seek to express this love through acts of service and care.

Spiritual Love

A later stage in our spiritual process is the development of spiritual universal love where wisdom or spiritual discrimination is now added to our love. We now perceive all forms as various manifestations of one unchanging, ever blissful, divine consciousness. In this state we experience pure love in which we cannot distinguish between the other and ourselves.

Although we are less affected by the suffering we see, we are even more wholly dedicated toward eliminating it. Thus, we love and accept all beings as they are while we direct our energies toward facilitating this process of our mutual spiritual unfolding. Each of us moves forward in their own unique way.

Previously we may have tried to solve people's problems for them. Now we realise that the most effective way we can others is to love and accept them as they are and empower them to find their own inner wisdom and strength in order to overcome their problems. It is difficult for some to realise that it is sometimes more loving to allow someone to suffer a little more so he or she can find the solution herself and grow strong and free from ignorance. Only an enlightened person can know when not to help externally because this would be the most loving act for a specific person.

Many parents would do well to learn this form of wise "tough" love. They might help their children far more if they refrain from solving their problems every time they are in trouble. No one should, however, misinterpret that I am suggesting that we should not help those who are in need. We must help, but we must also ask ourselves what the most appropriate help would be in each situation.

The greatest and most precious help we can offer to those we love, is to help them get in touch with their inner power and wisdom. This, at times, means helping, and at others, means letting them struggle by themselves while we mentally pray for them.

For an enlightened spiritual being to see someone cry about some unhappy event in his or her life or fear some future possibility, might be like our watching a small child cry or express fear. We sympathize with and understand the child's feelings. We love it and we want to help it, but we cannot really be worried.

Those who experience this level of love sometimes may well be misunderstood, with others believing them to be uncaring. As we grow spiritually, we begin to understand, however, that real love is a love for the soul within the other, which is seeking to free itself from ignorance and the illusion of weakness and fear. These spiritually awakened beings offer help on other levels through their positive thought forms such as prayers.

In this way, help is given without undermining the others' self-confidence.

Loving One – Loving All

When we limit our love to a specific person (we do not mean sexually, but rather emotionally, mentally and spiritually), it is difficult to experience love in its highest form. We love this person and not others, focusing on loving them because they offer us security, pleasure or affirmation; or because we consider them to be "ours."

*Pure love is universal. It can express itself toward any particular being,
but it cannot limit itself to that person or group. If it does, then it is love mixed with conditions.*

When we single out one specific person and limit our love to them, we are in effect, loving an illusion. That person which we love becomes a temporary manifestation of the one Universal Being.

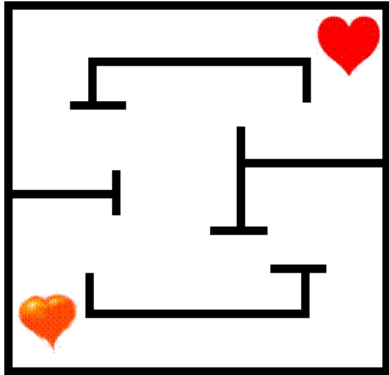
That form on which we focus is a temporary physical, emotional, mental manifestation that will dissolve back into the galaxy. When we love the essence in that star, that is, its spiritual essence, we begin to love all stars. The same essence is in all the stars. The same spiritual essence is in all beings. When we love the spiritual essence in others and not only their form or the specific benefits that we receive from them. We love the spirit within.

Our love now reaches the highest, purest level, both unconditional and universal. It is unconditional because it does not depend on what others do or do not do, and universal because we start to love more and more people independent of their appearance, character and other factors. We love the spirit within them. We as spirit are one with the spirit, which is within them.

So we can love the star or we can love the galaxy of stars that is the night sky and thus all the stars. This is our choice. Our job is to purify love through our efforts to love unconditionally in all of our relationships, no matter what the other does or does not do. Only then will we truly be happy. Only then will experience our true Self.



Is this love? Love versus being 'in-love'



There is a massive difference between *loving someone* and being in love. If you love someone, you're still in control of your emotions – you choose how you'll allow yourself to feel and react about that person. If you have fallen in love, however, you are no longer calling the shots. You become hopelessly dependent upon (and at the mercy of) whomever you've fallen for.

It's common for patients to fall in love with their psychotherapists. Why? Because there is a very real tendency for people to fall in love with those who satisfy our emotional needs of compassionate understanding.

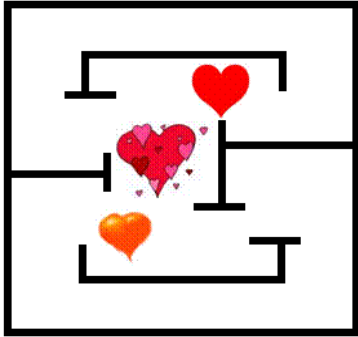
Do you know when you're in love? Can it be a romance of a lifetime? Do you believe that the person you're destined to be with is the one you're with now? Do you find all the things in life evolves around love?

Have you ever bragged to your friends, "I'll never go crazy over a girl (or bloke)". "I'm never going to act like a lovesick twit!" Your friends will smile to themselves. "That's what you think" they mutter. "Just you wait. Some day your time will come!" And sure enough, it does. Sooner or later that person finds themselves foggy daze - ignoring friends, neglecting school or work, and bumping into furniture.

What is this thing called love?

Real love exists when your strong tender feelings for the other are balanced by reason and deep respect. You care just as much for the other person's welfare and fulfilment as you do for your own. Judgements about the person are quite objective and rational. The two of you have many values and ideas in common. You share similar goals and ideals. In short, you are matched as well as mated. All these factors will be able to support and sustain a happy relationship over a long period of time. To the extent they can, it is real love.

Don't assume that because you're more grown-up in your emotional life than most other people, you're protected from romance. The real test of emotional maturity then is not whether you "fall in love" (become infatuated). That happens to almost all of us. The true test of maturity is rather what you do about it. Do you react rationally to this romantic condition? Or do you rush rashly into some foolish, perhaps permanent, commitment before the relationship proves to be sound. EXPECT ROMANCE AND BE PREPARED. Romantic experience catches up with all of us, young or old, rich or poor, mature or immature. And with it comes perplexity and uncertainty. If romance hasn't reached you yet, be patient. Your time is coming! If it has already come to you, it will likely come again. The issue, then, is how can you act wisely once you are, "wounded by one of cupid's arrows." You need something better than a soft-eyed grin and the old "never mind, dear; when it hits you you'll know it" routine. When you ask an honest question, you deserve an honest answer.



Is What I'm Feeling Infatuation or Love?

Red Flag Thoughts: "You are my life. I can't live without you."

Contrary to popular belief, there is a difference between infatuation and love. And there is a difference between lust and love. Love is grown into; it develops over time. While, Hollywood would have us believe love can be manoeuvred in and out of, such is not the case. It is a clear indication that our society has an unrealistic, if not diluted, view of love. There is love, and there is infatuation, and, though related, they are distinctly different.

Infatuation:

- Develops rather rapidly
- Based on limited characteristics
- Based on the emotion itself
- Is selfish and self-centred
- Changes rapidly
- Loses touch with reality
- Largely outward or physical
- Doubts/Insecurities
- Jealousy/Possessiveness

Love:

- Is grown into
- Based on the whole person
- Focuses on the person with whom you are involved
- Is other person centred - selfless
- Demonstrates a deep commitment
- Is a gradual development
- Maintains balance of life and priorities
- Involves the total relationship
- Security/Peace Trust/Faith

LOVING SOMEONE

VERSUS

BEING IN LOVE

LOVING SOMEONE

Involves more selfish than selfless behaviour

Means to love someone after considering how well they match you and expecting them to reciprocate the same feelings

Happens after choosing someone with deep scrutiny into their personality

You expect him or her to reciprocate your feelings

You want the best from the other

Romance becomes a necessity

There is an expiration if there is no equal commitment on both sides

There should be an equal commitment on both sides

BEING IN LOVE

Involves more selfless than selfish behaviour

Means to love someone even when they don't reciprocate the love you have for them

Happens even without your knowledge, so it's not a choice

Can be one-sided, and you still expect the best for him/her

You expect the best for the other

Romance is not a necessity

May last forever since you can be committed to your feeling

Commitment may be most often one-sided

A relationship is an investment of time, as well as love, which, in turn, continues to grow and deepen over time. It is amazing that the better we get to know someone, the more we care for them and the more we love them. They even become more attractive, on all levels, because of the quality time we commit to our relationship with that person. As you search for love and happiness, keep in mind that everything worthwhile requires time and effort. And if love is the greatest of all gifts then, don't be afraid of investing your time, energy, talents, and all that comprises the person you are into finding that person with whom you want to share your life.

There are some feelings we have when infatuated that we don't have when we're feeling love. Some of the symptoms of infatuation are; feelings of panic, uncertainty, overpowering lust, feverish excitement, impatience, and/or jealousy. When infatuated, we are thrilled, but not happy, wanting to trust, yet suspicious. There are lingering, nagging doubts about our partner and their love for us. We're miserable when they're away, almost like we're not complete unless we're with them. It's a rush and it's intense. It's difficult to concentrate.

Infatuation, is an obsessive compulsion to receive emotional support from another person. Falling in love in this manner involves the irrational expectation that the same emotion will *magically* appear in the other person. If this fails to occur, the infatuated person feels hurt. Infatuation is common, especially among singles, and especially the inexperienced.



Having experienced both sides of the infatuation equation I have a few words of advice for those that are "under the influence." When you are infatuated, unless you are extremely wise with the ability to detach, it is rarely clear what actions are proper and what actions are improper. Situations vary, and general advice cannot be given on what to do. If you do nothing else with your life, at the very least, try to be a happy person and avoid making problems for other people.

- Don't allow yourself to believe for even one moment that the OTHER person is also in love in the same way. If you can at least avoid deceiving yourself then the pain will be much less. Do NOT blame the person you love for not being honest about what you think is their deep passion for you. Do NOT blame the person you love for stringing you along. You string yourself along! The only person that makes you love someone is you! The safest thing to cultivate is a sense of self-control.
- LISTEN to what the other person says. Don't double-guess another person. Don't arrogantly think you know better than he/she does about their own mind. These errors will come back to haunt you. If you fail to listen, you will miss many clues that could spare you from humiliation and rejection. Listening requires LOOKING at the other person, IN THE EYES, and watching their face and hands. Listening requires NOT DAYDREAMING, but taking in each word that is said, and the way in which it is said. If you are not in the habit of listening CAREFULLY, now is a good time to start practicing!
- Do NOT brood over the other person. If you find yourself thinking about him or her all the time, and the other person does not return the compliment, that is unhealthy. Exercise, socialise with other friends, join a club, get involved in other activities. Love yourself and do good things for yourself.

- NEVER commit any hostile act against the person you love or once loved. Be adult and wise enough to walk away from a situation where you are unwanted. Having failed in love, there is no good to come from receiving hatred in its place. Display grace, dignity, and honour, and others will respect you for it however grudgingly.
- Don't take yourself or your love too seriously. Do NOT allow yourself to get depressed over love. Love yourself.

Falling in love

If we think of the process of falling in love as an act of imagination, we will better understand it. We are stirred by feelings we first experienced and learned in Mother's and Father's arms. The 'falling' happens as we create connections with the powerful remembered feelings from long ago. We develop new and deeper capacities for feeling. We imagine how life will be with this partner. We fill our hopes, wishes and dreams with this new person.

Part of this period is focusing on and appreciating the many facets of the loved one that speak so strongly to us. In a real sense, we invent a new life with this idealized image of the beloved. This loving image will play an important role throughout our relationship, as life becomes increasingly affected by realistic concerns.

The mutual exchange of courtesies and attention—is essential to create the full intensity of falling in love. Falling in love, inventing new ways of relating, and glorying in this new dimension of being alive, gradually tapers off in intensity, but being in love can be long term if both partners learn and apply the skills of loving.

We often assume that our partner constantly loves us. But a partner notices the other's behaviour, interprets it, and decides whether or not to love. When our appraisal of our partner's action is negative, we go defensive and distance ourselves. When we appraise positively, we display cooperation, affection and enjoy the partner. The process is continuous.

What Makes us Fall in Love?

We all have a model for the ideal partner buried somewhere in our subconscious. It is this model that decides which person in that crowded room catches our eye. But how is this model formed?

Appearance

Many researchers have speculated that we tend to go for members of the opposite sex who remind us of our parents. Some have even found that we tend to be attracted to those who remind us of ourselves.

Personality And Character

Like appearance, we tend to form preferences for those who remind us of our parents (or others close to us through childhood) because of their personality and character, sense of humour, likes and dislikes, etc.

Pheromones

The word "pheromone" comes from the Greek words *pherein* and *hormone*, meaning "excitement carrier".

In the animal world, pheromones are individual scent "prints" found in urine or sweat that dictate sexual behaviour and attract the opposite sex. They help animals identify each other and choose a mate with an immune system different enough from their own to ensure healthy offspring.

