

**WHAT WE
FOCUS ON
GROWS:**

**Fundamental Concepts
for Creating the Life
You Choose**

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What We Focus On Grows:
Fundamental Concepts for Creating the Life You Choose
by Faustine Judd
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Dedication

*To Jim Goeke the love of my life, soulmate, husband,
teacher, and mirror.*

*Thank you for remaining in relationship through the hills
and valleys, days that are comfortable and those that are not.
For conversations around new resources you kept finding for
The Book.*

*Thanks for being here as I steer past “Squirrels” and “Bright
and Shineys” to complete
The Book.*

*I would be remiss if I did not mention my Father who gave
me my first personal development book when I was in high
school, Dale Carnegie’s “How to Win Friends and Influence
People” AND my Mother who, mostly, told me I could do and
be anything, anyone, I wanted to be. Thank you both for
teaching me, through example, to be curious.*

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PREFACE

Although the title is “What we focus on Grows”, it could be “Where There’s a Will, There’s a Way”. Before we can make changes, have the success we **SAY** we want, we must be **WILLING** to

- see the opportunities,
- take the actions and
- RECEIVE the good we say we want.

So, as Momma used to say:

“Where there’s a will, there’s a way.”

This book came about for many reasons. My continued personal exploration of the ideas you will find in What we Focus on Grows and a desire to create a conversation around those ideas are two reasons. Included in that conversation is a recognition of the importance of more and more people being aware that the world we see around us now is the effect of the thoughts we CHOOSE to think, the stories we CHOOSE to tell ourselves and others.

Then there is my fascination with the human brain and how everything is created twice. First in our thoughts and second in the physical.

This is not some magical jump from thoughts to physical, it is because our attention and actions happen as a result of what we think. ...even when we are unaware of our thoughts. That is all the more reason to know ourselves, be able to choose our thoughts consciously.

...and if I can leave a legacy, I want it to be one that contributes to joy and success for people whose lives I touch. The information in this book has been mined over the course of the last 6 decades, through experience, reading, and other types of education.

Studying, understanding and practicing Growth-Mindset was key in getting my Masters in Adult Education after I turned 60. I wish I had found a book like this in my teens or pre-teens with strategies for success and why they are supposed to work.

What you FOCUS on grows and **you can learn how to focus on what you Choose**. Then you can begin to see more of that, what you Choose, in your life. Remember, **You** are the Creator of your life and your experiences.

Congratulations on choosing to empower yourself by experiencing this book, physically or digitally.

Who is this book for?

This is written for you if:

- You want more success in your life.
- You have fabulous ideas, begin projects and then find you have multiple projects, and plans with great possibilities... BUT... You then feel overwhelmed and discouraged and stressed out because you ...”never finish anything.”
- You have an idea in mind that, **you know**, ... if brought to fruition, if you make it physical, ... will make a difference in your life and that of others... ...but you constantly seem to be starting and stopping.
- You just feel there is more to life than what is going on in your current day to day routine. Life is OK, but you know there could be MORE, **and** you want to make a difference in life. You want to leave a legacy.

INTRODUCTION:

“We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them” Albert Einstein.

Let’s begin thinking about the things we want to change... in a different way.

This short book was created to open up, or remind you of, the possibilities you contain in your own mind and heart for creating the life you CHOOSE to live. Through knowing how we create the experiences we perceive in our life, we then have the opportunity to choose to create something different, or ...

...we can choose to create more of the same.

It is short because I want to sketch out what the possibilities are, why these strategies work, some basic ‘how to’s’ and a few resources. If you can see those possibilities, you will then be willing to go further...

...and that is the next book.

For those of you who are reading a hard copy of the book here is a QR Code to use. This will allow you to electronically access all of the links you see in the book.



SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1

Beliefs

Our Beliefs are the foundation for how we view all of life, so this is where we begin. Many of the beliefs that shape how we view and behave in life are not consciously known by us. Even those we are conscious of have not been questioned.

We will explore our beliefs, and where those stories came from. As you begin to know yourself better, it becomes easier to release the stories that are not working for you and embrace those that do.

Releasing those stories that do not serve us also allows us to create new stories that do. Self-knowledge is the vehicle transporting us to Self-Empowerment.

Chapter 2

Values

At the base of everything we do, that we have a passion for, everything we have a strong, vivid, meaningful vision for, are **VALUES**. The more a project, career, or other action is based on our values, the more energy we are willing to put into it AND the more energy we will be able to generate, to put into that project, career, etc.

Included in this chapter is a short Values exercise to help beginning to clarify, for yourself, what your values are.

Again, self-knowledge is your vehicle for Empowering yourself and choosing what brings joy and satisfaction in your life. If you do not consciously know your values, it is easy to

1. be distracted and attracted by what I call "bright and shineys" [facebook, twitter, the newest 'get rich' scheme... or
2. find yourself living the life, having the career that someone else thinks is right for you.

Chapter 3

Joy/ Happiness And Brain Chemicals

Just a little information on the importance of Joy for our health. Learn ways we can consciously trigger the healthy brain chemicals through how we think and what we do. Then the opposite, how the less comfortable brain chemicals are triggered giving us the "fight or flight" response associated with what some people call the reptilian brain, the amygdala.

Brain health experts say that unhappy chemicals warn you of potential harm and happy chemicals alert you to potential rewards. You need them both. Even though it feels uncomfortable, cortisol is giving you a message. If you rush to mask the feeling with alcohol, drugs, relationships, shopping, eating, etc. you miss the opportunity to use information from the situation that brought the cortisol into play. By being aware, you can make different decisions.

Chapter 4

Growth Mindset

This includes things like Neuroplasticity [the fact that your brain actually grows and changes with every thought you think, every action you take, and the information you receive from all your senses]. It also includes information about your own personal “Google” or search engine that is part of your brain. It is called the Reticular Activating System or the RAS for short. With knowledge of these two things, you will see how you can choose to make changes you want in your thoughts, actions and feelings – in your habitual way of being – to create more of the experiences YOU choose.

One of the most important things you need to know that is included in Growth Mindset is that Failure is only failure if you quit –

Failure, or unexpected results, is feedback! It is information of what works or does not work and what you need to adjust in the future to get a different result.

Also, most of us hate what we call criticism from others, but THAT is only feedback too.

It is up to us to decide if it is valid and therefore something we can use to make adjustments that will work better for us or if it is not true the feedback can be ignored without emotional attachment. It’s just someone else’s opinion. They are allowed. We are allowed. Yes, no, next, move on.

Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8

Vision Tools, Affirmations, Focus, and Habits

These chapters support you as you create a vision for what you want in your life.

If we cannot imagine what a new experience feels like, emotionally and physically, what it looks like, and why we want this change, we will have more difficulty creating a habit of thinking different thoughts and taking different actions.

Do you know that there no such thing as multi-tasking? Or, that we all waste hours in our days that we can **never** recover by trying to multi-task. [*Spoiler Alert*] All multi-tasking is really switch-tasking and wastes our time. Prove it to yourself in the chapter on Focus.

Think of it. If you lose all your money, you can begin again and there is the possibility of not only creating that level of wealth again, but of doing even better.

If you become ill, there is the possibility of changing life habits and getting help to become healthy again.

If you waste your time, spend it unwisely and unnecessarily, you can **NEVER** recover that time. You can't save it up and, no matter how fast you run, you cannot catch up to it. Once it is gone it is, . . . well, it is **GONE**.

Take action now and use all of these strategies and tools to become aware of what you really want your life to be like and create habits and practices that will help you reach your goals.

After all, a habit is just the action or thought you have practiced so much that it has become automatic. If you practice habits that create strong, broad paths in your brain that make it **EASY** to do what you want to do, to support your success, everything can change.

If we cannot imagine what a new experience feels like, emotionally and physically, what it looks like and why we want this change, we will have a more difficult time creating a habit of thinking different thoughts and taking different actions.

Chapter 9

Commitment and Self-Accountability for Success

If we do not have a commitment to anything be it a relationship, the ultimate goal we have for better health including strength and a healthy weight, creating a business, building a house, tasks seem onerous, too difficult and not worth doing.

It is as W. H. Murray said, "Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness."

The power for reaching any goal, accomplishing any dream is an entanglement of commitment and the emotions you feel about your results. These things determine if you will, if you are **WILLING** to, take continuous action and accomplish the big things in your life.

Real commitment requires **ACTION**. I know it is obvious, but without action, nothing happens.

To keep one in motion and moving forward, the word accountability comes up. I like to call it **Compassionate Self-Accountability**.

We could talk about forms and tracking your action, planning and moving from one step in you action plan to another, but without **Compassionate Self-Accountability** it is easier to quit before we reach a really worthwhile goal.

In the past, when I have been working toward something difficult, well let's use a "diet", healthy lifestyle change – well a DIET and I have not stuck to it, I have found myself looking in the mirror, beating myself up. There is one time in particular that I remember.

Words like stupid, incompetent, fat, lazy, ugly came up. Then there were the comments like, you'll never, can't, weak-willed, etc, some **really** ugly stuff.

Would YOU ever say things like that to your best friend? Ok, me neither, but there I was saying them to the only person in the world who has been with me since birth and is assured to be with me until I die.

YIKES! Now what do you think happened when I talked to myself like that? Well, I can tell you, it was not good – in any aspect of my life, but particularly not in becoming healthier, especially not eating right the rest of the day. After giving myself a dose of cortisol I really needed a hit of dopamine that comes with eating some "junk" food – sugar, fat... And of course I had already "messed up" my goal for the day, so what the heck, why did I even need to pretend I could change.

Who has been with you since you were born, will be with you until you die? Who has been there with you no matter what? ...Ups, Downs, Success, Failure? Wouldn't you say the person who has stuck with, you no matter what, could be your BEST friend? YES, YES, YES!!!!

THAT is the person in the mirror!!! Treat that person like the best friend in the world. Love, Nurture, be kind to and encourage that person in the Mirror.

This chapter talks you through ways to prepare and act compassionately to yourself as you are willing to put in the effort needed to reach your goals, even if that means trying something different tomorrow, or getting help from others.

Chapter 10

Meditation and Mindfulness

The health and energy supported by practicing Meditation and Mindfulness, can not be over-stated. As we create a life worth living there will always be challenges, and that is a good thing. Through meditation we can create a center of calm that allows rejuvenation to meet each new challenge. There are simple techniques you can use, in the moment, to calm yourself, think more clearly, and take care of yourself. This chapter is full of resources and recommendations for finding what works for you. Watch the recommended videos, practice some of the exercises recommended, and center yourself to open the doors to even greater creativity and joy. ...and as Ted Lasso says, "Be curious, not judgmental."

CHAPTER 1 BELIEFS

**Before we were born, a whole society of storytellers was already here.
The storytellers who were here before us taught us how to be human.
- Don Miguel Ruiz**

I bet you think your beliefs are "based on the facts". Right? More accurate would be "the facts AS YOU KNOW THEM." You could even say they are based on YOUR INTERPRETATION of what YOU BELIEVE the facts are. Some facts are fabricated and hold our thoughts. What if your family gave you the story of:

"You were born on a dark and stormy night, right here in this house. It was storming so bad, we could not go to the hospital."

Now if your parents told you that story and embellished with how your dad boiled water and had clean sheets ready, mom was only in labor for 2 hours and that your arrival was easy and the greatest joy of their life, you would believe that. Why not? Those are the "facts" of your birth.

Comes a time, in your early 20's, when you are in an accident and you need blood of the same type as yours and it comes to light that no one in your family - your entire family - has blood that is compatible with yours. This in turn, to save your life, brings to light the fact that you were adopted when your mom's best friend Carolyn, "Auntie Carolyn", had a baby before she was married.

What happened to YOUR "facts"?

**We have to live today by what truth we can get today and be ready tomorrow to call it falsehood.
- William James**

Another illustration of how your own experience can give you the wrong "facts". Your family has a loving, large yellow Labrador retriever, Sunny, that lets the toddler you, do anything you want with her, puts up with ear pulls and tail pulls and you messing with her food and still claims you as her human.

Now Aunt Susie comes to visit bringing her little rust colored mixed breed dog, Sinbad, who she had recently adopted. He is afraid of everyone he does not know.

Thankfully, your Sunny is staying in the fenced back yard while guests are arriving, avoiding any doggie interaction when you try to pet Sinbad.

In all the greetings and bringing Aunt Susie's bags in, you spot the little dog, who is investigating the kitchen. You make a beeline for him. Sunny has never even growled at the toddler you, so you have no fear.

You catch up with the small dog as he is going into the open pantry ...and he is cornered. Toddler you is so happy and excited, trying to pet him and squealing with joy.

The squeals of joy soon turn to crying as Sinbad begins barking, and snarling and nipping your little toddler fingers to get you away from him. You are traumatized, not physically hurt, but traumatized nevertheless. Your fun neural chemicals stopped being produced and cortisol flowed in with the feeling of danger.

From that day on, as a child, you would not have anything to do with any rust-colored dogs.

Even as an adult, you still feel a bit of anxiety around dogs of that same color. Intellectually you know an animal's color does not have anything to do with their nature, but you have an emotion-related thought habit, based on one emotional experience.

We never stop to consider that our beliefs are only a relative truth that's always going to be distorted by all the knowledge we have stored in our memory.
- Don Miguel Ruiz

I know the next illustration sounds like an old sit com [situation comedy] plot line, but that plot line worked because we humans frequently make up stories about others, with little or no information.

There are the "FACTS" that Joni "broke up" with her new "boyfriend", Bob, over. [Define **new** - they met two weeks ago.] When she told him she had two tickets to the opening of this season's new comedy, he said he could not go to the theatre the night in question, because he had a previous engagement. Joni gave him no opportunity to explain and quickly got off the phone saying, "Sure, see you around." And hung up. That night she saw Bob in the Café with a blond. They were laughing and seemed to be really enjoying their evening together.

Joni **knew** that her fear of being deceived, yet again in a relationship, was true. Her belief that this was another relationship that was destined to end, then, ...became true.

She stopped returning Bob's calls and avoided locations they had hung out. Joni's interpretation of the FACTS, her BELIEF, the STORY she made up, was that he was dating someone else. Her BELIEF was that Bob had lied to her

when he originally told her he was not currently dating anyone. Deception, where there was none, became a FACT for Joni.

Belief creates the actual fact. - William James

What Joni did not know was that the boyfriend's sister was in town for the weekend to catch up and spend time together before going to Europe for the summer.

There are some stories, beliefs, that seem to be common knowledge.

Essentially, we ALL **know** that people in the Middle Ages thought the earth was flat. ...Or did they?

I wanted to use a simple, universal story illustrating how beliefs held to be TRUE by everyone in society at a particular period of time may be later PROVEN to be mistaken.

The story that was to be an example of how our beliefs are stories we tell ourself is this. Prior to Columbus making his voyage in the 15th century most people thought the world was flat.

However, when doing a little research, I found reality was different.

Surprise!!! MY story, the one I and many of my peers learned in school, was false, not true, fake news.

Be Skeptical, but learn to listen. - Don Miguel Ruiz

It turns out that people in the Middle Ages **believed** the world was **ROUND**. Yet, that is NOT the story that many of us learned through formal education. The idea of the earth as a spherical object has been around since the time of the Greeks and the majority of the people in the Middle Ages believed that.

Without going into the details, apparently, the belief that everyone except the very educated in the Middle Ages believed in a flat earth was supported by the Author Washington Irving (Sleepy Hollow, Rip Van Winkle). See *A History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, a romanticized fiction of Columbus. [Retrieved on 7/1/22 from <https://peacefulscience.org/pdf/prints/excerpts/myth-of-myth.pdf>]

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

Think of all the things you “know” to be true, things you “Believe” without question.

Can you create a safe way to question some of the beliefs you have that “MAKE” you feel any of these feelings?

- Angry
- Sad
- Unhappy
- Frustrated
- Insulted
- Offended
- Disgusted
- Frightened
- Vengeful

Sometimes we think our reactions are caused by an experience, but how we experience **anything** comes from what we believe about the experience. Our belief becomes our reaction.

“Your reaction to an experience that you don’t like isn’t the effect, it’s the cause. The belief that you can’t trust people, or that you’re not good enough, or that you have to sacrifice your life in order to have success ... were there prior to the experience that you are having of them.”

The belief is the cause and your experience is the effect. – David Bayer, Mind Hack, e-book ©2021

Begin to examine your beliefs, your stories about:

- Life
- Men
- Women
- Parents
- Children
- Animals
- Strangers
- Money
- Education
- Spirituality
- Where you live
- What you deserve
- People who are different than you – color, sex, race, culture, height, age, language
- Your abilities
- Authority figures
- Normal

When you identify a story, ask yourself:

- How do I know that is true?
- Is it always true?
- Is it absolutely true?

Would it not be a different story if our beliefs lined up with the life we CHOOSE to live? . . . ***Rewrite your stories!***

What would you feel?

Who would you be?

What would that allow you to do?

Nothing is impossible to those who decide upon possibility. The universe responds by becoming the thing you determined shall be.

The framework of your preconceived notions is your only limitation. These are subject to change at a moment's notice when you have arrived at a new DECISION.

– William Walker Atkinson

NOTES

What do I believe about: *Add the words and concepts you want to explore. Use a notebook or journal for more concepts and details*

Life

Women

Men

Children

Where you live

Strangers

RESOURCES

Another resource I found when editing this book is Lyn Christian's website <https://soulsalt.com/> for more ideas regarding beliefs and values. [downloaded 7/24/2022]

<https://soulsalt.com/list-of-values-and-beliefs/> List of values and beliefs.

<https://soulsalt.com/what-does-success-mean/> What does Success Mean?

CHAPTER 2 VALUES

First, I would invite you to reflect upon some of the values you may have become more conscious of while making your way through “the pandemic” or some other crisis in your life. Things you may have taken for granted before.

Maybe that would be seeing family and loved ones face to face, time away from family to recharge and come back with a fresh face, taking a vacation. What comes up for you?

When you hear the word “Values”, you may think of morality or traditional values.

**"The ideals which have lighted my way, and time after time have given me new courage to face life cheerfully, have been Kindness, Beauty, and Truth."
- Albert Einstein.**

Most people look for Core Values when doing a Values Exercise. In addition to Core Values are what I call Underlying or Essential values. These are extra, mostly unacknowledged, day-to-day things that light you up, bring you joy, or simply give you comfort.

These Underlying or Essential Values can even include the kind of weather you enjoy, the size of town or city you want to live in, or do you need to be out in the country, in the mountains, by the water...

Do you need to have colors around you, flowers?

Does creating beautiful things give you energy, bring fulfillment to your life?

I have not seen anything written on Essential Values and you may have heard them called something else, Or not mentioned at all, that is just how I identify those conditions that may be necessary to someone and may not be a CORE value.

For example, I could be working at the Unicorn Detection Office doing consulting and research in the field of Unicorn detection and have the perfect job package.

- work from home
- only weekly trips to the Unicorn Detection Office
- beautiful 3 bedroom, 4 bath, 3,000square foot, modern home, provided as part of the package,
- groceries paid for and delivered bi-weekly.
- vehicle of my choice provided for use on the island.
- a paid vacation to somewhere warm 2 times a year
- a base salary of mid to high 6 figures.

How long do I think I would last if this was all located in, say, Stanley, Falkland Islands, near the Antarctic Circle? The average temperature in the warmer months, January and February, is 52°F, rainy and windy. In the colder months, April to October snow is frequent with wind and high humidity, the temperature average is about 34.5 °F

The duration of my stay would probably be less than a year for multiple reasons: The cold, grey weather most of the year, did I say the cold? Being raised, mostly, in Florida, I really have a preference for a more sub-tropical climate and sunshine, even if there is high humidity, all things being equal.

A NOTE about the use of the word “comfort” previously.

This does not mean to stay in your “comfort zone” of action and learning. That prevents growth. Nor do I mean to always stay in physical comfort without exploring activities, geography, or culture which may seem challenging.

Exploring mentally, physically, emotionally, and intellectually broadens and gives depth to our life, understanding, relationship with others and the world.

Experiencing the new and different, without judgement, with the intent of learning, increases our creativity and empathy.

Exploring “new” thoughts, actions and ideas feels uncomfortable at first. Persist to gain new skills and understanding.

The purpose of this book is to raise your awareness and provide suggestions for finding support in consciously creating the life you choose to live. As you gain a clear view of the path you want to walk, one that is in line with your inner, true values, you will begin to see new opportunities and feel greater energy.

If you do not broaden your horizons, you cannot make informed choices.

At the base of everything we do, that we have a passion for, everything we have a strong, vivid, meaningful vision for, are **VALUES**.

The more a project, career, or other endeavor is based on our values, the more energy we are willing to put into it AND the more energy we will HAVE.

It is easier and more fulfilling to invest our energy and efforts into a project, career, or relationship, etc. that is based on our values.

The **stronger** those values are in us, the more we are **AWARE** of those values, and the more **congruent our actions** are with those values, the more willing we are to persist in overcoming any obstacles to :

... build the business,
...get the education,

...create the art,
...or you name it.

This is where self-knowledge comes in. If you do not consciously know your values, it is easy to be distracted and attracted by what I call "bright and shyns". That may be the newest fad trending on Twitter, Instagram or whatever the current social media or information system is as you are reading this.

It may be the newest "sure winner" multi-marketing opportunity a friend shares, or you see on the internet, the opportunity "of a lifetime", that promises to make you rich.

It may be the career path your family wants you to take, what you think society expects of you, or going on a shopping spree with your best friend.

If you do not have a plan based on your values, circumstances and other people will provide one for you

Just to be clear, I am not saying using social media is bad, it is just a tool for connecting with others, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok or whatever the new social media is as you read this. Like any tool, these can be valuable when you use them consciously based on YOUR needs and values. A hammer is valuable for building things, but if you are not being conscious in your use, you can smash your thumb or finger.

I call these things "bright and shyns" because it's like my cat when you shine the bright and shiny laser light all over the floor. Oh, yea, it's over here, no it's over there, no it's on the couch and she goes running after it everywhere the light moves.

These things that take us off our purpose, our values are generally things that have no substance to them.

Another friend calls them "squirrels". She has a dog that loves to chase squirrels and when she yells, "SQUIRREL!" her dog gets excited and starts running around looking for one of those furry tailed little rodents to chase.

