



how to be
happier

TEXT



Ken Johnston

How To Be Happier: Text

www.HowToBeHappier.com

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(Nobody likes to read this kind of stuff. We wish we didn't have to do it.)

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You will notice a small symbol throughout the book that you may recognize as the symbol for infinity (∞). It has taken on a new context for this study. It means "unlimited happiness."

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INTRODUCTION

Psychological principles that are well established in 2005 include the following.

Happiness

There is a great deal of evidence and unbiased research that supports the conclusion that "Happiness" is based on four perceptions, assessments, and judgments. A person will think their life is happy if they:

1. Have frequent strongly felt and long-lasting good feelings
2. Have infrequent and mild bad feelings of short duration.
3. Have a positive assessment of how happy and fulfilling life has been
4. Feel optimistic about life in the future.

Self-talk

Each person creates his or her own experience of the world, events, and people in his or her life, by the unique thoughts and assessments the person uses. Each person has a choice of seeing the world, events, and people in a positive way or a negative way, or anything in between. Experience of life depends on a person's thoughts and assessments.

If you are naturally a positive, optimistic person, who is fulfilled by what you are doing, you are having a happy life. A naturally happy person (about 50% genetically influenced), is happier because he or she has more positive and optimistic "self-talk."

If you are naturally a negative, pessimistic person, who does not find fulfillment in what you are doing, you are having an unhappy life.

An unhappy person (because of neurotic thought patterns or generalized pessimism), can be taught to be happier by managing his or her "self-talk."

The most widely used therapies in use today are based on the principle that thoughts produce feelings and feelings produce behaviors. These various therapies are described as cognitive therapies. The therapeutic

interventions for people suffering from misery and unhappiness involve helping them change their “self-talk.”

Individuals find many sources of positive self-talk that they can use to replace the negative thoughts that bring them discomfort. Millions, for example, depend on inputs from Oprah or Dr. Phil, on television. Religions offer comforting thoughts that reduce the pain caused by an individual’s negative self-talk. Cults offer the unhappy individuals a replacement set of thoughts (offered by the cult leader), to replace negative self-talk. Thousands of self-help books and courses (e.g. the kinds of power of positive thinking) and its progeny offer positive thoughts that people can use to make themselves happier.

Being Unhappy

If you are having an unhappy life, you can learn to be happier, but in order to do that, you must change your self-talk. How do you do that?

- You’re being offered pre-packaged self-talk from every imaginable source. However, if you’re a negative, pessimistic person, having an unhappy life, you’re also likely to be somewhat cynical, or doubtful, or pessimistic about the value of the pre-packaged self-talk that others are suggesting you use. So, it’s likely you are still unhappy.
- Some teachers are offering generalized strategies for changing your own self-talk, such as disputing negative assessment, to free you from having to adopt pre-packaged self-talk from other sources. But, again, you’re likely to be cynical, or doubtful, or pessimistic about using a different strategy than the one you find comfortable, and thus you may not adopt the recommended strategy.
- There is some evidence that pessimists have a clearer perception of the world than optimists. There is evidence that optimists must sometimes distort their perception of the world, to maintain their optimism. Experienced pessimists often rebel at adopting the optimists’ distortions.

As a result of all of the above, lots of people are living unhappy lives because they cannot or will not

- a) adopt the pre-packaged self-talk offered to them, or
- b) adopt a new strategy of disputation to repair something they don’t see as broken, or

- c) change their thinking to be more optimistic, which in their judgment may produce a distortion.

Great News! You can NOW be as happy as you decide to be

According to the scientists who study “happiness,” each of us has unique genes and life experiences that establish our level of happiness. The scientists estimate that half of that happiness level is based on your genes alone. So, some people are naturally able to be happier than others. If you don’t do anything to change it, you’ll stay with your current happiness level.

Also, you’ll tend to *revert* to your normal happiness level — whether it’s low or high — after life’s turning points such as graduation, getting a job, marriage, having children, losing a loved one, etc. Each of those turning points will change your happiness level up or down for a short time, but you’ll quickly revert to your own normal level.

The happiness scientists have found that you can make a huge change in your level of happiness by doing specific things that will make you happier. And if you do those things regularly, say from three to four weeks, they will become a habit.

This is even good news for the naturally happy person, because he or she can become even happier...in fact, much, much happier.

This is Great News! for people whose natural happiness level is low. A low level of happiness accounts for the grouches, grumps, and pessimists of the world. It’s great news for them, because they can now choose how happy they would like to be, and do things that are scientifically proven to make a person happier.



HOW HAPPY DO YOU WANT TO BE?

How Much Do You Know About Happiness?

Take a little self-test to see what you know about what reinforces happiness. Look at the list below and decide which will make you happier, and which would not.

Which of the following would make someone happier?

1. Exercise and fitness
2. More power
3. More money
4. Working
5. More friends
6. Being younger
7. Being talented
8. Helping Others
9. Loving someone
10. Having more education
11. Having a close-knit family
12. Having good looks
13. Having nice clothes
14. Having some control over your life
15. Having a high IQ
16. Being optimistic
17. Maintaining the status quo
18. Being a celebrity
19. Divorce after a bad marriage
20. Feeling Grateful

Answer: Items 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 14, 16, 17, 20 contribute to happiness. People often mistake the other things: power, money, youth, talent, education, good looks, nice clothes, high IQ, celebrity, and divorce after a bad marriage as things that make you happy. They may be things you *want*, but once you have them, you'll find they don't make you any happier. You'll quickly revert to your normal level.

Where are You on the Happiness Scale?

Take a look at the items on this scale and make an estimate of your current happiness level. Do that now.

Happiness Scale	+10	momentary peak experiences; drugs, huge wins
	+9	solitary meditative states; spiritual highs
	+8	group highs; cults; sects; focus on one domain
	+7	pollyanna; denial; unreal "own world"
	+6	full of positive emotions; engagement/meaning in all domains
	+5	positive emotions; engagement/meaning in most domains
	+4	resilient; lots of positive emotions/engagement in multiple domains
	+3	little unhappiness; lots of positive emotions
	+2	normal amount of happiness; lots of pleasure or engagement or meaning
	+1	normal; generally happy; some unhappiness
	0	neutral
	-1	pessimistic, regretful; grouchy but well-functioning
	-2	mostly unhappy; some pleasure; fully functioning
	-3	very unhappy; bitter; fully functioning
	-4	miserable, but functioning in most domains
-5	miserable, but functional in one or two domains	
-6	situationally depressed; hurt, loss, overwhelmed; barely functioning	
-7	profoundly depressed; unable to function well in any domain	
-8	severely disturbed	
-9	pathologically dysfunctional; sociopathic; paranoid	
10	suicidal ideation or acts	

Truthfully, it's going to be more challenging for someone with a normal happiness level of -3 to reach a level of +6, than it will be for those with a level of +2. They have a greater distance to go beyond their comfort zone. However, it can be done.

If you're -7 or below, we can't help. And we can't get you above +6.



WHERE TO START

There are over thirty topics (Happiness Habits) from which you may choose. They are grouped by the degree of life impact the activity would bring you.

We've organized the steps into:

- Quick Start: Least impact; no prerequisites
- Intermediate: The steps that are more challenging, and have fairly easy prerequisites
- Advanced: The steps that are more impactful for your life and have more prerequisites. These are the most challenging.

This is the point in the process of becoming happier where we begin helping you to challenge the roles that your genes play. We help you learn happiness habits that counter your natural, genetically-programmed, unhappiness habits. Instead of trying to rid you of the natural habits that produce unhappiness, we've found it's much simpler to teach you new, more positive, habits that you will use in conjunction with your old negative habits of thought.

If you're just beginning on your path to becoming happier, you have two choices. You can start with some of the easy steps. This strategy allows you to succeed quickly and easily. It allows you to build the habit of persistence toward the goal of being happier. It prepares you well for the more advanced topics.

The other choice beginners have is to dive in, head first, into the most challenging changes. Here are the risks. If you haven't built the habit of persistence toward the goal of being happier, it may be too easy to get frustrated and quit. If you are a person who tends toward negativity, pessimism, and has a lack of resilience, you probably also have a natural pessimistic pre-judgment that "this stuff" can't make people happier. (Or, you may just be thinking "this stuff" probably won't work for you.)

If, however, you've come to realize that other people seem to be happier than you, you may have become truly determined to become happier. If you also are a normally persistent person — which means that when you set out to reach a goal, you keep going until you get

there — these advanced topics are the meatiest topics and will have the most dramatic effect on you.

Here’s a way to tell. Do you start diets, and never reach your goal weight? Do you buy a gym membership, and then stop going? If you’ve tried to quit smoking, but always smoke again, then you need to learn the habit of persistence. We advise you to start with two, three or four of the less challenging ‘a’ steps. Then, when you have persisted, and feel fully committed to being happier, move to the moderate topics, then on to the most impactful ones.

Choosing Where to Begin

You are truly free to just skip around, without any guidance from us. If you do, we applaud your independence and creativity. If you don’t, we applaud your perseverance.

Take a look at the following topics and make an assessment of where you think you are on each subject. Read through the following outcomes for each of the topics and think about how that topic currently contributes to your happiness, and how much of a habit it is. Use a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is low and 5 is high. That may give you an idea of which of the Quick Start Happiness Habits could use the most attention.

Quick Start Topics

	low	2	3	4	high
Maintaining the Status Quo At the end of this practice you will have identified at least ten major “status quo” things that give you great comfort. How happy are you with your status quo, i.e. “the way things are?”					
Being a Fan At the end of the practice you will have discovered activities for which you are already a fan, and what triggered your choices. You will have learned the habit for becoming a big fan of other activities. How happy are you with being a fan (the number of things you are a fan of, and how much pleasure you get out of them)?					

<p>Sleeping Well</p> <p>At the end of the practice you will have discovered whether lack of sleep is a choice or a physical problem, by researching the Internet and possibly reading related books.</p> <p>How well do you sleep?</p>					
<p>Exercising and Being Fit</p> <p>At the end of the practice you will have created the habit of choosing either a) dieting one day in the future, or b) a one-day diet or c) a combination of the two. You may also choose to add the one-day exercise program.</p> <p>How do you feel about your weight and fitness?</p>					
<p>Meditating</p> <p>At the end of the practice you will have chosen one of two ways to meditate and will have developed the habit of meditating.</p> <p>Are you happy with the meditating that you do (or don't do)?</p>					
<p>Making Positive Comparisons</p> <p>At the end of the practice you will have made a habit of feeling good about who you are, what you do, and what you have.</p> <p>Are you someone who compares yourself to others? If so, how does that make you feel?</p>					
<p>Having Expectations</p> <p>At the end of the practice you will have learned to experience the positive force of anticipation and will have developed the habit of finding the good in your experiences.</p> <p>How do you enjoy your expectations?</p>					
<p>Having Some Control Over Your Life</p> <p>At the end of the practice you will have the habit of examining your "to do" list and doing less of what you <i>don't</i> want to do, and more of what you <i>do</i> want to do.</p> <p>How happy are you with the control you have over your life?</p>					

<p>Having Freedom and Choice</p> <p>At the end of the practice you will be able to distinguish between “maximizer” and “good enough” purchases. You’ll learn to convert many activities to “good enough.”</p> <p>How happy are you with the way you use your freedom and your choices?</p>					
<p>Having a Pet that you Like</p> <p>At the end of the practice you will be able to make a choice for a pet that will fit your circumstances.</p> <p>How satisfied are you with either having, or not having a pet?</p>					
<p>Finding Flow</p> <p>At the end of the practice you will have learned the habit of adding flow to tasks that have been boring in the past, and finding flow in things that used to frustrate you.</p> <p>How engrossed do you get in many of your tasks?</p>					
<p>Enjoying Holidays, Celebrations, and Rituals</p> <p>At the end of the practice you will have noticed times when you lifted your mood, and times when you were invited to be negative. You will have learned the habit of converting the potential negative reactions, into neutral, and sometimes positive reactions.</p> <p>How happy are you with the holidays, celebrations and rituals in your life?</p>					
<p>Friends</p> <p>When you complete the practice, you will have a plan for becoming closer to at least one of your current friends or acquaintances, and you will have chosen at least one action for helping someone, in order to increase the depth of the friendship.</p> <p>How happy are you with the quantity and quality of your relationships with friends?</p>					
<p>Helping Others</p> <p>When you complete the practice, you will have chosen at least one action for helping someone.</p> <p>How much of your time do you commit toward helping someone else?</p>					

<p>Being Appreciated At the end of the practice you will have surveyed one or more people (who are important in your life) and discovered their views on appreciation. You may discover what ways their views differ from yours. You'll make a habit of valuing the appreciation you get. How much do you value appreciation when you get it?</p>					
<p>Appreciating Someone At the end of the practice you will have delivered appreciation to at least one person whom you value, and you will have begun to develop the habit of giving appreciation to others. How often do you appreciate someone else?</p>					
<p>Feeling Grateful At the end of the practice you will have established a daily pattern for being grateful to people, things, and events in your life. How often do you review the things you are grateful for?</p>					

Intermediate Topics

low 2 3 4 high

<p>Having Leisure Activities At the end of the practice you will have examined the ways you spend your leisure time. You will have the habit of replacing the less satisfying activities with those that are rewarding, engaging or meaningful. How much do you enjoy leisure activities?</p>					
<p>Finding Meaning in Your Life At the end of the practice you will have discovered your five strengths and virtues and will have used those to uncover more meaningful things in your life. How much meaning do you find in your life?</p>					
<p>Having Children At the end of the practice if you have children, you will have increased coping skills. If you are thinking about having children, you will have checked out whether your expectations were realistic, or not. How happy are you with having children (or not having them)?</p>					

<p>Loving Something</p> <p>When you complete the practice you will have practiced the habit of making a commitment to love unconditionally something that brings you pleasure. You will also take a least one thing from the list of things you want to learn to love, and take some action toward that goal.</p> <p>How good are you at loving something outside yourself?</p>					
<p>Bouncing Back from Adversity</p> <p>At the end of this practice you will have learned and practiced the formula for resilience so that it becomes a habit whenever you think about or experience an adversity.</p> <p>How good are you at bounding back from adversity?</p>					
<p>Being Loved</p> <p>After completing the practice you will have acknowledged someone who offered you a kindness, and will have selected ways to become closer to others. You will have researched what others have done, as well.</p> <p>How okay do you feel about accepting love?</p>					

Advanced Topics

low 2 3 4 high

<p>Being Happier with Work</p> <p>When you have completed the practice you will have uncovered the times at work when you have been in “flow,” and you will have the habit of creating more “flow,” as well. You will have converted some of the unhappy aspects of your work into happier experiences.</p> <p>How happy are you at work?</p>					
<p>Having a Close-knit Family</p> <p>At the end of this practice you will have learned the habit of turning an unhappy situation between you and another family member, into a happier situation, resulting in becoming closer to that person.</p> <p>How close are you to other family members?</p>					

<p>Having a Good Relationship With Your Parents</p> <p>When you have completed the practice you will recognize what has created the breach, and will have taken at least one step toward healing it. You will have learned the habit of curing breaches as they occur.</p> <p>How close are you with your parents?</p>					
<p>Choosing Religious or Spiritual Beliefs that Bring You Comfort</p> <p>At the end of the practice you will have chosen to either work on some current beliefs that cause pain, or investigate the meaning of life through other spiritual methods, or simply add meaning to your life.</p> <p>How happy are you with your choices of your spiritual life?</p>					
<p>Having Happy Memories</p> <p>At the end of Practice I you will have taken painful memories and made wise choices about how to handle them. After Practice II and III you will have purposely distorted some memories so they are more positive.</p> <p>How happy are your memories?</p>					
<p>Being Optimistic</p> <p>At the end of the practice you will have the habit of being able to take any thoughts about the future, and use the formula for optimism to convert potential negative thoughts into positive thoughts.</p> <p>How optimistic are you?</p>					
<p>Being Positive</p> <p>At the end of the practice you will increase the number of positive thoughts.</p> <p>How positive are you?</p>					
<p>Loving Someone</p> <p>When you have completed the practice, you will have learned how to take a list of characteristics that you don't like in a specific person, and shortened the list. You will have learned the habit of taking good feelings and maximizing them, while minimizing bad feelings.</p> <p>How happy do you feel about loving someone?</p>					

Having an Intimate Relationship At the end of the practice you will have practiced maximizing good feelings and resolving bad feelings. How happy are you in an intimate relationship?					
Being Married At the end of the practice you will have identified those communications with your partner that end on a positive note, and sustained a positive to negative ratio of five to one over a period of one week. How happy are you in marriage, if you are married?					

More About the Advanced Topics

If you are about to embark on one of the advanced topics, there are some things you need to know. The advanced section is where we begin helping you challenge the roles that your genes play. We teach you happiness habits that counter your natural, genetically programmed, *unhappiness* habits. You'll learn more positive habits that you will use to counteract your old negative habits of thought.

If you are someone who wants to just skip around, without any guidance from us, we applaud your independence and creativity. However, because some Happiness Habits are more challenging to learn, and much more powerful and transformative than the other steps, they will take more time and a higher level of commitment.

Before you work through any of the advanced topics, you will need to read Appendix A: "Four Questions Four Choices." This is a condensed version of a two-hour audio-visual program entitled "Four Questions and a Map." That course is available on the website <http://www.visionarypublications.com>.

Begin

The topics have been arranged in an approximate order that places the easier ones first, then the more difficult, and finally, the advanced topics. This sequence may not necessarily fit your personality and capabilities. Regardless of wherever else you may want to go, please start with "Maintaining the Status Quo."





Quick Start Topics

MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO

People are “of two minds” about change. It’s normal to *want* to change, and it’s normal to *resist* change. Keeping things the way they are — the status quo — is comfortable, familiar, and easy. Change often seems desirable, but at the same time it’s a little scary.

Take this web site for example. We’re going to offer you what scientists have discovered: The more than thirty simple, easy, and fast ways that you can become happier. If you’re like most people, you “kind of” want to be happier, but since it involves change, and maybe some effort, you aren’t sure you want to do it. What if you don’t like being happier? What if you don’t like the “new you?” Will it feel funny? Can you change back if you don’t like it?

Even normal, natural things change the status quo: getting a job, graduating from school, getting married, having a baby, moving to a new place, leaving home, getting divorced, moving back home, are all very stressful events. Some may be exciting, even thrilling, but you’re also under a lot of stress during any of these life changes.

After any of these life events, you want the changes to settle down as quickly as they can. You want to establish a routine and get comfortable with it. You treasure some of the things that haven’t changed, like your favorite shoes, shirt, or sweater. You want to sleep in your own bed, with your own pillows. You want your favorite breakfast foods, your worn and comfortable slippers, and your comfortable chair.

How can we help?

We assured you that many of these more than thirty ways to become happier were easy, fast, painless, and even fun. We told you that you didn’t need to do any of them that were hard for you or made you uncomfortable. We’ve made them as easy as possible, and we’ve built in a lot of enjoyable benefits. We’ve done our best to give you some fun and some friendly teammates in the forum to keep you company on your journey.

We don’t urge you to jump to a new you. We suggest you creep along, changing slowly, feeling your way, and staying within your comfort zone. Change a little at a time. Move in inches, not yards. That way,

you maintain your status quo, without even feeling the change...except you will notice that you are happier. (No one has yet complained.)

If you are undergoing stressful major life changes, we'll give you some great stress reduction tools you can use to keep your cool during change. Most importantly, we understand that:

- you want to be happier
- you really are already pretty happy
- you really don't want to change too much
- you don't want to work hard at self-change
- you don't ever want to fail.

We know all that, and we also know we can help you be as happy as you choose to be. We'll help you maintain the status quo and become happier while doing it. How do we help you change while also maintaining the status quo? It's all about the tools you get to work with.

Getting Comfortable

Here is the secret game plan. Gradually, as you work through the practice, you'll get more and more comfortable with the topic you choose.

You'll be encouraged to keep notes, so that in the future you can look back and see where you were when you started. You'll have dozens of lists and other documents of your very own. The secret is that while you're changing, the topic that you chose is feeling more and more comfortable for you.

To net it out, you'll gradually make the act of "changing to becoming happier" the new status quo. So, while we're helping you change (which involves gradually changing the status quo), you'll have a new, comfortable, homey feeling, where the new status quo is: Changing to be happier. That's the secret game plan.

Please go to your workbook now, to practice "Maintaining the Status Quo."



BEING A FAN

Along with the frustrations that sometimes come with it, being a fan will make you happier. Being a fan gives you something to be passionate about. If you root for your favorite sports team, you are “investing importance” in how they do. If they do well, you’re happy. If they do poorly, you’re less happy, but you probably wouldn’t give up being a fan for that team, because being a fan makes you happier.

Most people think being a fan means rooting for a sports team. Most sports fans think it’s their team that counts. Not so. What counts is “investing importance.” So, anytime you *invest importance* in something or someone you are being a fan, which makes you happier.

There is no limit to the number of people or things that you can invest importance in. You can be a fan of a school, an organization, a restaurant, a youngster, a sport, a team, a newspaper, a television show, a spouse, a relative, a Nation, and on and on.

The most enthusiastic, positive, life affirming people we’ve ever known were huge fans, fans of everything. One fellow we met was so good at investing importance in things that he was a fan of breakfast, of lunch, and of dinner. He just loved life. He loved everything. Every comic was funny to him. Every person was interesting to him. Every piece of music was terrific. Every singer was the greatest.