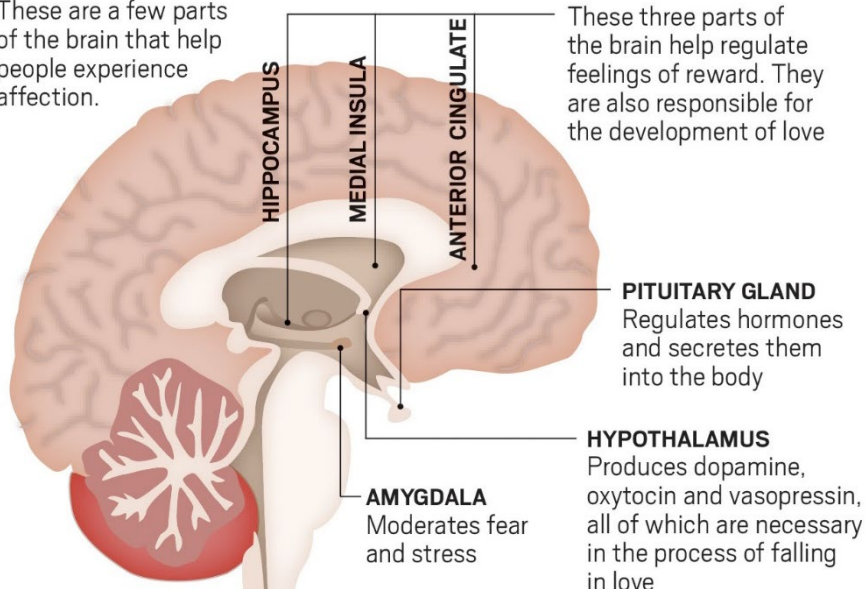
The existence of human pheromones was discovered in 1986 by scientists in Philadelphia and its counterpart in France. They found these chemicals in human sweat. There is evidence that **smell** is an important aspect of love (note the booming perfume industry).

THE SCIENCE OF FALLING IN LOVE

Beyond the love songs, romantic poems, passionate novels and movies, love is the result of complex processes in the body. What follows is a breakdown of love's biology and the ways humans experience romance with each other.

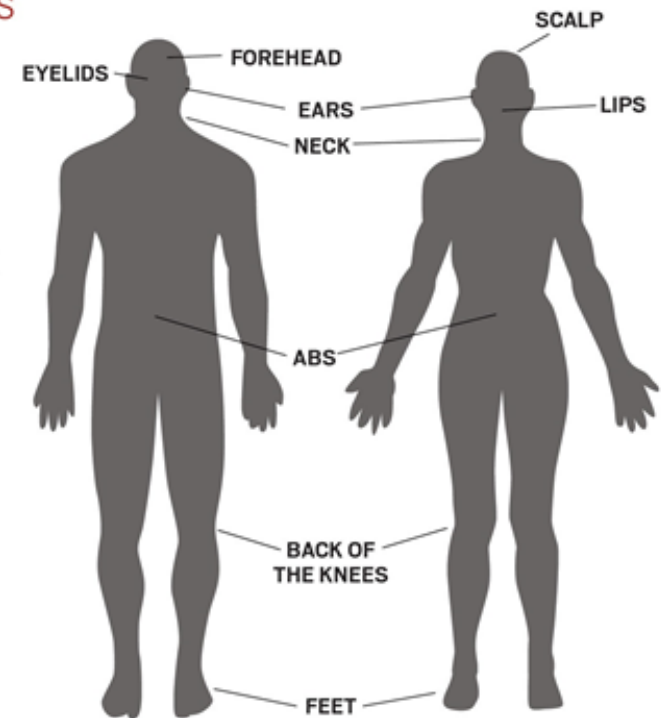
WHERE DOES THE BRAIN LOVE?

These are a few parts of the brain that help people experience affection.



HOT SPOTS

Erogenous zones are parts of the body that are particularly responsive to stimulation, resulting often in sexual excitement. These are popular hot spots on men and women.



SOURCES: "The neurobiology of love" Semir Zeki, heritage.org, census.gov, womensday.com, princeton.edu

FALLING IN LOVE, STEP BY STEP

1. The hypothalamus releases **dopamine** into the body, causing feelings of ecstasy and excitement.

2. As **dopamine** levels increase, **serotonin** levels decrease.

Serotonin is responsible for a person's mood and appetite, among other things.



The lower levels of **serotonin** are similar to levels found in people with obsessive compulsive disorders.

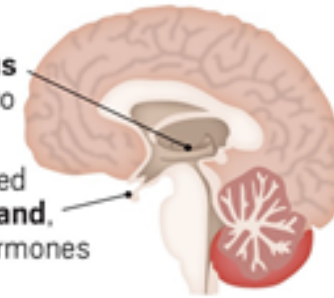
This may result in feelings of obsession or infatuation.

3. Along with dopamine, the body also produces a substance called **nerve growth factor**.

- **NGF** is more prevalent in people who are newly in love.
- People who are not in love or are in long-term relationships have lower levels of **NGF** than recent lovers.
- The amount of **NGF** in the body directly relates to the intensity of romantic feelings.

4. **Oxytocin** and **vasopressin** are responsible for feelings of connection and commitment.

- The **hypothalamus** produces these two hormones.
- They are then stored in the **pituitary gland**, which secretes hormones into the body.
- In times of extreme passion – such as during orgasm – these hormones enter the bloodstream.
- The presence of the two chemicals is often attributed in part to the success of long-term relationships.



5. These hormones affect different parts of the brain. Because of these sections' nearness, certain responses occur:

Activity increases in the romantic core of the brain. —> The amygdala deactivates.

A person's standards for judging others grow blurry. —> The person in love feels less stress and fear.

The result is an overall feeling of unity between people in love.

DN GRAPHIC ADAM BAUMGARTNER

The Greatest Love Requires Great Courage



It doesn't take much courage to simply have a relationship. You choose to spend your time with someone, to have sex with him or her, perhaps to live together. It does however take courage to love your partner deeply, to not be merely a couple but to be true lovers, and to create a conscious relationship together. The greatest love always requires the greatest courage.

If you measure the success of your relationship in terms of how comfortable it makes you feel, you may convince yourself that your relationship is good because it doesn't challenge you, and confuse yourself that your challenging is unhealthy because it's creating wild surges of emotion. I'm not saying that a relationship that is always painful is good for you, and you should stay with that partner—you shouldn't. When you develop the courage to love deeply and consciously, you will find yourself feeling uncomfortable a lot of the time, as your relationship stretches you beyond the boundaries of your comfort zone as you experience the changes essential to growth.

The depth and honesty of your love, and the more trust you create between you, the more your relationship will present you with the truth, and the more uncomfortable you may become. Sometime after a significant commitment is made in a relationship, such as moving in together, getting married or having a baby or another baby, will usually bring with it a time of conflict and turmoil. Remember the Power Struggle referred to earlier in the chapter, well here it is.

The Courage to Share Precious Moments

If loving deeply requires a certain degree of emotional courage, then sharing precious moments requires even more courage. Why?

The more precious moments you share together, the more difficult it will be for you to avoid the truths you may have denied or hidden from in your relationship, the harder it will be to pretend things are “ok” when they're not, to convince yourself that you're being loved enough when you aren't, and to close your eyes to the unspoken problems in your relationship. We go to great lengths to avoid these precious moments as I call them, because they force you out of your comfort zone and demand that you finally attend to the problem with complete honesty. It's time to take off your masks and reveal the feelings at the heart of who you are. It is the only way to true growth within the relationship. The longer these issues are ignored, denied or masked, the more deep rooted the issue becomes and the greater the level of pain and heartache when they finally burst their way to the surface.

You Are The Source Of Your Love

When the initial bliss of relationships start to fade, the common misconception we adopt is that it is up to the other person in our relationship to do or say something to make you feel more “in love”

You are the source of the love that you feel in your relationship, NOT the other person. Bear with me on this, I will explain in more detail later in the chapter. For now though, it is crucial to understand that it is your responsibility to learn how to fall in love with your partner over and over again. It isn't something you do once only and can then sit back. Know their needs, remember the essential elements that made you feel the sensation of love, showing attention, affection, appreciation, acceptance and understanding. Demonstrate your respect, passion and above all, your friendship for them. Love is an active verb, like a plant that will die without water, love will die without your care.

Staying in love

Staying in love is, perhaps, the greatest challenge in your relationship. A substantial number of people stay together after love has gone.

The truth is not complicated...it is just hard to grasp and keep in one's awareness. Love is a relationship. This is not hard to understand. What is more difficult to really comprehend is that every relationship is an independent entity. It is like a separate person. It is made up all the interactions between the members of the relationship. This relationship remembers and influences how every future communication is interpreted.

To make it even more demanding, love changes as it grows. It goes through phases just like a person. We are not surprised that an infant, child, adolescent or adult require from us different treatment, and we quickly develop the necessary skills to interact with them. We should not be surprised that falling in love, being in love, and long-time love require, if we are to be successful lovers, that we create new, more appropriate understandings, skills and practices to enhance our love in every phase.

Love does not have a singular meaning, for example: tender love, passionate love, romantic love, true love, pure love, spiritual love, lust, eros, and sexual love all have discrete meanings.

Love is complex—far more complex than sadness, anger, fear, pleasure, pride or joy. But we know enough to identify some specific ways to make love stay if we focus on our experience and our awareness, and do not depend upon our love to maintain itself.

Six actions impact every relationship negatively. In ascending order of seriousness: criticism, contempt, defensiveness, blocking-out, hostility and failure to keep agreements.

The relationship becomes negative and unstable when there are more than one negative element to every five positive aspects. An unstable relationship is one with a negative sentiment bias, where one is likely to interpret nearly any action as negative and respond with defensiveness. In contrast, where there are more than five positive interactions, you create a positive sentiment bias, where nearly every action is interpreted as positive. You respond with warmth, openness, availability, understanding and acceptance.

So, the truth of staying in love, is to take great care in every communication, every word, gesture, expression, touch, agreement, every action involving your lover and you. Each is registered and remembered by your love.

You can understand why staying in love is an ongoing challenge—and a demanding one.

We get the idea that love is spontaneous because falling in love seems to happen without much planning on our parts. It is described in song and poetry as earth shaking, trance-like, struck by lightning, enticing, wonderful, and blissful, euphoria and fascination. Since many of us have been there, we know that

that marvellous feeling carries a powerful promise of being too strong and too totally absorbing not to be long-lasting. We are convinced and most of us are easily persuaded that love is spontaneous, it grows and maintains itself without us having to do anything much but give in to it!

But now we know that our love exists in and between us. It can be scary. It makes it clear that both need to be careful of each other and develop new skills designed to protect the love and help it grow; it is anything but spontaneous. Many positive actions may be impulsive, but they are not without thought.

Your Relationship as a Sanctuary



For many people, when problems develop in life, their relationship becomes an additional strain or drain instead of what it should be, the one place where you can go in the world to feel safe, comforted and supported. You may not always be able to use your relationship this way, sometimes you will need to find relief and answers from within yourself, in your own heart. Your relationship should be there for you as a beacon of strength and comfort.

All too often though, instead of being with your partner, connecting with him to replenish your energy, we avoid them, fearing that being together will sap what remaining energy you have left. At its worst, the relationship can become the source of your pain and heartache, if you both let that happen, which only adds to your desire to escape.

If you are with the wrong person, he or she still has unresolved issues they can't put to one side, you may need to withdraw into yourself to regain your strength to either confront the situation or find the courage to leave. All relationships go through their times of emotional tension or turmoil. However, it should not feel like this all or most of the time.

Every relationship is different, and only you will know the truth about yours. Your heart will know if your partner is capable of providing you with the ongoing emotional support you need and that they will keep up with your rate of emotional and spiritual growth. If you find yourself trusting other people with your innermost fears, pains and secrets, then you must question the truth about the long-term future of your relationship.

The time to make assessments is not when everything in the garden is rosy, but when life throws its low ball at you. You deserve to feel that your partner can be your emotional sanctuary, no matter what circumstances present themselves. You deserve the knowledge that no matter what happens today or in the future, their arms around you will always make you feel that everything will be alright. If the feeling of comfort feels temporary, and you know in your heart that it will be totally up to you to resolve a life problem, then they are not a true sanctuary. A sanctuary is a genuine place of refuge or safety that helps you to feel genuinely safe. True sanctuary can only be provided by someone who knows enough about you and the problem and potential solutions, to provide real comfort and support, not mere "there, there" platitudes.

It follows that a sanctuary should be there for both of you. There will be times when both need the safety and refuge. If however, you find that one partner is constantly using the relationship as a sanctuary provided by the other, then this is not a sanctuary, it is the most draining sort of one-sided co-dependency. This doesn't necessarily require partners to be problem solvers or fixers. In many cases, we don't want solutions, we just want a sympathetic ear, but there has to be a balance struck between providing a sanctuary and being able to access it yourself. Only you will know if the balance is right within your relationship.

If you can't find sanctuary in your relationship, you will look for it somewhere else. You cannot deny your basic human need to feel genuinely soothed and sheltered to ease your pain. If you cannot turn to your partner, you will look for other substitutes in the form of love, food, drugs, or alcohol, addictive sex, incessant work, excessive spending, anything in fact that distracts you from resolving the issues at home.



Sometimes it seems less complicated to spend money, go out with friends or look for the solution in the bottom of a glass, than to turn to your partner and say "I'm hurting or something's missing with us" Sometimes it seems much less confrontational to work excessive hours or take action that compromises your dignity, than to say "I'm frightened that our finances are so bad right now, and I need to know you're still proud of me, and love me anyway." These are the precious moments of growth that will truly test your partner and the relationship. Faced together, they can either nourish you or reveal to you that you may have to consider the long-term prospects of a relationship where you are the only one growing. Precious moments aren't always easy but they will always reveal the truth.