My point is, if you have not consciously considered YOUR values, your life plan may not have heart. Your plan may not move you toward creating the life that fits you and brings you joy that sustains you even during the challenging times.

This is worth repeating:

**If you do not have a plan based on your values,
circumstances and other people will provide one for you.**

I have learned that as long as I hold fast to my beliefs and values, and follow my own moral compass, then the only expectations I need to live up to are my own.
-Michelle Obama

Without being conscious of your values you may not even have a plan, you may just float through life with moments of joy as you are allowing circumstances and other people to determine your path.

Remember, your values create **meaning** in your life. If you do not know yourself, know your deep values, it is difficult to understand why you are unhappy in a job, relationship, or location. ...Or why you experience joy, so you can create more of that.

All of that does not even address the loss of your particular gift to your community and the world as you float through life or live someone else's plan for your life.

To discover your values, is to know yourself!
- Yencris Baez

VALUES EXERCISE

Below is a short exercise to assist in identifying some of your values. Get a pad of paper and pen [or use your computer] and answer the questions below. *[I suggest answering them in writing so you will have all these ideas to build on as new ideas come up, triggered by your day to day experiences.]*

After reflecting on and answering the questions below, go to **Appendix I**, at the back of the book, to see a list of values. I recommend copying the list so you can write on it, circle the words that fit what you have found. This is not to limit you, if you know that there are other more appropriate words for you, please add them.

- Do the exercise alone
- Then do it with friends – have a Values Party (any excuse for a Party!)
- Discuss it
- Repeat this values exercise once a year. As you continue to have new experiences and learn, you may notice some changes.

But, there I go jumping ahead. For now, reflect upon and answer the following statements and questions.

PART 1

Identify the following for yourself to begin to get a picture of your values.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What were you doing the times you felt the happiest, the most joy? <i>I want to say, we are not talking sex, drugs, or sugar highs, ...but if we were, even those things could give us clues about what we were seeking at that time in life. Maybe escape, closeness, belonging.... Clues.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Picture the setting and who was present, your actions and the communication you were engaged in each of the times you felt the most joy in your life.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The elements that were present to help bring that feeling of joy are a hint.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What did that mean to you? What did each element mean to you?

When have you felt a feeling of accomplishment?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What were you doing?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What did that accomplishment mean to you?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This can be work, recreation, sports, learning a new language, creating something, gaining a new insight, any time when you felt a feeling of accomplishment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why was there a feeling of accomplishment?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What did that mean to you?

To find joy in work is to discover the fountain of youth. - Pearl S. Buck
*...and to find “work” that gives you joy requires knowing yourself, being able to say, see and **feel your own values** – which may be quite different from the values of your family, a social group, your peers, social institutions etc. [Refer to the list in APPENDIX I that you are using in this exercise]*

Who do you feel the most at ease around, the most joy and inspiration?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who do you enjoy working on projects with?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you could create a physical community of people who inspire you or you just enjoy their company and the ideas that you generate together, who would they be?• To state it another way, if you could have a Board Of Directors you could consult 24/7, what are the names of the people who would be on your Board?
<i>In this exercise banish all limits, these could be people you know or you wish you knew, living or dead.</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Now look at your list and determine WHY each person is on the list.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you feel when you think about each one,• What qualities do you admire.
What possibilities could you see in having each individual on your Board? If each one was a friend and mentor, what advise or ideas would they share with you? <ul style="list-style-type: none">•
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are some of the qualities you admire in others something you would like to practice? If so, what are those qualities?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do the answers to this set of questions mean to you?
<i>By the way, you CAN have an imaginary Board of Directors that you most admire and call on them to help you wrestle with issues that would be their expertise. Let your imagination work for you and you will be surprised at the inspiration you get through this practice.</i>

When your values are clear to you, making decisions becomes easier.
- Roy A. Disney
of Walt Disney Co.

CAUTION, *this is NOT about being with a particular person, but what that relationship meant to you. Your happiness does NOT depend on another person.*

The only person you are guaranteed to have in your life, every moment of every day, till the day you die, is the person you see in the mirror.

Other people leave for a multitude of reasons including death. On the other hand, you are responsible for creating your own community with multiple relationships based on the different things you have in common with different individuals and on differences that you may admire.

<p>Identify geographically, where you felt the happiest, most comfortable... as opposed to where you may have been miserable.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people have physiologic and psychologic reaction to temperature, high or low. What about you?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That is also true for the length of the daylight hours.
<p><i>Some people MUST be able to get out in nature daily, be by the water, in the mountains, desert, garden...</i></p> <p><i>Some need the energy and stimulation of the City. We ARE all different.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What about you? What elements do you enjoy the most? What do they bring you?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think of where you feel the most joy just from being there, not necessarily from what you are doing or who you are with, but just being. • Then examine why you may feel that way.
<p>When did you feel the proudest?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What, about the event, observation, completion, or accomplishment, etc. was meaningful to you?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were you proud of something you did?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ...of being part of a group or community?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ...being something bigger than yourself?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • of promoting something you are passionate about?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the meaning of it to you?

Recognizing the meanings of these things can help you identify your values.

- Look at the list of values in Appendix 1.
- Make a copy of the list so you can write on it and make notes.
- Circle all the values that appeal to you.

Later, you can go through to make a list prioritizing the items you have circled. After doing that, it will be easier to narrow down your list to what you **MUST** have in your life to live a life that is congruent with your values, or have a business that is congruent with your values.

If you find there are a LOT of words you circle, you can first group them into similar groups, to narrow down the number, then prioritize the groups. I also suggest creating a separate list of your “Essential” values.

You may find that some of the goals, or tasks, you find yourself “stuck” on and unable to move forward, do not match your values, they may match your family’s values, or the values of a significant person in your life.

They may even be what you think is expected of you, but they may not match YOUR values. They may be things you think you [*dreaded word*] **SHOULD** do, ...because of someone else’s values.

Keep in mind that some of your “essential” values may be, as mentioned before, more tangible. Climate, geography, population, resources, availability of things such as internet, good roads, shopping, or other similar items. These may not be CORE values, but any one of these can make YOUR life more or less comfortable.

Living my values fills every day with moments of meaning and joy.

Another way of identifying your values is to observe:

- What makes you smile when you see it.
- What makes your **heart** smile?
- Is it seeing beautiful scenes in nature?
- Taking a hike and experiencing the smell, sight, and sounds of the outdoors.
- Seeing people overcoming obstacles and being successful in their goals?
- Learning about new technology that supports sustainable energy?
- Is it creating beautiful things, or bringing the beauty out in something that might otherwise be overlooked?
- Is it painting a picture with words?
- Listening to music that moves you?
- Is it seeing a tool or machine that works perfectly, with grace, efficiency and is effective?
- Is it seeing the way something is done now, or items are used now, moving them around and creating something more effective and efficient for the job?

Be curious, be conscious of your emotions in the moment, of your observations.

Barbara Sher was talking about values when she said the following:

“Every time you worry that you could get trapped in some kind of work you don't care about, you're dealing with the problem of meaningfulness. I guarantee that in the back of your mind is the thought that somehow you have to make a contribution to something, be acknowledged, do something that matters--or you're just fooling around.”

- Barbara Sher

As you identify your values and are building a life based on them, remember this:

“Every time you have to make a choice about anything, think "Does this go toward or away from what I want?" Always choose what goes toward what you want.”

- Barbara Sher

From her book: I Could Do Anything If I Only Knew What It Was: How to Discover What You Really Want and How to Get It

We discussed Values and Goals, equally important is our Values and Behavior and choosing what we allow to influence us. It is important for us to maintain a conscious commitment to our higher core values. When we allow ourselves to behave in ways that are not congruent with our inner, core values this can bring about anxiety, unhappiness, losing confidence in ourself, and well, shame.

Some of my values are joy, kindness, learning, trust, tolerance, communication, gratitude, and empathy. At one point in my life, one of the least joy filled that I can remember, I had to take stock of myself and where this sadness, anger, and depression was coming from. Well, I have always seen the destructiveness of gossip, but I was now participating in it. I was listening, agreeing and to be honest, spreading it.

In retrospect I realize I was believing things that I had little or no real proof of. I was seeing what I believed, interpreting my observations to fit my beliefs. Intellectually I knew that whatever I focused on I would see more of, but there I was, criticizing and seeing more and more that was wrong. That is what you see when you give way to being judgmental. Perhaps, because my stated values were totally out of congruence with my behavior, mental and physical, at that time, I was miserable. It was not until I took myself out of the situation that I was able to regain perspective and learn from the experience. ...and deal with the regrets.

The point is, if you find yourself feeling unhappy and continuously stressed it may be enlightening to do a VALUES exercise, look at your core values and see where your mental and physical behavior may be out of line with those values. Make amends. Change your behavior.

Although there are other References and Resources at the end of the book, this interview with Kelly McGonigal by Tom Bilyeu is so impactful and relevant when

What we Focus on Grows

discussing, values, self-compassion, compassion for others, listening. She begins talking about exercise being essential to mental well-being.

It is a 48 minute video so you may want to listen to it in stages. ...Or, if you can do it, listen all the way through, take notes, digest and listen again.

Listen while doing dishes, making the bed, before you go to bed at night, while washing the car, while driving.

Do a search on her name and listen to the Ted talk she did on Stress.

[or click on the link in the Resources at the end of the book, you can also go to

www.kellymcgonigal.com] Check out the links to her material that is Located in Resources at the end of the book.

The values related discussion begins at 24:04 and runs about 4 minutes. Please take the time to watch this part, she has so much clarity to share on values.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtc1iWm_KCI

Stanford Psychologist Reveals One Change That Will Dramatically Improve Your Life | Kelly McGonigal

CHAPTER 3 JOY/ HAPPINESS AND BRAIN CHEMICALS

Joy is what happens to us when we allow ourselves to recognize how good things really are.

-Marianne Williamson

Experiencing JOY:

- promotes a healthier lifestyle
- boosts immune system
- fights stress and pain
- supports longevity

Having joy is a necessary part of our life and it can be found when we base our life choices on our deepest values. I like to think of it as conscious fun, and it can come from the simplest of things, like taking a walk and looking for all the tiny pieces of beauty on the journey. It could be the tiny yellow flowers on the weed growing beside the path, a butterfly we see on the wind, the shape of a leaf...of a tree, the colorful scarf of someone who is passing us on the journey, a window display we see in a store we pass, The smell of honeysuckle, the slightly citrus smell of Magnolia blossoms, and on and on. There is truly so much beauty in our world for us to notice and en-JOY.

We can allow ourselves to experience more joy just by taking time to notice small things around us, like familiar scents that are related to happy memories, memories of people and joyful experiences we have had.

The sweet smell of Gardenia makes me think of Mamma and how she always called them Cape Jasmine, or Lavender can conjure up memories of a visit to the Lavender House in Utah.

The scent of Lilac transports me to my sister's home in the thumb area of Michigan. She had a huge Lilac plant that produced an abundance of sweet-smelling blossoms in spring. When I smell lilacs, I see her back yard and the porch and back door that led into the hall to the dining room. Memories come flooding in.

We can make these kinds of things available for us and purposefully use them to bring up happy memories and feelings when we need a little boost, need some joy. For some people it may be a photo or other visual art to associate with a moment that makes them smile.

Joy is to fun that the deep sea is to a puddle. It's a feeling inside that can hardly be contained.

-Terry Pratchet

There is a vivid memory of when I was returning to Florida after being out west for over two years. I hadn't yet crossed the state line, but with the windows down and the breeze blowing in, I got a strong whiff of the slash pines on either side of the road and had to stop the car.

I touched the ground, and just took in the sight of the pine flatwood, noticing the palmettos and pine trees past the barbed wire fence, the yellow, black eyed susans and pink and purple phlox by the road. It smelled like home, pine trees and palmettos. Big smile and joy in my heart as I jumped back in the car and cranked up the Jimmy Buffet song, Changes in Latitudes. I was home! It was just in noticing a scent that the joy was triggered. Be aware, it may only take a small thing to give you an unexpected, powerful, feeling of joy.

Compassion and Happiness

There is a significant relationship between compassion and happiness. All the more reason to really notice others in our life with an intention of being of service. We all experience the same emotions and human contact is essential to us as living beings. This is not as a "should", but as a coming into compassion, opening up to who we are. [*Look in Resources at the end of the book. Kelly McGonigal's material is a great resource.*]

<https://www.compassioninstitute.com/teachers/kelly-mcgonigal/>

Health and Joy

Health seems to be related to our state of being, joy, or lack thereof. In fact, having and maintaining a state of joy and gratitude may be as important as smoking habits. That puts knowing yourself, your values, and what brings us joy into a new light. It is not just something to cultivate "if we have time." It is essential that we nurture our practices, thoughts, and relationships that bring us joy. What are 3 things you have to be grateful, that make you smile, today? If you do not immediately think of anything – go out and create something – a personal contact, a picture, take a walk and breath some fresh air, take a hot shower, pet an animal, do SOMETHING, 3 things, that bring you joy today and puts a smile on your face.

As humans we are wired for learning and just as we can exercise our bodies, we can exercise our minds, our thoughts, to mentally train for finding more joy in our everyday activities and environment. Create new, stronger paths in our brains to make finding joy automatic.

Check out the links to articles and information at the end of this chapter for more information on the importance of joy in your life and additional ways to add it to your life.

One of the reasons joy is so important is that the neurotransmitters of joy promote a healthier lifestyle, boost your immune system, fight stress and pain, support longevity and more. When we perceive something as good or happy happening, the release of the **neurotransmitters dopamine and serotonin** affects every system in your body. One of the things associated with **clinical depression** is **lower levels of serotonin**

Perception, Attitude, and ...Well, Just Focus and Relax... Ahhhh

Please pay attention to the word “perceive”. How we look at life is important. Two people can be in the same situation and “perceive” it differently. Just one quick example. Ever been stuck in traffic and find yourself frustrated, angry, fussing and fuming because you are going to be late for X,Y or Z? This is also fighting against “what is”.

“If you’re not having a good time, find something else that gives you some joy in life.”

-Penny Marshall

An example of perception and how different individuals respond to the same situation.

Sara was on the way to a meeting she had scheduled with her four-member Creative Team to launch their new business building package to groups in Los Angeles, Montreal, Miami, and New York.

She had been up late completing the Power Point [PPT] for the dry run this morning. The team had the PPT in their inboxes to review this morning. The plan was to run through it once for changes then once more for good measure.

The 2 p.m. launch would be a virtual meeting with the group from Miami.

Sara usually made final decisions on these projects a collaborative effort. Being stuck on I-4 behind an overturned tractor trailer was not part of her plans. The good news was that the driver was able to walk away from the accident. The bad news was it would take hours to get the truck and its load of gravel off the highway.

After the noise of the crash subsided and traffic was fully stopped, Sara took inventory to confirm that she was physically safe.

Her car had been one of the lucky ones, not involved in a collateral accident. She was able to sit back to practicing a four-breath meditation calming her initial fears and dissolving the frustration of not being able to make that meeting.

During her childhood, Sara's Dad had repeated "There is no need to worry about anything. If you can do something, do it, if you can't do anything right now, worry is just wasted energy. Besides it distracts you from finding a solution."

Worries about what it could mean not to launch as planned surfaced. Sara could feel her stomach beginning to churn and the muscles in her shoulders tightening again. There was no way she could get out of traffic and make her meeting.

She continued to do the breathing exercise as she observed these feelings. Redirecting her thoughts to what she **could** do, rather than what she could not do. She took action.

Checking her phone Sara confirmed that she had a signal and called Carol to let the team know her situation. Since Sara was stuck in one place for the next few hours, they brainstormed.

Carol, Cris, Jim and Michael were able to put the power point up, conference Sara in, and have their meeting. This kept the project on schedule for the preparation in the morning and the Miami meeting in the afternoon, with Michael as the lead. Sara could rest easy, knowing her team could handle all the details.

Meanwhile, Sara decided to relax and use her journal to write up some ideas she had for expanding the plan they were launching today to include communication and soft skill training for Business owners and employees.

This would complement the initial Business Building package. Eighteen months later Sara's company made record earnings from the sales of these combined services.

Let's look in on their team meeting the month after those numbers came in. All offices were closed for the team meeting that month. It was a celebratory meeting with food including the whole team. Full and part-time employees at every level and position were included in this meeting / celebration.

Sara gave a personalized journal and bonus check to all team members.

As the checks and journals were distributed Sara explained, why journals. "It was by writing down my ideas and expanding on them during what initially looked like wasted time stuck in traffic a year and a half ago, we are now here today with record profits."

"First I thought, 'Well this day is going to have a lot of wasted time in it, so much for time management!' Then I noticed my Idea Journal on the seat beside me, so with some time to myself, I fleshed out the idea of including an experiential communications and soft skill training for business owners and employees. I

drew out a mind map and wrote down all the possibilities I could think of, no matter how farfetched.”

“This success we are experiencing today came from those ideas and this whole team supporting each other to take action create and implement the new program.”

“Your assignment, if you choose to accept it, is to use your personal Idea Journal to do the same for your own life. Write down your ideas and dreams. Brainstorm. Mindmap. Take action, collaborate, use this practice to create what you want in your life.”

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Now, three cars back Larry was having a totally different experience. His amygdala [flight or fight] was in full control with Larry escalating the feelings of fear and worry. He was also lucky and did not have any damage to his vehicle.

Larry jumped out of his car and began shouting that somebody needed to get the ‘expletive, expletive’ truck off the road.

He yelled to whoever would listen, “You’re losing me the biggest deal of my life, [more expletives]!” and “Somebody’s going to pay.”

One of the emergency services workers insisted that Larry return to his vehicle where he pounded the steering wheel spewing more invectives that were muffled by the windows of the car.

Although his phone quietly buzzed on vibrate several times. He didn’t notice it over his own noise.

Larry eventually wore himself out with his distress. When he finally calmed down enough to remember to call the office and talk to his partner, Tom, about the missed meeting, it was too late.

When Larry didn’t show up at the office at 9 a.m., Tom had tried to reach him on his cell. Larry, as usual, had been playing his cards close to his chest and Tom didn’t have the details or paperwork for the client to sign.

The client arrived on time, at 11 a.m., but without being able to reach Larry, Tom had to watch her walk out as she said, “I am sorry we couldn’t make this work, I am going to have to go with Johnson, Inc. for this project.”

When Larry reached Tom’s cell, it went to voice mail. Today was the deciding factor for Tom. That lit up his amygdala again as he yelled into the phone telling Tom it was his fault if the deal failed.

Tom was at his lawyer's office, checking his options for getting out of the partnership with Larry.

By the time Larry got home that night, his blood pressure was up and he had a headache. He felt so bad he forgot the date he had with Sylvia. When he remembered it the next morning and tried to phone, Sylvia was no longer taking his calls.

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It seems like you have no choices. You are stuck, you are going to be late – no choices. But you DO have choices in how you feel about it.

You can use the time to consider that new project you want to move forward, or the painting you are working on. You can do some breathing exercises, focusing on the feel of your breath coming in and flowing out, relaxing your shoulders, relaxing the muscles in your body from head to toe.

You could choose to practice focusing by. Just look around at the other people stuck in traffic or, what flowers you can see along the side of the road.

Listen to and focus on the audio course you have been intending to complete on your drive. You can call a friend you haven't had time to call lately.

There is a multitude of ways you can change this experience from frustrating to fulfilling.

YOU have control over your intention, your thoughts, YOU can change your perception of a situation by doing what you can, where you are ---safely, even stuck in traffic.

BRAIN CHEMICALS

Loretta Breuning, PhD, on her website, www.innermammalinstitute.org, and in her books gives a clear, simple, easy to understand explanation of the "happy" brain chemicals. She discusses how and when they are triggered. She discusses how we can use that knowledge and has created specific exercises to create happier experiences in our life and in relationships as we understand possible reasons for doing what we do. Her work is based on and backed up by a substantial, broad, body of scientific research.

<p>"You can stimulate more happy chemicals with fewer side effects when you understand the job your happy chemicals evolved to do." — Loretta Breuning, PhD</p>

The following information, in more detail, can be found on her blog
<https://innermammalinstitute.org/five-ways-boost-natural-happy-chemicals/>

Below is an abbreviated list of some of the chemicals produced by the brain as Dr. Breuning describes them.

Dopamine is related to embracing a new goal and as we approach a goal a small amount is released. “The expectation of a reward triggers a good feeling in the mammal brain...” giving you the energy needed to obtain the reward.

This is what Sara produced as she took the action she could. Dopamine was produced as she wrote in her journal, mapping out the new project she would bring back to the team.

“Dopamine is responsible for allowing you to feel pleasure, satisfaction and motivation. When you feel good that you have achieved something, it’s because you have a surge of dopamine in the brain.”

From <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/dopamine>

Even taking a step toward a goal you deem important, can release a small amount of Dopamine.

“Embrace a new goal and take small steps toward it every day. Your brain will reward you with dopamine each time you take a step. The repetition will build a new dopamine pathway until it’s big enough to compete with the dopamine habit that you’re better off without.”

— Loretta Breuning, PhD

[*From Dr. Breuning’s Blog*](#)

In other words, this is one way to build a habit that supports you, by creating more success into your life in small steps that build upon each other. This is why gamifying education works to keep students engaged. Even something as small as awarding points as a task is completed, giving “badges” for sections completed, has shown increases in engagement and completion of classes.

Serotonin is related to believing in yourself and social dominance. “You enjoy the good feeling of serotonin when you feel respected by others.” Through focusing on your “wins” you can support the production of serotonin. Again, **what we focus on grows**, look for areas and occasions when others are admiring or respecting you. These are “serotonin wins”.

Oxytocin is related to building trust. “Trust triggers oxytocin.” You can consciously build trust with others. One of the ways to do that is through realistic expectations of yourself and others. This includes building the trust in small steps.

Endorphin is related to pain. It is involved in the “runner’s high” as a runner pushes herself against her limits, putting out more effort than is comfortable, “Endorphin causes a brief euphoria that masks pain.” Serious belly-laughing and stretching can also produce a small amount of endorphins.

Cortisol is related to survival which gives you the opportunity to stick around and thrive, or create success in your life.

This is what Larry was producing as he went into fight or flight at every opportunity.

Dr. Breuning says, “Cortisol feels bad. It alerts animals to urgent survival threats. ... Cortisol especially grabs your attention when it’s not being masked by happy chemicals. You might have a sudden bad feeling when your happy chemicals dip, even though there’s no predator at your door. If you can’t get comfortable with that, you might rush to mask it with any happy-chemical stimulant you’re familiar with.”