We don’t expect anyone to be able to do what that fellow could do, but if you could, you’d be happier. To him, life was a banquet, and he was enjoying all of it. The opposite of being a fan is being apathetic. Apathy doesn’t make you happier. Apathy makes you cynical.

We can help you identify people and things that you can root for; people and things that you can invest importance in. We can help you become a fan of more things and more people. Many people limit themselves to just being a fan of a couple of sports teams. Some don’t even do that.

Just imagine, if you became a fan of five sports teams, of fifteen different companies, of a dozen actors and actresses, of five television shows, of three youngsters in your neighborhood, of five nieces and nephews. Imagine how eagerly you’d be reading the paper for news of

the people and things you are rooting for. Imagine how eager you'd be for the phone to ring, to bring news of the people you're rooting for.

If you want to grab a bigger bite out of life; If you want to add meaning to your life. If you want to have more things and people to get excited about, we'll show you how.

Additional references: [Google.com](https://www.google.com) (use search terms such as "I'm a big fan of...")

Please go to your workbook now, to practice "Being a Fan."



SLEEPING WELL

You'll be a happier person just by sleeping well. If you don't sleep well, there are generally two kinds of issues. One is purely optional. You don't sleep well because you don't get enough sleep because you're too busy with staying up late, partying, playing, working or studying. We can't help you with that. That's a lifestyle choice, and you've decided that those activities are more rewarding or necessary for you than sleep.

The other kind of sleep issue is where you want to sleep, but can't. Or, you sleep fitfully, or you awaken and then can't fall back asleep. Frankly, we don't know beans about how to help you sleep better, but we've done some searching for you on the Internet, and we have listed two links for you.

You also have access to the forum where all the good sleepers can share their ideas, tips, and cures to benefit those who aren't good sleepers.

Some Tips

The Organic Style website <http://www.organicstyle.com> lists ten guidelines for getting more sleep. Use any that make sense to you.

- Stop your work/play when it's time to go to bed.
- Gradually add 15 minutes daily to your sleep, each week. In a month you'll be getting an extra hour.
- If you have a partner, enlist his/her help to rotate such things as duties with the children.
- Don't stay up late to do chores. It's better to get up an hour earlier.
- Establish a pre-bedtime ritual. 30 minutes before bedtime stop all stimulating activities, such as TV or working on the computer. Read instead.
- Don't use sleeping pills. Try some safe, natural cures instead, such as warm milk, valerian, magnesium or chamomile.
- Don't sleep with a pet. They are sleep disturbers.
- Stop drinking anything with caffeine in it at noontime.

- Do yoga, or meditation.
- Stick to a schedule, going to bed and getting up at the same times.
- Put a notepad next to your bed so if you think of something you want to remember, you can write it down and deal with it in the morning.
- Listen to soothing music for 45 minutes before bedtime.
- After 20 minutes of not sleeping, get up to read, drink something warm and decaffeinated, read a magazine; don't reinforce the "can't sleep" situation.
- Go for an early morning walk. It will keep you alert during the day and sleepy at night.
- Take a warm bath right before bed.
- Keep your bedroom as dark as possible.

The important thing to note is that you'll be a happier person if you sleep well. So, if you can't figure it out yourself, even with the help of the forum, or following the experts tips don't work, it may be worth your time and effort to consult a sleep clinic or medical people who specialize in sleep disorders.

Please go to your workbook now, for "Sleeping Well."



EXERCISING AND BEING FIT

Hah! You probably thought we'd tell you that you'd be happier if you lose weight and get the recommended amounts of exercise. Well, maybe so. But, it all depends on you.

For some people, exercising, working out, and staying trim is easy and natural. They value the benefits of it so much they are willing to commit the time and effort. They talk about the endorphins, which are natural good feelings from the brain that occur after exercise. So, for them, it is clear that fitness and exercise make them happier.

For other people, however, exercising and maintaining their goal weight are so difficult that it makes them miserable. They don't get happier. They just get miserable.

Everyone agrees that you'll live a longer and healthier life if you keep your weight within limits and get the recommended amount of exercise. So, if you can find it in yourself to eat right and exercise, by all means, do it.

But, suppose that just isn't you. Maybe you're overweight, and you just can't get into the exercise thing. Maybe, someday things will change for you, and you'll be able to get fit, exercise, and reach your goal weight. But, that time isn't now, and that just isn't you.

Experts disagree on the following thought, so we want to warn you that lots of people on the forum will disagree with what we say.

We just want you to be happier, and one way to be happier is to *accept yourself the way you are*.

It's hard enough being overweight, and out of shape. It's even worse if all the fit, thin, and well-toned people make you feel bad about yourself. Here is where the disagreement comes in. Some experts say that you should feel bad about yourself, if you're overweight, don't eat right, and don't exercise. They think if you feel really miserable about yourself, you'll be motivated eventually to eat right, lose excess weight, and exercise.

We don't think so. We think feeling miserable about your self is bad for your health, and bad for your mood, attitude, and morale. So, we disagree with some of the experts who want you to feel bad about yourself. We don't. You are who you are. Accept yourself. Appreciate

yourself for all the good things you are. Take pleasure where you can find it, find meaning in your life, and get into flow every opportunity you get. We think the diet and exercise will take care of themselves (or not), when you've done some or all of the other things you can do to be happier.

A life-changing habit

There is one life-changing habit you can learn, regardless of your decision about your weight. That is to weigh daily and make a guilt-free, self-accepting decision, just for that day. This habit, this discipline, this experience of persistence can, by itself be a life-changing event, whether or not it ever affects your weight.

Every day you face an issue that is important to your long-term health and fitness. You avoid denial. You make a new, one-day decision every day. Never mind about your weight. This lifetime habit will change your life in more ways that you ever thought possible.

Each day you will make one of two choices about dieting. This is called the "One Day Diet."

The One Day Diet

The first meaning of the "One Day Diet" is simply to accept yourself as you are, and tell yourself (if you so intend), "*One day I'll diet.*"

Even though you've decided not to diet, get on the scale first thing in the morning every day, so you can decide each day anew, that, "One day I'll diet."

And then, if you decide to, you may take option B: "I'll do the one-day diet." The second meaning of the "One Day Diet" is to make a commitment to *diet for one day*, and one day only. Weigh yourself each morning. If you are above your goal weight, the idea is to commit to diet just for that day. This takes the idea of "one day at a time" to a new level.

Most people find that even though they may be well over their goal weight, on some days they're willing to commit to diet today, just for this one day.

The important thing about this diet is the daily decision and commitment, with the knowledge that on certain days you're going to decide not to diet (maybe Thanksgiving, your birthday, etc.).

If you string a few single days of dieting together, you might even notice that some weight comes off. That little hint of success is sometimes enough to get you back on the scale the next morning and decide again whether you'll diet that day.

Some day will come when you really get motivated and decide you want to get healthier. At that point you may choose to add the "One Day Exercise" program to your regimen. Almost everyone can decide to exercise for one day. On any given day you can either say "One day I'll exercise," or "I'll exercise for one day."

Please go to your workbook now, for "Exercising and Being Fit."



MEDITATING

Meditating can make you happier. Scientists have verified that meditation works. We don't know how or why, but it does. Maybe it's because it relieves your stress. Maybe it's because it releases endorphins in your brain. (There are more theories than can possibly be valid.) You can learn to meditate for its own benefits, without ever knowing how or why it works.

Meditation is proven to have many benefits. People who meditate seem better able to handle adversity. They don't get so upset when things go wrong. They seem calmer.

We think meditation is a wonderful thing to add to a happy life. We don't think it is much of a substitute for having a whole life. (But, that's just our opinion.)

We recommend that you don't get caught up in the myths and magic and pseudo science that surrounds meditation. We hope you don't get so carried away with meditation that you end up in a cave, on a bed of nails wearing a groin scarf. (But, if that's you, go for it.) You can, if you like, ignore all the mumbo-jumbo that is often offered along with instruction in the process of meditation.

Easy to Learn; Easy to Do

We can get you started with a simple, easy to learn meditation process. In fact, we will recommend two ways to meditate, "Simple," and "Active."

There are many forms and variations of meditation, so if neither of these forms works for you, try another. Look into some books on meditation to discover which type is best for you.

Begin with ten to fifteen minutes and gradually increase it if you can. There is no right or wrong way to do this. The goal is to be in the present, involving your body and mind.

Some think the ideal length of time is 20 minutes, twice per day. Many people practice meditation before eating, not after. Some people use what is called a "mantra" to keep their thoughts from wandering. For example, the word "one" is a common mantra. Choose one that you like, if you decide to use a mantra.

Simple Meditation

1. Choose a tranquil location — a peaceful place where you feel comfortable.
2. Music enhances the experience for some people. If you choose music, choose calming and tranquil music. Many people prefer music from Eastern cultures.
3. Choose a comfortable chair, mat, pillow, futon, or couch. You want to be able to sit upright with your spine fairly straight.
4. Most people find it helps to close your eyes.
5. Breathe in, slowly and deeply. Feel your chest rise and feel the air reach the bottom of your lungs.
6. Let your breath out evenly and smoothly.
7. Concentrate on your breathing. Be aware of each breath and the feelings of deeper relaxation.
8. Imagine a blank page. If thoughts arise, allow them to enter your mind. Just allow them to pass, and refocus on your breathing.
9. End your meditation whenever you feel it is complete.
10. Open your eyes after you feel more relaxed and centered.

Active Meditation

If you find it difficult to sit still for the more traditional forms of meditation, you might want to try active meditation. You can use any activity, including swimming, walking, etc. as long as you involve your body and mind. Such activities as biking require safety awareness and shouldn't be used for meditation. Even walking requires some awareness of your surroundings for your safety.

1. Decide how long you'll meditate.
2. As you begin, focus on what your body is doing right now. If other thoughts about the past or future intrude, allow them to pass.
3. Appreciate every aspect of your actions.
4. Notice how your feet feel as they touch the pavement, or how your arms feel flowing through the water. Notice all the movements of your limbs, and how relaxed you are.
5. Notice your surroundings: the colors, textures, smells etc.
6. Feel your breathing and how your lungs expand and contract.
7. Imagine what it would be like for a person who had never had this experience.
8. End your meditation whenever you feel it is complete.

Additional books about meditation: <http://www.Amazon.com>
Please go to your workbook now, to practice for "Meditating."



MAKING POSITIVE COMPARISONS

We all compare ourselves to others. If you compare yourself favorably to someone else, you are likely to feel okay with the comparison. For example, you may be feeling sorry for yourself about something, and then meet someone who is less well off than you. That often puts your plight into perspective. There's an old saying that bears this out: "*I used to cry for I had no shoes to wear until I saw a man with no feet.*" (author unknown)

If you compare yourself *unfavorably* to someone else, you may be unhappy with the comparison. Guess what!

It's a really good idea to reduce the number of unfavorable comparisons.

Can you think of someone who has more money than you? Can you think of someone who is more attractive than you? Do you know someone who has a bigger house, a better car? Of course you can. However, if you sometimes find yourself feeling envious, or jealous — by comparing yourself to someone who is richer, more attractive, more popular, or more successful than you are — you are *making yourself* unhappy.

Giving up Distortions

To understand how to get better at appreciating yourself, it's useful to learn something about

- the way you perceive things
- the assessment you make of that perception and
- how you make choices about what actions to take.

For simplicity, we'll call the way you perceive something as your TWIPI ("The **W**ay **I** Perceive **I**t"). To make the assessment of that perception, you'll use something called your Comparator. We'll discuss choices and actions in a minute.

Note: The TWIPI and the Comparator come from the book "Sagery: A User Manual for the Mind," by Ken Johnston (available from the HowToBeHappier.com website.) They are also illustrated in the audio-visual program "Four Questions and a Map."

Your TWIPI

When you want to know the contents of your TWIPI, ask yourself, "What's happening?" For example, what are your thoughts right now? Go ahead and ask yourself that question: "What's happening?" You might have had the thought, "I'm reading this article."

The next thing that occurs is that you make an *assessment* of your perception, using your Comparator.

Your Comparator

The Comparator is used to *assess the perception* in order to determine what it means to you. For example, you might have followed the perception ("I'm reading this article") with the assessment "This is really interesting," or perhaps some negative assessment such as, "This is really dumb,".

Each of us is programmed to generally make comparisons in one of two ways. If you tend to be negative you might ask, "What are the flaws in this?" Or, "What's wrong with this?" Or, if you are more positive person you might notice, "What's good about this?" or "What can I learn from it?" Those answers are your assessment.

If you are generally a 'what's wrong' kind of person you get what we call a *mismatch* between your thought and assessment of that thought, and end up with a bad feeling. If you're generally a 'what's right' kind of person you get a *match* and end up with a good feeling. For example, the person whose program is on the negative side might make the assessment, "This is really boring," and get a bad feeling. The person who is more positive might think, "It's fun to learn new things," and feel good about it.

The Way You Perceive It Is Not Necessarily the Way It is

There is a difference between reality and your *perception and assessment* of reality. First of all, everything starts with some reality. You take a piece of that reality, and you filter it through many things, some of which is outside your awareness. By the time you're done, you have something quite different from the reality you started out with. (That's why we call it a "perception" rather than a thought.)

The idea is: you can't put too much faith in your assessment of "What's happening?" However, some people get stubborn. Some people think that their perception of they way it is, is *really* the way it is. This can lead to unhappy feelings and a poor outcome.

Of all of the possible combinations that you could have used to create your perception of what's happening, you choose only one. Surely, there are many other equally valid perceptions possible. Yes, there are almost an infinite number of equally valid perceptions possible from the same input. So, don't get too attached to any one of them.

When you have a perception that brings you good feelings or leads to a good outcome, use it. When you have a perception that brings you bad feelings or a poor outcome, abandon it. Go for a different perception of what is happening. Let your Comparator ask the question, "What's good about it?"

In the next section you'll read about how distortions can get added to your perception. If you're wise enough to understand the difference between your perception and the reality, you'll be flexible enough to make any shifts you need to make that will lead to good feelings and a good outcome.

Distortions That Get Added

The TWIPI will change through re-processing, meaning it will change if you continue to think about it; it's called "looping." After all the work you did to create the original perception in your TWIPI, it will change if you choose to stay inside and re-process the same input. Often, if the TWIPI and the assessment of the perception are mismatched, some distortions can be added through the reprocessing.

For example, Harold says: "Maude, you're an idiot."

Maude's *perception* (TWIPI), initially: "Harold insulted me."

Maude's *assessment* initially: "It's wrong to insult your wife."

Maude doesn't react to that input. Instead she stays inside and reprocesses it; she loops. But, by now, she is aware of other times he has insulted her, and that she doesn't like it.

Maude's TWIPI, after reprocessing: "Harold *always* insults me."

Maude's assessment: "You shouldn't ever insult your wife."

So, if you asked Maude initially, "What's Happening?" she would have said, "Harold insulted me." But, after Reprocessing (looping), she might say, "Harold *always* insults me."

Notice the distortion that has occurred.

When you stay inside and re-perceive an input, distortions often get added. In this case, "thinking" just gets you further and further from the reality you are "thinking" about.

The most damaging distortions are words like *always*, *never*, *can't*, *every*, *any*, and *must*.

Never allow yourself to use *any* of these words. They *always* distort, *every* one of them, and you *can't* help but err in using them. (A little humor.)

Sensitize yourself to these absolute words, so that you can reduce the distortions that you create. Begin to notice them as a source for bad feelings. As you ask the question, "What's happening?" you'll get the contents or your TWIPI. If you notice one of these absolute words in your assessment, you can guess that it will be the source of some or all of your bad feeling.

As you notice an absolute word, moderate it and see the difference it makes. Change *always* to "sometimes," or "often." Change *never* to "seldom," or "infrequently." Change *can't* to "haven't yet," or "don't want to." Change *every* to "most," or "many." Change *any* to "some," and "*must* to "may."

Faulty Cause and Effect

Another distortion that occurs as you re-perceive, is faulty cause and effect. You'll know this when you notice the word "because."

You create a faulty cause and effect when you tie two thoughts together with "because." For example: I am writing this paper *because* you want to read it. The reality is I am writing this paper. Another reality is that you are reading it (one might assume you want to). So, I have two separate realities, and the word "because" distorts the entire statement.

You can clean up the distortions by using "and" instead of "because." Here is a list of statements distorted by faulty cause and effect.

1. I have a poor self image because my parents didn't like me.
2. I smashed up the car because you were talking to me.
3. I lost my job because my boss was a real jerk.
4. I didn't get to work on time because the traffic was heavy.
5. I think she doesn't like me because I'm short.
6. I have a sharp temper because I'm Irish.
7. I'm really shy because all the kids teased me when I was a child.

Now, read over these statements and replace the "because" with "and." I think you'll see how the realities become clearer and the distortions disappear. When you replace "because" with "and" you

discover that you are not controlled by outside forces. You discover that you have more choices than you might have thought you had.

Strategies for Your TWIPI

Here are some strategies for your TWIPI.

- Notice distortions and moderate them (replace words like always, never, can't, every, and any)
- Eliminate faulty cause and effect (clean up the distortions by using "and" instead of "because")
- Don't get stubborn about what you perceive. Be open to awareness that what you're perceiving isn't necessarily reality.

Work with your perception until it serves you as a basis for good feelings, or leads to a good outcome.

The practice will lead you to some strategies for making fewer negative comparisons. If you wish, you can explore the forum for "Comparisons" on this website"

Additional references: If you're interested to learn more about TWIPI and the Comparator, read "Sagery" by Ken Johnston.

Please go to your workbook now for the practice for "Making Positive Comparisons."



HAVING EXPECTATIONS

Having expectations is another difficult issue to deal with. If you set high expectations for yourself, for others, for books, movies, restaurants, etc. you'll find yourself being disappointed a lot. So, while high expectations may act as a motivator for you, they come at a high price.

Let's say you go to a movie with high expectations. If the movie meets your expectations, well, it's just what you expected. So, you don't feel particularly delighted; you feel satisfied.

If, however, you have moderate expectations for the movie, and you really like the movie, you can feel delighted, and surprised, and a whole range of good feelings.

On the other hand, if you have low to moderate expectations for a movie, you rob yourself of the joy of anticipation. Who can be thrilled anticipating a so-so movie? Anticipation is a powerful way to feel happier.

It's hard to argue that one should adopt moderate expectations for oneself. Some people would strongly argue that one should expect a lot of oneself. You'll achieve more if you expect more of yourself, goes the argument. And, that may be true.

Will you really achieve less in life if you don't expect too much of yourself? It's hard to know, and some people feel it's a big risk to take.

So, should you have high, low, or moderate expectations for yourself? Should you have high, low or moderate expectations for others?

Strategies: Future, Present, Past

We have some powerful, yet simple, strategies for you, regarding expectations. We have some great practice that you can use to manage your expectations. The trick is all about noticing the different time elements.

Let's get back to the movie example. Ideally, you want to have high expectations while the movie is still in your *future*, so you can feel the pleasure of anticipation. During the movie, you are in the *present*, and you would be wise to just let yourself go with the flow of the movie

and enjoy it as much as possible. Look for, and notice, all the things about the movie that are good. Let yourself feel surprised by the good qualities. (Simply accept anything about it that isn't very good.) Then, after the movie, when it is in your *past*, selectively recall the good things, and have happy memories of the film.

Managing your expectations to become happier is all about time. There are always three kinds of time: the past, which is only available through memories, the future, which is only available through your imagination, and the now, which is happening this instant. You're spending the now reading these words, and thinking about what they mean to you.

The Practice

If you have always tended to be critical of things, or pessimistic about future events, the practice may feel very strange for you. You may feel like you are being phony or unnatural. If those thoughts arise, do the job you are always supposed to do in the now: Find the good in it. Imagine yourself in the future feeling positive feelings of anticipation, and feeling it frequently. Visualize yourself as you go through any future events, working to find the good things that are there. Imagine yourself in the future having an endless string of positive memories to look back on.

The more resistance you feel about the practice, the more you need it, and if you are patiently persistent, the practice will transform you into a much happier person. If you feel so negative about the practice that you feel like quitting, put this step aside and find something easier for you to do. Just remember, this is here waiting for you, and it has enormous power to change your moods, attitudes, and positivity. To build the habit of managing your expectations in the most positive possible way, use the practice to help you watch events in your life through each time window. Be aware that any time you have a negative experience, you may have set your expectations too high.

Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for "Having Expectations."



HAVING SOME CONTROL OVER YOUR LIFE

Do you sometimes feel like you don't have any control over your life? Does it seem as if life is racing by and you're just staying on the treadmill? It's not a good feeling to feel like your life is "out of control," or that other people are in control of your life.

Traumatic Experiences or Health Issues

Often people who have traumatic things happen to them or have health problems, feel that they have no control of their lives. They feel particularly vulnerable if family or other professionals are making the decisions for them.

If this is your situation, and you decide to take back the control, you may need to change your relationship with some people in your life. You may need to tell those people that you will be making the decisions in the future.

Life is Passing You by

Even if you haven't had traumatic experiences or poor health, you might think things are spiraling out of control, and that no one is at the wheel. Do you remember the old "I Love Lucy" show, where she's putting cherries on desserts in an assembly line? The line starts to move too fast, so she stuffs cherries in her mouth, in her pockets, and it's still too fast. Well, slow down your assembly line. Make a plan and work the plan.