Will it last?

More often than not, the feelings of passionate love lose their strength over time.

The chemicals responsible, (adrenaline, dopamine, norepinephrine, phenylethylamine, etc.) dwindle. Suddenly your lover has faults. Why has he or she changed, you may wonder. Actually your partner probably hasn't changed at all, it's just that you're now able to see him or her rationally, rather than through the blinding hormones of infatuation and rose coloured spectacles of passionate love. At this stage, the relationship is either strong enough to endure, or the relationship fades.

If the relationship can advance, then other chemicals kick in. Endorphins, for example, are still providing a sense of well-being and security. Additionally, oxytocin is still released when you're physically close and vasopressin continues to play a role in attachment.

The Definition of "True Love"

When asked to define what true love is, even the experts have to pause and think. Perhaps it's because true love has different meanings for different people. True love can be defined as caring about the health, well-being and happiness of another person. True love is when you carefully consider your words, thoughts and actions, and specifically how they will benefit that other person.

True love is when you care enough for another person to allow them the space and time they need to become all they can be. If someone says to you: "If you love me, you would ...," that is not love, this is control. True love is easily recognised as unconditional support. True love occurs when you shift from unconscious commitment to conscious commitment. When you hear people say: 'Relationships are really hard work,' this is an expression of unconscious commitment," Conscious commitment, means that you reveal your true self to your partner and support your partner through thick and thin.

All love comes from an open heart. When you're together, it's open and safe at the same time. This doesn't mean the person you love is necessarily your life partner. So how do you know if you're in a lasting relationship? Here are a few pointers:

1. **You feel good.** A good relationship makes you feel good about yourself.
2. **You look forward to spending time with your partner.** You don't need to be with other people, spend lavishly, or go to events to avoid being alone together. You enjoy spending quality time together even when it's quiet.
3. **You respect your partner.** You hear yourself bragging about your partner. You say things like: "My wife is a really talented designer". If you find that you're always talking about yourself, or your children, you're not focused on your partner or the relationship.
4. **You're interested in what your partner thinks.** You ask your partner's opinion about issues that are important to you. If he or she disagrees with you, you genuinely don't mind.
5. **You accept your partner's quirks.** Everyone has them. If your partner's quirks are endearing or tolerable, you're in good shape. If they really bother you, you should look more closely at the relationship.
6. **You're able to work through your problems.** It's natural to have some bumps in the relationship road to true bliss. People in healthy relationships see disagreements as a chance to learn more about their partner. However, if you're creating problems, or if you think every fight is the "big one" leading to a break up, you should probably rethink your relationship.
7. **You feel safe.** You're not afraid of losing your partner.
8. **You can't explain why you're together.** Many people coordinate their lives so that they have to be together. Ask yourself if you're truly together because you want to be, and not simply because of circumstances or to keep the image of the happy family unit upheld. If the answer is "yes," then you'll probably stay together. If it's "no," you're bound to have problems — if you haven't already.
9. **You don't compare your partner to others.** There will always be someone more beautiful, smarter or more athletic than your partner, but you don't care because you only want to be with him or her.

If you still don't know whether your love will last, try this last piece of advice Make a list of what you require from someone to be happy. If the list contains changes that are conditional to your happiness, you will be truly happy only when you see those changes appear indefinitely. If you are genuinely happy in your heart with who your partner is without the uncertainty of change, you may have found a relationship that will last. Remember though, they must sincerely want and be capable of making those changes, you can only really change you. Ask yourself "If the changes I want never appear, could I happily accept that?" Again, only you know the answer.

Love – Fiction and fact



Conditioning and beliefs create misconceptions that affect our views, choices and intelligent decisions in the area of love. There is a mass of misinformation that we accept as true that can have an adverse effect on the outcomes of our experiences of love. Romantic novels, television programmes and our assumptions about relationships help perpetuate many of these misconceptions.

As we discuss each misconception, cast your mind over your present and past relationships and ask yourself how many of them have played a part in the outcomes you have experienced.

Love is enough

- *“If I just keep loving him things will turn out ok”*
- *“We can get through anything together if we just keep loving”*
- *“Ok, so she puts me down all the time, I love her so it will work out”*
- *“She is so insecure, I have to be her pillar of strength as well as my own, but love will get us through.”*

Love is the most powerful emotion known to man yet love alone cannot resolve issues like these just by believing it will. The danger in believing that love is enough is that the real problem is masked by our refusing to honestly face up to the real problem lying underneath.

Love can “fool” us into believing :-

1. If we avoid facing our relationship problems, by telling ourselves: "If we love each other enough, none of these issues will matter."
2. I can stay in an unloving relationship even when they are not working by telling myself, "If I just love her more, she will change."
3. That "If I had only loved her more, I know I could have saved the relationship."

Love is the foundation for any good relationship. But if a relationship is going to survive and grow, it needs a lot more than love. Sadly believing that love is enough can cause you heartache and pain because it convinces you to stay in relationships that are not healthy. People with poor self-esteem or a childhood history of neglect or abuse create for themselves a victim or martyr type personality that becomes habitual and often attract relationships they find difficult to leave. They convince themselves that if they just find a way to love their partner more, their destructive actions will fade over time and be replaced with the true love that they themselves display.

FACT : *YOUR partner's behaviour is determined by their character that has nothing to do with how loving you are. Love alone is not enough.*

FACT : *Most relationships that fail, do so because the couple make premature commitments before they have identified whether they are truly compatible or not. Many are consumed with the romantic illusion of love and it is only when faced with trauma, that they are forced to try to make the jig-saw pieces fit.*

True love at first sight exists

The very same songs, poetry and romantic novels that perpetuate the misconception about love being enough, also contribute to the belief that we really can fall in love at the first sight of our beloved. Like a bolt out of the blue, true love can apparently hit any one of us the very moment we first set eyes on someone.

I'm sorry to burst a romantic bubble, but belief in the misconception of love at first sight, is a sure path to heartache further down the line.

“Yes but it felt like falling in love, if it wasn't love what was it?”

LUST: When you experience raw sexual chemistry and attach more emotion to the bond than actually exists. Intense physical attraction is most often mistaken for love because of the rush of chemicals and the apparent physical match we formulate in our minds eye that the person represents.

IMAGE INFATUATION: How handsome or beautiful they are, how they talk, the work they do, the power they exude, the money they have, even the car they drive can tick boxes in our minds, so that we become infatuated with their image and mistake the intensity of the feeling for love at first sight.

The very real danger of believing in love at first sight, creates the likelihood that you will be blinded by the intensity of initial chemistry and overlook the long term compatibility prospects. Infatuation can occur in a moment, true love grows in stages over time.

We can only have one true love

“Are you the one for me?”

The problem here lies in the very question. Once again, we are led by society and culture to believe that for every one of us there is “one” other perfect being, and we will never be happy until we find them. We go through life examining the prospective “one” dismissing every one with a flaw that disqualifies them from being our dream person.

In our attempt to avoid making a fatal choice, we miss out on experiencing what could be, a truly wonderful and special relationship. With our present partners we find ourselves secretly asking “I wonder if there is someone else out there who would make me happier?”

The first observation is that in believing that there could only ever be one person who would be right for me, I am looking for that one person to fill me up, to satisfy my every emotional need, which of course is a route destined to be filled with disappointment and heartache.

Secondly, in believing there is only “one” the natural course of thinking would be to dismiss someone because they don’t fulfil every element of our “fantasy” and we undervalue their unique qualities.

When a relationship ends, a common mistake is to choose a new partner who seems to have none of the flaws of the last, convincing ourselves that this is the “one” because they don’t have those imperfections. Again, this involves selecting and committing before adequately satisfying ourselves they are compatible in key areas.

FACT : It is perfectly possible to experience true love and happiness with more than one person, in fact with many people. The human heart has a phenomenal capacity for love, and we only limit ourselves to the quality and quantity of love we can attain because of erroneous belief in misconceptions about love.

FACT : Finding a partner with whom you are fully compatible, as well as one you love, is the secret for a healthy relationship that can last.

True love will meet my every need

“I want you to fulfil my every need, physical, emotional, spiritual and mental. I expect you will know what I want and expect without me having to tell you. Whenever I am feeling insecure, sad or confused, I expect you to lift me, cheer me up and have all the answers. On top of all that, you will help me love myself more when I need it, entertain me and share all my interests. You will be my perfect companion”

Outrageous isn’t it? Well, that’s what you are believing if you think that one true love can satisfy your every need.

And the sad truth is that many relationships are marred by one or both partners feeling disappointment with the other, after unconsciously expecting them to deliver on their unrealistic expectations. By unconscious, I mean that you may not even have verbalised your needs to yourself let alone to your partner, and yet resentment builds when they are not satisfied.

Belief in this particular piece of fiction sets your partner up to fail, to disappoint you before they have even been given a chance.

FACT: Many of our needs cannot and should not be fulfilled by our partner. We all need the variety of other people and indeed the strength of our own resources to meet some of our needs.

FACT: An otherwise good relationship may falter because you may resent your partner for failing to fulfil a need you should be fulfilling yourself or with the help of others.

FACT: If you feel emotionally empty in a part of your relationship, it may not be the responsibility, or within the ability of your partner to fulfil that emptiness. A partner may fulfil some of your needs, but never all of them.

FACT: Perpetuation of this belief places immense and unreasonable pressure on your partner to be everything to you.

We are not talking here about basic relationship needs of love, affection and friendship, but there are needs better fulfilled by friends, relatives and acquaintances.

It's great sex – it must be true love

Have you ever told yourself you were madly in love, and later realised it wasn't love, but lust? Have you had a relationship when the time you spent in bed was when you were most compatible?

If you have good sex it does not always mean you are truly in love with them, it certainly doesn't necessarily mean you were meant to be together and it doesn't necessarily mean you have a good relationship. It does mean that you have good sexual chemistry and that one or both of you are skilled lovers. It might also mean that you have a strong physical attraction that can be the basis for a healthy, whole relationship, if you are compatible in other important areas.

Belief that good or great sex must mean true love can set us up for disastrous consequences if we fail to take all other aspects of compatibility into account.

FACT: We can become involved with people we discover we are no longer as compatible with.

FACT: We can find ourselves staying in relationships longer than we should, have a hard time letting go of partners, allowing the sexual aspect to delay acceptance of incompatibility.

FACT: Good, even Great Sex does not equal true love, and plays a very small part in overall compatibility.



Precious moments for lovers

What does it mean to be a lover?

It is more than just being in a relationship with someone or making love to him or her. Millions are in relationships, have sex and share intimacy and closeness, but few are real lovers. A real lover commits to, and participates in, a perpetual appreciation of their partner, celebrating the gift of their relationship every single day by consciously exercising the key elements of love. To remind you, they are :-

- Demonstrating acceptance, appreciation and affection.
- Wanting the best for their partner, paying conscious attention, displaying genuine affection and understanding.
- Exhibiting friendship, respect and passion.

A true lover never forgets that their partner does not belong to them, they are on loan from the universe and they know that if they do not take good

care of them, they may lose them emotionally or even physically.

Ask yourself if this scene seems familiar to you. You arrive home tired from work, and your partner wants to tell you all about her day. The kids are chattering, keen for you to know what happened in their eight hours too. Maybe you're not aware of it, but you are not "there in the moment", you're off somewhere mentally, still thinking about what happened in a meeting, or when you can get some time to yourself. Your partner can't quite put her finger on it, but something tells her instinctively, that you seem a little distant.

Then suddenly, the phone rings, it's your colleague from work. You answer it and you switch to focused alert attentiveness. Laughing and animated, focused entirely on the caller and what they have to tell you, your partner looks on. How does she feel right now? She is probably wondering why she doesn't get the same degree of conscious attentiveness to what she wants to share with you. She feels unimportant and hurt, not worthy of your quality attention, resentful that others are allowed precious moments of "you" but she is not.

If we are honest, we've all been there. We all need to feel we are worthy of being listened to, being appreciated, accepted and understood. The greatest measure of respect we can show to the ones we love, is being there in the moment for them when they need us, paying sincere conscious attention to what they have to tell us. When we get this, we feel worthy, valued and loved.

Nothing that happens between you and your partner is insignificant. Everything that you say and do can create joy or pain. It is your job to identify what words and actions you use that will either strengthen your connection or weaken it.

You become a lover when you understand all of this, waking up each day filled with gratitude that you have another twenty four hours in which to love and enjoy each other. Should you or your partner forget that your relationship is a gift, when you no longer remember to cherish one another, that's when you cease being lovers.

There is little worse than being in a relationship and no longer feeling like lovers. There is little more sorrowful than realising that you love someone but you don't feel "in love" anymore. What once was a blissful joyful experience now feels empty. You may sleep together, share a home and family together, but that bond of ecstasy you once revelled in, may have faded or even disappeared. Falling out of love happens gradually over time as a result of one or both of you taking the other for granted, when either or both of you stopped thinking and acting like the lovers you once were.

In order to remain lovers, you need to create and preserve the precious moments in your relationship. Couples that fall apart, often take for granted the true beauty that exists with their partner, overlooking the conscious need to express kindness and most importantly, because they don't make time to experience the precious moments that love is all about.