She also says that unhappy chemicals warn you of potential harm and happy chemicals alert you to potential rewards. You need them both. Even though it feels uncomfortable, cortisol is giving you a message. If you rush to mask the feeling with alcohol, drugs, relationships, shopping, eating, etc. you miss the opportunity to use information from the situation that brought the cortisol into play to “...make better decisions and end up with more happy chemicals.”

In other words, by masking those feelings, you miss the opportunity to change your outcomes through changing your thoughts and actions.

RESOURCES

Visit Dr. Breuning’s website to explore further how to turn on your “happy” brain chemicals to create habits you choose for a more successful life at.

<https://innermammalinstitute.org/>

***NOTE:** You are finding numerous website links in this book. They are here to provide you with the option to explore more information, ideas, and resources, as you choose. My goal is to give you an overall view of strategies and ideas you can use to create more success in your life, yet keep this book short enough that you will want to complete it in some of the short moments you may have between the busy-ness of your life.*

Gretchen Rubin began the Happiness Project

<https://gretchenrubin.com/2009/06/the-importance-of-unhappiness-for-happiness>

“I’m saying that unhappiness is a clue to a way to be happier; does that mean that I believe that the goal of life is to eliminate all unhappiness? No. But it is a goal to give up needless unhappiness, or foolish unhappiness, or lazy unhappiness? Yup.”

Gretchen Rubin, of the Happiness Project:
When I started thinking about happiness, several quotations made a special impression:
"The best way to cheer yourself is to try to cheer somebody else up." Mark Twain
.....
"There is no duty we so much underrate as the duty of being happy." Robert Louis Stevenson (I ended up using this quotation as an epigraph to [The Happiness Project](#).)
"What a wonderful life I've had! I only wish I'd realized it sooner." Colette

The following websites contain articles with more information on the value of Joy / Happiness in your life and some recommendations on how to increase happiness in your life. Gretchen talks about how to use those feelings of unhappiness that come up for all of us from time to time, as clues to what we can choose to change in our life.

<https://positivepsychology.com/happiness/>

There is a significant relationship between Compassion and Happiness.

"There is a linear relationship between religious involvement and happiness. Higher worship service attendance is correlated with more commitment to faith, and commitment to faith is related to greater compassion. **Those more compassionate individuals are more likely to provide emotional support to others, and those who provide emotional support to others are more likely to be happy** (Krause, Ironson, & Hill, 2018). It's a long road, but a direct one!"

NOTE: This is not to say that "being religious" to look pious, makes one more compassionate. Those with a commitment to faith such as the nuns and priests who gave respite and support to individuals with AIDS in the 1980's and 1990's, when many were dying, are an example of faith and compassion. They offered comfort even while putting themselves in danger of losing their place in the Catholic Church. Just one situation that exemplifies a difference between faith-based compassion vs an organized religion.

[<https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2021/12/01/hidden-mercy-catholic-aids>

Downloaded 4/11/22]

<https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s10902-006-9042-1.pdf>

[For entire Document]

"Is happiness good for your health? This common notion is tested in a synthetic analysis of 30 follow-up studies on happiness and longevity. It appears that happiness does not predict longevity in sick populations, but that it does predict longevity among healthy populations. So, happiness does not cure illness but it does protect against becoming ill. The effect of happiness on longevity in healthy populations is remarkably strong. The size of the effect is comparable to that of smoking or not." Veehoven, R. (2008)

<https://science.howstuffworks.com/life/inside-the-mind/emotions/pets-happiness.htm>

“Pets are a pretty wise investment. It appears that what pet owners sacrifice in terms of time and money, they get back in better health and increased happiness.”

<https://science.howstuffworks.com/life/5-ways-to-maximize-happiness.htm>

“Fortunately, humans are ... wired for learning and growing. Just as we can physically train muscles to become tighter and stronger, we can mentally train ourselves to draw more pleasure from the mundane.”

<https://gretchenrubin.com/books/the-happiness-project/about-the-book/>

Honor your curiosity and check out information about The Happiness Project.

<https://www.healthline.com/health/affects-of-joy>

Benefits of feeling more joy

- promotes a healthier lifestyle
- boosts immune system
- fights stress and pain
- supports longevity

All above Links were retrieved 8/7/2021

Other resources for brain chemicals:

Serotonin - <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/serotonin>

Oxytocin - <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/oxytocin>

Dopamine - <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/dopamine>

Cortisol, Adrenaline & Stress - <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress/art-20046037>

Links retrieved 11/27/2021

CHAPTER 4 GROWTH MINDSET

“If parents want to give their children a gift, the best thing they can do is to teach their children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort, and keep on learning.” – Carol Dweck

Growth vs. Fixed Mindset

Carol Dweck’s theories on growth and fixed mindset come from personality theories in the field of social psychology. As she discusses self-theories in a book of essays (2000) she explains that fixed mindset, the belief that one has a fixed amount of intelligence, is an “entity theory” of intelligence. This is versus a “theory of malleable intelligence”, growth mindset, which is an “incremental theory” of intelligence (Dweck, 2000 pp 2-3).

The growth mindset premise is that intelligence can grow through effort, practice, and process. People with a growth mindset believe in brain plasticity, neuroplasticity, even if they do not know what those terms are. [Our brain grows through practice and experience.]

**People with a growth mindset see mistakes as
OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN.**

They try new strategies, ask others for help and work cooperatively and collaboratively.

Beliefs stemming from a fixed mindset are that intelligence is a fixed trait and an individual has a certain amount of intelligence, which cannot be changed.

To the extreme this means that one must always get things right, do things right the first time, and if they do not, it means they are not really intelligent [*judgement from INSIDE*]. There **should** be no effort in learning something. Effort means you are not intelligent and challenges are a threat. [*Judgement from INSIDE, it is not the judgement of others you can control, nor is there the need to worry about it.*]

This being the case, you can see the following are traits in each type of mindset. The overshadowing goal of a **fixed mindset is to “look good”**, make no mistakes, whereas the goal of a **growth mindset is to grow, to learn.**

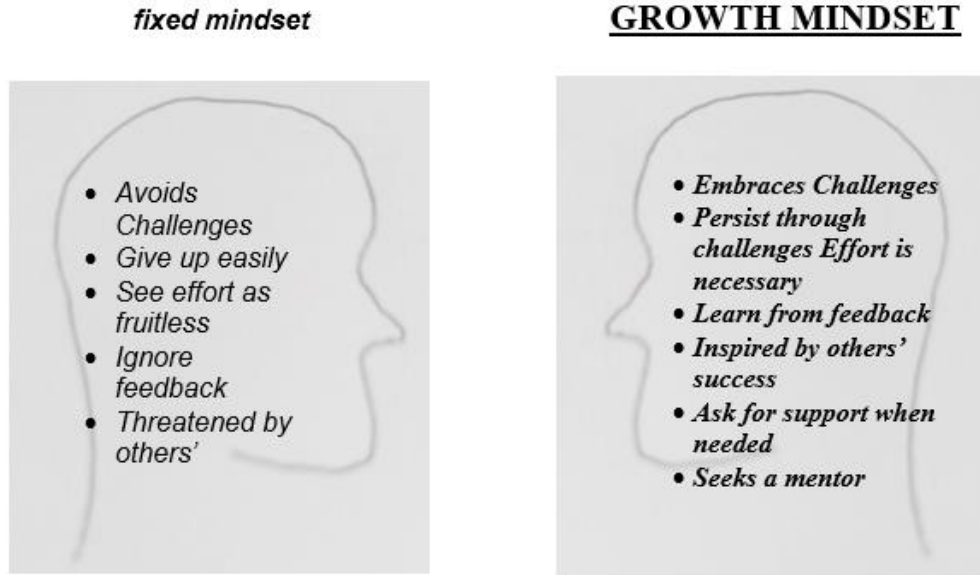


Figure 1: fixed & GROWTH Mindset

<p>Leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited learning • Limited growth • Limited potential 	<p>Leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Greater self-confidence</i> • <i>Appreciation for Collaboration and Community</i> • <i>Expanding potential</i>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

	Someone acting from a Fixed Mindset	Someone acting from a GROWTH Mindset
Challenges	Has to succeed to prove Intelligence, everything is a test	Sees challenges as learning experiences
Mistakes or set-backs	Sees it as proof that they are not smart, mistakes must be hidden so others won't find out they are not smart.	Sees it as a learning opportunity and uses process and strategy, asks for help if they cannot figure it out or accomplish a task alone.
Feedback	All feedback (Atta boy, great job! Is not feedback) is seen as criticism and is threatening.	Sees feedback as possible support and contributing to their learning.
Effort	See effort as bad, proof they are not intelligent,	See it as part of the learning process and how they get better at what they are doing.
Success of others	Feel threatened by success of others.	Find lessons and inspiration and may even ask to be mentored.

(Based on Dweck, 2006)

Embrace your “Failures” as the pathway to something Better.

Takeaways::

- We need to challenge ourselves. **Go past our comfort zone.** If we only do what we know and are comfortable with, we do not grow and learn. We do not become the success that is hidden inside.
- Mistakes and setbacks only show us what to do differently. **What did Edison say when criticized for 10,000 failures in creating the light bulb? That *he had learned 10,000 ways not to make a light bulb.*** Mistakes are only feedback to help us take a different path to reach our goal. Reframe it.
- **Feedback** about our performance or product **is INFORMATION.** True, some feedback can be ignored and is irrelevant, however, it should be examined to see if there is something we can gain from it. Then you just discard irrelevant criticism. Use what can help you make positive changes in performance or action and discard the rest. NOTE: Some people will criticize with no basis, so just shake it off, enjoy your success, and go on to your next success.
- Usually you will not accomplish anything big without effort. **Effort is how you get better and stronger.**
- **Find a mentor.** Look for others who are being successful in what you are working on and ask to be mentored. If that is not possible, look at what they are doing and how they got or made it to where they are. This is not to copy them, but to learn what skills you need to be successful in that particular field, what steps to take and in what order to take them.
- **Get a Coach.** Hire someone who is in your corner, can support you in finding resources, can brainstorm with you, introduce you to strategies to brainstorm when alone, and help you build your self-accountability muscle.
- **Build a community** of people with a growth mindset, create or join a Mastermind group with everyone involved supporting each other.

Mistakes are feedback that can lead you to success.

For more information on Growth Mindset check out the Character Lab playbook, AND scroll to the bottom of the page for their ENDNOTES.

<https://characterlab.org/playbooks/growth-mindset/>

NEUROPLASTICITY

“...What if a person expects others to meet his or her needs forever? They may not expect this consciously, but the reward structure in their life may have trained it into them. The resulting immature behavior gets labeled as a “disease” in the modern world. It’s not a disease—it’s a learning gap that can be solved by learning. If you didn’t learn realistic expectations and self-care skills in the past, you can learn them now. McKinnon has written a sequel to help: **To Change a Mind: Parenting to Promote Maturity in Teenagers.**”

- Loretta Graziano Breuning

In the quote above, Dr. Breuning is referring to John McKinnon’s books, *To Change a Mind* (2010) and *The Unchanged Mind* (2008).

Neuroplasticity, as it relates to the brain, is just a long word to say the brain can physically change. Changes are occurring with every **thought** you think, **action** you take, **visual** stimulation, **auditory** stimulation, **physical sensation** you feel, and every **emotion** you feel.

Neural pathways get stronger with repetition of any and all of the internal and external stimuli we experience. As the pathways become stronger, habits are formed since these stronger pathways are now the paths of least resistance.

While you may have heard the expression, "Practice makes perfect." it is more appropriate to say, "Practice makes PERMANENT." Only PERFECT practice makes perfect.

The brain is like a muscle and the more you use a certain part of your brain the more it grows. The neural pathways grow with repeating the same thoughts as well as with actions.

“Among other things, neuroplasticity means that emotions such as **happiness and compassion can be cultivated** in much the same way that a person can learn through repetition to play golf and basketball or master a musical instrument, and that such practice changes the activity and physical aspects of specific brain areas.”

-Andrew Weil

Using brain scans, it has been shown that the Hippocampus physically grew in size as the cabbies of London received their 2-year training to become cabbies. The Hippocampus is a part of the brain that is associated primarily with memory, special processing, and navigation.

Our minds have the incredible capacity to both alter the strength of connections among neurons, essentially rewiring them, and create entirely new pathways. (It makes a computer, which cannot create new hardware when its system crashes, seem fixed and helpless)."

-Susannah Cahalan

As the cabbies learn and store the memory of where all the streets in London are and how to go the shortest distance in the shortest time through the tangle of streets, part of their brain actually **grows** in size. Let me restate, **it physically grows in size.**

RESOURCES

Navigation-related structural change in the hippocampi of taxi drivers [You can Google the title]

<https://www.pnas.org/content/97/8/4398>

Examples of Neuroplasticity in Cognitive Domains [quoting research from Maguire et al (2000) - <https://www.rainbowrehab.com/examples-neuroplasticity-cognitive-domains/>]

Watch this video for more examples, "How Things You Do Change Your Brain" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8XwFahi-qf8> [you can Google the title and choose video]

Even more curious about the practicality of knowledge of Neuro-Plasticity? Check out this Ted talk <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0td5aw1KXA> [you can Google "The Woman Who Changed Her Brain: Barbara Arrowsmith-Young"]

"Because of the power of neuroplasticity, you can, in fact, reframe your world and rewire your brain so that you are more objective. You have the power to see things as they are so that you can respond thoughtfully, deliberately, and effectively to everything you experience."

-Elizabeth R. Thornton (2015, March)

"Elizabeth R. Thornton is an author, speaker, Founder of the Global Initiative for Objective Leadership. Her book, The Objective Leader: How to Leverage the Power of Seeing Things As They Are, is based on a curriculum she developed and teaches to graduate students, entrepreneurs and corporate executives, centered on the premise that we are all subjective—it's human nature. The Objective Leader teaches people that to succeed, we must consciously seek to increase our objectivity—seeing and accepting things as they are without projecting our mental models, fears, background, and personal experiences onto them". Psychology Today" downloaded 12/09/2021

RETICULAR ACTIVATING SYSTEM

aka RAS

The information on the RAS is included in the chapter with Neuroplasticity because they are intimately connected. It IS still all about neuroplasticity, and the RAS discussion gives another perspective.

Although there are more technical explanations of the RAS [with links in the back of the book] I like Gary Lockwood's explanation. [As of May 2, 2021 it could still be found at this link <http://successnet.org/cms/motivation-inspiration/attention-pleasemay-i-have-your-attention>

[Google the title: *Please, may I have your Attention.*]

Gary says:

"At the base of the brain where it connects to the spinal cord is a region known as the Reticular Activating System (RAS). **The RAS acts as a newspaper editor.** Editors make decisions regarding which stories get big headlines, page one treatment, and which items wind up buried with the ads on page sixteen."

Gary was talking about the old-fashioned paper newspaper, which can more frequently be found online in our present day.

Our Reticular Activating System (RAS) receives thousands upon thousands of bits of information, stimulation, all day long. Stimulation can also be expressed as scents, everything you see, everything you touch, whatever you hear, and all of your emotions. If you had to pay attention to each bit of data, you would be sitting a corner trying to process it all. That is where the RAS comes in to save the day, by filtering all that data down to what is important to you, determined by safety and what you have been saying, thinking, looking at, listening to, feeling, and doing repeatedly.

NOTE: For this, you can walk around or do it sitting in one location, your seat in the airplane or from the passenger seat in a car. Try doing it different ways. Write down what you noticed, without judgement. Then follow the rest of the instructions

SHORT EXERCISE:

To just experience a smidgen, very small part, of that kind of experience, quietly walk around your current location, **OBSERVING**, for 1 to 5 minutes. Set your timer. Let judgements and conclusions pass by and just observe **EVERYTHING**.

Take a pad of paper and writing implement to write down all you are noticing.

1. What do you hear? ...dogs, birds, the wind, cars, motorcycles, a jet going over, the refrigerator, the air conditioner?
2. What do you feel? ...a breeze, the air conditioner, heat from the furnace, the texture of your clothes, heat, cold, the furniture under you, the floor, ground, smooth or rough, what do you feel?

3. What do you see? Look in all directions, are you in a room with tiles in the ceiling or planking on the floor, how many of the pieces are there, are you outside, what do you see, grains of sand, rocks, how many, plants, what are all the colors?
4. Go on and focus on your sense of smell.
5. Add in emotions that are coming up. Do you smell something that brings up a memory?
6. What is your experience?

What did you notice?

How do you feel after this exercise, observing without judging – good, bad, ugly, pretty, just observing? How do you feel?

You may be amazed at all there is to notice, then notice one more thing, by refocusing on each item in your environment.

Now bring your mind back to any problem or idea you had in mind and see it with a new perspective, see new details to it, more possibilities than you may have been noticing previously?

If you had to 'attend to' all of the stimuli around you, every moment of every day, what would that be like?

Because we program our RAS with what is important to us, we can focus on those things. If we make our goals and dreams important using visual and auditory cues it becomes easier to accomplish them.

Be curious.

How many things did you notice during that exercise that your RAS had been blocking out because you have been attending to things that are important to your current goals and activities?

The items you notice may not be important to your safety, or goals, or what you are currently working on. They may be random, like a rusty nail, a blossom on a weed, or the odd shape of a rock.

Keep reading to see how you can use your RAS to see opportunities around you, to help you be successful.

Meta-Cognition

Think about your thinking. That is called meta-cognition. We think approximately 60,000 to 90,000 thoughts every day... and **most** of those thoughts are the same ones we thought earlier today, yesterday, the day before, the day before that, etc. Making all those neural pathways stronger and stronger through repetition, it is no wonder we find it difficult to change our life experiences. Neural Plasticity

or Brain Plasticity is what that is all about. It is why practice can make you better at basketball, playing a musical instrument or learning a new language.

Neuropsychologist Donald Hebb said,
“Neurons that fire together, wire together.”

This is a description of what you just read. In addition, I would like to remind you of what you read in the chapter on joy.

I am referring to the part that described how even a familiar scent from your childhood can trigger memories, groups of thoughts, because of that association. Those neurons are wired to the neural pathways containing the memory of an experience from the past.

The brain will follow the strongest, easiest path that you have made through **repeated** thoughts and actions. It is only by "mindfully" changing those thoughts and actions that you empower yourself to create the world you **CHOOSE** to have, rather than the one you wander into, or are led into for the benefit of someone else.

As stated previously, the saying, "Practice makes perfect." Is more accurately related as, "Practice makes **PERMANENT**." Say you are practicing a basketball shot, missing the shot over and over [repetition] and miss it every time because you have not learned a successful way to sink that shot. This physical movement will be wired into your brain and every time you try that shot you **will** miss it.

PRACTICE MAKES PERMANENT
Only PERFECT practice makes Perfect

Now, if someone teaches you a successful way to make the shot and you practice that movement over and over, it will become an automatic movement and you will be able to hit the shot over and over, automatically. You will have created a strong neural path.

The same goes with your thoughts. If you repeat all the old negative thoughts every morning when you see yourself in the mirror, that makes neural connections. If you make an attempt at doing something new, like a new sport, or a new work skill, do not get it quite right, and go to a thought that you are a failure, that makes more neural connections, building that pathway to think that thought again. That can lead to the expectation that you will always "fail" at anything new and a decision to just not try new things. This is an example of the fixed mindset behavior discussed previously.

“Where your attention goes, energy flows and results show”-T. Harv Eker
— In praise of the Reticular Activating System

Ok, back to the RAS. For there to be any action, information that comes into the RAS has to go to the cerebrum. This is the largest part of the brain and is where the information that is categorized as important is turned into thoughts and/ or emotions.

Your brain is your good and faithful servant, it will look for what your mind, through the RAS, has told your brain is important. The brain is constantly seeking out what **YOU** determine is important through repetition, as well as trying to protect you from danger by looking for anything that appears questionable.

“Where you put your attention and energy, becomes real in your life and monopolizes your mind”
-Tom Bilyeu

Another way to think of it is, you have your own built in Google. The other day I was looking for a class on storytelling. I didn't find a lot on that search even though I spent a lot of time trying different key words and phrases.

The next day I saw multiple suggestions around story telling. Amazon had three book suggestions. I looked at one of the suggestions on my Amazon account and began getting emails pointing me to YouTube storytelling videos. I had never looked for a video on storytelling before that.

When I commented on these happenings in a ZOOM meeting, every single person on the call said something similar happened to them. They did a search and then Google started giving them notices of where they could find things related to the search, even when they weren't "searching" for anything.

So, you can think of your RAS as your personal, **PROGRAMABLE**, Google.

Here's another way you may have experienced the RAS at work. Have you ever decided you must have something, a particular item, then you see it everywhere?

One summer day, many years ago, I decided it would be fun to drive a Mazda Miata sports car. I went to the dealership and fell in love with this shiny Red Mazda Miata convertible.

I drove it with the top down, with the warm breeze blowing through my hair. I took it to a back road with no traffic and lots of curves. Whoooooe, that was glorious! It felt like I was flying, so much freedom.

Then I returned it to the dealership and went home to think about it, compare prices, before I signed my life away.

What was interesting is, I began to notice little Miata's everywhere with a lot of those being red, like "mine". Now, were those cars not there before? Of course, they were there all the time!

Why didn't I "see" them before?

I had not made it important to my brain, specifically important to my RAS!

<p>Does that mean – You'll See It When You Believe It? (The name of one of Wayne Dyer's bestselling books)</p>

Now, coming back to our "thoughts". As stated before, the thoughts you **repeatedly** think make stronger and wider neural paths. As time goes by you continue to think the same thoughts, this wide easy path is a habit.

As you continue to repeat these habitual thoughts they inform your RAS to pay attention, to notice everything that is related to or confirms the thoughts.

With their wide neural pathways, these very thoughts have become automated. As I said, habits. They are the easiest path for your thoughts to go down when a familiar experience occurs.

If the repeated thought is that you are a failure, when you try something new and, of course, can't do it perfectly the first time, what happens?

That's right, the old "I'm a failure" talk begins, the now automatic, thoughts confirm it, and you feel bad. The brain will try to protect you from that unpleasant feeling through avoidance of new situations,unless you are **aware** and **mindfully** make thought and action changes, then practice them repeatedly.