Allowing Others to Affect Your Feelings

Some people think that others have a direct influence on their feelings. You can start by changing the words "...makes me feel" to "I feel..." For example, if you are used to saying "She makes me so angry," (which is a way of saying someone else is controlling you), change it to something like "I feel angry about..." (taking responsibility for your feelings).

If you want to have more control over your life, we can help you get it. When you explore this subject, you'll find that it's a lot easier than it seems. We help you identify and focus on the things that you do have control over, so you recognize that it may not be as bad as it seems.

Then, we help you discover that you have more choices than you might have thought. Ideally, it may be possible for you to discover that you really have chosen your life to work exactly as it is, and that you have an enormous amount of control that you didn't realize you had.

You can be a lot happier, even with the same chaotic, racing life you've been having, when you come to appreciate that you have a lot of choices, and you are doing exactly what you have chosen to do.

Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for "Having Some Control Over Your Life."



HAVING FREEDOM AND CHOICE

“Freedom” and “choice” are different things, but we’ll treat them together because they are intertwined. Freedom, in its simplest terms, means having choices. Freedom can make you happier. Having choices can make you happier. But, both only work within a small range. Beyond a small range, too much freedom or too many choices can be a burden that makes it hard to be happier.

Example:

Let’s say you win the lottery of 100 million dollars. You are now totally free. You don’t have to work. You can live anywhere. You can do anything. Total freedom sounds great, doesn’t it?

The scientists who have studied happiness also studied lottery winners. That’s one of the reasons they know that money doesn’t bring happiness. After the first glow of sudden wealth, lottery winners soon revert to their normal level of happiness; they are about as happy as they were before the big win. Being totally free doesn’t produce happiness. The burdens of having to make choices when there are no limits, puts a lot of stress on those who have that problem. I imagine you would eagerly change places with the lottery winners of the world, and you may find it hard to believe that total freedom is a burden.

Other examples:

Many of today’s college graduates — especially the liberal arts students — find themselves totally free to choose a career. They can go into any industry. They can do any kind of non-specialized work. Surveys of these young people show that they are overwhelmed with the choices. They have too many. They envy the computer science graduates, or the pre-med students, who, as it turns out don’t have as much freedom, because they’ve made limited choices about their careers. They will work in the computer field, or the medical field.

Here’s an illustration of the choice problem. During the cold war, a citizen in Russia could go to the store and buy blue jeans. Maybe he had only one choice. The Russian might feel like he didn’t have enough choices. He wasn’t happy. Perhaps he envied those Westerners who could shop in stores with many choices.

In my youth, I could go the store and have a handful of choices of blue jeans. It was good to have choices. I was happy. Today, an older person might go out to buy blue jeans and find a huge number of choices. Once used to a handful of choices, now faced with a vast array of styles, colors, washes, fits, the buyer is overwhelmed. More choices means more difficulty choosing, and more chances for error, more frustration in finding the right style.

My local grocery store has 141 different kinds of soup. Cable TV offers 140 or more different channels. If you sign up for Netflix movies, there are 30,000 choices. Maybe that's too many.

The increased number of choices has made something simple into something difficult. Beyond a certain limited range, an increased number of choices does not make a buyer happier.

You will be happier if you learn some simple strategies for handling situations where you have unlimited freedom or an overwhelming number of choices. We'll give you simple, fast practice that will help you resolve the paradox of choice.

The "Best" vs. "Good Enough"

Barry Schwartz, in his book "The Paradox of Choice" describes two kinds of shoppers: The "maximizer," who, wanting a new pair of blue jeans, might go to five stores and compare all of the choices to find the one that is "just perfect," and the "satisfier" (Barry's word), who is one who goes into one store that carries blue jeans, finds a pair that is "good enough" and is done.

Shwartz proposes that the optimal way to handle the paradox of having too many choices for any given purchase is to decide whether the purchase requires thorough analysis and comparison, or whether it just has to be "good enough."

When the choice is deemed important enough to require extensive shopping and comparison, then it may be prudent to undergo the stress and anxiety that goes along with trying to "maximize" a purchase. For everything else, Shwartz suggests just getting something that is "good enough."

For example, it might be worth your while to go through all the stress that is involved in trying to "maximize" the purchase of a house, or a car, because they cost a lot of money and the purchase will be with you daily for many years.

For other purchases, it would be wise to find something that is “good enough” without overly complicating the shopping decision, and enduring the stress, anxiety, and perhaps “buyer’s remorse” that comes from trying to find something that is “perfect.”

We would certainly support Shwartz’s views and even take them further. We would suggest that if you could, go ahead and make the purchase of a house or a car a “good enough” decision. We’ve seen many people virtually paralyzed by those decisions, and stressed out for months before and months after with the thought that maybe there was something “better” available.

There may or may not be gender differences at work on the shopping issue. It has been observed (please don’t think this represents our views at HTBH), that men are more likely to be “good enough” shoppers, and women are more likely to be “maximizers.” We think it’s more likely that men and women just make different shopping decisions on different items. For example, a woman may be willing to buy a car that is “good enough” while a man might study, examine, and overly complicate the decision and bargaining for a car. While a woman may put the purchase of a sweater into the “maximizer” category while a man might buy one that is “good enough.”

Even more likely: There are some men and some women who stress themselves far too much when they make a purchase, trying to find something that is “just right” or even “perfect.”

In any case, our goal is to help you become happier. Trying to make your purchase perfect will not make you happier. It will consume a lot of energy, time, and will cause you stress and worry. So, our simple advice is: Whenever and wherever possible, make every purchase one that is “good enough;” make no effort to find the perfect purchase. Also, once you have made a purchase, stop considering other choices you might have made. Done is done. That choice is finished. No regrets. Never look back.

Example

Alice (a “maximizer”) bought a wonderful house, in the “best” neighborhood, in the “right” school district, for a good price. Within a month after moving in she heard about a slightly larger version of her same house, in the same block, in even better condition, for slightly less money. She says, “Ever since I heard that, I’ve enjoyed our new house less, and have even regretted the purchase.”

You don't want to be like Alice whose wonderful new house didn't make her happier. If she had been looking for a house that was "good enough," she would have no regrets, and be quite happy with her new house.

Additional references: "The Paradox of Choice" Barry Schwartz

Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for "Having Freedom and Choice."



HAVING A PET THAT YOU LIKE

Pet owners know that having a pet that you like makes you happier. Dogs are very popular because they give unconditional love and affection to their owners. Dogs, however, make you and those around you, into their “pack.” Dogs are even more dependent on their “pack” than humans are. So, before you get a dog, be very aware of the dog’s need for company. If your pet will be alone often and for long periods, perhaps it’s better to get a less needy pet. Perhaps you could get a cat.

Some cat breeds give affection freely. Many do not. So, if you want a cat that will be affectionate, give you lots of company and amusement, pick a breed that fits that description. We’ll give you a few resources that will help in your search for a pet that you’ll like.

The right pet will make you happier. Make it an informed decision, so that you aren’t unhappy after selecting the wrong pet. Many times people get the same pet that they had as a child, without considering that the circumstances are different. A large, active dog, for example, might have worked fine when you lived where there was plenty of space for the dog to run, and someone was at home to take care of it. But now, if you’re working, you might reconsider and choose more wisely.

Be sure to do some research on getting the right pet. Use the words “selecting the right pet” in a Google, or other search, and you’ll find lots of good information. The book store is also a great resource for you.

When and if you decide to get a pet, join the pet forum and share your experiences. Or, if you’re still thinking and haven’t decided, look to the forum members for their thoughts. Share your situation, and get some feedback.

Additional references: books at Amazon.com Use Google or other search engines to research the subject. Here are two links:

<http://www.ddfl.org/behavior/rightpet.htm>

http://www.hsus.org/pets/pet_adoption_information/selecting_the_right_pet_for_you_pure_or_mixed_breed.html

If you'd like to see the Johnston pets, see their Bichon Missy at:

<http://www.kenshan.com/family/calendar/00.html> or read about their cat

Krikrit at: **<http://www.kenshan.com/krikrit/00krikrit.html>**

Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for "Having a Pet."



FINDING "FLOW" IN YOUR LIFE

Scientists studying happiness tell us that a truly happy life is made up of three things:

1. The "pleasurable" life
2. The "meaningful" life
3. The "engaged" life i.e. *Flow*

In other words, "flow" is important. Learn how to get it. Then, go where the flow takes you.

Some call it "engagement," some call it "flow," but it's any activity that so engages you that you *lose yourself* in it. When you're doing something and come to realize that you've just missed lunch, or found that hours have passed while it seem like only minutes, that's flow. Any activity or task that creates this state for you is a desirable task.

Flow is the delicate balance between challenge and skill. If a task is not challenging enough, you are likely to find it boring. If a task is too challenging, you are likely to find it frustrating.

Simply put, then, the key to finding flow is to:

- increase or decrease the challenge of a task or activity, or to
- increase your knowledge and skill and the challenge at the same rate.

We'll show you how to find it in your work, so you can enjoy your work more. We'll show you how to find it in the routine tasks that make up the space in our lives between leisure and work. We'll show you how to find it in leisure activities, so you can choose leisure activities that bring you the extra richness that flow adds to your life.

A Work Example

Betty's job was to transcribe the dictations of various medical professionals into the computer so the records could be easily accessible to others. All day long she listened to doctors, lab professionals, and pathologists drone on as they dictated their work. She had long since learned the vocabularies of each specialty and the job had become boring for her. She had taken special training to equip her for the job, so it was her chosen career, and she was good at it and her skill was high. The pay was excellent, but she could not escape the fact that the work had become boring.

Betty regained the flow that the job used to produce by increasing the challenge of the job. She found a dictation playback device that could vary the speed of the playback, while minimizing the distortion (the “Donald Duck” sound from speeding it up). She experimented with running playbacks as quickly as she could type and adapted each dictation depending on the speaking pace of the speaker.

Betty couldn’t have described flow, but she figured out a way to beat boredom by increasing the challenge of the task. She maintained flow by keeping the challenge precisely balanced with her skill. She became able to transcribe as quickly as she could type, and by doing so, achieved and maintained flow. Her workday flew by. (She ramped her production at a rate 1.5 to 2.0 times the next fastest transcriber.)

She ended up by quitting her salaried job and working as free lance, out of her home, and earning twice the money. But for Betty, the important thing was that she regained the flow that she had once felt in the early days of her work, as she was building her skills and learning the vocabularies.

A Housekeeping Example

Tom hated doing laundry; his wife hated vacuuming. So, they settled on a routine where Tom would vacuum and his wife did laundry. Tom soon found that he, too, began to dislike vacuuming. He found it boring. So — without awareness of flow — Tom began to make the task more challenging. He first chose to make the sweeper path lines parallel, and to keep the lines uniform. The increased challenge of the task created a state of flow, since he found it quite challenging to make all the lines uniform and parallel.

Eventually, even this became routine and started to get boring, so Tom increased the challenge more by making the sweeper marks uniform and parallel *and* diagonal and vertical. Soon his carpets looked like the designs of the mowers on golf courses or mowing lines on football fields. Eventually, he ended up keeping the lines straight on each side of barriers like chairs, sofas or tables. He sought a look as though all the furniture had been removed and he had vacuumed a perfectly clear carpet.

The point is that Tom was able to take a routine task and increase the challenge in perfect harmony with his skill in order to maintain flow. Critics might say that Tom was wasting more time on vacuuming than necessary, and they would be correct. But, without conscious

awareness, Tom was balancing challenge and skill to achieve flow, even though the task itself was mundane and potentially boring.

A Play Example

Most video games are built with the goal of increasing challenge while building skill. While you are first learning the game, it is very simple. Success is easy to achieve. If the game didn't get more challenging, it would quickly become boring. (Perhaps you are old enough to remember the first video game called "Pong.")

Game designers have learned how to make the game more complex and more challenging, as the user goes through different skill levels. You only need to watch young people totally absorbed with their PlayStations or other video game consoles to see the effects of flow. Mothers know how hard it is to interrupt the games for other things, like eating, bathing, or going to school.

You might have found it yourself if you've learned a musical instrument. Teachers are adept at increasing the challenge carefully to keep it in line with the increasing skill. When a student finds flow in practice sessions, learning doesn't feel like work, it feels like fun. If the assigned tasks get too challenging or stay too easy, boredom or frustration occurs and students feel like quitting the lessons.

Look to your hobbies to find examples of flow in your life. Bridge players, chess players, stamp collectors all find it easy to keep skill balanced with challenge.

Recognize that any given task you take on in the practice, may take you weeks, months, or even years to complete. The only risk you run is that you could find yourself so involved with adding flow to your life that you don't pay enough attention to the other two aspects of a full and happy life: *pleasure* and *meaning*.

Additional references: For a thorough study of flow, read "Flow" or "Finding Flow" by Mihaly Csikszentmehalyi (pronounced "cheeks sent me high")
Please go to your workbook practice for "Find 'Flow" in Your Life."



ENJOYING HOLIDAYS, CELEBRATIONS, AND RITUALS

Many people find joy and happiness in celebrating holidays and observing rituals. Many people don't.

If you're lucky, you'll be joyously celebrating such things as weddings, birthdays, or rituals that lead young people into adulthood. If this describes you, then carry on, appreciate your good fortune, and look at some of the many other things that will make you happier.

If, however, you are more like Scrooge in a Dickens' tale, and say "Bah! Humbug" when others are celebrating, we do have something to offer. We can help you appreciate the happiness that others are experiencing during celebrations, holidays, or rituals. We can help you be happy for them. And, as you know by now, when you are happy for someone else, you get happier yourself.

We will teach you a skill that will have many uses in your life. This skill has many names, but all are just different names for the same skill. Here are some of the sayings that describe the skill:

"Cast out darkness, let in the light."

"Borrow pleasure, run from unhappiness."

"Share joy, but not misery."

"Gather the happy around you so that the unhappy are farther away."

"Allow the joy to light your way, so as to see amid the gloom."

"Welcome happy thoughts. Make unhappiness unwelcome."

"Moods are catching. Catch the good ones. Be immune to the negative."

What are all of these homilies trying to say? Take joy where you find it. Share it. Embrace it. Allow it to reach inside you and make you happier.

Protect yourself from negative thoughts. Don't share them. Don't embrace them. Don't allow them inside where they can make you unhappy.

Some people might ask: "Isn't that being selfish? Whatever happened to sympathy for the miserable? What about empathy? Shouldn't we walk a mile in our brothers' footsteps? How sad the world would be if everyone felt the way you do. What about the Saints? What about Mother Teresa?"

Let's be clear. "Share the joy, but not misery," means that when you are around someone who is feeling joyous, you allow the feeling to lift your spirits. You become joyous, or at least as joyous as you can manage. When you are around somebody who is angry, you don't allow the feeling in. You don't become angry.

Mastering this skill won't make you a bad person, or insensitive, or not empathetic. This skill will make you more positive and happier. Your happiness will rub off on others.

As the saying goes, "Moods are catching." Catch the good moods; they will make you happier. Be immune to the negative moods; they will make you unhappy.

This is not an easy habit. We're going to give you practice that will help you develop it. You may find that you've shut yourself off from good moods and positive statements, in order to protect yourself from the bad moods and negative statements that are all too common.

In another step, called positivity, we'll teach you that positivity, (the ratio of the positive thoughts and words to the negative thoughts and words) has been scientifically measured. Positivity needs to be at a ratio of five to one. In other words, you need to make five positive statements to counteract the mood damage that one negative statement does.

In this step, however, we'll just teach you the skill of adopting, embracing, allowing, and welcoming positive statements and moods of others, while not allowing the negative moods of others to make you negative.

Actually, the teaching is all done. Now you know what to do. The practice is to increase your awareness and perception of the negatives and positives all around you, and gradually — with persistence and practice — you'll learn to lift your spirits when those around you are happy, and to stay unmoved when you encounter negativity.

Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for "Enjoying Holidays, Celebrations, and Rituals."



(A)
HAVING FRIENDS

Science tells us that because we are “social animals,” making new friends will make us happier; making close friends will make us even happier. Since an easy way to become happier is to make more friends, be open to friendship. And since making “close” friends is another way to become happier, take some actions to become closer to one or more of your friends. We have some wonderful tools to help you widen your circle of friends, and to become closer to those already in your circle.

Making New Friends

You already know many places where you can meet new people: school, hobby groups, a house of worship, your own neighborhood, etc. Being open to making new friends when you choose, takes some initiative on your part. It means you need to search out places that will likely have people who share your interests.

Making Close Friends

The happiness studies show that friends really do matter, and having close friendships help create a satisfying life.

However, does it seem as if you simply don’t have time to make new friends, or even stay in close touch with your “best” friends? You’re not alone, if you’re in a demanding job, or you’re tending toddlers at home. When you were young and looking for a career, you probably loved meeting new people and making new friends. Now, however, you may discover that the one or two close friends you have don’t get the attention that you used to give them. And you may wonder why you haven’t heard from them, either.

You may have discovered what the grandson of John Quincy Adams said: “One (close) friend in a lifetime is much; two are many; three are hardly possible.”

If, however, you are looking to widen your circle of friends, consider the people you know, and think about which ones you regard as friends. Some of your acquaintances can become your friends, with a little effort on your part. There are several actions you can take.

Keeping in Touch

If your friends don't live nearby (or even if they do), you will want to contact them. Don't wait until you hear from them. Send them an email or a "friends" greeting card. Make a phonecall; invite them to meet you for an event.

Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for "Having Friends."



HELPING OTHERS

For many people, helping someone is the easiest way to get closer to that person. It may seem odd that the simplest way to help yourself is to help someone else, but that's the way it works. Zig Ziglar said "You can have anything in the world you want if you'll just help enough other people get what they want." By making the first move, you set up a series of reactions that will get you what *you* want.

The odds are good that you can find many opportunities to help others. It will work out well for everyone, especially if you don't have expectations about getting something back (you usually get something back sometime, anyway).

If you can't think of people you can help, or ways in which you are willing to help, we'll give you a practice that will further your efforts.

Keep your Progress Journal up to date, so you can keep track of your progress in this area. There's a good reason to do that: One of the advanced steps explains how positive memories will make you happier. Keeping this journal will give you something to look back on; it will let you bring back good memories any time you are feeling blue.

As one of the websites about helping others says:

"The happiest people are those who care more about others than they do about themselves."

Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for "Helping Others."



BEING APPRECIATED

Being appreciated will make you happier. Being appreciated for a single, temporary, and impersonal thing, like, "I really like that report you wrote," is *good*, however, it's *better* to be appreciated for multiple, permanent, impersonal things, like "I really like the way you always jump in and fix things when they go wrong around here. You're terrific." And it's *best* to be appreciated for multiple, permanent, and personal things, like "You are so good for everyone's attitude and morale around here. Your sunny, warm and caring personality lifts everyone's spirits. Thanks for being here."

Some examples from home:

"Thanks for making my bed." (single, temporary, impersonal)

"Thanks for all the things you do around here to make life easier for me." (multiple, permanent, impersonal)

"Thanks for being who you are. I can't imagine life without you." (multiple, permanent, personal).

Let's face reality. You will never be appreciated enough. It's unlikely that anyone in your life will ever appreciate you enough for all of the things you do, have done, and will do for them. The problem is that the appreciation you get is totally up to the other people in your life. And, as much as we wish it were different, you can't control what the other people in your life do or don't do.

There are some things you can do that have some chance of increasing the frequency and the quality of the appreciation you get.

Being Appreciated

There's a very odd category that we should have learned about in school, yet we didn't. The odd category is the list of things that you *cannot* get by *trying* to get them. These are things that most people want, yet they can't get them by trying for them or buying them.

Here is a short list:

- LOVE: You can't buy it, and you won't be loved by *trying* to be loved.

- POPULARITY: You can't buy it. You won't become popular by trying to be popular.
- APPRECIATION: You can't buy it. You won't get it by asking for it.
- ATTENTION: You *can* buy it (ala Donald Trump and Richard Branson, et al), but when you ask for it, or try to get it, you're more likely to get negative attention.

There are other things, but you get the idea. So, what's the answer to these paradoxical needs and desires most of us have?

The way to be *loved* is to *love* someone. This is not a sure thing, but it's the best strategy you've got. The secret is to get outside yourself, and into someone else.

The way to be *popular* is to be genuinely interested in people. Besides being interested in other people, you have to like them, respect them, and pay attention to them. Again, the key is to get outside yourself and into others.

The way to get the kind of *attention* you want is to help people get what they want. If you attend to the needs and desires of others, you'll get their attention. This is as true of one-on-one situations where you want to earn the attention of an individual, as it is of one-to-many situations where you help a large number of people get what they want.

For example, a movie star like Meryl Streep, or a TV personality like Oprah, give people the experiences they desire and so they get your attention. The NY Times columnist Thomas Friedman gives readers the insight they seek. Think about all of the people who've got your attention. They got it by helping you get something that you want.

Now, let's talk about *appreciation*. You can't get appreciation by expecting it, or asking for it, or even demanding it. *You get appreciation by helping people get what they want.* Some people want to be loved, so love them. Love them unconditionally if you possibly can. Some people want to be popular, so like them, respect them, and pay attention to them. Be a friend to them.

The best way for you to *be* appreciated is to appreciate someone. Just as loving someone doesn't guarantee that you'll be loved in return, it's the best chance you've got. Appreciating someone else is the best chance you've got for being appreciated. The key is get outside of yourself, your needs, wants and desires, and into someone else — one person at a time.