Contrary to popular mythology, love is made, it doesn't just happen. The expression "making love" doesn't just apply to sex. It has a more significant meaning, in the sharing of precious moments. Paying conscious attention, showing affection and appreciation, displaying understanding, respect and true friendship and keeping passion alive, are essential elements in the making of love and the ongoing maintenance of a loving relationship.

Precious moments are created when you and your partner are totally focused on each other, loving one another in the moment with open hearts, experiencing the joy of the love that you share. When both hearts are open in this way, there is a connection of love between you that forges a wonderful bond. Precious moments are not just for the bedroom. It doesn't matter what you're doing, it's the level of attention you demonstrate to what you are experiencing that defines it as a precious moment.

When you don't share enough real moments with one another, you starve the soul of the relationship. You can spend every minute in each other's presence, but unless you are consciously experiencing some precious moments, you won't ever truly be together.

Precious moments teach you to pay attention with your heart, to start being right here, right now, IN THE MOMENT. It is those real moments that will ultimately give depth and meaning to your relationship, and keep you feeling eternally in love.

The Loving Look

He sleeps next to you, has sex with you, eats with you, sometimes looks *at* you but doesn't really look into you. He sees your face, but doesn't know how you're feeling. He sees your body, but doesn't see your spirit. . . . When your partner looks at you with a loving look, you will feel more completely loved than if he gave you any gift, more beautiful any words he could say . . .

Loving Your Partner with Words

The words you use will create either a receptive or a resistant response. The right words can talk to her body until it opens for you like a flower. The right words can make her feel swollen with desire, smile with delight and cry with happiness. You have the power to make her feel so safe, so understood, that all her old fears and mistrust melt away. You have the power to make her feel so cherished, so beautiful, that never again will she feel jealous or insecure. . . . Why wouldn't you want to find those words?



The Loving Embrace

A simple embrace can be more intimate than the most passionate sex, and more meaningful than the most honest conversation. Whenever you feel disconnected from the love you share with your partner, ask your partner to hold you. There is a world of a difference between an embrace and a hug. A hug can be something you share with friends, that "hello, it's been a while type hug" whereas a loving embrace is so much more. With a loving embrace, you can absorb all your partners worries and fears, and make them feel comforted and safe. Something magical can happen to you when you are held in your lover's arms. You forget about the things that you thought mattered, and remember the things that really do matter. You get out of your head and back into your heart. . . .

The Loving Touch

All too often, we can be clumsy and invasive with our touch. A good lover trains to speak the language of love with grace and eloquence. Like any language, the language of touch must be learned, practiced, and mastered if you are to become fluent in it.

. . . It's not enough to know where to touch your partner . . . you have to know when and how to touch him or her. There is nothing stronger than feeling immense love in your heart and allowing that energy to flow through you into the touch you pass on to the one you love.

Kissing

Kissing is one of the most intimate sexual acts you can experience. When you place your mouth on the mouth of the person you love, you are sharing the very life breath of that person. As with touch, if you set aside feelings of lust, and replace them with your heartfelt feelings of love, it will transfer into your kiss. The passionate kiss stands alone as an act in which both lovers are equally open to one another, our hearts are open and our souls breathe together.



Loss of love

Love nourishes the deepest level of our being. It feeds our soul, our heart, even our body. With it, we thrive. Without it, we become love-starved.

From the time we enter this world, there is something we need more than food, water, and air to live a meaningful life - we need love. When our heart is fed with intimacy, affection, and communication, the hunger for love is satisfied. But when we are deprived of these things, our heart is hungry, and we become love-starved.

Many men and women are walking around hungry for attention, for affection, for appreciation, for love, just like infants who were not touched or nurtured. Sadly, we're not just talking about single people, but about people in a relationship with a partner who, perhaps without realising it, is emotionally starving them by not adequately feeding their heart.

If we feel starved of love, we're not getting enough of the things we need to feel safe, valued, and connected, so we feel a sense of emptiness inside of us. Nature abhors a vacuum and many of us deal with that emptiness in ways that ultimately do not serve us. We try to fill ourselves up with other things - food, alcohol, drugs, shopping, work, care-taking people, excessive spending, etc. There's only one thing we're missing, one thing we're hungry for, and it cannot be replaced by substitutes. What we are missing is love.

Imagine that your heart is like a plant - it needs to be watered to be healthy, to blossom, and to stay alive. When your partner waters your heart with love, it becomes full. You can look at a person and tell if they are well loved, because they have that glow of love, as if they have just been watered. They are full of sweetness.

People who are starved of love, have a heart that is parched and thirsty. Rather than glowing with love, they appear dry and shrivelled up, as if they need feeding, which they do. They are thirsty for love. I'm not suggesting that if you aren't in a relationship, you are all dried up, the truth is that if you're loving yourself and regularly connecting with people you care for, your heart is being fed. What I'm referring to is what happens in an intimate relationship when, you need a certain amount of love to keep the "plant" of your well-being healthy and vibrant.

When you haven't eaten or drank fluids for a long time, you feel irritable, impatient and over sensitive. When you starve your partner emotionally, she is going to become irritable, impatient, and hypersensitive too.

Subconsciously and sometimes unknowingly we starve our partner's heart –either because we don't know any better or because we feel we need to exert power in the relationship by withholding love and affection. When she pleases you, you show love, when she doesn't you pull away. Sound familiar? We were never taught the importance of feeding our relationship in the same way we'd feed our child or our plants. Even if we know the value, we probably have never been taught how to actually do it.

Withholding or suppressing love is extremely unhealthy and destructive in relationships, and never truly gives you what you want. Ultimately, anyone who is treated consistently like this, will smarten up and leave the relationship.

How to mend a broken heart



Throughout your life, there will be times when your heart is broken. Perhaps a relationship ends, and you feel sad and depressed, or your teenage protégé just told you how much they hate you. No matter how your heart is broken, if you are not careful, it can lead to high blood pressure, stroke, heart disease and a number of other ailments.

But there are some things you can do to mend a broken heart. Here are some steps to help you cope and begin a new outlook on your life:

Practise Forgiveness This is not always easy, because human nature will want you to stay mad at someone, and to focus on the negative issues at hand. But medical research has proven that once you learn to forgive someone, not only is the other person "OK" in your eyes, but a burden will be lifted from your head... and your heart.

Reach out and help someone else When your heart is broken, and you are feeling sad, the last thing in the world you want to think about is anyone else but yourself. Take a deep breath, and reach out and help someone else who is in need. By focusing on someone else's needs instead of your own, your heart will be stronger.

Laughter It really is the best medicine. When your heart is aching, find ways to really laugh. Rent that new comedy DVD or find a few joke books. Start laughing, and you will be putting a smile on your face, and in your heart.

Alter your routine Just for a day or two, mix things up. Stop doing the same old things every day and try something new. Have you been putting off doing something? Do it now. Spend an entire day doing things that make you happy.

Look forward to the future When life breaks your heart, dust yourself off, and get back up there. Start looking forward to what the future holds for you. Set goals, and then make a plan to meet those goals. When you begin to focus on the future, you will soon forget the past, and anything that has caused you heartache and pain.

Appreciate you way through crisis Write a list of the things you like, then pick three of those things and put those things in your life - now. Make sure you can afford them and that they aren't harmful. When our hearts are broken, we often deprive ourselves of the things we enjoy. Make an effort to put enjoyment in your life. Focus on the people and things of value in your life and look for ways of appreciating them more.

Bless If we all adopted the principle of an “eye for an eye” the whole world would be blind. Don't return evil for evil, hurt for hurt, pain for pain. Don't wish something horrible would happen to the other person. Hope for their happiness, and it just may release your good fortune in your world.

The easiest way to forget someone, is to truly wish them well.

Glorify: Life is not over. You can live without them. Not only can you live without them, you can live even happier without them. It is a matter of perspective. Even with the negative in your world at the moment, there is something to be thankful for.

After time, you will discover there is plenty to be thankful for. Thank God and appreciate what you have. You can't be sad and grateful at the same time.

How to tell if you're not being loved enough

Here are some warning signs that you may be in a relationship in which you are loving your partner more than you are being loved. Be COMPLETELY honest with yourself, even if it hurts.

1. You are usually the one who reaches out first to be affectionate physically, (reaching for your partner's hand, offering a hug, giving a kiss, etc.).
2. You want to make love, to be intimate and loving when you are in bed, but your partner is into just having sex.
3. You go out of your way to be with him or do things for him, but your partner rarely goes out of his way for you.
4. In the beginning of the relationship you told your family about your partner before he told his family about you.
5. You are the one who makes most of the plans to do things together—restaurant reservations, weekend outings, romantic evenings—and your partner seems just to go along without showing a lot of enthusiasm.
6. You seem much more excited about being in the relationship than your partner, who doesn't show you how much it means to him.
7. On special occasions your gifts to your partner are well-thought-out and personal, while his seem last-minute and impersonal.
8. You initiate most of the contact in the relationship-phone calls, discussions, etc.
9. When you talk about your relationship, your future together, or your feelings for one another, your **partner** becomes very uncomfortable and unresponsive, or changes the subject.
10. You seem to be fitting yourself into your partner's life, habits, and schedule, and he doesn't make efforts to fit into your life and schedule.

**The power of love helps
to create miracles**



You will never lose love



We have talked previously about how our greatest experiences for growth are presented to us in the form of discomfort, pain and suffering. The loss of love is a perfect example.

It is an irony of life that one of the most profound lessons we will learn is when we experience a loss of love. It is a lesson from these very experiences from our past that teach us the most, for out of them emerge a wisdom you will not achieve in any other way.

Most love stories begin happily, with the person you love attracting your affection, admiration and respect. It may seem like this person is the fulfilment of all your secret wishes for a desired partner. You might experience an amazed feeling that this person seems to appreciate all the different parts of you, parts that had never been fully accepted by anyone. You will feel so much in love, love unlike anything you've ever experienced. You will marvel at the pleasure you feel as you sit for hours feeling waves and waves of ecstasy. With each visit, each phone call, each letter, each contact, you may get higher and higher.

Then, things begin to go wrong and your dream of finding a soul mate turn into a nightmare unlike anything your have ever experienced. The details will differ from relationship to relationship. Your dream person may start a relationship with someone else without even telling you about it, or a part of their character or past may be revealed that is repugnant to you. You may experience the horror that during your time together they were involved with other people, sending the same love letters, expressing the same feelings, word for word.

Undoubtedly, you will feel shocked, heartbroken, devastated, deceived, and used. You may lie on your bed and sob until exhaustion forces your body to sleep. It may not be the first time you have experienced hurt, but it may be the first time you've felt so lied to and betrayed. You will mourn, not just for what you feel you have lost, but more sadly for what you now know you never actually had in the first place.

As time passes you will ask yourself if you have been deluding yourself, living in a dream world, manufacturing the emotions you thought you had experienced. In your heart, you know this isn't true, that you had felt love, you had felt joy, You had felt ecstasy. At the time, you felt sure that they were feeling that same love. Now you know they weren't.

The deeper you search, the closer you will get to the realisation of the truth. All along you felt this person was giving you intense love and profound intimacy. You felt these feelings, so if they weren't the source, who/what was?

Suddenly, it will become clear and obvious to you. When it hits you, and you fully understand this, you are on the road to recovery.

All of the love, joy and ecstasy you felt came from inside of you!

When you felt all that love, whose love were you feeling? Yours. Whose joy were you feeling? Yours. Whose ecstasy were you feeling? Yours.



You weren't feeling their love, because it didn't exist in the way you thought it did. You weren't feeling loved by them, because they weren't loving you in the way you thought they were. It was all your own love!

Our minds assign our love to a person, as if they were the source of it. But as you have now discovered, they weren't the source of it. In fact, they were hardly participating in the process at all. You were the source of the love you were feeling.

This leads us to a further amazing revelation. If you were the source of your love for them, then you've always been the source of all the love you've ever felt.

You are the source of your own love. You decide when you're allowed to feel it and when you're not. But the love you feel is always yours. No one can give you any love you don't already have.

Let's take this to the next stage. If this person had never been the source of the love you felt, then when they left your life, what did you truly lose? Nothing. Are you less lovable because they are no longer in your life? Do you have less love inside of you? No. So what's different? They stopped doing certain things or saying certain things that had given you permission to feel the love and you concluded: "I don't feel loved by them anymore." Actually, you weren't allowing yourself to feel YOUR own love anymore. You decided to stop experiencing all that love because they weren't around to bounce it off of, to focus it on. You were the one depriving yourself of your own love.

Once you get this straight in your mind, you will allow yourself to feel happy and in love. It was all a game your own mind was playing with itself.

No one gives you love, so no one can take love away from you.

Close your eyes, take some long, deep breaths, and think about all of the people you've loved intimately in your life. Some had chosen to leave you. Some you left. When you focus on all of the love YOU have given you will feel glorious waves love begin to wash over you. Allow yourself to feel the love without trying to assign it to any one person or give it any meaning. As you do, the love will grow stronger and more intense until you feel like one huge body of love.

This is what it means to be in love.

When you realise that the joy and blissful state you experience when in love, is as a result of YOUR feelings of love and not the other persons feelings towards you, you will suddenly feel immense power, happiness and freedom. Probably for the first time in your life, it will hit you like a thunderbolt that the love you feel is YOUR love, that no-one can take away, ever. Embraced by your own love you will finally find your own, true inner companion for life.



When the meaning of this awakening dawns on you, you will never experience love in the same way again. From this point forward, you can enjoy love as it was meant to be enjoyed, dependent only upon your feelings about it and not revolving around the actions or feelings of another person.