We pay attention to things that are important to us in the present moment. This does not mean they are long term important. They may be. They may not be.

We lose FOCUS on what is important to our SUCCESS if we don't make it important to our BRAIN.

Say you have a melody running through your mind over and over and your dominant thought, right now, is to find out the name of that song, who sang it and other trivia. You may become so focused on the song that you start Googling, maybe it reminds you of a time in your life, a relationship, a location, a person. Remember, many things we see, feel, hear, smell and taste are wired to thoughts of our past.

Regardless of what the song has triggered, it is easy to get sucked into the internet search to the exclusion of something that is important to your "future self" like your homework, or the research you intended to do for an important project or writing up the text for your marketing.

How is GOOGLE Search like your RAS? *When you look at something or say something repeatedly, your RAS starts filtering for “IT” and pretty soon you’re seeing things related to “IT” everywhere you look. ...For better or worse.*

Finding the name of that song may not be "long-term important", may not be important to your “future self”, but your focus can be hijacked if you do not have a way of keeping the "long term important" things in front of you. *[There are many reasons this is so EASY to happen including not being sure what to do next, how to EASILY accomplish the important tasks. That, is a conversation for another time.]*

Just a quick comment about your “Future Self”. Think of it. This is the person you are supporting **right now** by gaining the skills for:

- a better job,
- to run a successful business,
- have a healthy, happy family,
- vacation in the places you want to explore,
- live in the home of your dreams – and own it outright

... , and more, as far as your imagination can see.

Back to that song that had sidetracked you. On the other hand, if you have created "aids" to keep the "long term important" things at the top of your mind, indicating to the RAS they are important, that is where your focus goes.

You can stay focused on your goals, by **talking** about what is truly important to you frequently, **post a note** in front of you with what is important for you, put a **picture** on your desk to remind you. If you are designing a marketing piece to help your business grow, you can keep a copy of one, similar to what you need, visible on your desk.

Try this! In Chapter 7 of her book *The High 5 Habit*, © 2021, Mel Robbins lays out this simple exercise. Begin to look for things that appear in a ‘heart shape’ during your day. She says to look for one heart. I challenge you to see how many heart shaped items you can find in a day. Do it for a week. Really. I did that the day I heard her talk about the exercise. That first **hour**, I found at least 12, just hiding in the design of the area rug in our living room.

That **day** alone I saw so many hearts or heart shapes that I lost count! <3

What we focus on we see more of. What we tell our brain is important, or to expect, we see more of. The RAS is amazing. Life is AMAZING!!!

Your brain is a problem-solving machine. You just have to choose the direction it goes by giving it instructions, clues.

I referred to some “aids” that could help lead us to what we want in our life, what are they? Well, in the class, "Hold Your Vision", I suggest that you write out what you envision, write note cards with a statement of what you are creating and place them in locations you will see throughout the day. Create a Mind map to see how the ideas flow.

As you allow thoughts, ideas, to come up, you will find that each idea can lead to another thought and from that one something else related and so forth.

Make a notebook with pictures clipped from magazines, create drawings, positive statements of what you want to have, see, be, do. Create a Vision Board with pictures that illustrate what you are “envisioning”.

Change these things out as your dreams/ goals grow and actions are accomplished.

**Your brain is a problem-solving machine
And will look for anything your Mind makes important.**

Looking at these things frequently stimulates the brain to look for everything around you related to them. When I do this, I always see opportunities I had previously overlooked.

I mentioned talking about what you are envisioning. When I talk about whatever my focus is on, I find that there are people around that have resources and information to share that I could not have possibly known of. Can we say COMMUNITY.

Another piece I have begun to add to classes and coaching is having people figure out and post their WHY for what they are envisioning and how accomplishing what they say they want, will make them FEEL.

**Your brain will work to make you right by preventing you from perceiving, seeing, and acknowledging anything that you strongly disagree with –
- you may hear yourself say, “It’s a fluke.” or find yourself making up a story that you are comfortable with, something that agrees with, your “BELIEF” – which is just something you DECIDED to believe because of X, Y, or Z. Your Belief is Your Decision, the STORY you tell yourself.**

Think about the example of the Mazda Miata, on page 39. Now instead of having a thought of a particular car in mind, what if you are repeatedly putting your attention on a self-statement, a belief, a thought, a story that “People in this town are unfriendly.”

Your mind will be constantly working to prove you right. It will ignore the person holding the door for you and smiling at the restaurant. If someone offers to help you in a store, you will only see them as trying to “sell” you something. If your new neighbor brings fresh baked cookies, you wonder “What does s/he want?” All of this, just because your mind wants to make you RIGHT.

On the other hand, if you think, tell your mind, the opposite, repeating it multiple times a day, “Everyone here is friendly and kind.” Your mind again tries to make you right.

You **notice** the person opening the door and smiling. You are grateful and smile back. In the store, you are grateful for the store clerk helping you find the perfect pair of shoes with the perfect fit, then recommending the perfect little bistro for Sunday coffee during your conversation.

You get home and when the new neighbor brings over the fresh baked cookies, you are grateful. In your conversation, you find a common interest and you now have someone to go to Art Club with, or play golf, or go fishing, or, or. Even more rewarding is that this new acquaintance could become a friend.

Think what a difference it could make in your life if you begin your day with something like –

“Today, I look for and appreciate the good.”

...then repeat it multiple times to help program your RAS to automatically find what is good around you, things that you just overlooked the day before, because you had not told your RAS it was important. In other words, practice AFFIRMATIONS of the stuff you choose to have in your life. Then notice.

While affirmations may not change everything, if we keep thinking the same thoughts every day, we are guaranteed to keep having those same familiar experiences. If they are empowering, joy filled experiences, Awesome!!!

If not, maybe a change is due. It is our choice, every single day.

CHAPTER 5
VISION TOOLS
Tools to CONCIIOUSLY change:
What you THINK
What you NOTICE.
What you SEE.

In the previous chapter you read about some tools that you may use to bring your attention to opportunities that could create what you say you want in your life.

These opportunities may already be right in front of you. Maybe because you have not told your brain to what is important, you haven't noticed them. Think of the hearts in the last chapter. <3

Until I gave myself the message that seeing heart shapes was important, I never noticed them in the carpet.

Keep in mind that you are doing these things to make what you **choose** noticeable. Your brain CAN help you achieve the results you say you want. That means DO NOT list what is missing and encourage those feelings of lack.

Generate a feeling inside of how you will feel when what you are **saying** you want is present, as though it is present. Life is abundant.

Some of the ways you can use to make your true desires important to that RAS part of your brain are as follows:

JOURNAL

Write it out, journal, paint a word picture of what you envision. Read it at least one time a week, add to it. What do you feel? When you create the story, the scene for your future self and immerse yourself in it, what do you feel? Change the story as you learn more, as you can imagine more.

NOTE CARDS – STICKIE NOTES

Write note cards with a statement of what you are creating and place them in locations you will see them throughout the day. Include what that will mean to you. What results will you have when this happens? Include your WHY.

Observe, you may find that the results you really want can come about in a different way than you thought. You can use electronic stickie notes on your computer as well as paper stickie notes.

Write the next step you need to take toward your bigger goal. Write out your bigger WHY or WHYS.

Read them every day to remind yourself of the importance of taking the next action, and then the next action and the next until you create the dream, life, business, job you are envisioning.

VISION BOOK

Make a **notebook with pictures** clipped from magazines clipped from a magazine and glued to the pages, write notes, words, clip words in bold text or script. This is a Vision Book or a Treasure Book. You can even call it your Goal Book. *[You can even figure out ways to do this electronically.]*

Create actual drawings in the book or a large drawing that depicts what you are choosing for your life --- add to it

VISION BOARD

Create a **Vision Board** with pictures that illustrate what you are “envisioning” you can cut out pictures and words for this, draw pictures and add them to the board, write your own words. Create an electronic vision board. If you use Slides on Google Drive, you can search for and insert pictures right from the internet. You can make multiple boards.

The whole family can do their own 8.5” x 11 Vision Board, print it out from the computer and post it on the refrigerator to discuss at least once a week and change as desired. What an awesome family activity and fun way to teach your children to use their imagination to clarify what they want in their life and bring what they want into their awareness.

AFFIRMATIONS

Create **positive statements**, affirmations, of what you want to have, see, be, do. Create Affirmations.

Remember we are already repeating, affirming, ideas with every thought we think, every word we say ----- many of these are negative. If we practice positively saying what we really want, we can change those old thoughts and notice the stuff that we want, that is already around us.

Verbalize and look for what you DO want in your life. Program your RAS to find those things instead of the opposite. Remember the little red Miata from page 39! Look for hearts, prove to yourself that this stuff works.

MIND MAPPING

Mind mapping is a creative way to visually sort out your goals and the various levels and pieces.

I have found that I can use a Mind Map for any goal or project I am working on.

I like to use a mind map to visually organize thoughts and ideas around a central theme or goal. It's great for brainstorming, studying, planning a project or a meeting, and more. You can use it when working alone or when working with others.

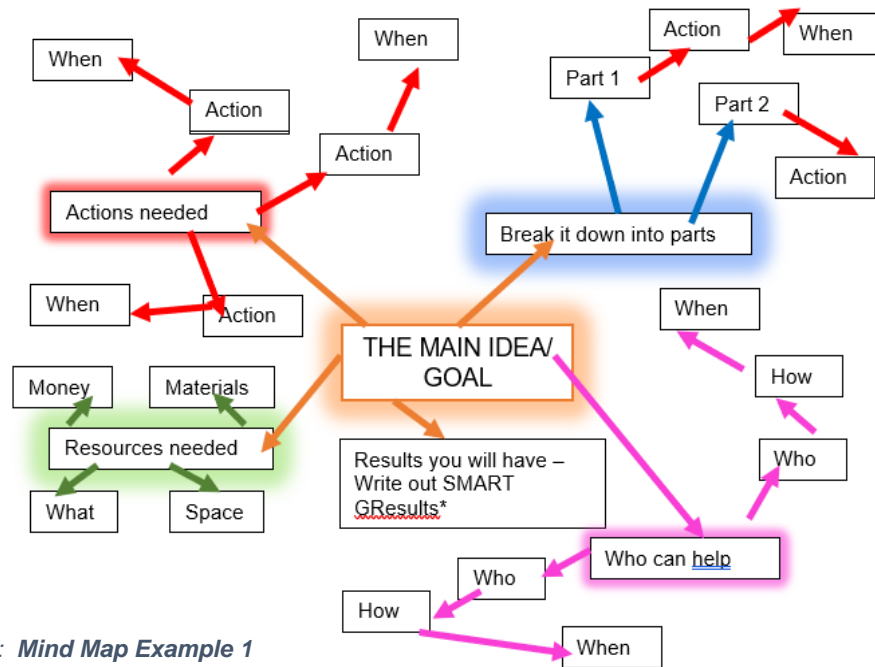


Figure 2: Mind Map Example 1

***GResults:** State your Goal or Dream then describe the RESULT you are really looking for. What will it mean to accomplish your goal? What will creating this Goal or Dream give you? What will it look like?Feel like? This has to do with your big WHY for accomplishing this Goal.

I call the two of these, Goal + Result, a **GResult**.

Have you ever noticed that when you are planning something, like a vacation, with a friend, a spouse, a group of people, that you can begin with a list of where you want to go, maybe you enjoy the beach, but you want to experience mountains too. Then you see pictures on a YouTube of people hiking through a rain forest. Where to go, what to do, decisions to make.

Everyone has experienced making lists. You can figure things out, create a check list, ... and, if you want to **really** come up with more ideas and possible solutions, a mind map may be the perfect method to use the creativity of your brain to get more possibilities out there, rather than beginning another list. You may want to end up with nice, neat, organized lists after completing the mind map process, but experiment by beginning with a mind map.

Be curious!

When you create a Mind map, you will link key concepts by using images, lines and words to construct a hierarchy of ideas as well as some random associations that can be sorted out later. One of the things you will want to do is get all the ideas down and linked as they come up so that you can come back and flesh them out later,.... or discard them altogether.

You will be using the concept of “radiant thinking”. Your levels of ideas or steps will radiate out from the central project, idea, or goal.

What works for me is to get all the big ideas out first, then begin breaking off the pieces. Turning them into their own Mind Maps until all the things I can think of are written down.

Let this set overnight, my brain is still processing all the ideas, then come back to see how it can be modified and begin scheduling the actions that will be needed to complete the project.

Coming back later allows me to add some things, change others and mark through or erase items [using the white board] that have been changed or are not needed.

If you have a large white board to do this with and the flexibility to leave it up, you can add to and change your map as decisions are made, actions are taken, objectives are reached, and new opportunities come up.

When I am satisfied that I have a good picture of my project, I can then go back and make my lists, if I think that is necessary. Ok, I love lists, so I usually make them and use a notebook to keep them organized. I can check things off and make modifications on my lists. Don't you just love a check list with check marks beside all the stuff on it? I do! That is just a nice, easy to create, little dopamine hit. That little feeling of progress toward a goal.

After each change, I like to take photos of the mind map [s] and upload them to the computer. This allows me to go back if I get stuck, my whiteboard is compromised, aka erased, or I have switched back to drawing on paper and can't find my notebook - LOL.

While writing this book, creating a coaching program, and creating new classes to go with the book and coaching, I developed a renewed appreciation for mind mapping.

Following is a series of mind maps I used when bringing this book to the printing stage.

The first is a broad overview of the 4 stages of the book production I thought would need to be included to complete the book publishing process and create success as an author.

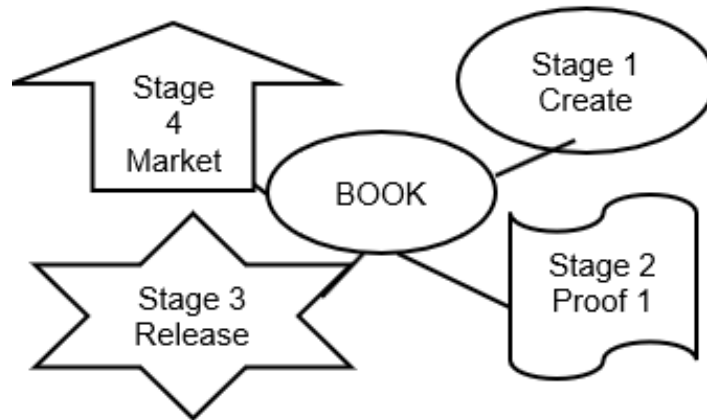


Figure 3 **Mind Map Example 2 - Book**

This mind map is small and compact, but to see more of the parts of the entire process you could use a large whiteboard, or piece of paper, like “butcher’s paper”.

Here we are using symbols to help identify what stage I am looking at in the bigger picture. Below is an illustration of Stage 2 when I created the first proof and decided to publish that as a hardback ASAP. This allowed me to get the ISBN number and hold an actual book in my hands.

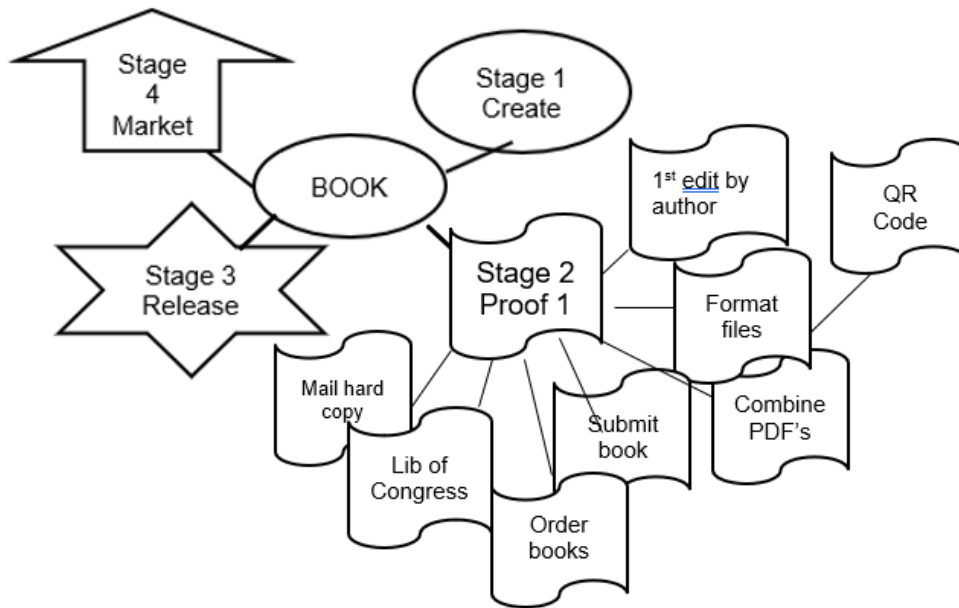


Figure 4 **Mind Map Example 3 - Submit to Lulu.com**

The second illustration, Figure 4, gives an example of how each section can be broken out to capture everything that needs to be done in that part of the process..

The book was written and I decided to publish it in a weekend to facilitate getting the ISBN Code, sending both the electronic and a hard copy of the book to the Library of Congress and getting a few copies of the first edition on hand to move forward with the last edit, marketing and distribution. .At the center of Figure 3 is “Stage 2 Proof 1”. Looking at this, I realized that “Add QR Code” implied several other tasks.

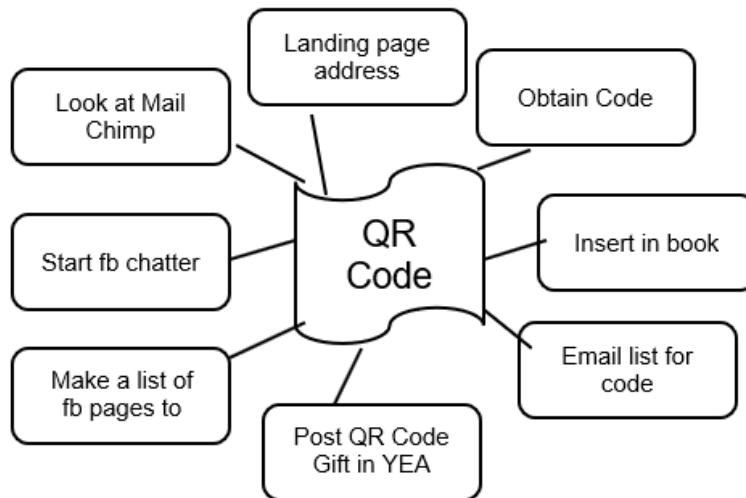


Figure 5 Mind Map Example 4 – QR Code

Those tasks would need to be completed on the website by creating a landing page for the code to send people to purchase the book and find out about coaching, classes, and other resources.

In the 1960s and 1970s Tony Buzan spread the concept of mind maps in his talks and books.

- Beginning with a key concept. Write one or two words [be brief] to describe the result you want. For example, a Vacation.
- Draw branches out from this Key concept to display the subsets of the main concept. For Vacation these could be as simple as Where, who, when, Expenses, What Experience
- From these subsets you will begin to draw lines to possibilities and things you will require. For Vacation WHEN you may check your calendar for the possibilities for you. If your WHO includes other people, you would want to include their dates on your WHEN so you can see the dates you are both available. Then if you find it is in June and September that you have

a choice of, you will look at WHAT you want to do, what is available, and so forth.

- To further stimulate your brain’s creativity and imagination use colors and pictures. Draw them or cut pictures out and glue them on.
- Suggestion – get large paper, butcher block, or tape several sheets of paper together to give you more room, or use a white board. Experiment.

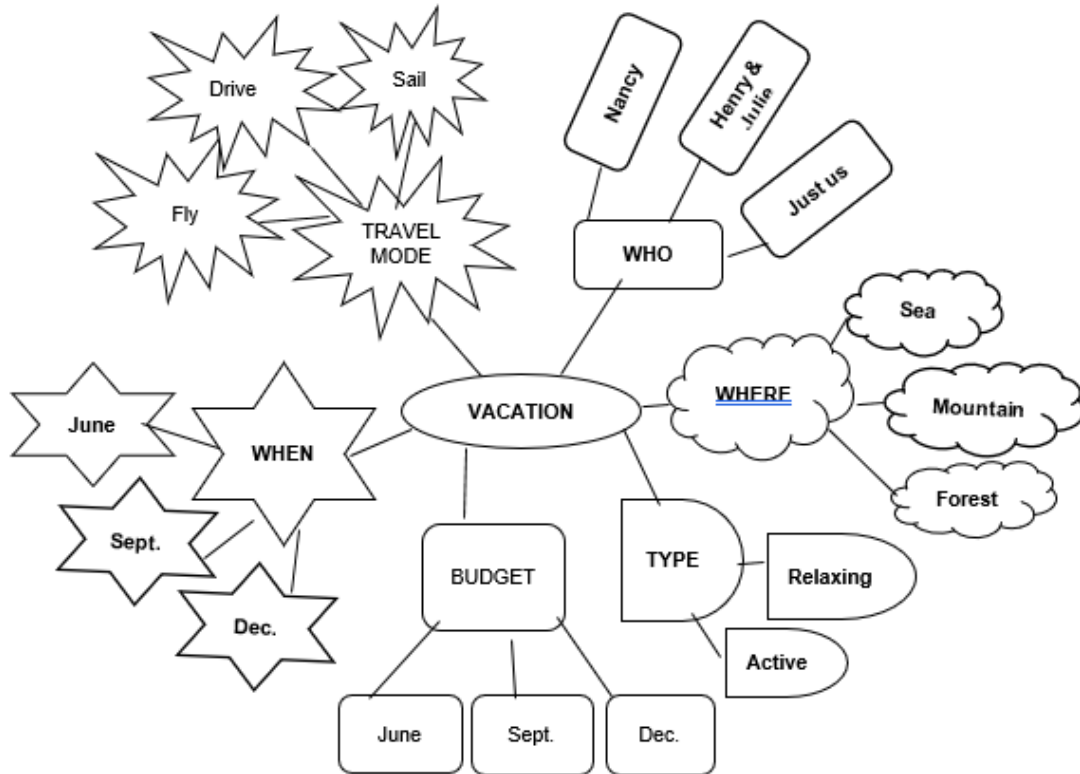


Figure 6 Mind Map Example 5 Vacation

Whatever the tool you are using, focus on the RESULTS you want. What will that look like, what will it feel like? BE in your creative process writing down what comes up without judging it.