Accepting Appreciation

Obviously, after you get through the practice (which is fairly short and easy), we suggest you go through the other step called, "Appreciating Someone." But, first, it's important to be aware of the appreciation you already have. Most people make the mistake of wanting their appreciation to come to them the way they want it, instead of the way the person giving it wants to give it.

This means that women tend to want their appreciation in a certain way that women value. Men tend to want their appreciation in a certain way that men value. As we all must realize by now, "Men are from mars and women are from Venus." They are aliens to each other. They don't speak the same language, or use the same gestures, or have the same needs.

So, it often happens that a man will express his appreciation for his partner in a way that would work for a man, but might be missed all together by a woman. In the same way, a woman will often express her appreciation of her partner in a way that any woman would recognize as appreciation, but a man might miss completely.

It often happens, therefore, that a man and a woman are each appreciating each other, but both feel underappreciated.

Another complexity comes from roles, like mother and daughter, or father and son. It often happens that people in these roles can feel underappreciated. A mother may get all confabulated when the daughter that she raised becomes her caregiver in the mother's later years. The daughter might feel underappreciated, when the problem is simply that the reversal of roles has totally confused them both. In situations like this appreciation might look so different that the daughter isn't even aware of it.

Before you leave this step and go on to appreciating someone, this practice will help you discover what appreciation looks, sounds, and feels like to the person you want appreciation from.

Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for "Being Appreciated."



APPRECIATING SOMEONE

Note: Before you take this Happiness Action, please complete "Being Appreciated."

One thing you can totally control is the frequency and quality of the appreciation you give to others. There is nothing to stop you from appreciating everyone in your life as often as you think about it. (We'll help you think about it.)

Expressing your appreciation often — especially if it's the highest quality appreciation — will bring the people in your life closer to you. And (not by accident), the more appreciation you give, the more appreciation you are likely to get back.

If you haven't thought about the frequency or quality of your appreciation, you may find you've been giving your appreciation in meager doses, like, "Oh, I like your purse." You could be giving much stronger appreciation, like, "You're always so cheerful. Thanks for being my friend."

Giving frequent, high quality doses of appreciation will make you happier. It will also make the people in your life happier. And, you increase the odds that you'll get some appreciation too. (But, don't count on it. That's not why you're doing it.)

Learning to become happier by giving more frequent, high quality portions of appreciation is easy, fast, and rewarding.

Appreciating someone is the act of communicating to someone how important they (or something they've done), are to you.

You may call appreciation many things:

- Respect
- Esteem
- Treasure
- Regard (you may regard the person, or an act)

You may

- "appreciate"
- "acknowledge"
- "attach importance to"
- "be grateful for"
- "be thankful for"

As you can see, appreciating someone is a huge category of things. If you're more comfortable calling it "respecting someone" or "acknowledging someone," feel free.

The idea is simple. Someone does *something* you value (an act), or is *someone* you value (the person).

Appreciating that person is the act of communicating your appreciation to that person. We say "act" because it involves an action, not just a thought. We say "communicating" because that implies the person "hears" the message. The communication can be in person, by phone, by Instant Message, by email, by note, by card, or delivered by another person.

The act of appreciating someone will make you happier. It will also, most likely, make the other person happier as well.

This step is all about becoming more aware of the people in your life whom you appreciate, and the acts of others whom you appreciate. Once you are aware of the people and the acts, this step is about increasing the frequency with which you actively communicate your appreciation.

In addition to more awareness, and frequency, this step is also about making your expressions of appreciation more "powerful."

Daily Practice

The daily practice will enable you to become habitually aware of the people and their actions that enrich your life, and for which you are appreciative. The daily practice will encourage you to act in a way that communicates your appreciation so that the person "gets it."

The daily practice will guide you to "enrich" your expressions of appreciation so that your actions are more powerful and more frequent.

When you've finished this step, you will have built the habit of communicating your appreciation of others frequently and powerfully. You, and those in your life, will be happier. Guaranteed!

Before we begin the practice, let's be clear on what makes an expression of appreciation powerful or wimpy.

An example:

You've got your arms full of stuff, and as you approach the door a stranger stops and holds the door for you. How do you express your appreciation?

1. You smile and nod. (wimpy)
2. You say, "Thank you." (fairly minimal)
3. You say, "I appreciate you holding the door." (appreciating the act)
4. You say, "You're very kind; thank you." (appreciating the person)
5. You say, "Thank you! You're very thoughtful. I really appreciate your help." (You've appreciated both the act and the person, and said it was meaningful to you.)
6. You say, "Wow! Thanks! You've saved my life. Come to dinner Sunday." (You've gone too far. That's over the top.)

Another example:

You're the boss, and one of your employees does some good work.

1. You smile, and give the employee a thumbs up sign. (Better than nothing but fairly wimpy)
2. You smile and say, "I like what you did." (appreciating the act)
3. You smile and say, "Good job. You always do that, so well." (appreciating the act — more powerful because you made it permanent with the word "always.")
4. You smile and say "Good job. I can always count on you." (Appreciating the act, and also appreciating the person.)
5. Big grin as you say, "Terrific job. I can always count on you. You make my job easy, and you're really good for this company." (Appreciating the act, the person, saying why the person is meaningful to you as well as meaningful to the company.)
6. Big smile as you say, "Great job. You're terrific at what you do. My boss was saying nice things about the department, and I told her you were a really important reason things were going so well." (appreciating the act, the person, and sharing your appreciation with the person, and third parties as well.)

Okay, you've got the idea.

- Appreciate the single act: nice, but wimpy.
- Appreciate the act...more broadly..."always:" stronger but not personal
- Appreciate the act, and the person: much stronger.
- Appreciate the act, and the person...more broadly, "always:" Very strong.

- Appreciate the act broadly, the person broadly, and why it's meaningful to you: Fantastic. Really strong. Powerful.

How to Communicate the Appreciation

These are rough guidelines; feel free to ignore. These are weak to strong, top to bottom.

1. An email message
2. An instant message
3. A handwritten note
4. A personal letter
5. A phone call
6. Face to face verbal.

If you communicate a very powerful appreciation, any medium will work. If it's really powerful, sometimes it's better to have it in writing so the person can look at it again and again. (I've seen really good ones framed.)

Escalate your appreciation gently. Don't leap from one who only nods to one who is effusive in your thanks overnight. The suddenness of the shift will be uncomfortable for some people, and it probably will be uncomfortable for you as well.

Increase your appreciation power at a moderate pace. There isn't any hurry. You're building a habit that will last your lifetime.

If you've been pretty lax in appreciating the people in your lives, start with appreciating their acts. When you're both comfortable with that level, shift to appreciating the person, when you both comfortable with that level, start explaining what they mean to you.

Frequency and power are both important. It's important to ramp up both frequency and importance.

When you accomplish this practice, you're likely to find yourself getting more appreciation as well. A happier *you* makes all the people in your life happier.

Please go to the practice for "Appreciating Someone."



FEELING GRATEFUL

Feeling grateful will make you happier. It's been proven time and again by every study the happiness scientists make. Feeling grateful is similar to feeling appreciated. The distinction we make is that giving and getting appreciation is between two people, while feeling grateful is something *you do for and by yourself*.

Many of us focus clearly on the things in our life that aren't going well. Feeling grateful is about focusing on the things that make your life better, richer, and happier. Some people call these good things the 'blessings' in your life. We call them the 'appreciables' in your life. We'll help you focus more often on the appreciables.

An interesting recent study showed that depressed people who made a *daily habit* of reviewing three things they were grateful for, became less depressed over time.

Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for "Feeling Grateful."





Intermediate Topics

HAVING LEISURE ACTIVITIES

Prerequisites: "Finding Meaning in Your Life;" "Finding Flow in Your Life"

Note: Before you take this step: Having Leisure Activities, take two other steps. Take the step where you *add meaning to your life*. And take the step where you *add "flow" to your life*. The reason we suggest that sequence is that you might want to use some of your leisure time for the activities that add meaning and flow to your life.

Leisure activities can make you happier, or not. It depends on your judgments. For example, let's say you read a novel. When you finish the book you'll be happier if you found the book meaningful to you in some way, or found that you "lost yourself" in the book and were totally engaged in your reading. On the other hand, if you thought to yourself that the book was 'trash,' it's unlikely that reading the book made you happier.

If that example fits you, then, of course it's obvious that you will make yourself happier by reading books that are meaningful to you and that engage you as you read them. You might read a 'trashy' book once in a while as a guilty pleasure, but you'll be happier if you choose your reading with more awareness. The same is true of TV shows, or movies, or cultural events.

We're not talking about converting you to great literature or PBS television. We'll simply help you recognize those leisure activities that make you happier, and those that don't. Then, you'll always be free to choose, but you'll be aware of your choices, and be free of that feeling that you might sometimes spend time that is just wasted.

The News

Pay special attention to the time you spend reading newspapers, or watching TV news. You may believe you have a citizen's duty to stay up with current events. You might even feel a little noble about keeping up with the day's news. It may not be true of the newspapers *you* read or the TV *you* watch, but in the bulk of cases, these media are filled with murders, scandals, wars, and other scary and unpleasant things.

If you take special notice, you'll see that the TV news keeps you waiting through the ads with teasers that say things like, "We'll be right back to tell you the seven deadly ways what you're eating can kill

you.” Or, “Back next with three secrets to staying alive on the expressway.”

If you look at the media content with “new eyes,” you may notice that the news is disturbing, frightening, horrifying, and not very enlightening. It’s certainly not entertaining, and is quite unlikely to make you happier.

If you are really happy with the way you spend your leisure time, you don’t need this practice. If, however, you sometimes feel like you’re just wasting your valuable time, you’ll find the practice helpful.

Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for “Having Leisure Activities.”



FINDING MEANING IN YOUR LIFE

There is something sad about reaching middle age and finding yourself asking the question, "Is this it? Is this all there is?" Yet, that happens to millions of people, because they don't know how to give their life meaning; they don't know how to live a "meaningful" life.

If you wonder, "What is the meaning of life?" we don't have the foggiest idea. If you ever wonder, "*How can I add meaning to my life?*" we can help you. If you wish to live the most complete and happiest possible life, then it's very valuable to learn how to add meaning to your life.

We are certain you want to hear our answer, but the editorial staff insists on denying you that pleasure. Instead, we'll tell you what the experts say. We've carefully chosen these quotes because they match our thinking.

Their secrets of living a meaningful life are incredibly simple, yet challenging to achieve. You'll see what we mean when you do the practice.

What Famous Thinkers Have Said

Leo Tolstoy, Russian philosopher said:

"The sole meaning of life is to serve humanity."

Hmm. Grandiose, noble and brief. How do you and I do that?

Victor Frankl, who wrote "Man's search for Meaning" sounds as if he ought to know. Frankl said,

"The meaning of our existence is not invented by ourselves, but rather is detected."

Frankl also said:

"What matters, therefore, is not the meaning of life in general, but rather the specific meaning of a person's life at a given moment."

To me this means that we each have to examine ourselves to detect what it is that gives meaning to our unique lives. That means that each of us, all 6.4 billion people living on earth right now each have unique capabilities, skills, talents, gifts, desires, needs, and ambitions. We each get to "detect" within ourselves what the meaning of our life will be.

People who never bother to find what is meaningful in their lives, according to Henry David Thoreau, American essayist, are missing the boat, really in a big way. Thoreau said,

"Most men live lives of quiet desperation, and go to the grave with the song still in them."

So, it seems to be that each of us is on our own. Each of us must discover, or 'detect' what it will be that makes our lives feel more meaningful.

More Quotes

Here are some quotes from some truly great people. Each of them is telling us what the meaning of life is *for them*.

We'll give you these examples of what made life meaningful for these great folks, then we'll give you some questions to help you find what will make your life more meaningful for you. (If reading quotes doesn't help make your life more meaningful, skip on to the "Summary.")

For Benjamin Franklin, actions were everything.

"Words may show a man's wit, but actions his meaning."

Eric Hoffer, great American writer and philosopher, said something that might explain about what makes a terrorist, when he said:

"Passionate hatred can give meaning and purpose to an empty life."

Let's hope that some of the terrorists learn to be happier so they don't have such empty lives.

Earl Nightingale, American Motivational writer, said,

"We are at our very best, and we are happiest, when we are fully engaged in work we enjoy on the journey toward the goals we've established for ourselves. It gives meaning to our time off and comfort to our sleep. It makes everything else in life so wonderful, so meaningful."

Ralph Waldo Emerson (or perhaps Bessie Stanley; it is in dispute.) said:

*"To laugh often and much;
To earn the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children;
To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends;
To appreciate beauty, to find the best in others;
To leave the world a little bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition;
To know that even one life has breathed easier because you have lived.
This is to have succeeded."*

Nelson Henderson was quoted as saying:

"The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit."

The Russian Mystic and Philosopher P.D. Ouspensky said:

"It is only when we realize that life is taking us nowhere that it begins to have meaning."

Antoine de Saint-Exupery, the famous French writer said:

"The meaning of things lies not in the things themselves, but in our attitude toward them."

Saint-Exupery also said:

"Each man must look to himself to teach him the meaning of life. It is not something discovered. It is something molded."

E.B. White (Famed American writer) said:

"Life's meaning has always eluded me and I guess it always will. But I love it just the same."

Carl Jung (Famous Swiss psychiatrist) said:

"The least of things with meaning is worth more in life than the greatest of things without it."

And, Jung also said:

"As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light of meaning in the darkness of mere being."

Tony Robbins (Famous American motivational speaker) said:

"It is not what we get. But who we become, what we contribute...that gives meaning to our lives."

Erich Fromm (Famed German psychoanalyst and writer) said:

"There is no meaning to life except the meaning man gives to his life by the unfolding of his powers."

Aristotle (We're still quoting him, and he wrote in 322-384 BC) said:

"Man is a goal seeking animal. His life only has meaning if he is reaching out and striving for his goals."

Les Brown (Motivational Speaker) said:

"Life takes on meaning when you become motivated, set goals and charge after them in an unstoppable manner."

Richard M. Devos (Founder of Amway) said:

"Money cannot buy peace of mind. It cannot heal ruptured relationships, or build meaning into a life that has none."

Phillip Brooks (1835-1893) said:

"It is while you are patiently toiling at the little tasks of life that the meaning and shape of the great whole of life dawns on you."

The Dalai Lama (Lhamo Dhondrub) said:

"Old friends pass away, new friends appear. It is just like the days. An old day passes, a new day arrives. The important thing is to make it meaningful: a meaningful friend – or a meaningful day."

And, we'll give the last word to Anais Nin (American-French writer) who said:

"There is not one big cosmic meaning for all, there is only the meaning we each give to our life. To seek total unity is wrong. To give as much meaning to one's life as possible is right to me."

Summary

If we might be allowed the privilege of summing up what these wonderful people have been saying, here it is.

Living the "meaningful" life is one of the three parts of a full life, well lived. (Along with the "pleasurable" life and the "engaged" life.)

There is no single cosmic secret to life's meaning. You are obliged to find the meaning in your own life. You must make each day, and each friend, and each event, meaningful. Life happens; you need to add the meaning. It's not about money. It's about having dreams and goals and striving to live your dream and reach your goals. You must mold the meaning in your life. You choose what counts for you. Let your life not be one of quiet desperation. Find the song in your heart and let it fill your life. Plant a tree for future generations to find shade under. Make the world a better place by having lived, if by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition.

Additional references: Martin Seligman's website:

<http://www.authentic happiness.org/>

Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for "Finding Meaning in Your Life."



HAVING CHILDREN

Having children is another difficult issue. Having a child will probably not make you happier, right away. When the child is grown and gone, you'll probably be happier that you had that child. Does that make any sense?

Theoretically, we'd all be happier if we could bear full grown children that are happy, thriving, and on their own, but we can't.

If you are going to have a child, don't expect that the child will make you happier. Instead, it might be more realistic to expect that the child will tie you down, make you worry, be a huge hassle, and will not appreciate you for giving it all your attention, your time, your effort, and your love. A child will cost you a lot of money, a lot of stress, and a lot of worry. That's what you should expect.

You will, however, get someone to love and nurture and care about. Those things will make you happier. Later, when the child is grown and you think back on raising the child, you will be happier because you had the child. There's even a chance, when you're old and need someone to look after you, that the child or children will be there for you.

We don't have any good answers for you on the issue of having or not having children. There are lots of resources for you on the Internet and in bookstores. It may be useful for you to list your expectations, then check them out with other sources, including the forum on this website.

Additional references: Bookstores

Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for "Having Children."



LOVING SOMETHING

Note: Before you begin, please read Appendix A: Four Questions Four Choices.

Some people say you can't "love" anything but people (and maybe animals). If you think that way, then just change the word "love" to "enjoy immensely," or something that feels comfortable for you. When you love/enjoy something, you give it great *importance* in your life. Giving importance to things and activities helps make you happy.

It's even easier to love something that isn't a person. It's really easy to love a dog. It's a little harder to love a cat, but cat lovers do it easily. Music lovers love music. Maybe they don't love all kinds of music, but they could. I love tennis, golf, football, basketball, and an endless list of other things, even dog sled racing. My mother loves jigsaw puzzles, and watching Doctor Phil, and zillions more things.

Everything you love makes you happier. And, you can decide to love lots of things. Sure, I can find fault with any of the things that I love, and so could you. One easy way to make yourself happier is to love the things you already love, and love them unconditionally. Another easy way to be happier is to start loving things you don't already love. (Example: when my wife and I married, she did not like football. In order to share that experience with me, she learned to love it and is now a big fan.) We can help you become aware of all the things you already love, and start choosing even more things you want to learn to love in the future.

Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for "Loving Something."



BOUNCING BACK FROM ADVERSITY

Note: If you have not read Appendix A, please do so now.

“Resilience” is the word generally used to describe *the ability to bounce back from adversity*. Resilience has been well studied.

Being resilient will make you happier.

One major difference between optimists and pessimists is their resilience. An optimist who gets laid off from work, doesn't take it personally, is sure it will be only a short time until a new job is found, and doesn't let it affect any other areas of life, like marriage, or the family, or friends, etc.

A pessimist who gets laid off from work is likely to think it was because of something he or she did or didn't do, and takes it very personally. A pessimist is likely to think it will take a very long time, if ever, to get another job. And, he or she is sure that the marriage will be ruined, the kids will hold grudges because of what they'll miss, and friends will lose respect. A real pessimist can end up staying home, sulking, avoiding others, and not even looking for work.

So, those who have studied resilience have taken careful notice of what it takes for anyone to bounce back from adversity. If you are dealing with adversity, we'll show you the exact steps to take to become more resilient and bounce back as quickly as possible. You don't have to convert from pessimist to optimist, we'll just help you discover the three changes you can make in your thoughts that will make you more resilient. And, we'll give you the practice that you can do in minutes each day to help you recover from the adversity more quickly.

Resilience

We put this topic before “Becoming Optimistic” because resilience is easier and more focused on one event, rather than the rest of your life. Resilience is the ability to bounce back from adversity, and to bounce back quickly. Optimists tend to be naturally resilient.

Pessimists are not. People that are a mixture of both may or may not be resilient.

The reason you need to know how to be resilient is because “Life Happens.” It would be a miracle if you have a lifetime free of adversity. Look around. Read the papers. Adversity is everywhere. There are fires, floods, tornadoes, tsunamis, muggings, burglaries, thefts, rapes, bankruptcies, layoffs, downsizings, intolerance, murderers, car accidents, deaths of loved ones, divorces, adulteries, betrayals, scandals, humiliations, droughts, crop losses, and on and on.

So, every life will have some adversities.

Optimists and pessimists can all go along in life pretty smoothly, until there is an adversity.

The optimist goes by the formula for optimism:

- It wasn't me... (life happens; not my fault).
- It'll be over quickly (the sun will come up tomorrow; it's just a blip)
- It's only affecting one small part of my life...I still have my (spouse, kids, family, job, friends, faith, hobbies, etc.)

The pessimist goes by the formula for pessimism:

- It's all about me...(my loss, or my fault somehow)
- I'll never get over it...(the pain will go on forever.)
- My whole life is ruined...(the spouse, kids, family, job, friends, faith, hobbies, etc. will all be affected. This adversity will ruin my entire life.)

Example:

John and Joe are co-workers. The company suffers in a recession and lays off many workers. John and Joe are both laid off.

John, the optimist, knows, believes, thinks, the following:

- It's not my fault; it's just the economy.
- I'll get a new job quickly, probably even a better job. (One door closes, another opens.)
- I've still got the important things in my life: my wife, my kids, my parents, my friends, my church. And maybe I'll get in a little more golf and fishing while I'm looking for my next job.

Joe, the pessimist, knows, believes, thinks, the following:

- It was me. The recession was just the excuse. I knew my boss didn't like me. Maybe it was that report I did. Maybe, it was...
- I'll never get another job in this economy, especially if I get a lousy referral from my boss. I'll end up bagging groceries.
- My wife will be ashamed of me. My kids will be humiliated at school. They'll blame it on me. My friends will avoid me because they'll be embarrassed. My dad always thought I wouldn't amount to anything. My sister-in-law will say, "I told you so."

Joe may end up taking years to get over the adversity. He may end up losing his wife and family. His friends may avoid him because they're embarrassed. But it won't be because he was laid off. It will be because of his *reaction* to being laid off.

People like Joe can end up defeated before they start, shunning people, staying home, not even looking for work. Joe's reaction to the layoff can start a spiral where all his self-defeating thoughts and attitudes become true. Joe's life may be ruined *by his reaction* to the adversity.