No One Can Give You Any More Love Than You Already Have

Have you ever thought everything was fine in your relationship, only to have your partner state that he has been upset with you, or unhappy about something for a while? You didn't know that they were feeling this way, you were walking around happy and in love. Yet, this person was already not loving you as much, but since you weren't aware of it, you were still giving yourself permission to feel the love. You weren't in love because he or she was loving you. You were in love because you gave yourself permission to be in love.

Imagine your partner does something to show you his love - he puts his arm around you, or kisses you and says something sweet, or gives you a thoughtful present. Feel this rush of love in your heart? Ask yourself, did he just give you an injection of love into your body? Did he pour a glass of love down your throat? Did he put love inside of you? What did he actually give you?

Why are you feeling more love in that moment? Because he gave you something that you are using as an opportunity to feel good about yourself, to feel more of your own love, that you already have. Nothing he did actually added to the volume of your love, you did that all by yourself.

No one can ever add to your love, no one can ever subtract from your love. You already have an infinite supply.

Stop Giving Other People Credit for Your Own Love

A major personal breakthrough you will make is when you recognise how you may be giving other people credit for the love you are feeling, rather than realising it is your own love.

Imagine you are taking a walk on the beach with your beloved, gazing out at the beautiful ocean, feeling the sun's warmth on your skin. Joy and love rise up within your heart and in your state of euphoria and love, you turn to your partner and say "You are so wonderful. I love you. I love being here with you. You make me so happy."

What are you really feeling in that moment? You are feeling the surge of your own love, joy, and gratitude for life. Was your partner "making" you happy, making you feel loved? No – you are assigning your own happiness and love to them. It's not that you don't adore being there with them, that it doesn't add to your fulfilment, it's just the fact that the source of your love is within you.

I'm not saying you should like everything a partner does, but to turn the love off and on because he didn't fulfil your expectations is just a game your mind is playing with itself. "I will let my own love rise up under these conditions, but not under these." I'm not saying that this awakening will remove the sense of loss when a person leaves your life, what I am saying is that once you realise that the source of your love, joy and happiness is within you, it will help the healing process dramatically.

Now, take another step in your journey to happiness. Apply the same principles mentioned above to the happiness that exists in your life. Pretty soon you will realise that happiness, just like your love, is sourced within you and the feelings you assigned to them. Stop assigning happiness and love to others and you will see happiness and love magically reappear in your life.



Healthy Love

People in healthy relationships display the following characteristics:

1. They allow for individuality
2. They experience both oneness with and separateness from another
3. They bring out the best qualities in self and another
4. They accept endings
5. They experience openness to change and exploration
6. They invite growth in the other person
7. They experience true intimacy
8. They feel the freedom to ask honestly for what is wanted
9. They experience giving and receiving in the same way
10. They do not attempt to change or control the other
11. They encourage self-sufficiency of partners
12. They accept limitations of self and other
13. They do not seek unconditional love
14. They accept and respect commitment
15. They have a high self-esteem
16. They trust the memory of the beloved; they enjoy solitude
17. They express feelings spontaneously
18. They welcome closeness; risk vulnerability
19. They care with detachment
20. They affirm equality and personal power of self and other.

Love Means Never Having to Say You're Sorry

Whilst we should not seek unconditional love from another, it is something we should strive for the one we love and the relationship we share. True love is unconditional. True love is transparent, where we can accept, understand, and allow the other person to make every mistake, falter, stumble, and give genuine heartfelt compassion when they are trying their best, even if their best is can be “better.”

True love should carry no judgment or manipulation. True love is pure, deep, eternal, and it never dies.

There may come a time when you have to be separated from someone you truly love in your heart. Please understand that sometimes time alone is the greatest gift you can give to another. Sometimes we “want” more, and sometimes we want to avoid love. These are the merely temporary delusions of the ego, not, the pure love that resides within our deepest heart and soul.

Forgiveness can be replaced with compassionate understanding. When we truly understand, there is no need for a formal apology. When we love purely, there is only compassion and understanding.

We all deserve pure love. However, to receive it, we have to first learn how to give it, first to ourselves and then to another.

Never having to say you’re sorry means that you know you are loved truly for who you are. You are accepted. In order to give this kind of love to someone else, we first have to love and accept ourselves with the utmost loving compassion, understanding, and carry no self-judgment.

It is when we stop manipulating our own personality into something we are not, that we can love someone else purely. This takes great conscious effort, and the desire to grow to become so pure and heart centred that the ego melts away.

When this happens, we know we are loved by self in the most genuine manner, and then we will also know that we are ready to give such a pure, unconditional love to someone else.

We can understand mistakes. We can understand growth. We can understand time spent apart means that time is needed in order to grow.

When you love someone, you will know in your heart that your love never died. You feel their presence in your heart, even if they are out of your life. Sometimes, we may not always get what we want in life, however, we will always get what we need in order to grow. We may not consciously ask for certain situations, but on a spiritual level, we brought them into our lives in order to heal, grow and learn what pure love is truly all about.

Accept and understand that you have always done the best job you knew how to do at any particular time with the knowledge and level of growth you had at that time. With the benefit of that understanding, you can extend that same understanding to the other person from your heart, and that is why you will not require them to say: “I’m sorry.”

You will understand, and they will understand. It is that pure understanding that allows what may have bruised our hearts to melt away. Once our fears and ego are out of the way, we truly can love purely.

You will never have to say you’re sorry to someone you truly love that genuinely loves you. You will only ever have to be yourself, that is all you will ever need to do.

When you accept the responsibility of love...



When you accept the responsibility of loving someone, you promise to honour your partner. The first meaning of honour is respect. In good times and bad, you are available for them.

An important part of love is dealing with the disappointments about our partner's styles, abilities, capacities, and ways of connecting with us. This work is done partly alone, and partly together. The solo work has two parts. One is to focus on the loveable aspects, great and small, of your lover. It more important than most people realise, that you are often mindful and appreciative of the good qualities that have aroused love from the beginning to the present, ignoring the problems. Two is to consciously review and refresh your awareness of your own actions with your partner.

The second part of the work, is managing one's actions and reactions to make sure they add to the positive side of the relationship. It is crucial to be aware of your partner's interpretation of what you say and do. You are doing your job right when your partner interprets your action as meaning, "I am loved and cared for".

Honesty is Necessary in Love

"Love is nothing without truth."

We have been systematically taught in our culture that lying is a normal part of our lives. We do it so often that we don't even notice it anymore.

Honesty is telling "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

Society's version of the truth is to tell the truth ONLY if it doesn't make anyone uncomfortable, doesn't cause a conflict, and it makes you look good.

I'm not talking about the big lies here, but more about the consistent, persistent "lies of omission" and "white lies" we perpetuate almost every day. For most of us, we don't even consider these small untruths to be lies until we experience the exact opposite. The whole truth.

We don't realise exactly how dishonest we're being and how much of ourselves we're holding back in the process. This dishonesty causes us to feel disconnected from others and creates small walls between ourselves and the ones we love. When we withhold the whole truth, we withhold others from seeing all of us. This may be fine in most relationships but not in your primary relationship with your partner. You want all of you to be loved, even those parts you presently judge as bad or wrong.



To create the true intimacy and closeness of true love, you will have to let your partner see ALL of you. This is a scary process because you will fear that they might get angry, or hurt, or decide that "all of you" isn't what they wanted and leave the relationship. But then, what kind of relationship would it be if your partner only knows part of you. If it isn't based on absolute truth, it will never be true love.

“Honesty can be tough but it's necessary if you want the close intimacy of true love.”

Many of us were taught that telling the truth is sometimes not being kind or loving, that it can separate us from what we want most, but telling the truth only separates us from our lies and our confused, limited self-beliefs. Yes, the truth may hurt sometimes, but it never wounds the way a lie, an omission or half-truth can.

Most of us were taught to avoid pain at all costs, so it is tough sometimes to face up to and share our truths, knowing that it may hurt a friend or lover or a member of our family. But when we don't tell the truth, it builds an invisible wall between us and those we love. Our greatest fear is that the truth will be distasteful to our lover and we will end up alone. The reality is that the longer we are together, the more we practice the truth, the more trust develops and the easier the truth becomes. When we hide nothing, we can give everything.

What IS a healthy relationship?

How do you know whether your romantic relationship, love affair, or marriage is the right one for you? Do you feel happy as often as you would like, or sad and miserable more often than you feel comfortable. As we saw earlier in the chapter, loving each other doesn't provide all of the answers. If you have a healthy relationship, you will know it and have little or no need to ask yourself these questions, because you already know the answers.

A healthy relationship doesn't make you feel miserable. You don't need to endlessly wonder about issues over which you have no control, such as 'Will he ever change his ways like he promised he would?'

So many people settle for being unhappy as a way of life, why is that? All too often it's because they don't feel they deserve to be happy. Love shouldn't make you feel bad.

Desperate, worried people tend to be possessive, jealous, clingy, needy, whiny, and/or unreasonable. When we love someone exhibiting these traits, is it any wonder that this quality of love can actually alienate the person who is the object of such an overwhelming, all consuming love? Everyone needs their own degree of personal space, and having such demands placed on you can be suffocating. Who among us feels capable of living up to such high standards as making someone else deliriously happy?

Extremely needy people tend to be high maintenance in a love relationship, sometimes even in a simple friendship. It's not much fun to realise the person you care about is constantly keeping score. It begins to feel as though you'll never pass their 'test'. True love isn't this draining and painful. There needs to be plenty of room for each partner to stretch and grow. So, how does your relationship measure up in the healthy stakes? How healthy is it? After examining whether you're mostly happy and content, or mostly sad and worried, you might want to consider the basic ingredients or characteristics of a healthy relationship:

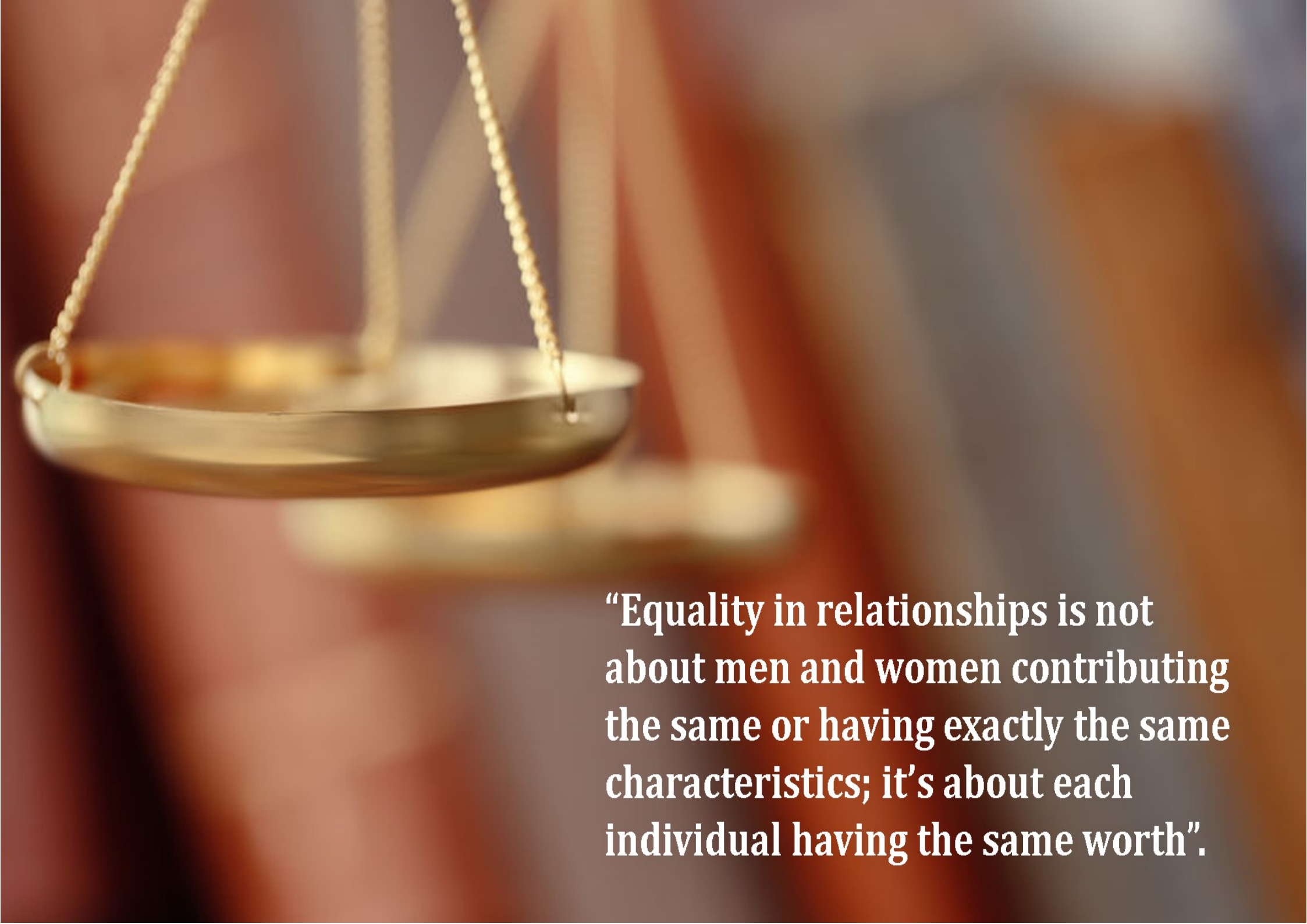
- What we expect from the relationship is fair and realistic.
- We are happy with each other, as we are.
- Each of us listens to the other, hears and cares.
- There is ample room for each of us to have a separate life/self.
- We know we are two separate people who choose to be together and grow/nurture a wonderful, loving relationship.
- We can argue or disagree, and remain friends.
- Each of us has come to rely on the other, because we value our relationship as a top priority.
- Mutual communication and sharing is valued by each of us.
- Neither of us must be something or someone other than what we are, to please the other.
- Total honesty is a shared value, as well as kindness and sensitivity toward one another's feelings.
- Our relationship works well now, not as an unfulfilled goal to be hoped for in the future.
- We are both committed to the relationship, and to one another.
- Neither of us should need to threaten to leave.
- We love and care for one another, unconditionally

How many of those strengths does your relationship have? If yours seems to be lacking, you don't have to settle for ordinary, when you deserve extra-ordinary.