As Ted Lasso would say, “Be Curious, not judgmental”.

Resources you can use to learn more about Mind Mapping and Visually organizing your ideas.

Books

- Tony and Barry Buzan, *The Mind Map Book*, BBC Worldwide, 1993.
- Tony Buzan, *Use Your Head*, BBC Worldwide, 2000.

Websites [Active as of 1/23/2022]

- https://www.jcu.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/115394/Mind-Mapping.pdf PDF of information and instructions from James Cook University in Australia
- <https://www.jcu.edu.au/> Go to the top right corner and put 'mind map' in the search. This will turn up more resources and information on mind mapping also James Cook University in Australia
<http://www.jcu.edu.au/office/tld/learningskills/mindmap/index.html>
An excellent university site with clearly set out instructions.
- <http://www.peterrussell.com/mindmaps/mindmap.html>
Peter Russell collaborated with Tony Buzan. Peter on mind map training, for more on mindmaps on his site, use the search box in the top right corner to get a list of all the information he has on mindmaps
 - <https://www.peterrussell.com/MindMaps/Advantages.php>
 - <https://www.peterrussell.com/MindMaps/HowTo.php>
 - <https://www.peterrussell.com/MindMaps/Uses.php>
 - <https://www.peterrussell.com/MindMaps/MMSoft.php> list of mind map software
- To find more information "Google"
 - Mind map,
 - Mind Mapping,
 - Tony Buzan
 - visual organization systems,
 - visual task management.
 - Visually organizing your ideas

VISUALIZE

Dare to visualize a world in which your most treasured dreams have become true. WAYNE DYER, American Psychologist & Author

Some people are concerned they cannot “visualize” so do this little exercise.

- Sit Down
- Close your eyes
- Now visualize your kitchen

What do you see? Maybe the fridge, stove, cabinets, sink, floor, walls...

Could you visualize, in your mind’s eye, your kitchen? I don’t like to use absolute words like All, Always, Never..., but MOST people can visualize. So far I have not seen evidence that an individual cannot. I have read of a few with a particular brain issue who cannot.

Back in the 80’s or 90’s I heard the story of a powerful example of how visualization can work. Currently, it continues to be a common practice for trainers to have their players and other performers, including Olympic athletes, practice visualizations in addition to physical training to improve their performance.

Imagining allows us to remember and mentally rehearse our intended movements. In fact, visualizing movement changes how our brain networks are organized, creating more connections among different regions. It stimulates brain regions involved in rehearsal of movement, . . . priming the brain and body for action so that we move more effectively. Srini Pillay, Harvard Medical School

Like anything else, when working to change your brain to program automatic actions/ thoughts, you choose, it takes daily practice. If you wanted to be an all-star basketball player, you would expect to consistently do the physical practice and visualization practice. The same is true if you wanted to be an Olympic athlete.

If you choose to create the life that empowers you to be the person you want to be, what can you expect? You can expect to consistently **practice** what it takes to get there, including action and visualization.

One ingredient to success in changing your automatic thoughts comes from practicing empowering affirmations, new self-talk thought patterns you **choose** to support the life you want to live. Another ingredient is visualizing. One way to gain clarity on the life you want to live comes through visualizing that life based on your values. As you are curious and become aware of more options, your visualizations and affirmations will change. We will talk more about affirmations in the next section of the book.

Practice daily. For example, visualize, daily, how you will implement the affirmations you are “practicing” into your daily life situations and interactions. Feel the emotions and see the positive. This daily practice and visualization will help you to find those neural paths to use when challenging situations come up.

There was a story about a Vietnam veteran and visualization that I read decades ago. I must have first come across this story in the late 1970’s or early 1980’s. In looking for the source I found mentioned that people recalled Denis Waitley and Zig Zigler both relating the story. The story is also recounted in the following books, *One Minute Messages*, 1986, *See You at the Top*, 1975, and *A Second Helping of Chicken Soup for the Soul*, 1980.

Compatibility Solutions, Inc. says that Major James Nesmeth was a pilot and was shot down over North Vietnam when flying a mission during the war. He remained a POW for 7 years, undergoing torture and solitary confinement. The cage he was assigned was 4.5’ high by 5’ long. Not tall enough to stand upright or long enough to lay comfortably. Most of his confinement he saw no one, talked with no one and was not allowed physical activity. The first few month he prayed for release and then to save his sanity and life he began to visualize the game of golf. He knew he had to do something to focus his thoughts. The only thing he had control over was his thoughts. He took responsibility for his thoughts.

Rather than lamenting what he could not do or did not have. He began practicing in his mind, his thoughts, the activity that had given him pleasure at home. Golfing, 18 holes. He visualized and practiced every detail; choosing and dressing in his golf clothes. Seeing the trees beside the course. Smelling the scents from the vegetation and the fresh mowed grass. As he set the tee with a slight left twist, he “saw” the individual blades of grass.

He carefully placed the ball on the tee, listened to the birds, saw the squirrels, felt the grip of the club in his hands. In his head, he talked himself through each play of the ball, smoothing out his downswing and follow through on his shot. He experienced the joy of watching the ball arc over the center of the fairway, bounce as it landed on the turf, to end up exactly where he wanted it.

He took his time executing each move, each step, he selected each club deliberately. He breathed in the beauty of the course every day as he played his 18 holes.

As he made each deliberate move and decision, the visualized 18 hole course took the same time as the physical game had taken at home. Major Nesmeth practiced seven days a week, four hours a day, making every shot.

Upon his return home a free man, he went through rehabilitation. The first thing he did, when physically able, was play golf. After seven years away, never actually touching a club, he shot the amazing score of 74.

A human being always acts and feels and performs in accordance with what he imagines to be true about himself and his environment...For imagination sets the goal 'picture' which our automatic mechanism works on. We act, or fail to act, not because of 'will,' as is so commonly believed, but because of imagination.

DR. PREM JAGYASI, Indian Author & Global Speaker

In a previous chapter addressing VISION TOOLS, Vision boards and other similar tools were mentioned. Creating those tools allows you to practice your habit of visualizing what you want your life to be like. It helps you visualize the person you choose to be and all of the material situations and items you associate with that life.

"You are the Michelangelo of your own life. The David that you are sculpting is you. And you do it with your thoughts."
–Joe Vitale

I cannot guarantee that you will have the life you visualize, as you still need to take action on the opportunities that you will begin to notice. However, it is unlikely that you will create a life you do not imagine.

Imagine someone who is raised in very humble surroundings, and never sees anything different than what s/he is growing up in. Unless that person moves to another location and begins to experience and see new ways of living, it is unlikely they will create a home that is different than the one s/he grew up in, or do anything different than what was modeled for them..

If you do not know there is something different in the world, how can you imagine it for yourself.

The owner of a high class five-star restaurant was participating in some work with children from Harlem. He brought them into his restaurant, told them to order anything they wanted and they were all served a seven course meal. When asked why he would do that instead of something "more practical", especially since they didn't have this type of dining available to them in their community, the gentleman had a perfect answer. His answer was, "If they don't see and experience something like this, how can they imagine it for themselves?"

"Cherish your visions and your dreams as they are the children of your soul, the blueprints of your ultimate achievements."
–Napoleon Hill

CHAPTER 6 AFFIRMATIONS

**Your beliefs become your thoughts,
Your thoughts become your words,
Your words become your actions,
Your actions become your habits,
Your habits become your values,
Your values become your destiny.
— Gandhi**

What is an affirmation?

Every thought you think and every word you say, to yourself or others, is an affirmation. These can be positive, supportive, or negative. This is your self-talk.

Yes, even what you say to or about others. Your brain is always listening.

In the previous chapter I talked about the tens of thousands of thoughts we have daily and that most of the thoughts we are thinking today we have thought multiple times for many of the days, months, years previous. That is, unless we have been consciously catching and changing those thoughts.

Our current thoughts are the affirmations we practice every day, every moment of every day. What is your first thought when you get out of bed? What do you think when you look in the mirror? Is it complimentary? Would you say it to a friend?

Think on this. That person you see in the mirror is the **ONLY**, I repeat, the **ONLY** person who will **ALWAYS** be with you from birth into this glorious world to your death.

That being said, wouldn't it be advantageous to have that person as your best friend? Wouldn't it be valuable to develop admiration, love, and compassion for that intimate friend? How do you greet a friend you love and enjoy being with? Is it with criticism, disappointment, and anger? No!!! You greet them with joy, love, and compliments.

**“Your relationship with yourself is the foundation for everything in your life. How you talk to and treat yourself sets the tone for everything you do. It determines how you feel, what you think, and what actions you take.”
-Mel Robbins, The High 5 Habit, pg 44**

Mel Robbins wrote about this very thing in her book, “The High 5 Habit.” In which she advocates and discusses giving ourselves the High 5 in the mirror, like we might give to a friend we greet with love and support.

She goes on to tell us how the High 5 Habit came about and various things that have happened to her, and people that follow her, from practicing the High 5 Habit on a regular basis. She recommends giving yourself the High 5 when you are doing well, celebrating your success, when things are tedious or going poorly to reassure yourself, that closest most intimate friend, you’ve got this. If anybody can handle it, you can.

Say kind things. In other words, speak positive affirmations to yourself. Encourage yourself as you would your best friend. Why? Altogether now,
“Because the person in the mirror IS your best, lifelong friend.”

You would say kind things to your best friend, right? I am repeating myself. Treat yourself like your best friend, nurture that person in the mirror who will be with you for your ENTIRE life.

Mel Robbins’ website is
<https://melrobbins.com/>

I recommend you watch this interview she gives. Here is the link to a YouTube where Mel talks about the High 5 Habit [or Google **“The High 5 Habit: Take Control of Your Life with One Simple Habit w/ Mel Robbins”**]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOar1Sle4u4>

[If you are reading the paper copy of the book or listening to audio, you can do an internet search of the video title, mentioned above..]

You can even use the High 5 in addition to affirmations you carefully craft, to remind yourself that you have a community. Sometimes we forget and feel we are alone in “this”, life, situation....

When you have forgotten and are in the “I can never”...[finish this, do this, be this...], look in the mirror. Look yourself in the eye [not just at your hair, the wrinkles, the acne...].

Look yourself in the eye, High 5 congratulating yourself on being so smart as to create and embrace that community you are part of, the individuals who are always ready to help, brainstorm, share resources and information.

You know who they are. Sometimes you may forget to reach out to them, but if you think about it, you know who those people are that want the best for you. These are the people who support you and cheer for you when you share your successes.

**THOUGHTS: Why should we think upon things that are lovely? Because thinking determines life. It is a common habit to blame life upon the environment. Environment modifies life but does not govern life. The soul is stronger than its surroundings.
William James**

Keep in mind the amount of repetition it took for our current thoughts/ affirmations to create the life we have now. Begin to consciously, deliberately, change those thoughts/ affirmations.

We can do this using the same repetition and attention that was given to the disempowering thoughts we have been repeating unconsciously.

*Just want to point out, **it's not your fault.***

Most all the disempowering thoughts were what you heard from others [*who had heard them from others*] as you were growing up. Parents, teachers, siblings, society, television programs, radio, the news. You just want to replace all those with empowering thoughts that you now say to yourself.

The better you know yourself, the more empowered you are to make changes. To respond. To be respon-sible for yourself. Do not confuse that with "to blame for".

What power, to be responsible for your own thoughts, emotions and – YES – actions and results. ...And being Responsible does not mean you go it alone. We all need help from time to time. We all need to be in community. We all need to collaborate with others for the best results.

Use your RAS to consciously create and repeat your affirmations. Record them, write them down, make yourself a video and watch it, do a vision board, a mind map, a treasure book, journal, draw pictures to represent your affirmations. Your brain IS a faithful servant and whatever you consistently put in, is what you will notice in your life. Think of the old computer phrase, GIGO, Garbage In, Garbage Out. You could also say Information in, Experience Out.

Choose what you pay attention to. Remember: "Where your attention goes, energy flows and results show"-T. Harv Eker

If our brain, our RAS is acting like Google, then what you repeatedly say, what you repeatedly pay attention to, will show up in your life more and more frequently. So, what do you want to experience, what do you want to see in your life? Focus on that, talk about that, look for the good and you will see more of it.

Just a side note, you can go so far as examining what you are telling your brain when you select a tv program, stream a movie, watch a YouTube. This may be one of the most powerful ways we can give our brain information. We watch, hear, and experience emotions from the film, news, etc. Just saying....

Something to think about. What are you choosing to experience. What emotions are you surrounding yourself with?

As you practice catching the old thoughts that do not serve you and begin repeating the things you do choose to notice in your life, you will find yourself becoming even more targeted in the words and phrases you speak, you will find yourself saying your affirmations aloud as “issues” come up in your life. You will begin reminding yourself to see the good there is in every situation. These are new habits, so be patient with yourself when your thoughts try to go down those old pathways.

**"Once you replace negative thoughts with positive ones, you'll start having positive results."
--Willie Nelson**

In fact, as you begin taking action, you may notice even more of what you do not want. Continue creating opportunities to catch and switch your thoughts about what you are noticing. Practice creating the new neural pathways, creating new thoughts and beliefs. Practice seeing the good in and from every situation.

CHOOSE what you view in videos and other visual arts. CHOOSE what you listen to, music, lectures, what you read. Become aware. Does what you are choosing support bring you closer to who you want to be, your goals and values, or does it move you further away?

Remember Pollyanna? Well, she may have had it right, the way she was always finding the bright spots and the bright side to any situation. I recommend taking a fresh look at this children’s show. Just Google “YouTube Pollyanna Entire Movie.”

7 Steps to Create Powerful Affirmations

- 1) **Write down your affirmation.**
- 2) **State it in the POSITIVE.**
 - a) The sub-conscious mind, your Reticular Activating System, the Universe, hears the meat of the statement. Think of every thought and every comment you make as a prayer. Some say, “The sub-conscious mind has no sense of humor.” Therefore if you say, “I don’t worry about money like I used to.” what is heard is, “I worry about money.”
 - b) To make a “money issue” a positive affirmation, you could say, “I have an abundance of money in my life.” or “I prosper in every aspect of my life including financial.”
 - c) Focus on what it is that you would like to create. What we focus on grows in our consciousness.
- 3) **Be succinct.** One issue to one affirmation. Sculpt it. This is the SEED, not the tree.

- 4) **State it in the PRESENT TENSE, the NOW!**
 - a) Example: Someone wants to be able to do public speaking. They may say, “I am an effective public speaker, NOW.”
- 5) **Use Powerful adjectives in your statements.** The more emotional impact the words have for you, the stronger their impact on your actions.
 - a) For instance, compare your feelings about the following statement with those inspired by the previous statement, “I am a BRILLIANT, INSPIRING public speaker, NOW!”
- 6) **Your statement must be BELIEVABLE TO YOU.**
 - a) If you cannot believe you are a BRILLIANT, INSPIRING speaker, for example. If your mind says “That’s rubbish, yea right, Hah!” or something similar, restate your affirmation saying, “I am WILLING to be a Brilliant, Inspiring public speaker, now.”
 - i) Then become aware of opportunities, and even hints of opportunities. Examine every event, comment, even advertisements that are possible opportunities.
 - b) Be gentle with yourself. Start where you are NOW. If all you can really believe at this moment is that you are willing, or that you take the first step to being the person you would like to be, or your first step toward a goal that you would like to accomplish, that is where you must begin. How can you begin from somewhere that you are not? How can you take the train from Tampa to Orlando, if you are located in Miami?
- 7) **Look into your eyes IN THE MIRROR and make your statements of positive affirmation.** This is very powerful! Even more powerful is to use your own name.
 - a) Another way to practice affirmations is to find a partner to work with. Find someone you like and trust. You can read their affirmations to them while looking into their eyes and they can do the same for you. Use the name of the person you are speaking to and say their affirmation to them. Example: “Susan, you are a brilliant, intuitive artist and poet.”

In Appendix 2 there are some affirmations to help you get started writing your own.

Enjoy, laugh, have fun with this life-play. Journal. Record daily the affirmations you are repeating in your mirror, multiple times, on a daily basis. Record any feelings and changes or discoveries in your life related to them. Later, when it seems life throws you a curve, you will read these for encouragement. Prove to yourself that when you actively practice saying and feeling your affirmations you get results.

Program your own organic Google Search to focus on and find what you CHOOSE, rather than what you do not want.

Make a list of some things you can choose to focus on. What are you grateful for? What do you choose to have more of in your life?

WHAT WE FOCUS ON GROWS!

*If you keep thinking what you have always **THOUGHT**, you will keep believing what you have always believed.*

*If you keep believing what you have always **BELIEVED**, you will keep doing what you have always done.*

*If you keep doing what you have always **DONE**, you will keep experiencing (getting) what you have always experienced (gotten).*

Change your thoughts to change your EXPERIENCE

How can you change? Simple, not easy!

Be Willing.

- Create your Positive Affirmations,
- Catch the old thoughts that do not serve you in changing your experiences... AND Change them into a thought about what you DO want, create thoughts that DO serve you.
- So you are creating affirmations and practicing those thoughts in every moment, not just once or twice a day.
- As you Create more Positive Affirmations, new thoughts, ACT in congruence with your new thoughts and

Practice.

Practice,

Practice,

Surround yourself with people who are similar to who you want to be.

Get a Mentor or Coach

Change your thoughts,
Change your actions,
Change your Life.

CHAPTER 7
FOCUS vs MULTI-TASKING

“Concentrate all your thoughts upon the work at hand. The sun’s rays do not burn until brought to a focus.”

-Alexander Graham Bell

Did you ever use a magnifying glass to burn a hole in a dry leaf? It takes a little patience and if you focus the sunlight through a magnifying glass long enough, you will see the dry leaf begin to smoke.

We know we need focus to accomplish our goals and the larger those goals are, the more we need to be prepared to focus. ... and the more we focus, the more persistently we focus, the more powerful our efforts are.

One of my favorite reminders about focus is, **"What we Focus on grows."**

This is a nice glib saying, but what does it really mean? It works like this. The more I think about something, the more I make something important to my brain. Therefore, my brain increases its effort to find what the mind has made important. Another thing that happens, if I have a strong belief about something, the more my brain will work to "make me right."

I mean gee whiz, how could those orange people think like that? I know that us Turquoise people are right, we have the answers. Substitute Red and Blue for our political polarization here in the U.S. Which is also why we tend to stay in our belief bubble with only people who believe like us, they make us feel right.

The problem is, if we do not consciously look into, non-judgmentally examine, information that seems to be different from what we already believe, we will miss opportunities.

What kind of opportunities?

I am glad you asked. Opportunities to LEARN, to grow, to expand our awareness, create something bigger and more comprehensive than what we already know. We could still be using horse and buggies for transportation if we had listened to those who told us it wasn't safe to go faster than that mode of transportation.

“The successful warrior is the average man, with laser-like focus.”

-Bruce Lee

This is related to the Reticular Activating System and how that works as our editor of all the tens of thousands of bits of information that is available for our brain to process on any given day. We'll talk about that later.

So, we could say, "What we focus on we notice more of." like that super-awesome car you test drove last week. Now you are seeing it everywhere. Was it that this car was not there before? NO! It is just that you have made it important to your brain. When we consciously focus on, what we have a passion for, the business we want to create, the book to be written, the art to be created, then we begin seeing the opportunities that are all around us. Opportunities for obtaining financing for your business, time to sketch, paint, finding the supplies you had stashed for a special project... and forgotten about and other opportunities that appear.

The same thing happens when we focus on **only** what we already know, what we have already decided to believe. It feels comfortable and by filtering out everything else, it makes us "**right**". But, what if some of what we believe is a little off and what if some of what we are blocking out is objectively accurate?

Well, if we allow that new information to get through we may feel some discomfort as we grapple with a new paradigm. The thing is, if we deal with "what is" we will find we have more in common with each other than we are now aware of.

Something to think about.

MULTI-TASKING

The trap of, "Oh yes, I am really good at Multi-Tasking."

Some of my dear friends believe they can focus on two or four tasks at the same time. They like to tell me how they multi-task. They believe this is "focusing", saving time.

Let's be clear. There is NO SUCH THING AS MULTI-TASKING! There is ONLY switch-tasking and when you are "switch-tasking" you are taking more time to get things done than if you do each of the tasks, focusing on them one at a time.

EXERCISE MULTI-TASKING [Switch-Tasking] Prove it to yourself
You will need <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A timer, you can use the one on your phone if you like.• Piece of paper• Writing implement• A Partner
Below is the sentence you will use.

*NOTE: If you do not have a partner **Memorize the sentence.** This is important because you will begin with a BLANK sheet of paper.*

"There is no such thing as Multitasking, it is all switch tasking and switch-tasking wastes valuable time."

Have your partner read the sentence to you as you complete the exercise. Then your partner can do the exercise. *[In the absence of a partner, read the sentence out loud and record it on your phone to play back when you write]*

Ok, you have your **timer**, your **partner** *[or phone]*, a piece of **paper**, and a **writing implement**.

INSTRUCTIONS:

You will be multi-tasking in Part 1 and focusing on one task at a time in Part 2.

PART 1:

- A. Your **partner** reads the sentence, and reminds you of the next word if you forget while "multi-tasking".
- B. **You** will be writing each letter down with the ordinal number below the letters and spaces like this:

Illustration:

Write **T** then write **1** under it, **h** and **2** under that letter, **e** and **3** under that letter, **r** with the number **4**, **e** and the number **5**, under the **space** between There and is, place the number **6** under it. ...And so forth through the end of the statement.

EXAMPLE:

There is.....
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8.....
Got it?

- 1. **Start the timer**,
- 2. **AND BEGIN!** Your partner reads the sentence for you.
- 3. When that task is **completed**:
 - a. Stop the timer
 - b. Write down your time. _____

PART 2:

- 1. Grab another piece of paper.
- 2. Reset your timer
- 3. Start the timer
- 4. Your partner reads the statement to you as before.
- 5. Write the entire sentence

6. Immediately after you write the entire sentence, write the ordinal numbers under the letters and spaces, 1,2,3,4, etc.
7. Stop the timer.
8. Write down your time. _____

Compare the two times. What did you find?

Did the first time take two times as long? three times?

Even though this is a simple illustration, imagine if you can complete two tasks you are doing in half the time or less by simply **Focusing** on and **completing** each task?

Something to think about.