You, my friend, will not end up like Joe. You are going to learn the formula for handling any adversity. You will not only learn the formula, you'll memorize the formula, and you'll practice using the formula until it becomes like a mantra that runs through your head anytime you hear of anyone suffering an adversity.

Here is the formula for handling any adversity that life hands you. Learn it if you want to be more optimistic.

- It's not about me. It isn't my fault. Life happens.
- I will bounce back quickly. I'll adapt. I'll adjust. I'll get on with my life.
- It only affects one small part of my life. I've got so much more.

Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for "Bouncing Back from Adversity."



BEING POSITIVE

Note: If you have not read Appendix A, please do so now.

Positivity is the ratio of positive to negative thoughts or statements. Think for a moment about someone you know who is extremely positive. No matter what's happening this person almost always has something positive to say. Now, think about someone you know who is truly negative. You seldom hear positive comments, and frequently hear complaints, gripes, sarcasm, cynicism, or critical statements.

The first person has a high positivity ratio, the second person has a low positivity ratio.

Raising your positivity ratio will make you happier. And, everyone around you who is positive will be happier. Negativity can bring other people down, and invites them to be negative too.

By raising your positivity ratio, you'll be happier in many ways. First, you'll be happier yourself. Next, you'll make your people around you happier. And, no matter how grumpy you may be, you're always going to be happier when those around you are happier. Your family (kids, parents, siblings, etc.) will be happier when you are more positive. Your co-workers will be happier when you're happier, and so will your friends.

Many scientific studies have been done, and they all confirm each other. If you can *keep your positivity ratio at five to one, or better*, you'll be positive, and so will all those around you.

In work situations, it has been proven that managers who are positive while relating to their employees — on a ratio of at least five to one — will have happier employees, less turnover, more productivity, and more loyal employees.

In marriages, it has been studied with incredible care. There is even a book called "The Mathematics of Marriage" by the leading marriage expert Dr. John Gottman, that shows that lasting marriages are those where the partners each have positivity ratios higher than five to one, while interacting with their partner.

If you have a low positivity ratio, you will be unhappy. Your marriage won't be going well, your kids will be difficult, you probably won't get to manage people, and if you do, they won't be happy. Even your friends won't be that happy with you.

Is there any limit to positivity? Can there be too much positivity?

Yes, the benefits of being positive start to reverse when your ratio goes above about thirteen to one. That's Pollyanna territory. If you're *always* positive, and *never* critical, assertive, or distrustful — even when it is called for — you lose all that you gained by being positive.

If you have a low positivity ratio, you probably don't have to worry about becoming too positive. If you want to learn to lift your positivity ratio, we've got some excellent practice that will enable you to turn things around and become much more positive. It won't happen overnight, and it may be really challenging for you, but if you do a little tiny bit everyday, you can turn your ratio around and start heading higher in a very short time. Every day you persist, and every day you practice the one-minute practice, your ratio will creep ever so slightly higher. You'll discover an amazing change in yourself.

It has been estimated that each of us has more than 200,000 thoughts each day. That's 200,000 negative thoughts if you're a truly negative person. That's painful. If you can turn that around, you'll eventually be getting 170,000 or more of those thoughts to be positive. That's becoming happier!

You don't leap from grump to Pollyanna. You creep, day-by-day, ever so slightly higher, until pretty soon people start to notice a change in you. You'll become happier, your partner will be happier, and so will everyone you deal with. In six months, or maybe even a year, just doing a minute a day of positivity practice will totally reverse your positivity ratio. And, you will be happier. We're here to help you remember to do the practice.

Getting to a five to one positivity ratio if you've been a negative, critical person, is probably the hardest of all the steps that we offer to make you happier. Yet, it is the most powerful change you can make in yourself and your life. And, the practice only takes a minute a day to do, and it is really easy to do. So, if you are committed, and have the ability to persist, you can become a positive person.

Example

A negative person and a positive person are watching a TV show. The negative person is constantly using the Comparator to notice "what's wrong or bad" with the characters and the lines in the TV show. The positive person is using his or her comparator to see "what's good or right" with the characters and lines in the TV show.

The positive person finds the good, even if a critic might find the it to be dreadful. The negative person finds every flaw, blemish, mistake, or weakness in the show. The positive person enjoys the show. The negative person might enjoy it, but mostly enjoys finding the flaws. If the negative person insists on commenting on every flaw, it's difficult for the positive person to continuing enjoying the show. And, unless the positive person is mentally tough, the constant carping can make the positive person turn negative about the show.

Another Example

Here is one person's idea for creating a more positive experience.

"I used to pick up my son and two of his friends from school each day. On the trip home it seemed as if all I ever heard were complaints. When I got tired of that I decided to do something about it. I told them if they wanted to continue their diatribes, they could do that, but each of them would first have to start the trip with three things that had gone well. Some days the positive comments were pretty thin, such as "Well, at least I didn't fall down during gym class." However, the trip got better over time and certainly was much more enjoyable for me, and, I believe for them as well. Years later I discovered how powerful that exercise was when I heard my son say to his son, "Tell me three things that went well before you complain."

Here is one formula for turning negative thinking into positive. Anytime you're aware that you're having a negative thought, reaction, or feeling about something, ask yourself, "What's good about this?" before you go outside of yourself and express it.

Then, when you have found even one thing to like about what's happening, express yourself positively. Maybe at first you just smile or nod. Gradually, you might work yourself up to commenting; "I like this..." about what ever it is you found that was good.

The Comparator

You've read the first book of the Sage Model, and you've seen the Sage Map. Negativity can start anywhere, but the most prominent cause for negativity is the "Comparator." When a thought gets to the Comparator, the thought goes down into your unconscious to be assessed or analyzed.

In an overly simplistic fashion, it's easy to imagine that a positive person's Comparator is taking the thought and looking for matches.

Matches create good feelings. Positive people like good feelings, and are very used to them.

It's easy to imagine that a negative person's Comparator is looking for mismatches. Mismatches create bad feelings. Negative people are used to them, and hardly even notice them.

One secret to positivity is reversing your Comparator's search — or more realistically — countering a negative search with a positive search.

Feel free to change the question your comparator asks anytime you get a negative thought. Any one in the following list will work. If you get tired of one, pick another and begin asking that. "What's good about this?" invites you to be judgmental. You have so many other ways of evaluating your experiences in life:

- What matches what I think?
- What matches what I believe?
- What matches what I've learned?
- What matches what I've experienced?
- What matches what makes me laugh?
- What matches what makes me emotional?
- What matches with my goals in life?
- What matches with my dreams in life?

The single most important part of this practice is that you begin searching for matches, anytime you find a mismatch. And, when you find some kind of match, you express yourself in some positive way.

Facial positives:

A smile

A laugh

Positive Gestures:

A "thumbs up"

A "high five"

A "fist pump"

A nod

Positive assertions:

"Yes"

"I like...."

"That's good"

Remember, the goal is five positive expressions for every one negative expression. If you have been a truly negative person, you're going to turn those 200,000 thoughts a day that used to be negative into 370,000 thoughts a day, as you automatically counter at least 170,000 of those thoughts with something positive.

Obviously, you don't need to express yourself positively 170,000 times a day. But, as you find those 170,000 positive counter thoughts, you express five of them for every one negative expression you allow yourself.

Some Thoughts

Here are a few clichés, or homilies that you can tell yourself as you gradually begin evolving away from negativity toward positivity:

If you don't have anything good to say, don't say anything.

What sunshine is to flowers, smiles are to humanity. They are but trifles, to be sure, but, scattered along life's pathway, the good they do is inconceivable.

It is said that laughter is the best medicine. It is an excellent medicine.

The most completely lost of all days is that on which one has not laughed.

Some people see things as they are and say "Why?" I dream things that never were and say "Why not?"

If you want more quotes, Google on "being positive;" pick your favorite quote and say it to yourself often.

**Additional references: "The Mathematics of Marriage" by Dr. John Gottman
Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for "Being Positive."**



(A)
BEING LOVED

The first step in the process of forging a strong relationship with someone is to be open to being loved. The next step is to love someone, then to join together into an intimate relationship, and finally to get married to someone who is happy. Being happily married will make you happier.

You may have observed that some people seem to find it very easy to marry. Some people do it three, four, five or more times. Leaving aside the question about why none of the marriages turned out well, it's important to observe that while one person might find it impossible to find a marital partner, others have little difficulty. This happiness habit may be part of the explanation.

Some people find it difficult to be loved, simply because they are unable or unwilling to “connect” with others. There are two steps that help people connect.

Step One

First, people who do connect can be observed smiling and making eye contact with others. In other words, they are “approachable.”

Approachability can vary, based on local or national customs. In New York, for example, where the streets are very crowded, people tend not to look at one another. Someone would be considered very weird if he or she smiled at each person who passed by. However, in a small town it would be considered rude not to do so.

It seems that the more crowded a situation is, the less eye contact is made. On Japanese subways, which can be extremely crowded, each person totally ignores all the others. In Los Angeles people are not encouraged to talk to strangers — even in a grocery store parking lot — because of the fears of what might happen.

If you are from one of the Northeastern states in the U.S. you are probably uneasy around the Midwesterner, finding those people perhaps over friendly. Northeasterners may miss new contacts, because the culture often promotes un-approachability.

So, you have a decision to make. If you want to expand your contacts and connect more with others, then find opportunities to be more approachable. If you walk, for example, and pass others on your walk, nod and smile. (This strategy works at the gym, at PTA meetings, at work, etc.) Next time you see that a familiar person, perhaps say something about the weather, or the terrain. Eventually you might even stop and introduce yourself. Hard to know, you might even end up with a new walking partner.

Step Two

The second step has to do with acts of kindness. Some people are not very good at accepting kindness, even small acts, and so they distance themselves from others who might like to connect. Some are uncomfortable accepting gifts.

I have a friend Lois, who is magnificent at accepting gifts. She is so enthusiastic about whatever you might give her that you want to give even more. As a result, Lois has many friends who love her (she's also a very giving, loving person in return).

Again, you have a decision to make. When you increase your enthusiasm for kindnesses that you are offered, or make a big "to do" about receiving a gift, you are creating more opportunities for being loved.

Family and Friends

Another thing we can help with is 'cherishing' and 'valuing' time spent with family and friends. Even people who feel very alone and lonely — and think they aren't loved — will probably find people around them who really do love them. These are most likely to be your family members and friends. So, we help you practice nurturing these relationships until they are even warmer and more openly loving.

Other helpful Happiness Habit topics on the [www.HowToBeHappier](http://www.HowToBeHappier.com) website: "Having a Close-knit Family," "Having Friends," and "Appreciating Someone."

Please go to the [practice](#) for "Being Loved."





Advanced Topics

BEING HAPPIER WITH WORK

Note: Before you begin please take "Finding Meaning in Your Life," and "Finding Flow in Your Life." During the practice you will be asked to use the process from Appendix A: "Four Questions Four Choices," so be sure to read that as well.

The science that studies happiness says that having work will make you happier. So, if you don't have employment, find work that you can do while you're looking for the job you really want. If you're retired, find something you love to do that gives meaning to your life. Stay-at-home moms may not get paid, but they have important and meaningful work. Along with being frustrating and difficult, their work can make them happier.

We can't help you find work, but if you have some, we can help make you happier at it. Whatever work you do will have some good and some bad aspects. The practice will help you identify the good things about your work, so you can focus your attention on those.

Studies of people tell us that besides the income and the social network that work provides, the real happiness comes from discovering how to "lose" yourself (finding "flow") in your work, and having identified the "meaning" in your work.

In an interview with Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (well known for his bestselling 1990 book, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*), Elizabeth Diebold said: "Flow, whether in creative arts, athletic competition, engaging work, or spiritual practice, is a deep and uniquely human motivation to excel, exceed, and triumph over limitation. Csikszentmihalyi describes his life's work as the effort 'to study what makes people truly happy.' The emphasis here is on the word 'truly'—because to him, happiness is not simply flow nor an emotional state nor even the experience of pleasure. The happiness he points to involves the continual challenge to go beyond oneself as part of something greater than one's own self-interest."

Even if you hate your job, you can learn to find meaning in it, and find opportunities for flow. The practice will help you do it. And, if you already love your work, we'll help you love it even more.

Additional references: optional: "Flow" by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for "Being Happier With Work."



HAVING A CLOSE-KNIT FAMILY

Note: Before taking this topic, be sure you have taken "Having Friends," and also have read Appendix A: "Four Questions Four Choices."

People who have close ties to their family are happier because of it. Even if you have no siblings and are orphaned, you may still have relatives who can be gathered, herded, and harnessed into being your family. Others have done it, and so can you.

More likely, however, you do have a group of people you can readily identify as being your family. If your family isn't close knit, both you and they are missing opportunities to be happier. After you've accomplished some of the easier ways to be happier, you might get ready to tackle making your family a closer-knit family unit. We'll help you with tips, techniques, and strategies that can bring a family closer together. Others will share stories on the forum of how they have done it.

With some families it can be a real challenge. But, with big doses of acceptance, and a whole lot of forgiveness, you can make it work. Some families that were fractured and split have found ways to heal the breaches and come back together. There is truth to the cliché that 'blood is thicker than water.' If you see the value, we'll help you achieve it.

For those who already have a close-knit family with strong bonds and shared enjoyment, we still have some things you can do that will make you even happier with your good fortune. A warm, loving family can support you through any kind of adversity that life may throw at you.

Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for "Having a Close-knit Family."



HAVING A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR PARENTS

Note: Before you begin this step, you will need to have read Appendix A: "Four Questions Four Choices."

You are lucky indeed, if you have a good, warm, loving relationship with one or both of your parents. That becomes a great source of happiness over a long period of your life.

Unfortunately, many of us have a strained relationship with our parents, or worse yet, no relationship at all with them.

Depending on your age and life history, building a warmer, more loving relationship with your parents may be easy, difficult, or even impossible. Most of the other things you can do to be happier may be much easier than repairing a breach with your parents. So, if you have a breach, you may want to put this one off until you've done a bunch of the easier ones. If that's how you feel, it's probably a smart move.

If you do some of the other things you can do to become happier, you may get so much happier that you become willing to take this one on. If so, we have guidance we can give you about how to break the ice, how to get started, and how to keep the progress building. This one may be hard, but it's really worthwhile. People will share their stories with you of how they have rebuilt unsatisfying parental relationships. They'll also tell you how rich, loving, and rewarding it can be.

It may be useful to know something about the parent/child experience, before you begin the practice.

There are several times in a child's life when he or she wants to break away from the symbiotic relationship with a parent. We all know about the "terrible two's." That's the first time. The second time happens sometime during the teen years, when raging hormones take over and make young people want to "get away" from parenting and live their lives on their own. In caveman days, the 13-17 year old did just that: left home, maybe even left the tribe, and struck out for a new life. For a variety of reasons, that's not possible in today's world. So, the typical teen is stuck with the genetically based desire to "do it myself," in a world that doesn't really make that very easy.

Some parents are knowledgeable about what's going on and they handle the daily struggles pretty well. Others don't handle them very

well and may end up tossing the child out. Maybe that defines one or more of your parents. Or, maybe the teen doesn't handle the pressure very well, and tunes out, or runs away from home, or escapes into drugs, or alcohol. Maybe that describes your situation. In any case, the young person is stuck for three or four years with programming that says "I've got to get away." By age 20, the person may be through all that, but the rift has been created.

If the rift between you and your parent(s) happened during that time of your life, it's no surprise. It's natural. What's not so natural is for it to have created a permanent break up in the relationship. It can be healed. But it requires something on your part: the recognition that you may have been responding to your hormones and your parents didn't understand that.

If your rift didn't happen in your teens, it may have been something like the difference of opinions about what you're doing with your life (college, no college, chosen occupation, lifestyle, who you married, how you're raising your children, relationships with siblings or other family members, etc.). Perhaps the difference came to a head and you or your parents severed the relationship. Because you're reading this, you obviously want to change that.

It will take work and courage on your part, but you won't be sorry. Time and time again we've heard things like, "My father died and I never told him that I loved him." Don't lose the opportunity to heal a relationship before it's too late.

Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for "Having a Good Relationship with Your Parents."



CHOOSING RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL BELIEFS THAT BRING YOU COMFORT

Note: Before undertaking this subject, please be sure you have read Appendix A: "Four Questions Four Choices." An Optional activity is to take the Happiness Habit entitled "Finding Meaning in Your Life."

Many people — all the world over — have strong religious or spiritual beliefs, and find those beliefs to be a powerful source of happiness and satisfaction.

Most of us have little awareness about our beliefs. We borrow most of them from our parents or others, and accept them with little question. Some of our beliefs we just make up. Some beliefs that we choose are from dubious sources, like our peers when we are children.

Some of our beliefs are given to us by strangers who have an agenda of their own: For example, advertisers who convince you that your home is host to dangerous germs that will harm you unless you use their soap, or disinfectant. Advertisers, salespeople, talk radio hosts, and others bombard us with "facts" that can influence what we believe. Often, these sources use fear, exaggeration, and distortion to get your attention, and to get their ideas or beliefs across. If we mistakenly adopt some of these distorted or false beliefs, we can end up worrying about things that really aren't problems. Or, we can spend money on products or causes that are intended to solve problems we don't even have.

Purpose of Beliefs

The purpose of a belief is to resolve the curiosity created by questions to which the answers are unknown or unknowable. The job of a belief is to bring us comfort and peace of mind in a world where much is still unknown or unknowable.

If your beliefs bring you comfort and make you happier, then you've chosen wisely. If you are satisfied with your religious beliefs, and feel that they bring you comfort, satisfaction and happiness, then we have little to offer on this subject.

However, most people — when they stop to think about it — find that a few of their beliefs bring them bad feelings. Poorly chosen beliefs can bring feelings like fear, guilt, doubt, envy, jealousy, or inadequacy.

If any of your religious or spiritual beliefs bring you pain, guilt, or misery, we can help you cope with those bad feelings, and even give you some counsel that can help you keep the religious or spiritual beliefs that bring you comfort, satisfaction, and happiness, while minimizing the aspects that bring you pain, guilt, or misery.

If you have difficulty finding faith, and religious or spiritual beliefs are not part of your life, we can offer help in finding beliefs outside of the religious or spiritual realm that might bring you some of the benefits that religious and spiritual people get from their faith.

Choosing a Cause

Since religion and spirituality is about identifying and then serving something that is a higher power and a greater cause outside oneself, you can take that idea and achieve many of the same benefits by choosing a *cause* that is greater than you, that's outside of you. For example, you might get involved in such things like:

- World hunger
- World peace
- The environment
- Poverty
- Local hunger
- Needy elders
- Needy children
- Etc.

If you are interested in resolving some of your uncomfortable beliefs, or wish to add meaning to your life through other spiritual or other methods, go on with the practice.

If you just want to read more about beliefs, read the excerpt from Ken Johnston's book: "Sagery: a User's Manual for the Mind." That excerpt is Appendix B.

Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for "Choosing Religious or Spiritual Beliefs that Bring you Comfort."



HAVING HAPPY MEMORIES

Note: If you have not read Appendix A: "Four Questions Four Choices," please do so now. Optional: you may also want to read your Progress Journal from your practice with "Having Friends."

Having happy memories will make you happier. Unhappy memories will bring you pain. Guess What! We recommend that you have happy memories.

Think for a moment about this question: What do you typically do if some or many of your memories are unhappy?

Okay, now here's our recommendation.

We recommend you do what some of the happiest people in the world have done: The happiest people are those whose memories of the events and people in their past *are seen in the most favorable possible light*.

If that seems odd, perhaps you'd have a dialog with us about that issue that goes something like:

You: "What? How is that possible? Do you mean that they have twisted, distorted, revised, or otherwise changed all the bad events and hurtful people in their past?"

Us: Yes! It's something like that.

You: (Accusation) "You mean you recommend purposely distorting or twisting the reality of your past to make yourself happier in the present?"

Us: Yes! Why keep old, hurtful, memories around, if all they do is bring you pain?

You: (Outrage) "That's Lying! That's not facing reality. That's distortion."

Us: Yes, it is. We are doing our best to help you be happier. We recommend distorting, twisting, or otherwise adjusting your thinking in two different situations.

For example, we think it is wise to be "crazy in love" and be blind to your lover's defects. We suggest that you will be happier in your love life if you look past your partner's weaknesses, and see almost exclusively your partner's good points. That's readjusting reality for

love. It may not make you the most realistic person in the world, but it'll make you a great, loving partner. And, you'll have a happier relationship.

What's that got to do with memories?

The other place where we think reality is overrated, and needs a valuable little readjustment, is in your memories of the people and events in your past.

If you are sometimes troubled by unhappy memories, we can help you modify those memories so you see them in the most positive possible light. That will make you happier.

No one has suggested that there is any benefit to reliving bad memories. Bad memories are memories of events, people, or situations that caused you pain. Bad memories are, in some ways, like nightmares. You don't want them, and when they come, you want them over as quickly as possible.

Scientists who have studied happy people know that the happiest people are those who have somehow reshaped or refocused their memories to see the people and events of their past, in the most positive possible light. If you want to learn how to reshape your memories so you can see your past in the most positive possible light, go ahead with the practice.

Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for "Having Happy Memories."



BEING OPTIMISTIC

Note: Before you begin this Happiness Action, be sure you have read Appendix A: "Four Questions Four Choices," you've also taken "Bouncing Back from Adversity," and you've read "Sagery: Book One." Optionally, you may want to have taken "Having Happy Memories."