Improve Your Love Relationships

- Talk with your partner openly and honestly.
- Don't sacrifice yourself for the relationship.
- Take responsibility for your feelings.
- Know you can only change yourself.
- Be yourself always.
- Know your intentions behind your words.
- Communicate your wants and needs to your partner.
- Accept them as they are.
- Let go of absolute value judgments.
- Drop your expectations of how they "should" be.
- Listen with your whole body, mind and soul.
- Express your appreciation and gratitude openly and often.
- Examine your beliefs about love relationships.
- Use humour to defuse difficult situations.
- Examine your desire to control your partner.
- Have a dialogue about your beliefs.





“Equality in relationships is not about men and women contributing the same or having exactly the same characteristics; it’s about each individual having the same worth”.

Honesty can be scary but it's necessary if you want a close intimate relationship."

Compatibility before Commitment



Many of the problems in relationships, stem from the fact that we make premature commitments before fully satisfying ourselves that we are truly compatible with our prospective partner. Sadly many relationships flounder because we enter into them blindly, often for the wrong reasons when we are honest with ourselves. We end up hoping that compatibility will just happen, only to discover some way into the relationship, that there are compatibility issues that will ultimately drive us apart.

One of the most common questions we ask ourselves as a relationship is forming, is "are you the one for me?" As months pass, having invested time, emotional support, love and effort into the relationship, we compensate and tolerate for fear of letting go of a relationship that simply isn't destined to go the distance. We hang on in there in relationships that we know will eventually have to face the realities of just how incompatible we are. Many couples are fortunate, and discover almost by luck that they have a level of compatibility that will sustain them over the long term.

Unfortunately, as the divorce rate indicates, many discover that when they eventually face the truth of their incompatibility, that the relationship either isn't working or the couple are simply papering over the cracks. We wish our partner could magically become the person we want him to be, but he can't.

It is only right that we should do everything in our power to salvage an ailing relationship. However, we may reach a point where we feel we cannot, should not or do not want to continue with a partner, and it is at this point we have to decide to stay or go.

If and when we realise that we are not sufficiently compatible with a partner, in key areas, love alone will not be enough to overcome the inevitable problems. Only when we find a new, truly compatible relationship will we realise we were right to leave the incompatible one behind.

We often come together at a time and due to circumstances, (on the rebound from a failed relationship), when because the new partner possesses qualities missing in the last partner, everything seems perfect. We rarely possess the clarity of thought after a failed relationship, to make the true evaluations of our new partner worthwhile.

It is often the case that we come together with a partner for a certain length of time in order to teach each other lessons and learn from one another, and when we have learned all there is to learn from that partner, it may be that we need to move on. You and your partner may have grown tremendously in your years together, and given each other great emotional gifts. However, when your goals, rate and style of growth become too different, it may no longer be healthy or emotionally as fulfilling for your personal growth for you to stay together.

The hardest part of all this is that your love for your partner may not have changed, and that makes it even more difficult to leave. Each new path will bring you greater happiness, wisdom, growth and love that you will not have known before.

Having said all of this, separation may not always be the end result of your soul searching. Your life should contain the true adventure of love, when you feel genuinely happy in the key areas of your life with your partner. When you are both absolutely open and honest with each other, are happy that you will grow and contribute equally to the relationship together, you may find that true happiness, for more of your life, is a real possibility. Only you will know your own circumstances and truths of your relationship. Love isn't something we do to get a result, it's an action that should fill you with joy and fulfils its own purpose in each moment it is experienced.

It will always be challenging, true love always is. You should always be growing, true love delivers growth. Most of all, the love you share should deliver true happiness and peace.

Ultimately, all that matters is your own true happiness and what you think of your relationship, not what any questionnaire might reveal.

Character versus personality



One of the most important and valuable lessons we can learn, is appreciation of the difference between character as opposed to mere personality traits. There is a massive difference between personality and character. Personality is what we see on the surface and initially attracts us, a sense of humour, good taste communication skills, soft devoted caring nature etc.

Whilst these traits are enjoyable, they are NOT what will determine true happiness in any relationship. For that we must look for CHARACTER.

Character goes much deeper, how a person treats themselves, you and the relationship. Their degree of commitment and ability to make necessary changes in themselves (growth) for the good of the relationship. The character of the individuals will ultimately influence the foundation of the partnership. Personality is the icing, individuality and independence of character is the substance. Knowing the building blocks of character helps us to determine, in advance, how successful or stressful a relationship will be, depending on the state of readiness of the individuals to develop good character as opposed to merely pleasing personality traits.

It is so common that the stronger partner wants to work on the relationship while the other may be reluctant, fearing change may threaten their future. The stronger one wants to talk about areas in need of improvement, the other is in denial that an issue even exists.

So, what are the six qualities that indicate character?

1. Commitment to personal growth

To learning everything he can to be a better person and better partner. An adventure of personal growth rather than a constant power struggle. A relationship cannot work if one partner refuses to seek help when needed or to hear the words of his partner. He needs his own goals for self improvement and you can see specific, positive changes over the years. Little or no change = little or no growth.

2. Emotional openness

A truly loving relationship is not based on sharing a home, a bed or a bathroom. It is based on sharing feelings. That's why we look for emotional openness. If a partner can't identify and share feelings, they're not mature or ready to be in an intimate relationship.

3. Integrity

A partner who won't hide parts of his life or personality. Who will only tell you what you want to hear to protect himself. Who will tell the truth without you having to force it out of him.

4. Maturity and responsibility

There are people who just aren't ready to be in a committed relationship. They may be loveable, they may love you very much, but if they haven't reached a certain level of maturity, you'll feel like you've adopted a child rather than found a lover. Being responsible means he or she can take care of himself domestically, healthily, mentally and financially. Responsibility means not letting people down. As we become more responsible, we become more respectful. Look for maturity in a person in how respectful he is of :-

- Your feelings
- Your time
- Your boundaries
- Your possessions
- His possessions

5. High self esteem

One of the biggest mistakes we make in choosing partners is focusing on how much our mate loves and treats us, NOT how they treat themselves. When a person is so giving and loving, appears so devoted, we may neglect they have no self-esteem. We may overlook that they are afraid to make a move without us, are constantly self-critical, seemingly incapable of independent thought, mental state and mood. A person with low self-esteem loves in order to feel better about himself/herself. A person with high self-esteem loves BECAUSE he/she feels good about themselves.

The healthier your partners sense of self-esteem, the stronger the relationship will be. If our mate walks around apologising for his or her life, seems embarrassed by who he or she is, is always putting themselves or their lives down, they have no pride in themselves.

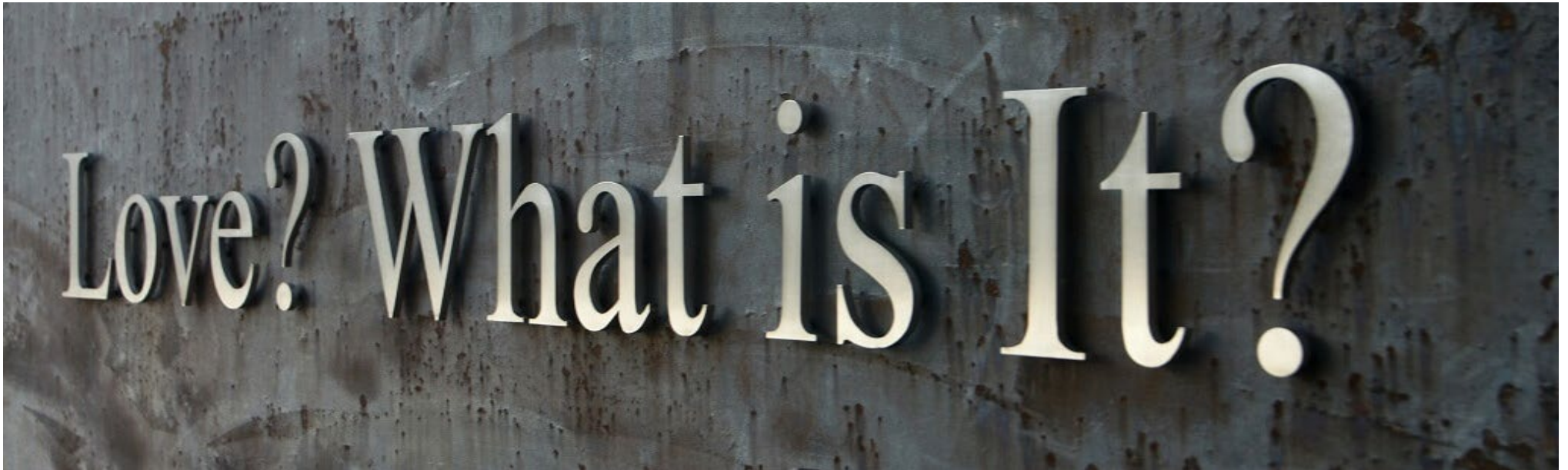
The more you love yourself the harder it will be to abuse yourself physically or emotionally. The clearest symptom of low self esteem is the way you let other people treat you.

THE MORE YOU LOVE YOURSELF,
THE LESS YOU'LL ALLOW OTHERS TO MISTREAT YOU.

This is why victims make are difficult and sometimes poor partners. Though loving a victim might make you feel needed, it is a destructive, draining and short term type of need. All the terrible things the victim complains others have done to them are merely reflections of their own low self-esteem. True self-esteem manifests itself in the action the person takes. It inspires us to take chances, go after our dreams and reach beyond our comfort zones. You can always spot someone with self esteem, because he is doing something. In contrast to this is a person with low self-esteem, who avoids action because he's scared to death of failing and feeling even worse about himself, and so he does nothing at all.

6. Positive attitude towards life

Negative people inject negativity into relationships, focusing on problems, resisting solutions. Negative people always find someone or something to whinge about and allow fear and worry to rule them. Negative people are cynical and pessimistic. Positive people focus on solutions, turn obstacles into opportunities, adversity into lessons. They trust their own ability to make a difference, believing that things can always get better, using their vision to change their reality.



What characteristics to look for in an ideal partner



Many thousands of research pages into the field of human relationships, can be distilled into a bullet point list of ideal qualities & attitudes of both partners. Whilst it would be unreasonable to expect any one person to be the master of all of these points, a genuine commitment to improving or attaining more of these attributes will improve your chances of enjoying a healthy long-lasting relationship. As you read through the list, ask yourself if either you or your partner are excelling or deficient in important areas.