“I don’t care how much power, brilliance or energy you have, if you don’t harness it, ... focus it on a specific target, and hold it there, you’re never going to accomplish as much as your ability warrants.”
-Zig Ziglar

Amazing. Think of all the time we waste trying to do several things at the same time. This was my time for the longer sentence.

1. Multitasking [switch tasking] 3 Minutes, 54 seconds [3:54 or 234 seconds]
2. Total, doing each separately, 1 minute, 29 seconds [1:29 or 89 seconds]

That is over 2.63 times longer to Multi-Task [switch-task], than when you focus on each task to completion separately.

Examine those results.

Now let’s look at a scenario that is more realistic. You are switching back and forth between two tasks to get them completed between 8 am and noon, four hours.

If you have no other distractions and can focus on each task to completion, would it be possible to decrease your time to about one and a half hours?

Even if you just cut your time in half, to two hours, that would give you two hours to complete another project or make several meaningful contacts for your business.

Another scenario, you have a report summary to complete, you know that you could whip this out in a focused 30 minutes, and you have staff (or you work at home and it could be family) dropping by to chat, business related, not business

related, multiple times an hour. That exponentially increases the time it takes for you to write that summary. It takes time to refocus and find where you were in your writing after an interruption and if you get sidetracked into doing a task for someone who comes into your office, you could lose most of the morning to things you had not planned for. If you are on a schedule to get the report out before the end of the day, it may not happen.

Can you relate? It was JUST a 30 minute report.

If you could **schedule** your morning, without interruptions, including an hour to write the report summary when you are the most alert and creative, the report goes in before noon.

Schedule an hour to meet with individuals who have business related issues, or return phone calls if no one schedules office time. The report will have been completed. You will have taken care of any urgent office issues, that leaves two hours.

One hour could be **scheduled** to work on something to move your business forward. You could write out an outline for that idea, you have been rolling over in your head, to create a new product or service.

The remaining hour could be **scheduled** to brainstorm that same idea with the appropriate people in your company, or maybe someone you want to partner with.

“Lack of direction, not lack of time, is the problem. We all have twenty-four hour days.”

-Zig Ziglar

Where are you sacrificing your time, that commodity you can NEVER get back, by multi-tasking?

One of the ways I have experienced that kind of sacrifice of time was by allowing myself to be interrupted by phone calls, emails and people who wanted to “talk”. By setting aside time to return phone calls and emails, then setting office hours in which I am available, I have found more focused time.

“There is no such thing as Multitasking it is all switch tasking and switch-tasking wastes valuable time.”

Dave Crenshaw

Do a web search on The Myth of Multitasking Summary and Review by Dave Crenshaw. Crenshaw, D. (2021). The myth of multitasking: How “doing it all” gets nothing done. Mango Media Inc..

Downloaded on 6/24/22 from:

What we Focus on Grows

<https://lifeclub.org/books/the-myth-of-multitasking-dave-crenshaw-review-summary>

“Our brains are evolving to multitask,” **not!** The illusion of multitasking

Posted on April 10, 2015 by MBSR Mentorship | 15 Comments

By Allan Goldstein

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From <https://ucsdcm.wordpress.com/2015/04/10/our-brains-are-evolving-to-multitask-not-the-ill-usion-of-multitasking/> on 6/24/2022

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CHAPTER 8 HABITS

“Every action you take is a vote for the type of person you wish to become. No single instance will transform your beliefs, but as the votes build up, so does the evidence of your new identity.”

— James Clear, Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones

Some of the ideas in this chapter are restating what you read in the chapter on affirmations. Those ideas bear repeating.

Habits are paths of the least resistance. They are automatic actions/ thoughts that the brain goes to when you are under stress or "multi-tasking". [Multi-tasking, not a real thing, it is really switch-tasking.]. Habits are the neural pathways that are the strongest because of repeated use of those neural pathways. Remember if you want to make an action a habit it is repetition, repetition, repetition.

Examine your current habits, journal about them. As you uncover habits and clusters of habits, CHOOSE to replace those that disempower you with habits that support you.

The truth is, you don't break a bad habit; you replace it with a good one.
—Dennis Waitley

You can expand and substitute habits you already have, that support you, to replace those that do not. You can create new habits, something that is fun AND supports you, to replace the habits that do not.

Examples of habits - eating when anxious, instant anger when frustrated or someone disagrees with you or criticizes, feelings of fear when you anticipate disagreement or conflict.

Let's take the first example of eating when anxious – well if I have a habit of eating when anxious, here are some things I **could** replace that with, depending on the situation or circumstances.

- Make sure to have healthy, naked, no dressings, snack. Snacks I prepare for the next day, before going to bed:
 - Carrots, sliced bell pepper, fresh black cherries [they are low-glycemic], sliced or stick cut rutabaga or turnips, radishes [if I like spicy stuff], Cucumber slices, bare-naked Celery sticks. Get creative, look around the produce department when I go shopping, how about some jicama? I could try old favorites and try new stuff.
- Take a walk around the block

- Turn on a fast song I like and dance until the song is over,FAST, with energy
- Do 5 pushups ... or more [if I “can’t do that, I can do 5 wall pushups and build it up]

Use your imagination. If you have ever said “I really need to xyz exercise, do 5 minutes of that exercise.

There is a common belief in the helping professions and self-help arena that says that it takes around 21 to 30 days to change a “habit”. There are 28 day programs for substance abuse issues that seem to be based on that belief. In fact I was all ready to quote all those old stories, but I was curious about where that data had come from.

The belief in it taking 21 – 30 days to change a “habit” seems to be based on a purported experiment that NASA did with astronauts at the beginning of humans going into space. I have done several searches and could not find any scientific writings on this NASA study, so will not repeat it here.

There are several people in the self-help community repeating the story, with no references for study reports. There is an article that addresses the story and gives links to some actual research on forming habits. This webpage, entitled Renaissance Man Journal, has an article written in 2015, “How Long Does it Take to Form a Habit?”

Here is the link to the article:

<https://gainweightjournal.com/how-long-does-it-take-to-form-a-habit/>

A study in 2009 found that it took people in the study 10 to 254 days to establish a habit. 66 days is the average.

Maybe you have even endeavored to make a change in your life by doing something differently for 30 days and became discouraged and gave up when it did not seem to work for you. I have.

What I took away from the studies I read is to persist with the new behavior until it becomes automatic, it feels normal. Now, instead of looking at the calendar hoping to reach that magic 30 day mark and experience the change, I can practice repetition until I have a healthy practice that feels normal. The action will be automatic, regardless of what the calendar says.

This is the link to the abstract for the study that briefly summarizes these findings.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ejsp.674>

James Clear, the author of Atomic Habits, also has an article on his website that refers to this same article. As he says whether it takes 50 or 500 days to build that new habit you have to begin with DAY ONE.

<https://jamesclear.com/new-habit>

How are habits created? Pretty obvious, right?

Repetition, emotion, seeing a scenario play out in your mind repeatedly, in other words, repeated visualization, repeated thoughts. Did I say repetition?

Repetition of the same thought or physical action develops into a habit which, repeated frequently enough, becomes an automatic reflex.

—Norman Vincent Peale

With this knowledge, you can now catch yourself in the repeated thoughts, feelings, visualizations, and actions that do not support you.

As you catch these thoughts, you can begin to empower yourself by repeatedly choosing thoughts, feelings, visualizations, and actions that DO support you.

“All big things come from small beginnings. The seed of every habit is a single, tiny decision. But as that decision is repeated, a habit sprouts and grows stronger. Roots entrench themselves and branches grow. The task of breaking a bad habit is like uprooting a powerful oak within us. And the task of building a good habit is like cultivating a delicate flower one day at a time.”

— James Clear

Part of this process of change is self-examination. Through understanding your own values, you can build a vision of your life, and perhaps a mission, what you want to be remembered for. To create this vision of your life in the material world, out of your head and heart into your life, you will begin to focus your attention like a laser. This focus will help you go from auto-pilot to "on purpose". Your favorite question will become, "Is this [thought, action, interaction, choice] bringing me more of the feeling and materialization of my vision, or is it taking me further away?" It is the small things, step by step, thought by thought

Big bold actions on the balance are not as effective as many of us are led to believe. While small might not be sexy, it is successful and sustainable.

—B.J. Fogg, *Tiny Habits*

Some of your friends will be interested and decide they will come along on their own journey to success and happiness. Some will not - for their own reasons. As your behavior, your actions, change, you may not have time to hang out at the old places.

We all have the same amount of time, 24 hours in a day. This is a treasure that we will not get back, so if we "spend it" to buy more of the experiences we say we do not want, we will have made a choice for those experiences and results.

If you spend it, focusing on your vision, with every 24 hours you spend, you will be a little closer to living the experience you are envisioning. You will embody, you will live that vision.

"The people you surround yourself with influence your behaviors, so choose friends who have healthy habits."
-Dan Buettner.

As you move forward, you may find that you have a whole new set of friends as you build a community of people who have a vision that feels similar to yours. As you "raise your vibration" you may find yourself resonating with those other people who are now at your "vibration".

When I say resonating, think of tuning forks, used in various musical endeavors. If you hold a tuning fork vibrating at the frequency of A sharp near another tuning fork that vibrates at the frequency of A sharp when struck, the second one will begin vibrating, resonating, so that you hear the note of A sharp without being touched.

Who and what we resonate with is determined by our habits.

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."
-Aristotle

Even with the wonderful, new books on habits such as, Tiny Habits by BJ Fogg and Atomic Habits by James Clear there is still one I turn to time after time.

That is 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Dr. Stephen Covey, not necessarily instead of, but in addition to the first two I mentioned. He built everything in his book upon the foundation of a Principle-Centered Paradigm, a Character Ethic.

This is an ageless foundational book for me and I recommend that anyone who is choosing to develop the habits of a leader and create success in their life read it.

The seven habits are:

- Habit 1: Take Initiative – Be pro-active
- Habit 2: Envision the Life You Want
- Habit 3: Prioritize Important Over Urgent – First things first
- Habit 4: Seek Mutual Benefits – Win: Win or no Deal
- Habit 5: Seek first to understand - Listen and Understand the Other First
- Habit 6: Collaborate to Create Possibilities
- Habit 7: Sharpen the saw - Practice Self-Renewal

Read it – get it at the library, buy it from a used bookstore, or buy it new, but read this book and begin practicing these habits. He illustrates the benefits of living all these habits in an entertaining way that you will remember. You need to see or hear [there is an audio version] his words, not mine.

Below are more REFERENCES ON HABITS included in Victor Gabriel Clatici's article "How Long does it Actually take to Form a New Habit?"

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-long-does-actually-take-form-new-habit-backed-science-clatici>

Personal Archive of Clatici Victor Gabriel

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Victor Gabriel Clatici

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CHAPTER 9 COMMITMENT AND COMPASSIONATE SELF-ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SUCCESS

Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. - W. H. Murray in The Scottish Himalaya Expedition, 1951

Self-compassion allows us to turn toward and face the difficult feelings that arise when considering our own mistakes and misdeeds, meaning that we can see ourselves more clearly and do what's needed to make things better. – Dr. Kristin Neff

Commitment. Ahhh commitment. If we do not have a commitment to something, tasks seem onerous, more difficult than is acceptable.

It could be a relationship, the ultimate goal we have for better health including strength and a healthy weight, creating a business, building a house, or anything that is integral to our joy, our success.

If it is working out, the reps sometimes seem unbearable, and well, boring, but repetition of the correct way of doing these tasks are what build the neural pathways that make them easier and more automatic.

More automatic – oh yes, that is part of what makes something a habit.

When those neural pathways become so well established that it is easier to take that action, have that thought [the ones you have practiced] than another, you have a habit.

The energy for reaching any goal, accomplishing any dream, is an entanglement of commitment and the emotions you feel about your results. These things determine if you will, if you are **WILLING** to take continuous action to accomplish the big things in your life.

What does commitment mean to you?

Here is a quote from W. H. Murray in The Scottish Himalaya Expedition, 1951.

*‘But when I said that nothing had been done
I erred in one important matter.
We had definitely **committed** ourselves
and were halfway out of our ruts.*

*We had put down our passage money, -
booked a sailing to Bombay.
This may sound too simple,
but is great in consequence.*

*Until one is committed,
there is hesitancy,
the chance to draw back,
always ineffectiveness.*

*Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation),
there is one elementary truth
the ignorance of which
kills countless ideas and splendid plans:*

*That the moment one definitely commits oneself,
the providence moves too.*

*A whole stream of events
issues from the decision,
raising in one's favor
all manner of unforeseen incidents,
meetings, and material assistance,
which no man could have dreamt
would have come his way.*

I learned a deep respect for one of Goethe's couplets:

*Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it.
Boldness has genius, power and magic in it!"*

W. H. Murray begins by saying that there were two things of great consequence the team had done that were of great consequence. They had put down their passage money and had booked passage to Bombay. They arranged the trip and paid for it. They did not just "make plans" or say it was a good idea, they took actions that committed them to the journey.

These lines are so important I am repeating them here along with his conclusions about commitment:

<p><i>We had put down our passage money, - booked a sailing to Bombay. This may sound too simple, but is great in consequence.</i></p>

*Until one is committed,
there is hesitancy,
the chance to draw back,
always ineffectiveness.*

Do you keep saying “I want to, I’m going to, I need to... do X, Y, or Z”?

Examine what is stopping you. Are you afraid to commit to the action, the time it takes because you are afraid you will miss out on other things? What do they call that, FOMO, Fear Of Missing Out?

Are you afraid to begin because you don’t know HOW to do it? The dreaded HOWs, or falling down the HOW hole. What to do?

Or maybe you are afraid it will not be as good as you think it will be, want it to be. If you don’t complete the project you didn’t fail, you just didn’t do it. “Until one is committed, there is hesitancy...”

Any of this sound familiar? Remember, no failure, just feedback.

Commitment: The Oxford Dictionary says the following: [Retrieved from the following link 04/22/2022]

<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/commitment>

. . . a promise to do something or to behave in a particular way; a promise to support somebody/something; the fact of committing yourself

Values and Goals

Values were discussed in Chapter 2. If your core and essential values do not match up with your goal, it is difficult to sustain commitment.

When talking with someone who says they want coaching to reach a goal, create the life they dream of, something they have had in mind for years, I ask this simple question:

On a scale of 1 to 10, what is your commitment to this “goal”? If they are not an immediate 9 or 10, we then have a discussion.

Why is this goal important? Is it something your parents told you is important? ... your friends are all doing it? ...it is somehow something that is expected of you by other people, society etc?

What will it give you to accomplish this goal? ...materially, emotionally? Imagine that it is a year from now and you have accomplished what you say you want to accomplish.

What does that look like, what does that feel like, who are the people now in your life? What can you do now that you could not do before?

Imagine five years from now. What has your first accomplishment allowed you to build, access, create?

- What is so important, **to you**, about this dream you have?
- When you reach the goal, materialize the dream, who will you be?
- What will your life be like?
- When you hold the image of this future life in mind, is this something you can be 100% committed to right now, in the present moment?

If you did not take time to do the Values Exercise in chapter 2, do so now, or sit with a coach, a counselor, or a friend who has access to a values exercise.

Find the top 5 to 10 values or categories of values that are true for you. How does the accomplishment of this goal support them?

If you are going for another degree or certificate and finding it hard to focus or stay interested in what is required to complete the course work, then why are you doing that?

Is it a legal requirement that allows you to do what you love and make money at it, like counseling or construction? Then that may require a new approach, a new mindset for looking at the course work. Maybe a tutor would help if there is difficulty, maybe there is a lack of learning foundation, that makes it harder to understand the curriculum.

If you are just taking courses, getting certificates, and degrees because of feeling like you are not enough – smart, degreed, experienced... simply not enough ---

STOP IT!

Do an honest evaluation of

- what you know,
- what you have experienced,
- who you are,
- the desires you have regarding your big goal
- Which of your values are supported by your big goal.
- Look for your strengths.

Coaching may help you gain clarity and move forward, or you could find a mentor, someone who has already walked the path you say you want to walk.

Then, once the commitment is there, ACTION is needed. To keep one in motion and moving forward, the word accountability comes up. I like to call it Compassionate Self-Accountability.

First, I will speak personally here, in the past, when I have been working toward something difficult, well let's use a "diet", healthy lifestyle change – well a DIET and I have not stuck to it, I have found myself looking in the mirror, beating myself up. There is one time in particular that I remember.

Words like stupid, incompetent, fat, lazy, ugly came up. Then there were the comments like, you'll never, can't, weak-willed, etc, some **really** ugly stuff.

Would YOU ever say things like that to your best friend? Ok, me neither, but there I was saying them to the only person in the world who has been with me since birth and is assured to be with me until I die.

YIKES! Now what do you think happened when I talked to myself like that? Well, I can tell you, it was not good – in any aspect of my life, but particularly not in becoming healthier, especially not eating right the rest of the day. After giving myself a dose of cortisol I really needed a hit of dopamine that comes with eating some "junk" food – sugar, fat... And of course I had already "messed up" my goal for the day, so what the heck, why did I even need to pretend I could change.

*Who has been with you since you were born, will be with you until you die? Who has been there with you no matter what? ...Ups, Downs, Success, Failure? Wouldn't you say the person who has stuck with, you no matter what, could be your BEST friend? YES, YES, YES!!!!
THAT is the person in the mirror!!! Treat that person like the best friend in the world. Love, Nurture, be kind to and encourage that person in the Mirror.*

While that was enough of a problem in itself, the discouragement was bleeding over into other parts of my life. Ever had the "won't work, so why even try" kind of day? Between the mental/ verbal abuse why would I even think I could do anything successfully. Unhealthy thinking and behavior, leading to more unhealthy behavior and lack of focus. Lack of focus on my strengths and what I liked in my life, what I had to be grateful for.

In the last part of Chapter 4 we talked about RAS, [Reticular Activating System]. You saw how our focus programs that part of your brain to find more of what we are focusing on. Uh Huh. You guessed it, all day, I kept finding more and more wrong in my life – 'cause I told my brain THAT was what was important to me, what was wrong.

That day is the kind of experience that led to what I call Compassionate Self-Accountability in my life and coaching practice. As I began consciously practicing the art of seeing the person in the mirror as my best friend, treating her with kindness, brainstorming better ways of accomplishing things, it has become much easier to find the learning in experiences and seeing what there is to be grateful for. That has led to more days that are filled with creativity and seeing opportunities available for good.

What I have found is that I am never going to be perfect at anything I do, and particularly not when I am just beginning to choose, practice new habits, new healthy habits. Also, when I practice the compassion for myself, that I have for my friends who I believe in and want to see accomplish their dreams and goals, I am much more successful at something like, say, dieting.

For anything, I have found, **done is always better than perfect**. It may take a few tries to be “done”, but whatever I am aiming at has a much better chance of being accomplished if I don’t criticize and beat myself up, but see all my results as feedback giving me indications of what I can tweak to be more successful. For healthy eating, that could be only having healthy snacks available, green stuff like celery and colorful crunchy vegetables.

Done is always better than Perfect.

CHAPTER 10 Mindfulness Meditation

This Chapter on Mindfulness Meditation is here, at the end of the book because I find that I MUST remember to practice this when faced with the “unexpected” like not being able to find my first writing of a chapter.

In the past, without a practice, I could spiral down to depression and discouragement, or out into anger – at myself, the universe, circumstances. This reaction would, many times, end with, “What’s the use?” The project would be thrown in the proverbial “closet” or sometimes it would just go straight to the garbage. Can we say Amygdala Hijack? Fight or flight.

I thought I had a file for each chapter of this book. I thought I was ready for a first printing. Low and behold I was not able to find the Mindful Meditation chapter! Yikes!

Double YIKES!!!

Breathe 2, 3, 4, 5, hold 2,3,4,5.

Release slowly, 2, 3, 4, 5 consciously drop the shoulders and Again. Breathe, Release and Relax. OK, you got this. You know where all the resource files are, you KNOW what you want to say – Breathe. This will be even better than the original!

What is Mindful Meditation?

That is a good question.

The breathing and self-talk described above is, for me, a form of mindful meditation. It allowed me to relax my mind and body. Did you see the mindset change at the end of the practice? “This will be even better than the original.”

In the article “*Meditation: A Powerful Relaxation Technique & Force For Change*” that Hilary Stokes Ph.D. and Kim Ward Ph.D. posted, February 18, 2010 at <https://www.authenticityassociates.com/meditation-a-powerful-relaxation-technique-force-for-change/> says the following:

“Technically speaking, there is nothing magical or mystical about meditation. Meditation is an increased concentration and awareness; a process to **live in the present moment** to produce and enjoy a tranquil state of mind. It is about paying attention, in the only time we have, the Now. **Living in the present moment** allows you to release regrets from the past and worries about the future. Meditation is the oldest recognized **relaxation technique** known.”

Meditation can lend clarity and creativity to your day as you clear away the mental dust and allow yourself to be in the moment. Some of my best solutions and ideas rise up right after, or during a meditation session.

Occasionally I find my way clear to go to a nearby spa with a meditation room and practice mindful breathing. As I relax and focus on my breath, it is interesting how answers, solutions to something I have been working on, just come up. I have learned to take a pen and small pad so I can jot down those ideas and go back into a relaxed state without worrying that I have to leave right away and take action lest I forget the inspiration.

There is a mountain of evidence for the physiologic effects of meditation on the brain and body. If you are interested in learning more about the statements I make in here in Chapter 10... and just more in general, look at the resources at the end of this chapter.

They include:

- Evidence, including various study results and conclusions.
- Links to other simple meditation methods
- Links to other meditation resources so you can find out what works best for you. And more!

Regular meditation has a measurable physical effect on different parts of the brain. Meditation thickens the prefrontal cortex, increasing intelligence. The thickness of that area of the brain determines processing power.

The hippocampus shrinks in people with major depressive disorder (MDD). Meditation increases the size of the hippocampus dissipating depression.

It increases “hippocampal cortical thickness”. This is the learning and memory center. **Can we say neuroplasticity?**

Meditation shrinks the amygdala, which is our flight or fight control center. Within 8 weeks of meditation practice people have effectively decreased excess electrical activity in the amygdala and reported less anxiety, worry and fear. This may be why it is helpful to people with PTSD.