Being optimistic will make you happier. Optimists live longer, happier and healthier lives than pessimists. Dr. Martin Seligman, in his book, "Learned Optimism," points to the research that proves that optimists live longer, healthier, and happier lives than pessimists. His book also proves his contention that optimism *can be learned*. Using Dr. Seligman's findings, we can teach you how to be more optimistic.

If you have a low happiness level, odds are good that you tend to be a pessimist. (Happiness researchers say that the level of happiness you return to after life's turning points, is about 50% dependent on your genes.) Pessimism is a way of maintaining a low happiness level, or an *unhappiness* level.

Some people are pessimistic in various aspects of their lives. For example, someone may be optimistic when at work, but pessimistic within a relationship. Some other people are generally pessimistic, viewing anything that happens as a "glass less than full."

If you are firmly committed to becoming happier, and are willing to work at it, you are ready for converting your life script from pessimism to optimism. If you are a confirmed pessimist, you'll probably think that there isn't much chance that this will really work for you. (And, of course, if we were pessimistic, we'd think you may be right.)

We, however, are optimists. So, we believe you can do it. You can do it if you want to do it. There are three simple keys to changing your thinking. We'll teach them to you, and give you short, fast practice you can do regularly to get you in the habit of optimistic thinking.

Optimism and pessimism are both *habits*. They are habitual patterns of thought. Old habits are not easy to break, but new habits are easy to acquire. We find it helpful not to try to break the pessimism habit, but to build a strong habit of optimism and carry them both forward to use the one that is most appropriate.

How will you know which habit is the most appropriate? Optimists tend to be less realistic than pessimists. Pessimists tend to be more realistic than optimists.

Optimists think anything is possible, and pessimists are more realistic. So, if you convert to optimism, you have to know when to shift back. For example, if you are inspecting parachutes, it pays to use your pessimistic habit. If you are planning a space launch, it pays to use your pessimism to imagine every possible thing that could go wrong, so you can prepare for it.

If you're really a confirmed pessimistic, you already knew that optimists aren't as realistic as pessimists. So, if you decide to convert, you'll find it useful to reduce your total commitment to reality, and also know when it's prudent to use your pessimistic realism.

If you're already a confirmed optimist, you don't need this section, although you're welcome to explore if you're curious. We've found that even very optimistic people can learn to be even more optimistic. (You can also learn when it is risky to be overly optimistic.)

If you are a confirmed pessimist — and really want to be happier — please do the practice. If you are sometimes pessimistic and sometimes optimistic, we suggest you learn how to become more optimistic, when it's appropriate.

Pessimism vs. Optimism

Pessimism is an odd blend of negative thoughts about whatever is happening in the present, and negative expectations about the future.

When you get to the next topic, "Positivity," you'll learn how to counter those negative thoughts about what's happening *now*. In this step, we'll give you the formula for countering negative thoughts about the *future*.

You've already learned and practiced the formula for optimism, when you went through the resilience step ("Bouncing Back from Adversity"). You learned to use the optimism formula on adversities and practiced by rehearsing how you would handle possible adversities that you worry about. In this step you'll learn how to use the optimistic formula when considering the future: all the time, every time.

Here is the idea: Any time you think of the future, your pessimistic habit of thinking will create a negative scenario. You may even find that you dread thinking about the future because it is so daunting.

To counter the pessimistic habit of thinking, you will learn to “loop” on your negative thoughts, and use the optimist’s formula to create a counter to the negative thoughts.

Looping

The pessimistic negative thoughts will follow the pessimistic formula:

1. Something bad will happen “TO ME” in the future.
2. It will last a long time, maybe for the rest of my life.
3. It will affect my whole life.

So, if you hear that someone had a heart attack, you might think:

1. I’ll probably have a heart attack.
2. It may kill me, or at least affect me for a long time.
3. My life will be ruined. Some lousy retirement. I’ll be bedridden.

By the way, if you weren’t here learning how to be more optimistic, you may have been right to worry about health problems. Statistics show that optimists live on average eight to nine years longer than pessimists. Part of the reason for that is the constant negative view of the future creates stress and worry, which is hard on the body.

Once you realize that you’ve had a negative thought, you’ll practice instantly looping back through your mind again, and using the optimist’s formula:

1. Bad things won’t happen to me. They happen to others.
2. If I did have a problem, I’d quickly get it fixed, and I’d be fine.
3. Nothing can stop me from enjoying my life, my wife, my kids, friends, etc.

Do you wonder that optimists live longer? They don’t worry. Everything will be fine.

Being somewhat pessimistic, you might have doubts about your ability to change your thoughts. You have lived with negative thoughts so long they seem normal to you.

You’re right that it’s hard to change your thoughts. So, we don’t suggest you even try. You’re simply going to add a new, overly-positive set of thoughts that you will use to counter the normal, natural negative thoughts that your DNA probably set you up to have. We say “overly positive” thoughts because that is the way they’ll seem to you at first.

If you're confident that you can do what we recommend, then jump over the suggested readings and go right to the practice.

Helpful Readings

If you are somewhat doubtful that you can do what we recommend (and you haven't read Book One of "Sagery") do that now. It's a brief introduction to the Sage Map, and gives you a really good graphic view of how your mind works (and everyone else's). It will walk you through the Sage Model and show you step by step how thoughts are created, processed, and assessed. Then, when you get to the practice, you'll be able to visualize exactly how you're going to use your mind to become more optimistic.

Regular people (who aren't pessimists), get a bad feeling when they have a negative thought. The book "Sagery" helps them use that bad feeling as a trigger to "loop" back and re-examine the thought. If you're really a confirmed pessimist, you might have become so used to your negative feelings that you don't even notice them. If so, then for a while you'll need to "loop" on every thought you have about the future.

Download a PDF of the walkthrough of the Sage Model (Book One). It may take nearly an hour to read, so, you may want to print it out and read it before you come back for the practice.

Additional references: Martin Seligman's "Learned Optimism."

Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for "Being Optimistic."



LOVING SOMEONE

Note: before you begin be sure you have read Appendix A: "Four Questions Four Choices."

Ah! Love! There is something wonderful about loving someone. Love can make you really happy. (It can also make you miserable, if you let it, but that's another story.)

Love is different from attraction, and very different from infatuation. If that isn't perfectly clear to you, be sure to take "Having an Intimate Relationship."

Love is a warm, good feeling you have about someone. You can love many people. There is no limit to the number of people you can love. You can even love someone unconditionally. The great thing is, the other person doesn't have to love you back. The other person doesn't even have to know about your love. The other person doesn't even have to be alive. For example, many people might love Jesus, or Mozart, or Allah, or Buddy Holly, or Buddha, or Elvis. I love several different movie stars. They don't know about it, and they're not jealous of each other. My love is unrequited, but I don't care. I can still feel love for someone, even if they don't love me back.

What You Do With Feelings

You may wonder why so many relationships turn sour. Current estimates are that more than 50% all marriages will end in divorce. The odds are even worse for relationships that don't reach marriage. (If you are presently in a marriage where your partner has left you and you want to get him or her back, go to HappierRelationships.com

Analyses of broken relationships reveal some important patterns. The success of a relationship is often determined by the way in which one or both of the partners handle their feelings about their partner.

How *do* people handle their feelings?

Patterns for Good Feelings

Analysis reveals that there are three major patterns that you'll use with good feelings. You can:

- Maximize them

- Take them for granted (do nothing special about them) or
- *Discount* them (find a way to make them go away or give them no importance.)

Let's examine these choices one at a time.

Maximize Them

The best thing you can do is to maximize good feelings. In order to do that, you can: *notice them* when you get them (called "marking"), *store them up*, and *review them* again and again. You can allow them to build into a reservoir of loving bonds that bind you to your partner.

Take Them for Granted

The most common thing you might do with good feelings is to simply *take them for granted*. That is, you feel them when they come, but make no effort to mark them or notice them. They are not carefully stored and nurtured. No time is spent on re-experiencing them or reviewing them in your mind. Time passes and they fade away.

Discount Them

The most destructive thing you can do with good feelings is to discount them. There is a variety of ways you can do that.

- a. You can *fail to feel them* when you get them, i.e. don't allow them to come into your conscious mind; it is as though they never happened.
- b. You can *think a negative thought* as soon as you have a good feeling, and thereby make it go away. For example, Joe might get a good feeling and immediately hear an internal message that says, "This won't last," or "I don't know why I am feeling this; she is really a turkey."

Here are some things we know about bad feelings.

Patterns for Bad Feelings

There are three things you can do with bad feelings:

- *Maximize them* so they get worse, or stay the same
- *Take them for granted*; do nothing special about them
- *Resolve them* so they lessen, or go away

Maximize Them

The most destructive manner for handling bad feelings is to maximize them. You can do this in a variety of ways.

- a. *Don't take any action* on a bad feeling except to store it up and add it to an ever-growing list of bad feelings about a person, or your relationship.
- b. *Actively distort* your perceptions of the situation, or the person who stimulated the bad feeling, and make it much worse than it really is.
- c. *Regularly review your storehouse of grievances or hurts* that you collect, and feel really, really bad about them.

Resolve Them

The most positive thing you can do with bad feelings is to resolve them when they come up. There is a variety of ways you can do this.

- a. You can *take some action*, i.e. you can do something positive about whatever gave you the bad feeling.
- b. You can *ask for what you want*. This is one form of action you can take to resolve the situation that you feel bad about.
- c. You can *accept the person, the situation or the behavior* that stimulated the bad feeling.
- d. You can *forgive* the other person for something that you can't accept. Forgiveness is a powerful tool for resolving bad feelings.
- e. Some people think if they discount (ignore) bad feelings by failing to feel them, this is resolving them. This is not a recommended practice because it is generally accepted that feelings are best dealt with rather than discounted, since discounting doesn't make them go away. However, discounting bad feelings is far less harmful than storing them up and harboring them.

If you'd like to be happier about whom you love, and learn to give your love freely, unconditionally, and without requiring anything in return, you'll learn a lot from the practice.

Additional references: Download "Metamating" by Ken Johnston available at www.visionarypublications.com

Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for "Loving Someone."



HAVING AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP

Note: Before you begin this topic, please be sure you have read Appendix A, "Four Questions Four Choices," and taken the topic "Loving Someone." Also, this is a fairly long reading, so you might want to set aside additional time.

In order to create and protect an intimate relationship, you may find it helpful to understand just how relationships are formed.

Five Stages of a Relationship

The pairing process has five stages. They typically follow each other in sequence, although the time each takes is highly individual. One person may go from attraction to infatuation in a matter of days, while another person may require many months, or even years.

1. Attraction

Attraction is the beginning stage. Attraction is a physical sensation. It can be very mild and pleasant, or it can be an incredible WOW!!!!!!! sensation. Attraction can be immediate, or it can grow gradually with time. It doesn't seem to matter what form it takes; even the mildest attraction, which took a long time to develop, can be effective in beginning the process.

Attraction can be so powerful that people get it confused with love. Young people especially have difficulty knowing what is happening to them. When the physical window first opens and a young person experiences attraction, the feeling is so new and it feels so good, that it is easy to understand how they think it must be love. As the years pass, and they find the experience repeated a lot, they grow to understand that the feeling is attraction, and that is *all* it is.

2. Courting

Attraction leads to courting. Courting tends to look very different from one culture to another, but the basics are always the same. Courting is composed of behaviors and actions that one person takes toward another as a result of attraction. If the attraction is mutual, then courting responses are given in return.

Courting actions normally begin with an indication of attraction. Somehow, one attracted person takes an action that communicates the feeling of attraction to the other person. In a very reserved

culture, this might be a little more than eye movements or a tilt of the head. In a very demonstrative culture, courting may begin with a pinch or a touch.

It is common for attraction to be one sided. When that happens, courting gestures may not be returned. This is quite frustrating, but very normal. When attraction is mutual, then a gesture from one person leads to a response from the other person.

A returned gesture of attraction generally leads to another. The tendency is to keep making each gesture or action slightly stronger and more direct as a way of continually verifying that the attraction is still mutual, even at the higher level.

When courting actions are continually met with responses that are positive, then finally both parties are out in the open, their attraction is understood to be mutual and at such a high level that there is no longer any risk of misunderstanding.

When courting reaches this level, the couple begins to become a pair. At this stage, each looks for indications of becoming exclusive. In the teen-age world, this stage may be known as "going together." It is this stage that our culture starts to frustrate the natural process. Parents seek to limit the young twosome from being exclusive. Our culture teaches young people that they will get more experience by dating a wide variety of people. Cultural influences aside, the process continues if either or both move toward restricting their interests to just the one significant other.

If the twosome does become exclusive, and they limit their interests to each other, then the process continues with more courting behaviors. The advanced behaviors lead to resolving dominance issues, and to testing the limits of the attraction. In the teen world we see actions like teasing and testing. The teasing is a process of testing the bond to see how strong it is. It is also the way of resolving the dominance issue. Other tests may also be employed to see how strong the attraction is, and to find its limits.

Testing will typically include sexual advances. Young people often think that sexual advances stem from powerful sexual needs. Yet, the reality is they are part of the testing process within courting, and serve as much to advance the relationship, as to actually achieve sexual union.

3. Infatuation

Mutual attraction, and mutual courting lead to infatuation. Infatuation is a truly incredible experience, marked by highly intense feelings. It is normal for a person experiencing infatuation for the first time to conclude that, finally “This must be love.”

Infatuation is not love — not in the mature sense of a bond, which will keep a twosome together. Infatuation is infatuation, and love is love. Love will come with bonding, and bonding is different from infatuation.

Infatuation isn’t love, but that doesn’t mean it isn’t wonderful. The incredible outpouring of songs and poems that celebrate infatuation tell the story of its power. Infatuation must be the single most powerful feeling experience that human beings have. It is WONDERFUL!!!!!!

It is during infatuation that the physical window for sexual union opens. We’re genetically programmed to stop resisting sexual advances and to throw caution to the wind. Sex seems “right.” Sex seems imperative. Sex seems to be “natural” and natural it is. Unfortunately, in many cases, especially concerning young twosomes, the cultural window is still firmly shut. Culture, parents, and all forces say “No!!” The body, nature, and infatuation say, “YES!!!!!!”

Infatuation is both beautiful and sad. It is beautiful because it feels so incredibly fantastic. It is sad, because it cannot last. The intensity of the feelings, the intense mutual attending, the incredible hormonal rushes, the exclusivity of its focus all contain the seeds of its ultimate demise. It cannot last, because people cannot go through their lives while in a state of infatuation.

Infatuation creates intense bonds that are the cornerstone of future bonding.

4. Bonding and Love

Bonding is a force that binds two people together through the results of shared experiences. When any two people share an intense experience, a bond results. When two people share many intense experiences, they have a strong bond. The more intense experiences shared, the stronger the bond.

If Sally and Tom share many intense experiences, and the experiences are positive, then the bond formed is one of love.

So, with this definition, “love” is the name for the feeling produced by the bonds which result from many shared intense positive experiences.

If Agnes and Harold share many intense experiences, that are all painful and negative, they too will form a bond. We call that kind of bond “aversion.” Each time they see one another they will get in touch with the feeling produced by the negative bonds — aversion.

Infatuation is by itself an extremely intense experience. During infatuation, couples normally share many experiences. Those experiences are made intense by the intensity of the infatuation. So, infatuation provides a fertile window during which ordinary experiences are made intense and positive by the effects of infatuation. Those intense, positive experiences shared while under the influence of infatuation — and retained long after infatuation fades — provide the bonds that produce the feeling of love.

A bond is formed with anything that provides us with a feeling. Some feelings are more important to us, and more highly valued. For example, the need to love and be loved is a very important need for most people, and very highly valued. The need to experience a good taste in the soda you drink is far less important, and not highly valued. So, a person who satisfies in you the need to be loved is much more highly valued than a soda that provides you with a good taste when you drink it.

Each experience forms a bond, but of vastly different levels of importance. So, bonds can be formed with anything that provides a good feeling, but the bonds are vastly stronger with the things that satisfy needs that are really important to us.

5. Coping

The need to find a partner with which to pair, is one of the most important human needs that we have. That need is acute when we don't have a partner. When we have one, and experience being loved, then that need is satisfied and other needs come to the surface.

Positive Bonds

The bonding that happens between two people is made up of:

1. A very strongly felt *need to find and pair* with a partner.
- 2: The very powerful *feelings of satisfaction* that come with satisfying the need for a partner.
- 3: The incredible *intensity of the feelings* that are magnified by infatuation.
- 4: *Your partner*, the person bonded to you by above components.

So, Infatuation produces powerful bonding. The bonding binds two people in love together, and gives them a huge reservoir of good feelings with which to begin their long-term relationship. As infatuation diminishes, and they both return to the “real world,” they will experience the normal number of difficulties that any two people have in building a life together. The reservoir of love and good feelings will be the bond that keeps them together to work through the difficulties that they will face.

Coping is a process for handling difficulties, and making difficulties into positive, bonding experiences. Without coping, difficulties can become negative, tense experiences. Negative, intense experiences do not produce love, and if they happen often, they can accumulate into a force larger than the bonds that form the basis of love — or worse, they can produce aversion.

“What difficulties?” the infatuated couple exclaims. “We don’t have difficulties. Everything with us is wonderful, and even if we quarrel, we have a wonderful time making up.” That’s what happens during infatuation. That is part of the wonder and beauty of infatuation. But remember, infatuation must and will fade. Then there will be difficulties. It is those difficulties, plus the normal, ongoing difficulties of life that create the need for coping.

If a difficulty is successfully coped with, it forms a positive, intense experience that is shared — another bond — to unite the couple more firmly. If a difficulty is *not* successfully coped with, an intense, negative experience is shared that moves the couple further apart.

Coping is a skill that can be learned. A person who is skilled at coping can turn any difficulty — no matter how painful and intense — into a positive bonding experience that brings the couple closer together. Without the ability to cope, bonding is an up and down matter. Frequently, infatuation brings many positive bonding experiences, and then as infatuation fades, the inability to successfully cope brings successive, intense, negative experiences that move the couple further and further apart. This is the story of too many unfortunate couples.

Summary

“Pairing” is the process of building a warm, satisfying relationship where both partners fall in love and stay in love, which requires bonding and coping.

Infatuation is an aid to positive bonding, but it is not required. Courting is an aid to infatuation, but it is not required. Attraction is an aid to courting and infatuation, but it is not required. What *is* required — for a couple to fall in love and stay in love — is bonding and coping.

Coping is the Key

There have even been very successful marriages reported where one of the parties felt not only no attraction — but instead aversion. One woman reported that she felt repulsed every time she saw the man that eventually wooed her and married her. She reported that the repulsion gradually gave way to neutral responses and while she never felt attraction she grew to love him greatly.

If everything works smoothly — according to the “natural way” — that’s terrific. If it doesn’t follow the typical pattern, it can still work.

Coping is the key, so let’s get to it. Now that you understand the stages of the relationship, it is time to begin focusing on the key phase. Coping holds the key to a happier and happier relationship.

To understand coping, it is first important to understand how the mind works, and where coping fits in. Remember, the goal of successful coping is learning to:

- *Maximize the good feelings* you have with your partner, and
- *Resolve the bad feelings* you get from and with your partner.

So coping is aiming at building a reservoir of good feelings that will nurture and satisfy the need you have for a relationship.

Additional references: “Metamating” by Ken Johnston, available at www.visionarypublications.com

Also, if you wish, read Appendix C, Kinds of Relationships.

Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for “Having an Intimate Relationship.”



BEING MARRIED...AT FIRST

Note: If you have not read Appendix C, please do so now. If you have not already taken "Resilience," "Optimism," and "Positivity," please take those first.

Marriage is a somewhat confusing factor. The scientists will tell you that married people are generally happier than unmarried, widowed, or divorced people. Married people live longer than unmarried, and tend to be healthier. So, if you aren't married, and find someone you want to marry, all the science tells you to go ahead. Get married.

However, except for a short time following the wedding, don't expect being married to make you much happier. It seems that most people fairly quickly revert back to the same level of happiness they felt before the marriage. And, that's true even if the marriage is a happy and mutually satisfying one.

TIP: Find a marriage partner who was happy before he or she met you. Beware of marrying a person who had a really miserable life before you came along. If you're dating someone who was miserable before they met you, have that person join this site and get much, much happier, before you tie the knot. If he or she won't work at becoming happier, you might rethink the marriage idea. Odds are good that when the honeymoon is over, your partner will be miserable again, and so might you. You might even discover that your new partner holds you responsible for his or her new misery.

Dr. John Gottman of the Gottman institute in Seattle, has studied marriage scientifically to the point where he can predict with up to 95% accuracy whether or not a marriage will last. He spent more than twenty years videotaping and analyzing couples' behaviors. He saw that the difference between happy and unhappy couples *is the way they fight*. Happy couples will include positive interactions such as humor or smiles. Unhappy couples generally include criticisms, defensive responses, and negative words and gestures. He points out the importance of beginning any discussion about a disagreement or argument in a positive way. His findings show that in terms of the couple's interactions, a positivity ratio of five to one on the part of both spouses will protect a marriage from divorce.

After a careful scientific study of marriages, Dr. Martin Seligman says that every marriage must have at least one optimist, and at least one person who is resilient.

So, if you've taken the resilient step, the optimism step, and the positivity step, you are a marvelous bet for a good, secure, and happy marriage — the kind of marriage that lasts.