<input type="radio"/> Committed to learning everything to be a better partner	<input type="radio"/> Commitment to Personal Growth	<input type="radio"/> Controls jealousy
<input type="radio"/> Committed to supporting personal growth of partner	<input type="radio"/> Maturity & a sense of Responsibility	<input type="radio"/> Shows appreciation and pride
<input type="radio"/> Acknowledges and admires praiseworthy qualities	<input type="radio"/> Creates right mix of certainty & Spontaneity	<input type="radio"/> Shows true feelings of affection
<input type="radio"/> Shows an awareness of avoiding hurt for partner	<input type="radio"/> Always contributing value to the relationship	<input type="radio"/> Emotionally Open
<input type="radio"/> Always seeking to make a financial contribution	<input type="radio"/> Self dependant – maintains own character	<input type="radio"/> Positive Attitude towards Life
<input type="radio"/> Keeps asking questions to learn about the other as they grow	<input type="radio"/> Relationship doesn't solve all life problems	<input type="radio"/> Honesty, Integrity & Trustworthy
<input type="radio"/> Identifies the areas of incompatibility and works on them	<input type="radio"/> Compassionate, accepting and understanding	<input type="radio"/> Seeks to be authentic with the other
<input type="radio"/> importance of differences in views and attitudes	<input type="radio"/> Keeps passion alive in the relationship	<input type="radio"/> Expresses feelings readily
<input type="radio"/> Practices quiet forgiveness and acceptance consistently	<input type="radio"/> Focuses on partners positive qualities	<input type="radio"/> Release pressure from the partner
<input type="radio"/> Eliminates the influence of guilt in the relationship	<input type="radio"/> Avoids situations that give cause to be doubted	<input type="radio"/> Always seeks to be significant
<input type="radio"/> Doesn't ignore potential problems, deals with them	<input type="radio"/> Right mix of selfless and selfish attitudes	<input type="radio"/> Flexible and embraces change
<input type="radio"/> Knows value of real moments of love and happiness	<input type="radio"/> Believes love in itself is not enough	<input type="radio"/> Not use relationship as a crutch
<input type="radio"/> Happy mix of freedom and boundaries in the relationship	<input type="radio"/> Romance : feels it, displays it, often	<input type="radio"/> Pays attention and shows it
<input type="radio"/> Manages and controls their own needy-ness & self esteem	<input type="radio"/> Earn trust and respect with consistent character	<input type="radio"/> Doesn't justify or wear masks
<input type="radio"/> Avoids circumstances when they are draining the other	<input type="radio"/> Sense of fun and love of life with a passion	<input type="radio"/> Equality in the relationship
<input type="radio"/> Unconditional, non judgmental acceptance of the other	<input type="radio"/> Sees friendship as the most important element	<input type="radio"/> Maintains own High Self Esteem
<input type="radio"/> Passion, keeps the electricity and chemistry flowing	<input type="radio"/> Encourages open and honest communication	<input type="radio"/> Has courage to love deeply
<input type="radio"/> Strives to achieve a balance of control, happy for both	<input type="radio"/> Manages own expectations to avoid resentment	<input type="radio"/> Easy going and liked by others
<input type="radio"/> Knows what attracted the other, maintains and builds upon it	<input type="radio"/> Avoids manipulative tactics to control the other	<input type="radio"/> Reliable
<input type="radio"/> Remains always capable of meeting emotional needs	<input type="radio"/> Shares innermost thoughts and experiences	<input type="radio"/> Polite and respectful
<input type="radio"/> Takes care of themselves physically, diet, exercise	<input type="radio"/> Sensitive to how the partner is feeling	<input type="radio"/> Warm and friendly
<input type="radio"/> Unafraid of expressing love in looks, words, touch, gestures	<input type="radio"/> Character commands respect from others	<input type="radio"/> Kind and considerate
<input type="radio"/> Wants partners happiness as much as their own	<input type="radio"/> Doesn't clam up or allow issues to fester	<input type="radio"/> Calm. Uses anger wisely
<input type="radio"/> Wants to progress in life and relationship	<input type="radio"/> Enjoys discussion of ideas and thoughts	<input type="radio"/> Honest with themselves
<input type="radio"/> Interested in events outside relationship	<input type="radio"/> Open to opinions and feelings of others	<input type="radio"/> Confident and independent
<input type="radio"/> Works on compatibility to nurture needs of other	<input type="radio"/> Shares values on important issues	
<input type="radio"/> Satisfies physical needs of the other	<input type="radio"/> Unafraid of commitment in all areas	

Friends and Lovers



First and foremost, your primary love partner should be your best friend. What follows is a summary of thoughts to keep in mind when building a healthy loving relationship. Whilst it is personalised from a man's perspective, it is equally appropriate from a woman's viewpoint.

The only way to have a friend is to be one. ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Learn to see her without distortion; to value her as highly as you value yourself; to give without expecting anything in return; to commit yourself fully to her welfare. Only then can love move freely between you without apparent effort. It's unconditional love between best friends.

When we are able to love in this selfless manner, we experience a release of energy. We cease to be consumed by the details of our relationship, we spontaneously treat each other with love and respect. Love becomes automatic.

Friendship among lovers is essential to unconditional love and is the primary ingredient for a deep and lasting love relationship. Trust her with the deepest murmurings of your soul. She knows the best and the worst of you and yet loves you through and through -- a friend as well as a lover.

Never close your lips to those to whom you have opened your heart. ~ Charles Dickens

In order to experience the kind of relationship you want, accept the fact that, in order to understand each other, you and your love partner must have clearly developed channels of communication. Cultivate transparency by being a master in the art of self-disclosure. Know that when the inclination to reveal yourself to the one you love is blocked, you close yourself to her and experience emotional difficulties. Promise to never hide behind a facade.

Practice telling her exactly what pleases you, decreasing her reliance on guesswork. Express preferences instead of demands. Believe that you can never know yourself except by disclosing yourself to her.

In ways you may not fully understand, self-disclosure helps you to see things, feel things, imagine things, hope for things that you could never have thought possible. The invitation to transparency, then, is really an invitation to authenticity. It is also an invitation to allow yourself to be vulnerable.

When you allow her to see you for who you really are right now, you become less afraid that you will be rejected in the future. When she accepts and loves you unconditionally, you know you will never have to hide in the relationship in the future.

To have inner peace it is necessary to be consistently loving in what you think, in what you say and in what you do. Think thoughts of love. Speak words of love. Demonstrate unconditional love for her in all that you do.

Openness means being willing to communicate your deepest feelings. There can be no intimacy without conversation. The only way you can both truly

communicate is to tell the truth. Truthful communication moves love partners and creates a condition of unity, love and satisfaction.

For intimacy to grow in a healthy love relationship there can be no withholding; feelings - both positive and negative - must be shared equally between love partners. The act of withholding the truth is always potentially a lie.

The energy required for the self-discipline of honesty is far less than the energy required for withholding. Your love partner and you are dedicated to the truth and live in the open, and through the exercise of your courage to live in the open, we become free from fear. Fear cannot exist whenever insight is valued above feeling frightened.

Listen when she shares without making judgment. Your heart should always be open to hear what your love partner has to say.

Someone said that it is possible to be together so much that we suffocate each other. Perhaps, you do not allow this to happen in your love relationship. Understand that love includes letting go when she needs freedom; holding her close when she needs care. Commit to creating space in your relationship when needed.

Learn to cherish both intimacy and solitude. Never feel tied to each other.

Don't smother each other. No one can grow in the shade. ~ Leo Buscaglia

At the heart of love, there is a simple secret: the lover lets the beloved be free. You and your love partner require different mixes of independence and mutuality, and the mix is freely discussed and renegotiated from time to time when necessary.

When two people in a love relationship are complete within themselves they do not experience the love they have for others as diminishing, detracting, or threatening to the love they share. They are secure within the relationship.

Insecurities bring forth jealousy, which, in effect, is a cry for more love. It is within your rights to ask for more affection when self-doubts surface, however, the indirect way that jealousy asks for it is counterproductive. Excessive possessiveness is inappropriate. Jealousy is the surest way to drive away the very person you may fear losing.

It is an irony that the more possessive you are, the more love you will demand, the less you will receive; while the more freedom you give, the less you demand, the more love you will receive. Take great pleasure in watching your love partner be fully free and fully alive!

Encourage each other to widen your circle of friends. Each seek to ever expand your horizons. Enjoy celebrating life together and with friends!

Know that if you expect to be the only person who matters to you love partner you are setting yourself up for disappointment. As wonderful as true love can be, no one person can meet all your needs. Your love partner is, and should always be your very best friend, and she is not your only friend.

Fully expect your love partner to have other passionate interests other than you. To extend the freedom to develop her own interests in other people and hobbies can only empower your relationship. Freedom can never confine. It can never be detrimental to the relationship. It can only open up many exciting and previously undiscovered opportunities to enjoy life.

When your love partner is pursuing areas in which she excels, she is happy. You will enjoy her most when she is happy. People are easier to love when they are happy.

Trust should be forever present in your love relationship; trust and deep commitment to each other, and loyalty and devotion. This allows us the freedom to care about people of the opposite sex and to enjoy friendships with them, and when you sit down together in the evening to share the events of the day, you do not have to ask if our love partner has been faithful.

The stronger and more secure you become, the more you are willing to be yourselves while encouraging your love partner to do the same.

Genuine unconditional love not only respects the individuality of the other but actually seeks to cultivate it, even at the risk of separation or loss. The ultimate goal remains the spiritual growth of your love partner, the solitary journey to peaks that can be climbed only alone.

Believe that no matter how committed your relationship, you will always be "single" as well as a part of a couple. Unconditional love is a special, intense connection, and it is not an answer to all or even most individual problems. No one can make you happy but you.

The Power of Love



Most of us at some time or another will ask ourselves “What am I here for?” “What’s my purpose in life?” “Where did I come from, where am I going?” At some time or another, we all ponder the reasons for our human existence.

When you look back over your life, you will discover that your most precious assets are the thoughts and memories of the people you have loved and who have loved you.

From the most respected research, the most popular conclusion is that love is the most important thing in the world. Everything we read about the meaning and purpose of life brings us back to the idea and the importance of love. Everything you do to make you love and respect yourself makes you more capable of expressing love towards others. Each time you do or say something kind or loving towards someone else, you increase the amount of love you have for yourself. When you express love in some way, you make the world a better place. Each time you express love towards someone else, whether they need it or not, you improve the quality of his or her life. At the same time, you improve the quality of your own life too. You make your life a blessing to others around you, and a wonderful experience for yourself.

Love is the one thing we can never have too much of, either for yourself or for others. A lack of love or withdrawal of love sits at the core of most of the problems of the human condition. Whatever the question, love is always the answer.



You can never have any more love for yourself than you are prepared to express to others. By the same token, you can never give any more love away than you have for yourself. It may feel like you are loving someone more than yourself sometimes but in reality when you do not love yourself enough, you cannot love others properly. If you want more love, give more love.

It is a common mistake when feeling unhappy to expect others to fill up your heart with love. The truth is, you will only experience the amount of love that you yourself are prepared to give, no more no less. The love you feel, is actually your love being expressed, not the love you receive, so it follows that you can only ever love others as much as you feel love for yourself.



Bringing it all together – Joining the dots

The first part of this project outlined the foundations of how you got to the place or state you find yourself currently. You may be dissatisfied or deliriously happy where you are. I'm guessing that most who have read this far want something more, more happiness, more fulfilment. That is where the section of powers comes in. Here is where we will bring it all together for you, join the dots, plotting the journey, looking back on how and where you got here and where and how you will fill the gap and move closer to that ideal place where you want your life to be.

Our quality of life, happiness and fulfilment is determined by the searching questions we ask ourselves and more importantly, the honest and truthful answers we give to those questions. Because this process is about you, for each of the 20 sections, answer for yourself the questions set on the next page. Add any others you feel are more relevant to your life and circumstances. The answers you give yourself will reveal your own truths. I hope they will help set you free.

Getting the most out of it – It's up to you

If your life can be compared to a jigsaw puzzle, there are many thousands of pieces that make up your own story so far. It would be unreasonable to expect anyone to work through the information and exercises in this project in one uninterrupted session. Gathering the information on these pages took thirty years to compile and present. I need to manage your expectations. Only you will know the amount of information you can absorb comfortably without losing focus or interest.

The first ten sections comprise background information to assist you to gain clarity of how you arrived at your present state in life. The second set reveal the incredible powers at your disposal to help you on your journey to a happier more fulfilled place. The information on these pages came to me in small chunks over a thirty-year period. All I have done is place them in an order that made most sense to me. Your order may differ from mine. My goal is all of this is merely to share valuable information that has enhanced the quality of my life dramatically. My sincere hope is that some if not most of the information brings you as much satisfaction and fulfilment as it did for me.

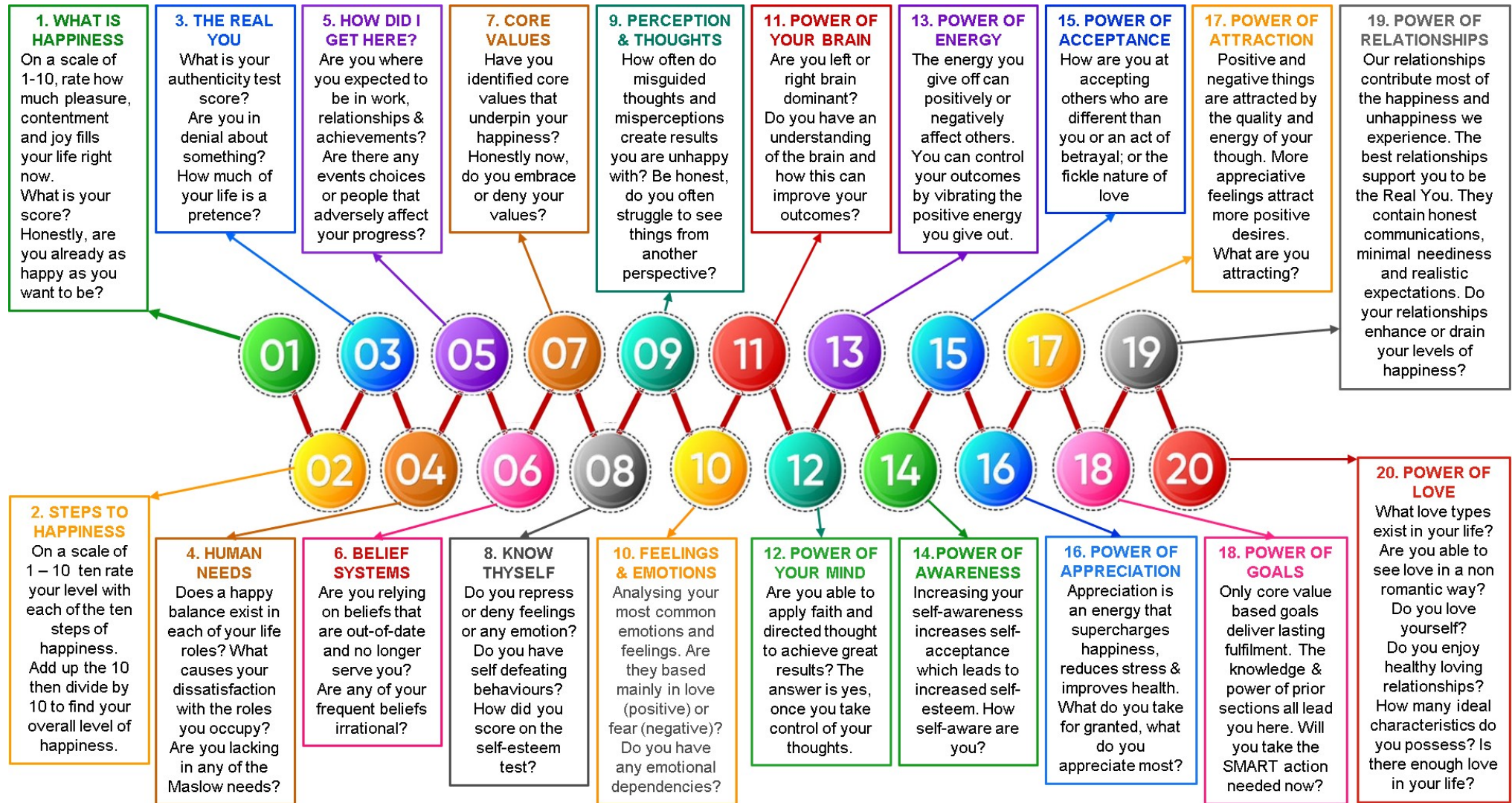
How you approach this remarkable journey for yourself is totally up to you. You may choose to scan the sections and pick out those to digest which are of most interest and relevance to you. Or, you may devise a plan to digest each of the sections in whatever order you feel works for you, so you may plot your own journey.