“If you want to reduce the stress in your life, then be aware of how much you tend to take personally.”
Joh Kabat-Zinn, Mindfulness expert

Meditation cools the parietal lobes increasing our feelings of belonging

Meditation strengthens the “corpus callosum”, the connection between the left and right hemisphere of the brain. This balances the brain/ harmonizing the both

hemisphere. This allows people to focus, have deeper thoughts, allows super creativity, enhanced memory, and clearer thinking,

Meditation lights up the Anterior insula, the brain's center for compassion and kindness

Within 6 weeks meditation can Increase the internal consistency of the temporoparietal junction (TPJ) – the Brain's Emotional Quotient Center.
Why do we care?

We care because our Emotional Quotient (EQ) is more important than IQ, especially when working with a team. If someone can work with people, has a high EQ and has an “average” IQ, she will be much more likely to be successful than someone who is a genius, but misses all the social-emotional cues that are needed to have good cooperation and collaboration with a team.

Just practicing mindful breathing exercises can lower your blood pressure

And then there is SLEEP

Suffering from insomnia? Meditation builds the Sleep centered “Pons” – again through the magic of neuroplasticity, the ability of the brain to change, practicing meditation on a regular basis can give you relief.

All of these assertions are backed up by science, studies, papers [*see all the references at the end of the chapter and end of the book*], history... but what is important is that you can prove to yourself that these strategies and techniques work.

When I first heard of meditation and went to a class, the leader struck a chime and we were told to follow the sound until it disappeared, then sit in silence for 15 minutes. I do remember thinking “I can't sit still THAT long.” “I can't”, *there is that disempowering word again*, “clear my mind of thoughts. They keep coming up, I have to... No time...”

I also remember feeling more anxiety by the end of that L-O-N-G 15 minutes of “trying” to sit still and not think, than when we entered the classroom.

During the past decades since my first “meditation” experience, I have become familiar with “Mindful” meditations. I do not claim to be an “expert” on meditating, but I will share some things that work for me and resources that will allow you to learn more. What is important is to find what you can do, what works for you. If we are at a point where something seems complicated, takes too much time, too much trouble, feel more anxious after the experience than before, we will not do it and we will miss out on all the benefits.

I have found what works for me and am finding success increasing my time to do different meditations. Although listening to a chime being struck and following that sound until it disappears, then sitting in silence for a few minutes is easier now, I still prefer having something to focus on, to occupy my mind in the here and now. Guided meditations keep me from going down rabbit holes to worry, what ifs, whys and hows.

Quick Mindful Meditation Exercises

Breathing Meditations

Note: There are multiple ways of doing Breathing meditations. If you want to experiment with others, search “mindful meditation breathing practices”. When I did the search, I found short videos, as well as articles and research.

Remember, you can do any of these suggested Mindful Meditation practices to self-calm, refocus, or just physically relax. The meditations you choose to practice depend on what works for you and the “Now” you are in. Explore, be curious, enjoy!!! You can’t do it wrong, because the right way to do them is the way that works for you.

Just Breathe

What I have discovered is key to mindful meditations, for myself, is “Focus”. After all, being mindful means being present in the NOW.

When you are “having a moment” – you **know** what I mean! You love that person in front of you but, at the moment, you want to pinch their head off, or it’s the person in the office, or not even a person, it could be a situation. Maybe you are trying to do too many things at once, so you can get out the door to an appointment, and CRASH, your cup of coffee is in the middle of the kitchen floor, giving you yet another thing to do.

Take 1 to 5 minutes using this exercise to refocus and start fresh.

- Breathe normally
- Place your attention, your Focus, on each breath
- Feel it coming in through your nostrils
- Going up through your sinuses
- Down the throat into the lungs
- Consciously, gently breathe out through your mouth
- You can notice your tongue dropping down and
- You feel your warm breath pass your tongue and your lips
- After a couple of breaths, you begin to notice the lessening of the tension in your shoulders
- Your shoulders drop down just a fraction as they begin to relax
- Continue for as long as you need

Then, to shift your perspective, ever so gently:

- Think of something you could be grateful for in this situation.

If the tension is coming through an interaction with another person, what about this person can you be grateful for or appreciate? Failing that, in the moment, think of something that you ARE grateful for in your life – the flowers on your dining room table, your grandchildren, the new comfortable chair for your office – something that is real to you. ...and continue to BREATHE.

Eight Four Eight by Five

Ok, honestly, you can experiment with this and substitute any set of numbers that work for you.

This is one of my favorites. It is helpful for me when I realize I have been sitting at the computer focused on the screen and in one position for way longer than anyone should be. That's when I get up and walk around, counting, Breathing, waving my arms backwards and forward, like I am a bird about to take off, and rotating them to loosen up those arm and shoulder muscles. You can do it walking around, standing, or seated; with eyes wide open, or closed.

- Breathe in for a slow count of 8
- Hold for a count of 4
- Exhale for a slow count of 8
- Repeat 5 times

The same as in **Just Breathe**, you will:

- Place your attention, your Focus on each breath
- As you breathe in counting to 8, feel the breath coming in through your nostrils
- Going up through your sinuses
- Down the throat into the lungs
- Hold for a count of 4
- Consciously, gently breathe out through your mouth to a count of 8
- You can notice your tongue dropping down and
- You feel your warm breath pass your tongue and your lips
- After a couple of breaths, you begin to notice the lessening of the tension in your shoulders
- Your shoulders drop down just a fraction as they begin to relax
- Continue for as long as you need
- Then to shift your perspective, ever so gently
- Think of one or more things you could be grateful for. You may even want to pull out your journal and make a list of things you are grateful for.

If you have decided to create a regular mindful meditation practice and would like to gently increase your practice time, here is a suggestion.

Begin with one of these breathing practices outlined here, then combine them by setting a timer or stopwatch to do each one for one minute alternating and gradually increase your practice, by one minute at a time. You can do it the way that works for you. If you want to have a 16 minute practice, you could alternate practices, doing each meditation four minutes.

For me, my mindful practice means focusing and asking myself the questions:
What is in front of me NOW?
What sensations am I experiencing NOW?
What am I seeing NOW?
What am I hearing NOW?

These questions are perfect for doing a Walking Meditation to dust off my thoughts and refocus my mind as I allow my brain to work in the background on the things I have told it are important (through the projects I am focusing on, my deliberate affirmations and visioning tools, like a vision board).

Another reason mindfulness exercises work for restoring clarity of thought and greater calm, aside from the physiologic action and reaction from breathing deeply, is the same reason that switch tasking [remember, there is no such as multi-tasking] is **ineffective**. Your brain cannot think two things at the same time.

When we focus on what we CHOOSE to focus on, and keep bringing our attention back to that, we can redirect our brain and help the amygdala calm down. This can allow us to get out of that fight or flight feeling and to think more clearly about a situation. Also, keep in mind, as you strengthen your practice, you are SHRINKING the amygdala, again, that may be why people are finding that mindful practices help with PTSD.

[See https://www.ptsd.va.gov/gethelp/mindfulness_tx.asp or do a search on “Mindfulness Practice in the Treatment of Traumatic Stress”]

Please be mindful of your surroundings, when you will be closing your eyes for any exercise, do so in a safe environment.

Walking Meditation **[Focusing]**

This exercise can be done inside or outside. Although I find it works best when I actually walk, you can do the practice sitting in one place if you are stuck, like at a wedding, funeral, car trip, in an airplane... Again, this exercise is just focusing on what is in front of you NOW.

Remember the 4 questions from above? ...and you can make up more of your own questions.

1. What is in front of me NOW?
2. What sensations am I experiencing NOW? Touch, Taste, Smell.
3. What am I seeing NOW?
4. What am I hearing NOW?

First, if you are stuck in one place, and you are not the driver or pilot, you can begin by closing your eyes.

- In your thoughts, list what you remember seeing around you, –
- Listen, each of the noises you are hearing [*wind, voices, air conditioning...*],
- Touch your clothing, do you remember what you are wearing? Touch the item you are sitting on, what material is the seat made of? ...Your arm rest?... Things that are around you? Are there vibrations or bumps in your ride?
- What do you smell? [*Someone's perfume, soap, smoke, fresh mowed lawn, flowers...*]
- What can you hear? [*The hum of the engine, someone else talking, the wind, rain...*]
- Turn your attention to your mouth, are you tasting anything, maybe you had a mint and you can still taste a little of that.
- Now, with your eyes open see what is directly in front of you. The windshield, the seat in front of you, a book. What is directly in front of you? Then begin to look around. Your left, your right, look behind you. Are there physical items, people? What do you notice now, that you did not see previously?
- If you have a piece of chocolate or some little treat in your pocket or purse, find it, take a very small bite, not even a bite, just enough to get a small amount of the item on a tooth or on your tongue. Explore the taste, the subtle flavors. What can you identify? ...a spice, vanilla, a nutty flavor or something else?

When you do this exercise, notice if there were any surprises. Write, or create a voice recording, to explore what you noticed.

Now for this exercise done walking. Depending on the area you plan to cover in your meditation, you may want to begin with your eyes closed, do all of the sensing on the first part of your walk, for example, one side of your house, then begin again with your eyes closed, standing at the corner for the next side of the house. Be mindful of where you are, who, and what is in your area.

Note: This is not a “search and find something” mission, it is a meditation, to notice what is around you that you may not have noticed before. This is a practice in focusing, that can allow your feelings and thoughts to calm as you examine things you see on your journey.

For EXAMPLE, a leaf.

- What color is it?
- What shape?
- Does it look different on the back than on the front?
- Are there veins of a darker or lighter color running through the leaf?
- Is it as large as your hand, or as small as your pinkie finger?
- Is it attached to a plant, or did you find it laying on the ground?

- If you see the plant that has leaves like the one you are looking at, does it have flowers, fruit ?

If you are doing this with children or teenagers, you may want to check and see if they understand the purpose of the exercise.

This is an EXAMPLE of a walking meditation.

This is to observe what is NOW, not to judge. Direct my thoughts to what is in front of me rather than in my head.

I cross the living room noticing the green and beige pattern of leaves and ferns on the area rug. Hmm, look at all those heart shapes within the leaves. I open the white front door, briefly pausing to imagine what it will look like when I paint the outside a Chinese red and smile with pleasure seeing that bright red door in my mind's eye. *[To strictly stay in the NOW, I suppose I would just see what is there without judgement, however I have incorporated some of the small items that are on my vision board to speed up the manifestation. ...and it makes me happy!]*

As I observe without judgement, the current screen and glass door, I am grateful the glass stays in place. *[It is an old door with one glass pane which, when raised, can no longer be trusted to stay in place if the door is opened and closed.]*

In my imagination, I see the NEW white framed, double-pane screened glass door, with a functioning window that can be raised to let in the breeze when we have days there is no need for heating or AC, lowered to keep the heat/ cold out, and let light in when we want to have the solid door open and still maintain the house temperature.

I gently close the door and allow my eyes to wander to the orchids blooming in front of the porch, one has large purple flowers, another large white ones with purple centers. They are so beautiful today!

I take a slow, focused look around. Close my eyes. With my eyes closed, look for 12 items I had noticed. I come up with seven and am fine with that, gently reminding myself to just notice. *[See, always talking to myself but I choose the thought rather than reacting with criticism.]*

Now I am listening. I hear a cardinal in the yard, there is a golf cart going by on the street in front of the house. The breeze caresses my skin and then there is the sound leaves make when a breeze touches them.

There is also the sound of leaves, from the oak tree in the side yard, as they hit the roof. I hear a larger vehicle, it is on the other side of the neighbor's fence, my guess is. one of their large trucks. A sound of a siren in the distance.

I open my eyes and proceed. After the rains, the yard is a beautiful green,

There are bright yellow Dandelions in part of it. No poisons here! I'm just happy to see green and even welcome the flowers that others call weeds. So far, the ones I have taken the time to identify are all edibles or medicinal or both.

Dandelions are both. All the parts of a Dandelion are usable from the blossom (edible), leaves (edible and with medicinal properties) to the root (edible with medicinal properties and can be used as a coffee substitute if roasted and ground – yummy mellow flavor). *[These thoughts come up and I bring my focus back to what I am experiencing in the present.]*

I notice there is an abundance of little purple flowers at the edge of the yard by the sidewalk. The pretty white daisy-like flowers are getting tall. Beautiful peace lily, I see 12 blossoms today.

I smell the gardenia blossoms before I see it. There are one, two, three...., there are 11 blossoms on the gardenia, and more buds ready to burst open. .

Upon examination, the tiny purple flowers by the sidewalk have 5 petals and are about 0.5" across, pretty.

Ok, I go further and focus on each little thing I see, replacing any drifting worry thoughts about completing the book, writing up curriculum, etc. etc. with thoughts of the now and what is right in front of me, what I am seeing, touching, hearing, feeling, smelling. The more I practice, the easier it gets to return to center and gain perspective.

Guided Meditation

The last meditation I will discuss is the Guided Meditation. Beginning with a Body Scan focusing on feeling the muscles relax throughout the body is always effective. Some people begin with the head, some with the feet.

Until you focus your attention to your scalp and relax those muscles there, you may not even think of having muscles that could be tense on your scalp.

The scan progresses from the scalp down the body to the feet and toes. You can use it as a short relaxation practice or schedule more time and take a longer journey. Where you travel is only limited by your imagination and directed by what the meditation purpose is. Three of the journeys I like are:

- Walking on a beach
- Through a forest path to a retreat
- Visiting the library

Sometimes the purpose may be to allow the subconscious to bring out a treasure or message about something individuals may be looking for clarity on. It could be a new idea for a project. The end results are as varied as people participating.

You will find links to Guided Meditations at the end of the chapter so you can sample different types, led by different individuals. This will enable you to see if these are helpful to you and how you like them presented. *[If you are reading a hard copy, you can do an internet search of the title plus the word youtube. To find the video.]*

Such simple yet powerful exercises.

Find what works for you and SCHEDULE it. For me, if it is not on the schedule it doesn't get done. Self-care is essential for us to fully accomplish our dreams and goals --- and then enjoy them.

We have now completed all 10 Chapters of the book. At the end of this chapter you will find more references and resources than in most of the other chapters. Enjoy, and thank you for making it to the end. Share the book, share the information and resources. Keep learning, look for more resources on your own and check out my website as it grows and new events are announced. Namaste.

VIDEOS AND ARTICLES

GUIDED MEDITATIONS TO SAMPLE – *there is a variety of styles offered in these videos. If you do not like the first ones you choose, try others until you find the style of guided meditation you like. Some are short, 2 or 3 minutes, some are longer, up to 33 minutes. Be curious, experiment to see what works for you.*

Mindful Breathing Exercise – Every Mind Matters 2 Min 21 sec. [2:12 Min]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfDTp2GogaQ>

Short Mindful Breathing exercise. Goal: Feel more calm and present.

Breath -- five minutes can change your life | Stacey Schuerman

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFcQpNr_KA4

TEDxChapmanU

9 min

Stacey Schuerman leads us through an exercise designed to reset, renew, and rejuvenate our energy. Join her as she teaches us about breathing and calming the mind.

Mindful Breathing: Practicing self-care

3 Min

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLkoZtiXeqQ&t=24s>

Mar 20, 2020 Smitha Mallaiah, senior mind/body intervention specialist in Integrative Medicine at MD Anderson Cancer Center, guides listeners through a short exercise in mindful breathing. Deep breathing can help increase muscle relaxation and improve sleep and overall mental health and well-being.

A 6-Minute Breathing Meditation To Cultivate Mindfulness

6 min

<https://www.mindful.org/a-five-minute-breathing-meditation/>

“The most basic way to do **mindful breathing** is simply to focus your attention on your **breath**, the inhale and exhale.”

This article teaching how to do a 6 minute meditation is by Diana Winston, February 26, 2016 includes a link on the page to an audio file. Scroll down to find the Audio.

Daily Calm | 10 Minute Mindfulness Meditation | Letting Go

10 Min

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syx3a1_LeFo

Tamara Levitt guides this 10 minute Daily Calm mindfulness meditation on letting go. **The Daily Calm** is a unique mix of meditation and inspiration everyday. A daily meditation practice helps with lessening anxiety, worry and stress, while enhancing self-esteem and self-acceptance. It also improves resilience against uncertainty and adversity.

Make sure you have your volume up loud enough to hear the sound of the waves. Very calming, like being at the beach listening to the waves with a good friend.

15 Minute Guided Meditation To Find Peace In Uncertain Times 15 Min
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W19PdsIW7iw>

This short guided 15 minute meditation for anxiety and stress is the perfect way to welcome peace, balance, and joy into your life especially during uncertain times like the current COVID19 pandemic. ... It is time to let go of the negativity, stress, anxiety....whatever is holding you back in your life.

Brief Mindful Breathing for Anxiety 4:12 Min
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tc0oVEIWR5I>

Christiane Wolf, MD, PhD, Mindfulness and Insight Meditation Teacher at Insight LA, Los Angeles - Dr. Wolf is a physician turned mindfulness and insight meditation teacher. She is the co-author of "A Clinician's Guide To Teaching Mindfulness" and together with her co-author Dr. Greg Serpa leads the national Mindfulness Facilitator Training for Clinicians at the VA (US Department of Veteran Affairs).

A Guided Meditation = Receive Answers from Your Higher-Self 20 Min
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=huru_90omHM

Gentle guidance to connect with your inner-wisdom... Keep an open mind that you will receive an answer to a question; a new understanding; or a useful action to take! :-)

Guided Meditation For Clarity And Guidance 11:11 Min
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36tLNjcyek>

Discover the healing power of Mother Nature as I take you through a guided meditation to unlock your divine inbox which is full of guidance and clarity. Enjoy

Guided Meditation to Find Direction and Receive a Key Message / Insight From Your Shamanic Guide 24 Min
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRz5TENIEa4>

This meditation is based on the use of the 4 directions: north, south, east and west, to connect more deeply to the true you, to release what needs to go, to find your direction and new beginnings, and to connect to your own inner north star. All of this is with the guidance of a shaman who at the end has a gift, an insight about you just for you.

Meet Your Spirit Guides In The Crystal Cave | Powerful Guided Meditation Connect To Your Soul Group. 33 Min
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jd7Ha9F6vBM>

Powerful!! Guided meditation to help you to experience your spirit guides and find deep connection, inspiration and revelation.

Guided Imagery Meditation: The Beach 10 Min
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZeEPo8w-n8>

Use this guided imagery meditation that incorporates breathing and visualization to focus on your breathing, daydream a bit, bring your attention to something relaxing, decrease stress, and bring calm to your day. Enjoy!

Beach Relaxation Guided Meditation on the Beach | Guided Visualization

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lq3e0sb9Vy0>

Relaxing walk on the beach.

25 Min

15 Minute Guided Imagery Meditation Exercise | City of Hope

15 Min

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcdbCphVa1g>

Guided imagery meditation exercises help reduce anxiety, stress, fatigue, restlessness, difficulty sleeping and physical discomfort.

8 Minute Mountain Meditation | Guided Imagery

8 Min

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gW5CDMnLMMg>

Lee Ann Annotti, PhD, narrates this mindfulness exercise adapted from Jon Kabat-Zinn's "Mountain Meditation." Dr. Annotti specializes in evaluating developmental disabilities such as autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, learning disabilities and intellectual disabilities. She has written a series of blogs to provide education for parents with special needs children.

Waterfall Meditation - Guided Imagery to Refresh Yourself

3:21 Min

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBYYFbStfHM>

Unwind and relax with this visualisation: Imagine standing under a waterfall. Feel the cool water cascade over you, flowing from the top of your head, over your shoulders, arms and out through the palms of your hands, down your body, legs and feet and into the earth. Let the water wash away all the tension from your mind and body.

Akashic Records Guided Meditation | How to Access the Book of Life | Past Life

29 Min

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_rx4pGsf8E

Good for getting in touch with your subconscious

VIDEOS & WRITTEN MORE ABOUT MINDFULNESS & MEDITATION

Impact Theory with Tom Bilyeu offers hundreds of videos with important information on wellness and other continued learning. You may want to follow up on some of the people he has interviewed, their books, classes, and videos. We will begin this section with one of his amazing interviews.

<https://www.youtube.com/c/TomBilyeu/videos>

This site gives you videos, articles and other resources

<https://positivepsychology.com/mindful-breathing/>

Practicing **mindful breathing** is gently focusing attention on the **breath**. You begin noticing the **breath** coming in...

Scroll to the bottom for more articles and videos. Downloaded May 4, 2022

Discover the Trifecta of Mindfulness, Meditation and Manifesting | Emily Fletcher on Health Theory **54 Min**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7H5eDS05MAk>

Emily Fletcher is the leading expert in meditation for high performance and the founder of Ziva, where she helps people perform at the top of their game with meditation and mindfulness techniques. In this episode, she talks about how meditation can inform personal and professional development.

How Meditation Can Reshape Our Brains: Sara Lazar at TEDxCambridge 2011 **8 Min**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8rRzTtP7Tc>

Neuroscientist Sara Lazar's amazing brain scans show meditation can actually change the size of key regions of our brain, improving our memory and making us more empathetic, compassionate, and resilient under stress. This engaging Ted Talk highlights many of the ways Mindful Meditation can benefit an individual by actually changing the brain.

Mindfulness and Benefits of Mindfulness Meditation – Panel discussion

If you want to Nerd Out on [Mindfulness and the brain](#) here is a full hour and a quarter of discussion between 2 neuroscientists and Jon Kabat-Zinn. Several of the following links are from a larger panel discussion on MINDFULNESS

From NourFoundation – the link to the entire discussion is

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5TeWvf-nfpA> **1 Hr 14 Min**

- Neuroscientists Richard Davidson and Amishi Jha join clinical mindfulness expert Jon Kabat-Zinn to explore the role of consciousness in mental and physical health, how we can train the mind to become more flexible and adaptable, and what cutting-edge neuroscience is revealing about the transformation of consciousness through mindfulness and contemplative practice. The event was held Wednesday, February 6, 2013 by The New York Academy of Sciences

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MINDFULNESS MEDITATION - More

- This event is part of The Emerging Science of Consciousness Series, bringing together leading experts from various fields to discuss how the latest research is challenging our understanding of the very nature and function of consciousness in our daily lives.

“If you want to reduce the stress in your life, then be aware of how much you tend to take personally.”
Jon Kabat-Zinn, Mindfulness expert

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7CBfCW67xT8>

How mindfulness changes the emotional life of our brains | Richard J. Davidson | TEDxSanFrancisco **17:52 Min**

Dec 12, 2019 "Why is it that some people are more vulnerable to life's slings and arrows and others more resilient?" In this eye-opening talk, Richard Davidson discusses how mindfulness can improve well-being and outlines strategies to boost four components of a healthy mind: awareness, connection, insight, and purpose.