If you are already married, and your marriage has been filled with turmoil and dissatisfaction, marriage probably has made you *unhappier*. Divorce is always an option, but divorce will also make you unhappier. So, at first, it seems as though you can't win if your marriage is unhappy. But, there is a solution.

The scientists now know how you can save a marriage, and how you can turn a broken marriage into a positive, loving, mutually-satisfying experience, once again. It isn't easy, and it takes a lot of commitment, but the payoff is really valuable, and according to the statistics, you'll be happier with a repaired marriage than you will be if you divorce and stay single, or remarry.

Unfortunately, the statistics don't take into account people who have gone through what you've achieved in becoming a happier person. By yourself, you have the skills and attitudes, needed to make a marriage work.

Master These Steps

If you have mastered these steps, you will be a terrific spouse:

- Loving someone
- Appreciating someone
- Being Optimistic
- Being Resilient
- Positivity to a ratio of 5 to 1.

If your spouse is a non-resilient, negative, and pessimistic person who does not express appreciation or love toward you, then your spouse is probably pretty unhappy. It is quite likely, even with you becoming happier, that your spouse is disappointed in you and dissatisfied with your marriage.

Is it possible that you could interest your spouse in becoming happier? If your spouse were to master the five steps listed above, you two could work together to create a truly magnificent relationship. If not, it may be time to examine your options.

Your spouse might be willing to do what you have done, and commit yourself to being happier, if that would save your marriage.

If you are the only one willing to work at making the marriage work, you have to decide if you are willing to make that commitment. If you are, you now have the tools to lift the quality of your relationship through your positivity, optimism, resilience, and ability to express your love and appreciation for your spouse.

Some Divorce Tips

If you and your spouse agree it is better to divorce, we have some tips for you.

1. Divorce is an adversity that will test your resilience. So be ready.
2. Look carefully for these traits in anyone you meet in the future:
 - Someone who is naturally happy
 - Someone who is resilient and optimistic
 - Someone who expresses love and appreciation easily
3. Avoid these warning signs:
 - Someone who was unhappy until you came into his/her life
 - Someone who is critical, judging, and negative frequently.
 - Someone who has difficulty expressing love and appreciation

Staying Married Tips

If you decide to stay committed to the marriage here are some tips for you.

1. Work at beginning any disagreement on a positive and respectful note.
2. Keep your positivity ratio high, regardless of the negatives of your spouse.
3. Practice appreciating your spouse every chance you get.
4. Be as loving as you can.

There is a good chance that you, working alone and with the patience of a saint, can turn the marriage around.

Additional references: "The Mathematics of Marriage" by Dr. John Gottman
Please go to your workbook now, to the practice for "Being Married."





Appendices

APPENDIX A

Four Questions Four Choices

Note: This is a condensation of a training program called "Four Questions and a Map." If you are interested in learning more, please feel free to take the entire course by reading the book, or watching the audio-visual programs called "Four Questions and a Map."

Looping

Sometimes a difficult situation causes the mind to get stuck processing something over and over again — this is called "looping." Looping on a thought can clog up the normal flow of thinking, feeling, and reacting.

Example

Joe lost his job. With two kids in college, retirement looming, and not enough savings, Joe got stuck imagining a future where he couldn't find a job. He visualized every other disaster he could imagine, as well. His ego thought how humiliated he felt. He imagined his marriage might be ruined. He imagined that the kids would lose their education. You get the idea: looping, rushing thoughts, all bad, all disasters that he couldn't solve — not based in reality — but they seemed real to Joe.

Example

Sally's husband left her for another woman. She imagined all sorts of reasons, and blamed herself. She also worried about her children and what would happen to them. She knew her job skills were rusty and looped about never finding work. Again, there were all bad thoughts — not based in reality — but seeming real to Sally.

Dispute Inaccurate Thoughts and Unreasonable Assessments

Sometimes our list of thoughts contains thoughts that simply aren't accurate.

They may be *too hopeless*, like Joe's thought when he was laid off,
"I'll never get another job."

Or they could be *too broad*, like Joe's thought,
"The layoff will ruin my life."

Or, *taken too personally*, Sally's thought, when her husband left her,
"I must have been an awful wife."

It's important to dispute thoughts that may be inaccurate, or exaggerated. The goal of making the thoughts accurate is to avoid letting inaccurate thoughts hurt you. So, collect evidence against harsh judgments or judgments that are too broad, or those that are "forever."

When Joe examines his conclusions he will see that he has exaggerated the impact of the current job loss.

"The layoff will change my life, but it won't ruin it. It wasn't my fault. I got laid off along with many others. Of course I'll get another job."

Joe's task is to change his point of view so that he can go on with a productive and positive job search.

Sally disputed her conclusion that she wasn't a good wife.

"Wait a minute, who says this was my fault? I was a very good wife. I put up with a lot from him. He just found someone else."

Sally's task isn't to find herself without a role in the breakup of the marriage, but to find evidence that balances the severe judgment she made, that somehow she was not a good wife.

Unanswerable Questions

Another way the normal operation of your mind can get clogged is through unanswerable questions. If the question is important to you and is really unanswerable, your mind can get stuck and accidentally cause great pain. For example, when Sally's husband left her for another woman, she kept asking herself unanswerable questions, like "

"What did I do wrong?"

"Am I so unlovable?"

"Who would hire me?"

A productive question will produce a good answer; something gets answered or accomplished, and you move toward your goals. However, bad questions are the source of much of our emotional pain. Bad questions are those that jam your thinking process, because they're unanswerable. Now, how does that happen?

Looking for an Answer

You know the power of curiosity. Try to think of a situation where you've been asked a question, and you couldn't think of the answer right away, like, "Who starred in that movie?"

If you make the answer important, it can bug you until you remember. Well, that's the exact same process that a "why" question evokes.

“Why” questions are often unanswerable. Or worse yet, they have a thousand *equally possible* answers.

In attempting to answer a “why” question, your question handling process gets clogged. For example,

“Why did they lay me off and keep Murphy?”

“Why did she leave me?”

“Why doesn’t she love me?”

“Why did he die?”

If the question implies something bad about *you*, you’ll search and search through all of your human weaknesses, each time hurting more and more.

Since you can always come up with different possibilities — all of which hurt — the looping continues. The mind doesn’t like to stop until the question is answered. And: the question is *unanswerable*.

“Why Me?” — the World’s Worst Question

The world’s worst question is, “Why me?” There’s no answer. It is unanswerable.

“Why” questions cause you to loop to find the un-findable. The same curiosity that bugged you about the movie star will make you even buggier when you’re going through a trauma or crisis. You give it lots of importance, and you try to find an answer.

If you consider the answer to the question,

“Why doesn’t he love me?” Or,

“Why doesn’t she love me?”

You loop and loop, each time looking for some defect in you that explains why someone doesn’t love you. And: *there is no answer*. (Or, there are a thousand answers, none of which may be right.)

Ask Productive Questions

When you’re facing some adversity, you need to protect yourself from unnecessary pain. Your personal difficulty is painful enough. You can’t let your mental processes hurt you more. So, don’t allow any questions that are unanswerable, like,

“Could I have saved him?”

“What could I have done?”

Keep it very simple. Only allow questions that you know the answers to, or questions whose answers you can find easily.

Tell yourself:

*"I'm not going to waste time on questions that are unanswerable." Or
"I have no way to know that, and it would hurt me to try to answer it."*

Use good questions are like,

*"What can I do right now to get on with my life?" or
"What can I do to stop looping on this thought?"*

Keep those kinds of questions.

Words to Avoid

As you examine your thoughts, be aware of words like "always" or "never." Look for exaggerations of time in the future, like "forever." Look for words that suggest distortions in scope like, "nobody" or "everybody." And look for imperatives like "must," "have to," or "can't." Your goal is to make sure that any remaining hurtful thoughts on your list are accurate.

Constructed Images

What about clogging the mind with constructed images that have never happened? Sometimes our mind makes us feel pain by using imagination to create pictures of events that aren't happening, haven't happened, and won't happen.

Fred made himself miserable by imagining that his wife was unfaithful to him. It wasn't so, but his mind constructed images so real that he thought it must be so. When Fred began asking the four questions, he concluded that he was creating feelings of jealousy by imagining scenes that weren't happening. He decided he didn't want his life filled with jealousy, so he ASKed his imagination to construct images of his wife thinking about him and smiling lovingly. He found that worked for him. He was still overly using his imagination, but it was now giving him pictures that brought good feelings.

If you find yourself haunted by an overly-active imagination, you can either keep switching to sensory inputs, to stay in the here and now, or you can recall memories of good times you've had in the past. In any case, if the painful images reappear, you can always repeat the four questions and four choices to make them disappear.

The Four Questions

While you're using your mind productively for dealing with problems you face, your thoughts can't swirl and hurt. So, we suggest that

every time you feel the pain of a bad feeling — as quickly as you realize it — you ask each of the four questions and make one of the four choices.

1. The First Question: What's Happening?

When you ask yourself "What's happening?" very quickly you'll realize, *"I'm having a bad feeling."*

2. The Second Question: How am I creating this feeling?

The second question: "How am I creating this feeling?" asks your thinking processes to check and see what's going on. For example, you might find:

*"I'm trying to answer an unanswerable question." Or,
"I'm looping on a hurtful memory." Or,
"I'm looping on a frightening image." Or,
"I had this thought, and I made a negative assessment, so I got a bad feeling."*

Do you see what you're going to do here? You're replacing a hurtful mental process that brings you pain, with a productive question that asks you to examine what's going on in your mind that's bringing you bad feelings.

Sometimes you may not have a good answer to the second question, "How am I creating this feeling?" It doesn't matter, because the question itself creates curiosity rather than pain. If you're curious you'll find the answer to the question, and by the time you've gone through this cycle two or three times, you'll have a much better idea of how to answer the question "How am I creating this feeling?"

3. The Third Question: Is this feeling what I want for my life?

Some bad feelings like grief from a loss of a loved one are authentic feelings. As painful as they are, they're feelings that we all need to get through, in the normal stages of grief. But we don't need to make the loss greater by asking hurtful questions, or distorting our thoughts or assessments. Also some bad feelings are valid and useful because they lead us to take action that will be productive. In Sally's case she might find the feeling of anxiety over money to be productive. It might stimulate her to consider how to create a careful budget. But she wouldn't find it productive to become paralyzed over the feeling and do nothing.

You'll examine this bad feeling to see if it's useful and productive and will lead you to take action to get on with your life. Or whether this

bad feeling is simply unproductive, hurtful, damaging, and possibly even debilitating.

4. The Fourth Question: How can I move toward what I want in my life?

With this question, you're examining what you want for your life — in the future — and you're choosing a productive step you can take toward getting on with that life.

a. First Choice: ACT

The first choice for the question,

"How can I move toward what I want in my life?" is

ACT. When ACTIONs will move you toward what you want in your life then, choose ACTION. For example, Sally might choose to plan a budget to deal with her concerns about money. Joe might put together the plan for finding a new job.

Instead of asking the unanswerable questions that can clog your mind, you may replace them with four productive questions. By the very act of asking yourself those four questions, you've stopped asking the hurtful "why?" question, and are instead asking productive questions. So, once having decided to move toward what you want for your life, you have four choices. Of the four choices you have already selected to ACT, by the simple ACTION you've taken to replace the "why?" kind of questions with more productive questions.

b. Second Choice: ASK

If ASKING will move you toward what you want in your life, then ASK. Sally might choose to ask her in-laws to maintain their relationships with her and the children. Whatever the result, she's dealing with each issue that troubles her and doing her best to cope with it. Joe might locate a job search firm and ask for help in finding a job.

c. Third Choice: ACCEPT

If ACTION or ASKING aren't good options, then the wise choice is to ACCEPT that "what is," is. Sally's husband is gone. She can scream, shout, cry, or anything else she has to do to deal with her grief, but the final stage in coping with loss is acceptance. She can hope it will be different, but she can't let her hope keep her from accepting that "what is," is. Railing against what is can only bring more pain.

Sally was bitter long after her divorce, feeling angry and hurt by her ex-husband. When she asked herself the four questions, she realized

that a life of bitterness was not what she wanted. She couldn't think of any action to take, or anything to ask. So, she decided to simply ACCEPT that the marriage was over.

If she has to move, she'll move. If acting and asking are not answers for her, she'll be wise to accept it, and get on with her life.

d. Fourth Choice: FORGIVE

Even after accepting that "what is," is, Sally will need to take the final wise choice and forgive her husband. Not for him. He may well not deserve it. But for Sally's sake, to get on with her life, her innate wisdom will tell her that it is wise to forgive.

"Failure to forgive is the severest form of self-punishment."

Keeping her anger alive, and stoking it or nursing it will only hurt Sally. So, the final step in the set of wise choices is to forgive anyone who has hurt you, and forgive yourself for anything you've done to another that brings you feelings of shame or embarrassment.

Sally realized she had to FORGIVE her husband for what he had done to her, before she could be free of the pain and bitterness. It wasn't easy for Sally to forgive the man who she thought had ruined her life, but when she read the forgiveness quotes she found one that worked for her. (See quotes below.) There are a number of thoughts that can help you forgive, if you decide to forgive. The one that helped Sally let go of her bitterness and forgive her ex, was this one:

"Failure to forgive is the severest form of self-punishment"

and she also liked,

"Don't forgive people because they deserve it. They may not. Forgiveness is a gift you give yourself."

From that time on, anytime the old bad feelings reappeared, Sally would quickly go through the four questions, and immediately remind herself of her choice to forgive. It didn't take long before all the old pain stopped resurfacing.

More Forgiveness Quotes

Forgiveness does not change the past, but it enlarges the future.

If I forgive, I am free to create my experience of my life with more loving thoughts, and fewer pained and angry thoughts.

Forgiveness is a modest price to pay to achieve peace of mind.

If I can forgive others, I can forgive myself.

Don't forgive someone because they deserve it; they may not. Forgiveness is a gift you give yourself.

*Forgiveness does not change the past, but it enlarges the future.
Any man can seek revenge. It takes a king or prince to grant a pardon.
Forgiveness is a gift of great value, yet it costs nothing.
When a deep injury is done to us we will never recover until we forgive.
A good marriage is the union of two forgivers.
Forgiveness is a choice. Not a decision. It's an act of will.
Don't wait to forgive until you feel like it. You may never feel like it. Feelings may
take time to heal after the choice of forgiveness is made.*

The Four Choices

In the exercises, you'll ask the four questions, and then select the wisest choice. We don't expect you to be able to do each of the wise choices yet. You may find that you're not ready to take the ACTION that you need to take. Or, you may find that you're not yet up to ASKING for what you need or want. And, it's unlikely that you'll be able to leap immediately to ACCEPTING those things in a situation that you can't yet accept. And, if you're dealing with a fresh hurt, FORGIVENESS is very, very difficult. Each time you go through this process, you'll find that everything gets easier, and wise coping becomes more possible. And, even if this is your final time through, it's normal that you still might not yet be able to accept or forgive those things that you can't change.

Note: This was a condensation of a training program called "Four Questions and a Map." If you are interested in learning more, please feel free to read the book or take the audio-visual programs called "Four Questions and a Map."



If you're using this process to practice one of the Happiness Habits, please read the steps below, which will be used to resolve troublesome situations.

Following the steps for the process is an example of a person who had an automobile accident. The blank form for your use follows that.

The Process for Using "Four Questions Four Choices"

Print out the form that's at the end of this paper. Print two if you think you may have a lot of thoughts.

The situation: At the top of the form describe the situation.

Thoughts: Write down any thought that comes into your mind, thoughts that pertains to the troublesome situation.

Assessments and Feelings: Go back and read over each thought one at a time, and write whatever comes to your mind as a response to that thought (your assessment). At that same time, write down whatever feeling the assessment produced.

Cross off unanswerable questions: Go back over your list of thoughts. If any thought is an unanswerable question, tell yourself not to clog up your mind with a hurtful and time-wasting question and cross it off.

Add new thoughts: Relax for a moment and see if there are any new thoughts to add. If so, repeat the steps 2-4 again.

Re-evaluate your assessments: Read each thought and check for accuracy. If your assessment of the thought was reasonable, leave it as is. If the thought and assessment produces fear and anxiety, it's probably distorted and should be crossed off.

Ask the four questions: With each remaining thought, ask the four wise questions and select one of the four wise choices:

Questions:

What's happening?

How am I creating this feeling?

Is this what I want for the rest of my life?

How can I move toward what I want?

Choices:

Act

Ask

Accept

Forgive

Review the remaining thoughts: Look for the words to avoid (always, never, any, forever, nobody, everybody, must, have to, can't). Collect

evidence to prove or disprove the thought. Cross off inaccurate thoughts, or rewrite them.

Choose a process for any remaining thoughts (Act, Ask, Accept, Forgive), and create a plan.

Start the process again, if you feel some issues are still unresolved. ∞

Example: An automobile accident

Thought	Assessment	Feeling	Choice
<i>I can't believe I didn't see that car.</i>	<i>I was careless</i>	<i>guilty</i>	
<i>Charles will be furious.</i>	<i>It was my first accident.</i>	<i>defensive</i>	
<i>The baby could have been hurt.</i>	<i>It would have been my fault</i>	<i>guilty</i>	
<i>Why did this have to happen, now?</i>	<i>We have so much going on.</i>	<i>harried</i>	
<i>What if our insurance goes way up?</i>	<i>We'll have to give up our vacation</i>	<i>sad</i>	
<i>What if we get sued?</i>	<i>We'll lose everything</i>	<i>fear</i>	
<i>Maybe I should stop driving.</i>	<i>That would ruin my life.</i>	<i>panicky</i>	
<i>I'm so glad the baby wasn't hurt.</i>	<i>I always use the baby seat.</i>	<i>proud</i>	
<i>I'm glad no one was hurt.</i>	<i>It could have been worse.</i>	<i>grateful</i>	
<i>I hope Charles understands.</i>	<i>He can get really angry.</i>	<i>worried</i>	
<i>He's not the world's best driver.</i>	<i>He takes more risks than I.</i>	<i>defensive</i>	
<i>His mother will think I was careless.</i>	<i>She'll be right.</i>	<i>defensive</i>	
<i>I'd better call her and tell her.</i>	<i>Let Charles tell her.</i>	<i>insecure</i>	
<i>I should have avoided the accident.</i>	<i>I must not have paid attention.</i>	<i>guilty</i>	
<i>Is the car ruined?</i>	<i>It doesn't look that bad.</i>	<i>worried</i>	

Description of the troublesome situation: _____

Thought	Assessment	Feeling	Choice

Description of the troublesome situation: _____

Thought	Assessment	Feeling	Choice

APPENDIX B:

Changing Destructive Beliefs, Learnings, Rules, etc.

Note: The following material has been excerpted from the book "Sagery: A User Manual from the Mind," by Ken Johnston.

There are some terms used that you need to know in order to understand the material.

The TWIPI: Stands for "The Way I Perceive It." You can learn the contents of your TWIPI by asking yourself, "What's happening?"

The TWISB: Stands for "The Way It Should Be." Each person has a set of experiences that have taught them rules, beliefs, and learnings that produce pictures of "The Way It Should Be."

The Sage: Each person has many parts of his or her personality. The Sage Model, which is part of the book "Sagery," describes nine parts. One of the parts is called the Sage, which is the wisest part. The Sage will make wise choices and wise decisions, if allowed. Otherwise, another part or parts will take over.

The Comparator: The part of the mind which compares what's happening, to the Way It Should Be" and gets either a match or a non-match. Matches produce comfortable feelings ("What Is, is The Way It Should Be"). A mismatch produces uncomfortable feelings.

You have spent your life collecting experiences that you will use to shape your future. Everything that you experience in the present is compared against all of your past experiences. There are many the elements in your Storehouse of experiences that can be used to interpret your present experiences.

You *don't* have much control over what comes up for you in your TWISB. Your Comparator takes the current input, and brings up something from your Storehouse to use to interpret it. Your Comparator may bring up a belief, a rule, a goal, a judgment, and some other element from your Storehouse.

You *do* have a lot of control over how you *respond* to whatever comes up for you in your TWISB. If your TWISB provides a match, you will have a good feeling. If your TWISB provides a mismatch, you will have a bad feeling. If you elect to use your Sage to handle bad feelings, then you have the opportunity to examine the TWISB item and make a decision about whether it is a productive item, or a destructive item.

Purpose of Your TWISB

("The Way It Should Be" according to me)

The purpose of your TWISB is to guide you as you go through life. Your TWISB can affirm that things are going as you want, or alert you when things are not going well. Your TWISB will give you good feelings when you are acting, thinking, and feeling in a manner consistent with your values, and are choosing strategies that will help achieve the outcomes you desire. Your TWISB will give you bad feelings when you are acting, thinking, or feeling in a manner that is not consistent with your values, or are using a strategy that will not give you the outcome you desire.

Your TWISB is failing to serve you well when it

- produces bad feelings unnecessarily, or when it
- induces you to choose strategies that do not produce the outcomes you desire.

Your TWISB is Yours Alone

Be aware that your TWISB is yours alone. You have a unique body of experiences. You have chosen your specific beliefs, values, and desires. You have made your own decisions and your own learnings from your experiences. The things that come up for you in your TWISB are unique to you.

Many people make a grievous error in assuming that other people should have the same beliefs, learnings, values, judgments and rules that they have. The reality of life is that each person creates his or her own Storehouse. If you attempt to force your choices of “the way it should be” on others, you are opening yourself up to a life full of bad feelings.