My contact information will be supplied with this document. I would be delighted to hear your thoughts and how your journey progresses.

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step" is a common saying that originated from a famous Chinese proverb.

You won't have to travel a thousand miles to arrive at your destination, but the first single step is your beginning.

Your At-A-Glance Summary



In a Nutshell . . .

- We began our journey asking **WHAT IS HAPPINESS?** We explored what happiness means, looking at the different levels of happiness and its universal meaning.
- Next we revealed the **10 STEPS TO HAPPINESS**, the key areas where you can dramatically improve the levels of your happiness.
- We started our voyage of discovery about **THE REAL YOU**, discovering the authentic you that makes you most happy, how to reclaim your authentic self, avoiding the negative influence of others, concluding with your authenticity self-analysis.
- You learned about the basic **HUMAN NEEDS** we all must satisfy to allow true happiness to return to our lives. We explored the key roles you occupy within the main areas of your life that combine to influence your levels of happiness.
- In **HOW DID I GET HERE?** You heard about the eight stages of human development and how your childhood conditioning and emotional programming could be affecting your happiness. We sought to identify the influential events, choices and people in your life up to this point, that had a positive or negative effect on your happiness now.
- You were introduced to **YOUR BELIEF SYSTEMS** Discovering how the beliefs that reside in your mind dramatically improve or impair your experience of happiness. You learned how to improve your belief systems and how to eliminate self-limiting, destructive and negative beliefs.
- In this next important section **YOUR CORE VALUES** were identified and their relevance to your state of happiness.
- **KNOW THYSELF** helped you to understand the role played by your self-concept and self-esteem in your search for inner happiness.
- With **PERCEPTION AND THOUGHTS** you were introduced to the perception cycle, a powerful tool to improve the quality of your beliefs and thoughts to increase the levels of happiness you enjoy. You uncovered the power behind your thoughts and how they attract positive and negative circumstances and people that affect your happiness.
- You will have understood how **FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS** colour the thoughts you have, affect the decisions you make and the outcomes you achieve. You learned how to use your emotions to generate energy and improve the quality and quantity of happiness you attract.



In SECTION 2 WE UNLEASHED YOUR POWERS OF HAPPINESS

- We began with the **THE POWER OF YOUR BRAIN**, explaining in simple terms how your wonderful brain is constructed and can be made to work for you, how your every thought leaves an impression and how changing your thoughts will change your experiences of happiness. You were shown what parts of the brain have an impact on your emotional state of happiness.
- Within your wonderful brain we looked at **THE POWER OF YOUR MIND** and how to interpret its instruction manual to unleash your power to change your circumstances through an understanding of your levels of consciousness. You heard how thoughts are transferred and attracted and their related influence on the happiness you experience in life.

- **THE POWER OF ENERGY** helped us realise the importance of the role that energy plays in attracting more happiness into your life. Through examples you learned how thought energy is scientifically recognised throughout the modern world as a powerful means of attracting more of the happiness you want.
- We introduced you to **THE POWER OF AWARENESS** and how by developing self-awareness of your thoughts, beliefs and actions, you are able to identify the changes you need to make to attract and reveal more happiness. Increasing your self-awareness connects to the next section of self-acceptance.
- You discovered how **THE POWER OF ACCEPTANCE** and in particular, self-acceptance, can transform your life and directly improve your experience of happiness in life. You learned how to increase your acceptance, hearing that the greater your acceptance the happier you will become. Acceptance led naturally into the immensely powerful trait of appreciation.
- **THE POWER OF APPRECIATION** Focused attention on your powerful energy of appreciation, of self, others and the world around you, and how it will take you to new levels of happiness beyond your current experience.
- The personal development world universally agrees that **THE POWER OF ATTRACTION** arms us with the ability to attract more states of happiness and repel states that have led to all of your unhappiness.
- Harnessing and connecting the combined powers up to this point, **THE POWER OF GOALS** focused you in on what you really want to be, have and do in your life, with the incredible power of goal setting. You learned how releasing your fears and setting goals turn your dreams of happiness into reality.
- Optimising **THE POWER OF RELATIONSHIPS** you saw how your relationships with other people contribute the majority of happiness or unhappiness you will experience in life. You will have understood the vital role of healthy personalities, combining the knowledge of the forgoing chapters to create wonderful, healthy relationships to immensely support your growth and happiness.
- **THE POWER OF LOVE** If the first nineteen chapters contain the building blocks of happiness, you learned how love, the greatest power of all is the cement that holds them all together. The phenomenal healing power of love is the strongest and most intense power of them all.



Concluding Thoughts

I came to a conclusion a long time ago, that I would like to share with you. I cannot think of a better purpose to which to devote our lives.



“I cannot change the world, but I can present the world with one improved person, myself. I can go to work on myself to make me into the kind of person I admire and respect. I can become a role model and set a standard for others. I can control and discipline myself to resist acting or speaking in a negative way toward anyone for any reason.

I can discipline myself to always doing things the loving way rather than the hurtful way. The one thing I can learn to control is my thoughts. By keeping my mind calm and focused on kind, loving thoughts about myself and others, I can make a better, more loving contribution to this world.

I have come to realise that our biggest mistakes, our greatest regrets, have little to do with what we have done and are all connected with love, with not having loved enough, or having been loved enough. Through conscious thought and effort and the application of love as my underlying principle, I pray that I will make fewer mistakes and have fewer regrets.

My purpose in life is to become a totally loving person. My life is what I make it by the things and people I choose to focus my attention upon. My job is to live joyously, and to enable this by filling my mind with thoughts of love, compassion and forgiveness”.

If there is a great secret, a basis of all human greatness, a true meaning and purpose for life, it is that there is nothing greater than the beauty of love. Surely there can be no worthier purpose than to commit our lives to the expression of love. There can be no happier man or woman on this planet, than those whose lives are filled with, and dedicated to expressing, giving and receiving love.

Twenty chapters, hundreds of pages, thousands of words. Years of detailed research have led me to the simplest of conclusions:-

“The secret to happiness is right here, in a heart filled with love”.

Wishing you all the love and happiness you wish for yourself, today, always and forever. May your truths set you free!

I'll leave you with some wonderfully inspiring words I wish I had written – The Awakening.

With Love

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steve' with a horizontal line underneath.

~ The Awakening ~

A time will come in your life when you finally get it... when, in the midst of all your fears and insanity, you stop dead in your tracks and somewhere the voice inside your head cries out - ENOUGH! Enough fighting and crying or struggling to hold on. And, like a child quietening down after a tantrum, your sobs begin to subside, you shudder once or twice, you blink back your tears and begin to look at the world through new eyes. **This is your awakening.**

You realize it's time to stop hoping and waiting for something to change... or for happiness, safety and security to come galloping over the next horizon. You come to terms with the fact that any guarantee of "happily ever after" must begin with you... and in the process, a sense of serenity is born of acceptance.

You awaken to the fact that you are not perfect and that not everyone will always love, appreciate or approve of who or what you are ... and that's OK. They are entitled to their own views and opinions. And you learn the importance of loving and championing yourself... and in the process a sense of new found confidence is born of self-approval.

You learn that people don't always say what they mean or mean what they say and that not everyone will always be there for you. So, you learn to stand on your own and to take care of yourself... and in the process a sense of safety and security is born of self-reliance.

You realize that much of the way you view yourself, and the world around you, is as a result of all the messages and opinions and beliefs that have been ingrained into you often wrongly, down the years of your life. And you begin to sift through all the junk you've been fed about how you should behave, how you should look, how much you should weigh, what you should wear, what you should do for a living, how much money you should make, what you should drive, how and where you should live, who you should marry, the importance of having and raising children, and what you owe your parents, family, and friends.

You learn to open up to new worlds and different points of view. And you begin reassessing and redefining who you are and what you really stand for. You learn the difference between wanting and needing and you begin to discard the doctrines and values you've outgrown, or should never have bought into to begin with ... and in the process you learn to go with your instincts. You learn that it is better to want than to need someone and better to be wanted than needed.

You learn that it is truly in giving that we receive. And that there is power and glory in creating and contributing.

You learn that principles such as honesty and integrity are not the outdated ideals of a bygone era but the mortar that holds together the foundation upon which you must build a life.

You learn to distinguish between guilt and responsibility. You learn that the only cross to bear is the one you choose to carry and that martyrs get burned at the stake.

Then you learn about love. How to love, how much to give in love, how to open up to receive love. You learn to look at relationships as they really are and not as you would have them be. You learn that it is a mistake to fall in love with someone for what you want them to become or think they might become, because they may disappoint you.

You learn that alone does not mean lonely. You learn that controlling people, situations and outcomes is not always to be recommended. You learn that a mind changed against it's will, remains of the same opinion still. You learn to accept that others may not love you in the same way you love them and that this is OK. You learn that you can't change anyone permanently but yourself, and that others will only change themselves if they feel it serves them.

You stop working so hard at putting your feelings aside, smoothing things over and ignoring your needs. You learn that feelings of entitlement are perfectly OK.... and that it is your right to want things and to ask for the things you want... and that sometimes it is necessary to make demands. You come to the realization that you deserve to be treated with love, kindness, sensitivity and respect and you won't settle for less.

And you learn that your body really is your temple. And you begin to care for it and treat it with respect. You begin to eat a balanced diet, drink more water, and take more time to exercise. You learn that being tired fuels doubt, fear, and uncertainty and so you take more time to rest. And, just as food fuels the body, laughter fuels our soul. So you take more time to laugh and to play.

You learn that, for the most part, you get in life what you believe you deserve... and that much of life truly is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

You learn that wishing for something to happen is different from working toward making it happen. More importantly, you learn that in order to achieve success you need direction, discipline and perseverance. You also learn that no one can do it all alone...and that it's OK to risk asking for help.

You learn the only thing you must truly fear is the greatest robber baron of all: FEAR itself. You learn to step right into and through your fears because you know that whatever happens you can handle it, and to give in to fear is to give away the right to live life on your own terms. And you learn to fight for your life and not to squander it living under a cloud of impending doom.

You learn that life isn't always fair, you don't always get what you think you deserve and that sometimes bad things happen to unsuspecting, good people. On these occasions you learn not to personalize things.

You finally learn and accept that comfortable love is not necessarily the love that provides the most fulfilment. You discover that anyone can merely love within a relationship, and that the greatest love of your life will require the greatest degree of courage and daring and will

challenge and stretch you beyond your comfort zones. You learn that the higher the price you have to pay for love, the greater the reward in growth and happiness.

You learn that the essence of loving is to display and receive the right quality and quantity of acceptance, appreciation, attention, affection and understanding. You learn that compatibility comes before commitment and a sincere sense of compassion and forgiveness goes a long way to healing old wounds. You learn that a truly loving relationship consists of a healthy combination of friendship, respect and passion, usually in that order.

You learn that one area where you must not compromise is your right to happiness. You are entitled to lead a happy and fulfilled life, experiencing growth, ongoing stimulation and real love.

You learn that God isn't punishing you or failing to answer your prayers. It's just life happening. You learn that negative feelings such as anger, envy and resentment must be understood and redirected or they will suffocate the life out of you and poison the universe that surrounds you.

You learn to be appreciative and to take comfort in many of the simple things we take for granted, things that millions of people upon the earth can only dream about: a full refrigerator, clean running water, a soft warm bed, a long hot shower.

Slowly, you begin to take responsibility for yourself by yourself and you make yourself a promise to never betray your authentic feelings and self and to never, ever settle for less than your heart's desire.

And you hang a wind chime outside your window so you can listen to the wind. Never lose your fascination with the stars.

And you make it a point to keep smiling, to keep trusting, and to keep your heart open to every wonderful possibility.

Finally, with courage in your heart you take a stand, you take a deep breath, and you begin to design the life filled with truth and happiness, that you want to live as best you can.

~~Author Unknown~~