Written Resource, online

Meditate Your Way to a Younger Brain (2021, Jan 18). Meditate Your Way to a Younger Brain, 7 Minute Read. Downloaded 5/11/2022 from:

<https://www.canyonranch.com/well-stated/post/meditate-your-way-to-a-younger-brain/>

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[PDF - <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s10902-006-9042-1.pdf> downloaded 4/11/22]

RESOURCES

[In case you are reading a hard copy of the book and missed it at the beginning, here is a QR code that will allow you to access all the links in the book electronically.]



ANXIETY

<https://www.youtube.com/c/melrobbins/videos>

<https://www.melrobbins.com>

While Mel may not be the Queen of Anxiety, she has dealt with and found ways to thrive while overcoming challenges of anxiety and helping others learn strategies to do the same for greater success in their lives. She is entertaining and insightful.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtc1iWm_KCI

Stanford Psychologist Reveals One Change That Will Dramatically Improve Your Life | Kelly McGonigal

Kelly McGonigal has dedicated her career to using neuroscience and psychology to develop methods of improving mental well-being. And she is now at the forefront of researchers and advocates who continue to explore the connection between mind and body. On this episode of Impact Theory with Tom Bilyeu, Dr. Kelly McGonigal explains how to change your emotional states through physical movement, and also explains why movement has such a strong effect on the brain. She also describes ways to become more compassionate, shares the story of her own struggles with chronic pain, and gives surprising insights into why it's not always good to try to control your inner experiences.

https://www.ted.com/talks/kelly_mcgonigal_how_to_make_stress_your_friend?language=am

How to make stress your friend

Stress. It makes your heart pound, your breathing quicken and your forehead sweat. But while stress has been made into a public health enemy, new research suggests that stress may only be bad for you if you believe that to be the case. Psychologist Kelly McGonigal urges us to see stress as a positive, and introduces us to an unsung mechanism for stress reduction: reaching out to others.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

<http://www.shareguide.com/Goleman.html>

Interview with Daniel Goleman

The author of *Emotional Intelligence* talks about emotional health, spirituality, and human potential

Daniel Goleman, PhD., has covered the behavioral and brain sciences for the *New York Times* and his articles appear throughout the world in syndication. His groundbreaking book, *Emotional Intelligence*, has sold millions of copies around the world, and the term EQ has become part of accepted vernacular. Dr. Goleman has taught at Harvard and was formerly senior editor at *Psychology*

Today. His latest book, *Destructive Emotions: A Scientific Dialogue with the Dalai Lama* was published by Bantam Books in January 2003.

GROWTH MINDSET

Dweck, C. (2008). Mindsets and math/science achievement. Carnegie-IAS Commission on Mathematics and Science Education. Retrieved on 01/04/2021 from [DOCUMENT]

http://www.growthmindsetmaths.com/uploads/2/3/7/7/23776169/mindset_and_math_science_achievement_-_nov_2013.pdf

HABITS

How Long Does it Take to Form a Habit – retrieved 4/16/22:

<https://gainweightjournal.com/how-long-does-it-take-to-form-a-habit/>

This is the link to the abstract for the study **How are habits formed: Modelling habit formation in the real world**, retrieved 4/16/22

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ejsp.674>

James Clear, the author of *Atomic Habits*, also has an article on his website that refers to this same article. As he says whether it takes 50 or 500 days to build that new habit you have to begin with DAY ONE.

<https://jamesclear.com/new-habit>

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-long-does-actually-take-form-new-habit-backed-science-clatici>

Personal Archive of Clatici Victor Gabriel

How Long Does It Actually Take to Form a New Habit? Backed by Science!

Victor Gabriel Clatici

Lally P, van Jaarsveld CHM, Potts HWW, Wardle J. How are habits formed: Modelling habit formation in the real world. *Euro J Soc Psychol* 2010; 40:998-1009. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ejsp.674/abstract>

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Lally, P., Gardner, B. (2013). Promoting habit formation. *Health Psychology Review*, 7(sup1), S137-S158.

JOY/HAPPINESS

You can find more information on the value of Joy / Happiness in your life at the following websites <https://positivepsychology.com/happiness/>

<https://science.howstuffworks.com/life/happiness-project.htm>

<https://gretchenrubin.com/books/the-happiness-project/about-the-book/>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/affects-of-joy>

MEL ROBBINS – 5 SECOND RULE

<https://melrobbins.com/>

Learn about the **5 Second Rule**, the **RAS**, the science and activating your frontal cortex.

Watch her Ted Talk **How to Stop Screwing Yourself**

https://www.ted.com/talks/mel_robbins_how_to_stop_screwing_yourself_over?language=en

<https://melrobbins.com/about/#>

To see more information on Mel Robbins and her story, what she has to offer Click on Videos to watch short clips and longer videos.

Also do a Search of “Mel Robbins videos YouTube” or “Mel Robbins Videos”

Framingham Heart Study

“Dynamic spread of Happiness in a large social network: longitudinal analysis over 20 years in the Framingham Heart Study

This study shows when they looked at “clusters of happy or unhappy people” in a social network the “relationship between people’s happiness extends up to three degrees of separation.” If you are at the center of the network and surrounded by happy people, you are “more likely to become happy in the future”.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/337/bmj.a2338>

BMJ 2008; 337 doi: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.a2338> (Published 05 December 2008) Cite this as: *BMJ* 2008;337:a2338

Average of the Five People We surround ourselves with

David Burkus declares that we are NOT the Average of the Five People we surround ourselves with, but we are more influenced by the NETWORK of people we surround ourselves with.

He says, “Audit the people around you. Make sure that you’re spending time with people who are in line with what you want for your own life (preferably people “better” than you so it raises your average).” He then goes on to point to research that substantiates this assertion. To see his article and resources you can go to this link or just GOOGLE “You’re NOT The Average Of The Five People You Surround Yourself With”

<https://medium.com/the-mission/youre-not-the-average-of-the-five-people-you-surround-yourself-with-f21b817f6e69>

MIND MAP

Websites [Active as of 1/23/2022]

- https://www.jcu.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/115394/Mind-Mapping.pdf PDF of information and instructions from James Cook University in Australia
- <https://www.jcu.edu.au/> Go to the top right corner and put ‘mind map’ in the search. This will turn up more resources and information on mind mapping also James Cook University in Australia
<http://www.jcu.edu.au/office/tld/learningskills/mindmap/index.html>
An excellent university site with clearly set out instructions.
- <http://www.peterussell.com/mindmaps/mindmap.html>
Peter Russell collaborated with Tony Buzan. Peter on mind map training, for more on mindmaps on his site, use the search box in the top right corner to get a list of all the information he has on mindmaps
 - <https://www.peterrussell.com/MindMaps/Advantages.php>
 - <https://www.peterrussell.com/MindMaps/HowTo.php>
 - <https://www.peterrussell.com/MindMaps/Uses.php>
 - <https://www.peterrussell.com/MindMaps/MMSoft.php> list of mind map software
- To find more information “Google”
 - Mind map,
 - Mind Mapping,
 - Tony Buzan
 - visual organization systems,
 - visual task management.
 - Visually organizing your ideas

MINDFULNESS/ MEDITATION

<https://www.authenticityassociates.com/mindfulness-meditations-and-breathing-to-cope-with-covid19/>

Resources

These **Mindfulness Techniques & Strategies** are Great for Overcoming **Anxiety, Stress, Trauma, and Encouraging Healing**

Posted on: May 6th, 2020 by Dr Kim Dr Hil

<https://www.authenticityassociates.com/meditation-a-powerful-relaxation-technique-force-for-change/>

Meditation: **A Powerful Relaxation Technique & Force For Change**

Posted on: February 18th, 2010 by Dr Kim Dr Hil

Breathing Meditation Practice

MULTITASKING

<https://lifeclub.org/books/the-myth-of-multitasking-dave-crenshaw-review-summary>

The Myth of Multitasking Summary and Review by Dave Crenshaw. Crenshaw, D. (2021). The myth of multitasking: How “doing it all” gets nothing done. Mango Media Inc..

6/24/21 – [Active link 01/23/2022]

Downloaded on 6/24/22 from:

<https://lifeclub.org/books/the-myth-of-multitasking-dave-crenshaw-review-summary>

“Our brains are evolving to multitask,” **not!** The illusion of multitasking

Posted on April 10, 2015 by MBSR Mentorship | 15 Comments

By Allan Goldstein

Originally published July 2011 revised April 2015

From <https://ucsdcfm.wordpress.com/2015/04/10/our-brains-are-evolving-to-multitask-not-the-illusion-of-multitasking/> on 6/24/2021

The Myth of Multitasking – YouTube| Dave Crenshaw 20 minutes -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTndWdaBffk>

Dave Crenshaw – YouTube Channel -

<https://www.youtube.com/c/davecrenshaw>

Dave Crenshaw website

<https://davecrenshaw.com/>

NEUROPLASTICITY

<https://www.authenticityassociates.com/2-neuroscience-breakthroughs-lead-to-neural-plasticity/>

Science proves how **your brain can be rewired through neural plasticity**

Posted on: May 31st, 2010 by Dr Kim Dr Hil

<https://www.pnas.org/content/97/8/4398> [Document]

Navigation-related structural change in the hippocampi of taxi drivers

Watch this video for more examples, “**How Things You Do Change Your Brain**” [you can Google the title and choose video]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8XwFahi-qf8>

Even more curious about the practicality of knowledge of Neuro-Plasticity?

Check out this Ted talk <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0td5aw1KXA>

[you can Google “**The Woman Who Changed Her Brain: Barbara Arrowsmith-Young**”] 13:56 Min

<https://www.authenticityassociates.com/neural-plasticity-4-steps-to-change-your-brain/>

Neural Plasticity: 4 Steps to Change Your Brain & Habits

Posted on: June 21st, 2010 by Dr Kim Dr Hil

Neural Plasticity: How to Use Your Mind to Change Your Brain

Some practices listed:

Positive Emotion

Repetition and Practice

Visualization

Meditation

NEUROSCIENCE

<https://www.neuroscientificallychallenged.com/blog/know-your-brain-amygdala>

NEUROSCIENCE MADE SIMPLER

KNOW YOUR BRAIN: AMYGDALA

What is the amygdala and what is its function in the fight or flight response.

<https://www.compatibilitycode.com/book-resources/the-power-of-the-subconscious-mind/>

RETICULAR ACTIVATING SYSTEM

Although there are more technical explanations of the RAS [with links in the back of the book] I like Gary Lockwood’s explanation that as of May 2, 2021, could still be found at this link <http://successnet.org/cms/motivation-inspiration/attention-pleasemay-i-have-your-attention>

STORIES

https://www.ted.com/talks/lori_gottlieb_how_changing_your_story_can_change_your_life?language=en 16:17 Min

How changing your story can change your life

Stories help you make sense of your life -- but when these narratives are incomplete or misleading, they can keep you stuck instead of providing clarity. In an actionable talk, psychotherapist and advice columnist **Lori Gottlieb** shows how to break free from the stories you've been telling yourself by becoming your own editor and rewriting your narrative from a different point of view.

Resources

VISUALIZATION

<https://www.compatibilitycode.com/book-resources/the-power-of-the-subconscious-mind/>

The Power of the Subconscious-mind

For additional on visualization [downloaded 5/6/2021]

VALUES

Values Exercise – Character LAB –

A short 15 minute exercise and a short values list can be found at

<https://characterlab.org/activities/my-values/>

There is a link on the page to download a pdf of the exercise and list.

To view all **playbooks provided by the Character LAB** go to

<https://characterlab.org/playbooks/> For more information, scroll down on each page you go to and look for the endnotes.

There are **online values assessments**, such as:

VIA <https://www.viacharacter.org/> ,

Personal Value Assessment <https://www.valuescentre.com/tools-assessments/pva/>

Recognizing the meanings of these things can help you identify your values. Looking at a list of values, such as those in Appendix 1, may be helpful in jogging your memory for answers to questions in the Values exercise. You can also GOOGLE “values list”, “core values list” or something similar. Here is a link to an article from www.soulsalt.com that gives another perspective of Values and Beliefs. <https://soulsalt.com/list-of-values-and-beliefs/>

A short 15 minute exercise and a short values list can be found on the Character LAB website at <https://characterlab.org/activities/my-values/>

There is a link on the page to download a pdf of the exercise and list.

To view all playbooks provided by the Character LAB go to

<https://characterlab.org/playbooks/> For more information, scroll down on each page you go to and look for the endnotes.

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Above Links on Values were retrieved 8/7/2021

Links retrieved 11/16/2021

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This page of acknowledgements will be brief and I will miss more people who have had a part in my arriving at the point of creating a book than I will list here.

To my husband Jim Goeke, I am forever grateful you are in my life, mirroring what I need to see and being patient while I am in a creative process... again. Thank you for our conversations that have helped generate and refine ideas in this book.

Keith Roghair, thank you for your friendship for, what is it now? ...over 30 years!!! Thank you for reading, editing, and talking me through some of those run-on sentences. You have always been here, no matter what adventure I have jumped into.

Rosalind Dunlop, one of my best friends forever, thank you for supporting me all these years, coming to my Heal Your Life classes. Thank you for all our discussions, saving the world, for helping me to form my ideas and practices of self-responsibility. For the hours of conversation. Thank you for agreeing to be part of the creative process with me.

Yencris Ortega, another trusted bestie. Thank you for your encouragement, long conversations, brainstorming, class practices and sharing the creative process. Your work with veterans is creative and inspiring. You are truly an example of making a difference in people's lives. Thank you for taking the time to read each paragraph of the book, helping me to clarify some of the ideas where the writing seemed confusing and adding stories.

And another bestie, Carol Witt. Thank you for supporting me in my Heal Your Life work and always including me in your enterprises. You are changing so many people's lives for the better with Young Entrepreneurs Alliance [Y.E.A.]. These entrepreneurial classes, now reaching into Africa, and all the gifts that people from YEA are now offering are changing the world. Thank you for our conversations, technology support, teaching me how to set up the website. Through you, I have met so many truly wonderful people and learned what Community is about. <https://www.yeaentrepreneurshipprogram.com/>

That leads to my gratitude to Isoclair Miller, Isoclair International Coaching Center, LLC, we have been making a difference in each other's lives and supporting each other in our passionate endeavors our class together in 2020, including writing and the Abundance group, sharing your story and things that work in the coaching process, and each of us creating an online Vision Board class. Speaking of which, thank you to Zenith Rootz and Michelle for your support and participation in the Abundance group which gave me courage to publish the first proof of this book so I could have a physical, tangible book in my hands that showed me I'm not just 'talking about' writing my first book. Then to make it to this version.

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Yencris Ortega, another trusted bestie. Thank you for your encouragement, long conversations, brainstorming, class practices and sharing the creative process. Your work with veterans is creative and inspiring. You are truly an example of making a difference in people's lives. Thank you for taking the time to read each paragraph of the book, helping me to clarify some of the ideas where the writing seemed confusing and adding stories.

And another bestie, Carol Witt. Thank you for supporting me in my Heal Your Life work and always including me in your enterprises. You are changing so many people's lives for the better with Young Entrepreneurs Alliance [Y.E.A.]. These entrepreneurial classes, now reaching into Africa, and all the gifts that people from YEA are now offering are changing the world. Thank you for our conversations, technology support, teaching me how to set up the website. Through you, I have met so many truly wonderful people and learned what Community is about. <https://www.yeaentrepreneurshipprogram.com/>

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APPENDIX 1 – List of Values

Acceptance	Common sense	Enjoyment	Humility
Accomplishment	Communication	Enthusiasm	Humor
Accountability	Community	Equality	Imagination
Accuracy	Compassion	Ethical	Improvement
Achievement	Competence	Excellence	Independence
Adaptability	Competency	Experience	Individuality
Adventure	Concentration	Exploration	Influence
Alertness	Confidence	Expressive	Inner Harmony
Altruism	Connection	Fairness	Innovation
Ambition	Consciousness	Faith	Inquisitive
Amusement	Consistency	Fame	Insightful
Assertiveness	Contentment	Family	Inspiring
Attentive	Contribution	Famous	Integrity
Authenticity	Control	Fearless	Intelligence
Authority	Conviction	Feelings	Intensity
Autonomy	Cooperation	Ferocious	Intuitive
Awareness	Courage	Fidelity	Irreverent
Balance	Courtesy	Focus	Joy
Beach	Creation	Foresight	Justice
Beauty	Creativity	Fortitude	Kindness
Boldness	Credibility	Freedom	Knowledge
Bravery	Curiosity	Friendship	Lawful
Brilliance	Decisive	Friendships	Leadership
Calm	Decisiveness	Fun	Learning
Calmness	Dedication	Generosity	Liberty
Candor	Dependability	Genius	Location
Capable	Determination	Giving	Logic
Careful	Development	Goodness	Love
Certainty	Devotion	Grace	Loyalty
Challenge	Dignity	Gratitude	Mastery
Charity	Discipline	Greatness	Maturity
Citizenship	Discovery	Growth	Meaning
City	Drive	Happiness	Meaningful Work
Cleanliness	Effectiveness	Hard work	Moderation
Clear	Efficiency	Harmony	Motivation
Clever	Empathy	Health	Mountains
Climate	Empower	Honesty	Nature
Comfort	Endurance	Honor	Openness
Commitment	Energy	Hope	Optimism

What we Focus on Grows

Order
Organization
Originality
Passion
Patience
Peace
Performance
Persistence
Playfulness
Pleasure
Poise
Popularity
Potential
Power
Present
Productivity
Professionalism
Prosperity
Purpose
Quality
Realistic
Reason
Recognition
Recreation
Reflection

Reflective
Religion
Reputation
Respect
Responsibility
Restraint
Results-oriented
Reverence
Rigor
Risk
Satisfaction
Security
Selfless
Self-reliance
Self-respect
Self-responsibility
Sensitivity
Serenity
Service
Sharing
Significance
Silence
Simplicity
Sincerity

Skill
Skillfulness
Small Town
Smart
Snow
Solitude
Spirit
Spirituality
Spontaneous
Stability
Status
Stewardship
Strength
Structure
Success
Support
Surprise
Sustainability
Talent
Teamwork
Temperance
Thankful
Thorough
Thoughtful
Time in Nature

Timeliness
Tolerance
Toughness
Traditional
Tranquility
Transparency
Trust
Trustworthiness
Trustworthy
Truth
Understanding
Uniqueness
Unity
Valor
Victory
Vigor
Vision
Vitality
Wealth
Welcoming
Winning
Wisdom
Wonder

APPENDIX 2

AFFIRMATIONS

All is well in my world.
I am deserving of a wonderful life.
I am enough.
I am the only one thinking the thoughts in my mind.
I choose joy.
I create my own stories.
I choose to center myself now.
I choose how I use what I learned from this event/ experience.
I choose the meaning I make of this event/ experience.
I now consciously create the life of my dreams!
I am delighted to be using my talents and abilities in my ideal career position!
I am willing to open my arms and claim the wonderful life I deserve.
I greet the morning with joy and enthusiasm.
I am a money magnet! Unexpected income is always coming my way.
All of my needs are met by the Universal abundance of Spirit.
I choose to embrace thoughts of abundance that nurture and support me.
I love money and money loves me
Every cell in my body is alive with health and energy.
My immune system is strong and healthy.
My body has a remarkable capacity for healing.
I love and accept all parts of myself.
I listen closely and open my heart when interacting with others.
I enjoy wonderful associations with positive, uplifting people.
I sleep in peace and wake in joy.
I breathe in and fill my body with trust. I breathe out and let go of my concerns.
I am guided perfectly in any action I need to take now.
I am joyfully trusting the Universe to create the perfect outcome.
I am joyfully and gratefully receiving miracles in my life right now!
Happiness is my natural state of mind.
I enjoy being cheerful and happy every day.
My life is filled with pure joy and happiness every day.
I'm a clear-headed, positive thinker.
I find solutions to problems quickly and easily.
Doing my best always gives me peace of mind.
It's easy for me to let go of negative emotions and happily move forward.
I can quickly find something to like about everyone I meet.
I see all my daily challenges as well within my capabilities.
Feeling happy and content come naturally to me.
I work through every struggle with the faith that everything will work out for me.
As time goes on, I get greater and greater enjoyment out of life.
I take every challenge I face in stride.
I always keep my cool in all situations.
I am always calm and happy.

I always have time for a good laugh.
I've released all negative emotional bondage that anyone or anything ever had on me.
I accept and am grateful for all the blessings I have been given.
I'm great at finding the silver lining in every dark cloud.
I allow other people to be responsible for themselves.
I always have enough time to acknowledge and appreciate all that's good in my life.
I learn important life lessons from every misfortune.
I base my value on what is in my heart, not what is in my wallet.
In spite of my faults, I am happy to be me.
Happiness and I are one.
People are eager to become my true friend.
No matter how much chaos there may be around me, my thoughts are peaceful and calm.
I always have time to enjoy the here and now.
Life isn't perfect, and that's perfectly alright with me.
I accept others even if they are different from me.
I am a fun-loving person.
Making my own mistakes has taught me how important it is to forgive others for theirs.
I am always satisfied with doing my best.
I am calm and at ease no matter where I am and no matter what I'm doing.
I love and accept myself and others
I appreciate even the littlest kindnesses that other people do.
I am grateful for all my opportunities.
I am open to doing new and different things that give me pleasure.
Failure is only feedback, I am always learning.
I believe that everything I do, I can do better with a smile.
I am optimistic about my promising future.
I am grateful for every good thing in my life.
I am the master of my emotions.
I control my thoughts and feelings.
Like me, everyone is doing the best they can in this moment.

These “affirmations” are only suggestions to give you an idea of how to craft your own for creating the life you choose to live. Create new empowering thoughts to replace those that are not so much. Some you may have been unconsciously repeating multiple times a day for years. Have fun, do a gratitude journal to see how many things you can find every day to be grateful for.

Running water, hot water, a toilet that flushes the waste away, people who bring packages and mail to your house, people who sewed the garments you wear, those who created the fabric of what you wear and other things around the house, the merchants and people who grow the food you eat. What are YOU grateful for?