The first step in creating a life that works for you is to accept that your choices are for you, and that other people have the right and freedom to make their own choices.

You will create many unnecessary bad feelings if you believe that your TWISB is “right,” and attempt to make other people believe, decide, learn, and value as you do.

Make it Work for You

For many people, the TWISB is the major source of bad feelings, and poor outcomes. When you are living at the conflict level, you are at the mercy of whatever comes up for you in your TWISB. When you use your Sage (your wisest part) to resolve bad feelings, you can make your TWISB work for you. The Sage will help you affirm the

elements of your TWISB that work for you, and will help you to purge the elements of your TWISB that don't bring you what you want.

Affirm What Works

To make your TWISB work for you, it is helpful to affirm the elements that work. As you learn to affirm and strengthen the good feelings you get, you will at the same time be affirming the TWISB messages that produced the good feelings or good outcomes.

Purge What Doesn't Work

The task for your Sage is to purge the TWISB messages that do not work for you. As you produce a bad feeling your Sage will come on to resolve it. If your bad feeling is produced by an unproductive TWISB message, your Sage will help you purge the hurtful message, and find a positive TWISB message that will lead to good feelings, and productive outcomes.

TWISB: The Elements

The major elements of the TWISB are discussed in the following paragraphs. The focus will be on the unproductive aspects of each element. Strategies will be offered to help the Sage learn to purge the unproductive messages.

Values

Your unique set of values is one of the most important components of the TWISB. When an input is processed that conflicts with one of your basic values, you may find that that basic value comes up in your TWISB. Of all of the TWISB elements, your values are the most fundamental and least changeable. If your Sage determines that one of your basic values is causing you repeated difficulties — and gets in the way of you achieving what you want for your life — then your Sage will bring that value up for review. This is an infrequent event for most people. In most cases, the other elements of your TWISB will be in conflict with your basic values, and in those cases, you will purge or change the other TWISB element.

Goals

The next most fundamental TWISB element is your unique set of goals. Your goals are what you have decided to be, become, or achieve in the future. Your goals serve as the basis for choices and decisions. Sometimes you might select a goal that is inconsistent with your values. When this happens your Sage will help you reshape your

goals so that they become compatible. For example, a person might decide to get revenge for some perceived wrong. The goal of getting revenge might come into conflict with a basic value such as the desire to be a forgiving person and a person who does not hurt others. In such a case, the Sage will resolve the conflict by adjusting the goal so that it fits within the basic values. Goals that are compatible with the basic values are seldom a source of TWISB problems.

Wants

Wants can either be goals, or steps toward reaching a goal. For example, you might “want” to win an election. The “want” is to win the election, and the election is a step toward a goal of achieving power, prestige, or influence. When a want is compatible with the basic values, and is compatible with an important goal, then it is seldom the source of TWISB problems. Wants become problems when they are incompatible with values or when they conflict with achieving a goal. Wants become problems when they are held by individual parts that are not acting in concert with the team of parts. The Sage can resolve problems created by incompatible “wants” by calling a team meeting and adjusting the wants so that they will be supported by all parts.

Dreams

You might sometime find a dream coming up for you in your TWISB. Dreams are the fantasies that you create that are not turned into goals. A dream is something that you may want, but have not been taking the necessary actions to achieve. When your Sage discovers a dream creating a mismatch in your TWISB, your Sage can resolve the bad feelings by making a decision about the dream. The Sage will help you decide to either turn the dream into a goal, or to simply let the dream fade away.

Dreams have value to you when you use them to stimulate the action necessary to realize them. Dreams can have a pleasure value when you use them to create pleasurable fantasies of the future. Dreams become unproductive when they cause you to have bad feelings in the present, and are not powerful enough to stimulate action to achieve them. For example, as a youth I dreamed of someday becoming a great sports hero. Today, that dream is past the possibility of realization. If I recall that dream, and have a “Walter Mitty” type of pleasurable fantasy, then the dream is not being hurtful. If, however, every time I see a sporting event, I feel a pang of pain because I

never realized my dream, then the dream has become unproductive. When a dream has become unproductive, the Sage can resolve the bad feelings by deciding to let go of the dream.

Hopes

Hopes are constructions of the future that have satisfying outcomes. They serve a positive purpose when they mobilize your energies to achieve the desired outcomes. They can be unproductive sources of pain if they serve to create bad feelings when they are not realized. For example, Edna is hoping her SIGO (significant other), will telephone. As she experiences the pleasurable construction of the satisfying telephone call, she gets good feelings. If the hope leads Edna to place the call, then it is useful in that it gets her to take action to realize her hope. If, on the other hand, Edna produces a series of bad feelings as time passes and the telephone call doesn't come, Edna's hope has become unproductive.

If Edna invokes her Sage to handle the bad feelings, the Sage will be able to resolve them by accepting that there has been no telephone call. As her Sage becomes wiser, she will discover that she spends less time with her Constructor creating hopeful fantasies and more time in the here-and-now experiencing life more fully, moment by moment.

Expectations

Expectations are sometimes based on past experiences. For example, Billy once went to the circus and he had a very enjoyable experience. Now, as Billy goes to the circus again, he has some expectations about the experience he will have.

Expectations are enjoyable when they are positive, because they produce the pleasurable feeling of positive anticipation.

Expectations are unproductive when they are negative. Negative expectations provide bad feelings well in advance of the experience. For example, Billy has an appointment with the dentist. He expects a painful experience. Each time that Billy thinks about the dentist, he rehearses the bad experience he will have. The expectation brings Billy bad feelings.

Even positive expectations become unproductive when they are used to create disappointment in the reality experience. Susan and Fred go to see a film together. Susan has high expectations for the film. Fred has negative expectations for the film. Fred creates bad feelings for

himself in advance of the film. Susan creates good feelings of positive anticipation before the film. When they are finished with the film, Fred gets a good feeling because the film is "better" than he expected. Susan gets a bad feeling from the film because the film didn't live up to her expectations.

In both cases, the expectations caused some bad feelings about the film, either before or after. It can be argued that it is wiser to have no expectations, either positive or negative. If you have no expectations, then you can experience the reality freshly, as it really is, rather than having it screened through your expectations.

If it is easy for you to decide to have no expectations, then you may make that decision. If it is difficult, I propose an alternative for you.

You may find it wise to decide: "I choose to get the most that I can from each experience, and I am not willing to experience bad feelings because of expectations."

If you decide to do this, then your Sage will resolve each bad feeling that you get from an expectation, by re-perceiving the experience to find the positive things that can be gained from the experience.

After you make this decision, expectations will no longer have the power to create bad feelings for you, and you will find yourself able to get the most possible benefit from each experience.

(For more on expectations, see "Having Expectations.")

TWISB: Beliefs

Beliefs are both a source of pleasure and a source of pain. By understanding beliefs, you can increase the pleasure they bring you, and you can reduce the pain beliefs have the potential to create.

Beliefs are a source of pleasure when they resolve the discomfort that is produced by "not knowing." Beliefs are a source of pain when they hurt the person who holds the belief, or when they cause a person to hurt others.

Your Sage can help you choose beliefs that provide pleasure and comfort, and your Sage can help you modify beliefs that bring you pain or cause you to hurt others.

How Beliefs are Formed

One of the wonderful aspects of human beings is curiosity. Curiosity has been the source of many of the great discoveries that make our

lives so rich. Curiosity has stimulated humans to explore, to create, to build, to experiment, to learn, and to reach out in every dimension of human life.

Curiosity is produced by questions. When a question is formed in the mind (whether from outside or from inside), a search is made of the Storehouse for an answer. If no answer is found, curiosity is produced. The amount of curiosity that is produced is a function of the importance assigned to the question, and the perceived payoff of finding the answer.

When you form a question for which there *is* an answer, curiosity motivates you to find that answer. This leads to learning and knowledge.

When you form a question for which there is no answer, or to which the answer is not yet known, curiosity is produced, and you have no way to resolve the curiosity. The curiosity is felt like a tension, and it begs to be resolved. Indeed, if you assign the question enough importance, you can become very curious, and if you don't resolve the curiosity, you can find yourself deeply troubled by your inability to resolve the tension.

Beliefs are the answer to resolving the tension produced by questions that have no answer, or to which the answers are not yet known. Beliefs provide the relief for the tension of curiosity.

For example, science knows a great deal about the common cold, yet they still don't have enough answers. Doctors and scientists don't yet know how to cure the cold, and there are conflicting ideas about how colds are caught or transmitted. They have a number of theories, or possible explanations, but they simply don't know.

If you form the question in your mind, "How did I catch this cold?" you will create curiosity. To resolve that curiosity, you might create a belief about how you caught the cold. So, you scan your Storehouse for possible answers, and you invoke your thinking processes and you select from all of the choices, the answer you like the best. "Aha," you say, "I got it from Harold." Then you have an answer, and you feel the relief of "knowing" how you caught your cold.

Your Sage part has the wisdom to know that you really don't "know" how you caught your cold. If you ask your Sage, your Sage might say, "I don't know how I caught the cold." Or, the Sage might say, "I don't know, but it seems reasonable that I might have become infected in some way through contact with Harold, who has a cold."

Notice that there are parts of you that “know” how you caught the cold, and there is at least one part (the Sage), that is wise enough to say, “I think I know,” or “I have a theory about it.”

Your Sage is not troubled by uncertainty. Your Sage knows that uncertainty is the price you pay for wisdom regarding anything which is not knowable or not yet known.

Yet, uncertainty still produces tension in some parts of the mind. For those parts, “knowing” feels much better than being uncertain. Uncertainty doesn’t provide as much comfort and relief from the tension of curiosity as “knowing” does.

So, every human being collects beliefs. The beliefs are created or borrowed from others to resolve the tension produced by curiosity. Curiosity is produced by forming questions that you don’t have an answer to. Or, questions for which there are no answers.

The Purpose of Beliefs

Beliefs have several purposes. The first and primary purpose is to resolve the tension that comes from asking questions to which there is no known answer, or to which you don’t know the answer.

The second purpose of beliefs is to guide you in making decisions and choices about how to proceed in areas that are not yet known. There is still a great deal that us humans don’t yet know. Discoveries are being made all the time and our reservoir of knowledge grows. But, there are many discoveries still to be made. Until those discoveries are made, we simply don’t yet “know” the answers. Yet, we still have to go forward and live our lives. So, we need beliefs to help guide us until the discoveries are made.

So, beliefs are to give us comfort from the tension of “not knowing,” and beliefs help guide us as we move through those facets of life about which not everything is yet known.

Without beliefs, life is full of tension and fear. Without beliefs, you would suffer continuous stress from the tension produced by curiosity, and you would be very fearful about making decisions and choices that might be “wrong.”

You Choose Your Beliefs

It is important to notice that you choose your own beliefs. Some people find it comfortable to think that their beliefs are imposed by others. Some people fear the responsibility that they feel when they

think that they choose their own beliefs. But, in reality, however you think that you got your beliefs, you *chose* them.

You might have created some of them for yourself. You might have borrowed some or all of them from others. As a child you most often got them from parents and teachers. However the beliefs were created, you decided to believe them. You *chose* to believe them.

If you fail to acknowledge that you chose your beliefs, then you give up the freedom to examine them and modify them to make them serve you. If you won't take responsibility for your beliefs you can end up serving your beliefs rather than having your beliefs serve you.

You Have a Strategy for Becoming Convinced

There are a number of different strategies that people use to become convinced about a belief. Some have to see something before they believe it. Some have to hear about it. Some need only hear a belief one time; some need to hear it repeatedly. Some need to hear it from an authority figure; some do not.

Some people create their own beliefs. Some only borrow them from others. Some people do some of each.

For some people, their beliefs start out as hunches, speculations, or theories, and become beliefs over time. Here is the way that works. You form a question, discover that you don't have an answer, become curious, and begin creating possible answers. Your thinking part might create several alternatives. From these, you will pick one as the most likely. When you first do this, you know it is only a speculation, or theory.

The next time you form the same question, you process it looking for an answer, and lo and behold, this time you have one. What comes up for you is the same speculation or theory that you created the last time, only this time it comes up for you as an answer. Gradually, as you use the answer again and again, you lose track of the source and you discover that you now believe it.

You may find it enlightening to explore some of your beliefs and discover what strategy you use to become convinced.

Allow Your Sage to Hold "Meta" Beliefs

As you are reading this discussion about beliefs, it may occur to you that I am suggesting that you loosen your hold on your beliefs. That is not the case. Beliefs are powerful and important tools that serve

you in many ways. I do not suggest you believe them less or suggest that you purposely introduce less certainty.

Here is a wise and prudent strategy regarding beliefs. I suggest that you maintain the same level of certainty about them that you presently have. I suggest that all of your parts remain as convinced as they are. What I suggest is that you add some “meta” beliefs for your Sage. Allow your Sage to observe your beliefs as you use them, and help you to strengthen those beliefs that serve you well, and modify those beliefs that hurt you or hurt others.

Here is the Sage strategy for beliefs. As a belief brings you good feelings, your Sage will help strengthen that belief by affirming the good feeling and the belief that produced the good feeling. As a belief brings you a bad feeling, either about yourself or someone else, I suggest you allow your Sage to resolve the bad feeling.

Your Sage will come on to resolve the bad feeling, and will examine the belief. The test that your Sage will use will be to determine whether the belief is serving you or hurting you. If your Sage discovers a belief that is not serving you, but instead is hurting you or someone else, then your Sage will propose a modification of the belief.

The “meta” beliefs that your Sage will hold are simply these:

The first purpose of beliefs is to bring comfort and peace of mind whenever you are contemplating issues that have no answers, or are unknowable.

The second purpose of beliefs is to provide guidance for aspects of life where the answers may not be known.

A belief is good when it serves you.

A belief needs to be modified when it hurts you or hurts others.

Examine Your Beliefs

You can examine each belief that produces a bad feeling, whenever it comes up for you. Or, you can do a scan of your beliefs to examine them without waiting until they come up for you.

To do a scan of your beliefs, simply ask yourself this question: “What beliefs do I have that bring me pain and discomfort?” After you review those, you might ask this question: “What beliefs do I have that prompt me to act in a way that brings pain to others?”

Modify Those That Hurt You

Clearly any belief that brings you pain is a belief that isn’t serving you. Your Sage will attempt to modify the belief so that it can serve the

important purposes that beliefs serve, without hurting you. If the entire belief is hurtful, and can't be modified to make it work for you, then your Sage will consider other beliefs you might choose to replace it.

Modify Those That Hurt Others

If you have beliefs that cause you to say or do things that hurt others, your Sage will examine the belief and modify it so that it can serve you without hurting others. If the belief is so totally hurtful that it can't be modified, then your Sage will consider what other beliefs you might choose in its place.

Sage Strategies for Handling Belief Issues

As you start using your Sage to handle hurtful beliefs, you may discover that you begin to adopt a different set of strategies regarding belief issues. You may find yourself becoming more accepting of others who have different beliefs. You may find yourself willing to offer your beliefs to others, but being accepting toward them if they don't choose to adopt your beliefs.

Your Sage knows that beliefs are tools that serve you. Your Sage has the wisdom to understand that beliefs are not "right" and absolute. Your Sage might think of a belief in the same way as you might consider a warm coat. If you have a nice warm coat, and another person has a different coat, you don't feel compelled to tell them why they should have a coat like yours. You don't find it difficult to accept the other person just because he or she prefers a different kind of coat. Your Sage takes the same approach with beliefs. Your Sage knows that the other person's beliefs offer them comfort and satisfaction. Your Sage can accept the other person totally, even though the other person chooses different beliefs. Your Sage knows it isn't wise or kind to push your beliefs on another in an effort to get them to change to your beliefs.

Accept People with Different Beliefs

It is common for a set of beliefs to come in a package. Sometimes in addition to the valuable beliefs, you will find some hurtful beliefs that come along with the package. Sometimes, for example, the package might include a belief that it is wrong to modify or change any of the beliefs in the package. Or, the package might contain a belief that says that people who hold different beliefs are lost, wrong, or ignorant.

Some packages even come with a belief that compels you to force the belief onto others who may not want it.

You may have parts of you that believe the hurtful beliefs, along with the valuable beliefs. Some of your parts may believe that it is wrong to modify *any* of the beliefs in the package. Some of your parts may believe that you would be wrong to accept people who have chosen different beliefs.

Your Sage is wise enough to know that just because a bunch of beliefs come together in a package, you don't have to choose the hurtful beliefs in order to keep the valuable ones. Your Sage knows that the beliefs exist to serve you and that is why you chose them. Your Sage is wise enough to know that you can believe all of the valuable beliefs in the package, and modify or eliminate those that would hurt you or cause you to hurt others.

You can observe the incredible injustices that occur in the world when people are unwilling to accept other people's choice of beliefs. As this is written, there are several wars throughout the world that are being fed by one hurtful belief wrapped in a package of good and valuable beliefs. In each case, the hurtful belief is that it is wrong to accept different beliefs in other people, and that it is "right" to kill them if they won't accept the "right" beliefs.

It is horrible when people go to war to punish others for choosing different beliefs. It is just as sad when neighbor fights neighbor because of a hurtful belief wrapped up with valuable ones.

As your Sage modifies any hurtful beliefs you may have had, you will find yourself becoming more accepting of people who choose different beliefs, and that is wise.

Conflicting Beliefs

Another source of internal conflict is between conflicting beliefs, learnings, rules, etc. in your TWISB. Each of us is filled with many conflicting beliefs. Conflicting beliefs and conflicting learnings produce inner tensions and dissonance that keep us from getting what we want.

A person might have two deeply held beliefs that conflict. For example, one belief may be that it is important to have a warm, loving relationship, and another might be, "you can never trust a woman (man)."

Sagery offers a whole new approach to dealing with beliefs. Sagery offers a new set of “meta” beliefs which, when installed, will provide a way of resolving conflicts. These “meta” beliefs are beliefs about beliefs. For example, one meta “belief about beliefs” is, “*beliefs are chosen.*” This puts the responsibility for what you believe on *you*, and gives you a choice of the beliefs that you will adopt. Another meta belief is the belief about beliefs that, “*The purpose of a belief is to make us comfortable, give us peace of mind, and enable us to get what we want in life.*”

By giving clarity to the purpose of beliefs, we become able to choose to maintain beliefs that satisfy the purpose, and give up those beliefs that create pain, hurt, or dissatisfaction.

Failure to Test Strategies in Terms of Desired Outcomes

Another way we create inner conflicts and dissonance is by failing to choose our strategies based on the outcome they produce. For example, the woman who wants a loving relationship might find herself reacting to her thoughtless partner with anger and criticism. The result of her strategy achieves the opposite of the outcome she desires. Instead of bringing her closer to her partner, they become further apart.

The Sage Model helps to show that strategies must be chosen based on the outcome desired. Sagery offers a method of assuring that you choose strategies wisely, by requiring that the desired outcomes be determined and considered.

Without being clear about the outcomes desired, it is too easy to choose strategies based on habit or belief. For example, a person may choose an unproductive strategy because they “believe” that that strategy is the “right” way to handle a certain situation, regardless of the outcome that’s produced.

Another cause for unproductive strategies might be a “belief” about what kind of person one is. For example, the lady in our example might hold the belief: “That’s the way I am.” This belief discounts her ability to choose strategies based on outcomes.

You Can Have Peace of Mind, *and* Get all of Your Needs Met

People have sought wisdom, peace of mind, and inner harmony in many ways. Virtually all of the ways we have heard about in the past involve maximizing use of one part, and extinguishing all of the other parts in order to avoid inter-part conflicts. This means that all other

parts are given little or no importance. For example, consider the guru who retreats to a cave in search of inner peace. All creature comforts and basic needs are discounted. There is no spouse, no children, no family, no beliefs, no interests, no loyalties.

In every generation there have been gurus offering complete systems for achieving peace of mind and inner harmony. These systems promise such things as enlightenment, transformation, eternal life, or oneness with the universe. Some systems are based on no beliefs (or all beliefs), and others have a complete set of beliefs with the conflicts already resolved.

Now, Sagery shows us that there is another way — Sage resolution of inter-part conflicts — while assuring that each part gets its needs met. There is no need to extinguish all other needs; they can all be met with win-win conflict resolutions. In addition, your own beliefs may be maintained. With the installation of meta beliefs — beliefs about beliefs — your Sage can resolve belief conflicts and paradoxes.

Outcomes don't have to be vague and unreachable, such as "seeking eternal consciousness or oneness with the universe." They can be reachable, material, and satisfying. The outcomes you choose provide your Sage with the rudder to steer you to the realization and achievement of your unique potential.

So, the Sage Model offers promise of a new kind of inner harmony and peace of mind, a state that enables each part to be satisfied, and in addition develops the Sage part as well. As the Sage part is developed, the higher needs of humankind can also be satisfied. Wisdom, philosophical thought, and appreciation of the wonders of the universe become available.

Your Beliefs

There is a part of you that needs to honor your beliefs. You believe fully in your beliefs and want to live a life in harmony. When you honor your God, vote your conscience, or support a cause you believe in, this is the part that is responsible.

Your belief part may want to:

- believe in your fundamental values and have values you believe in
- use your beliefs to guide your life and be true to them
- choose beliefs that support you achieving what you want in life
- choose beliefs that support you in my desire to empower others
- be with friends who share your beliefs

- give up any beliefs that you now have that are hurting yourself or others

You and Your Sage Select Your Fundamental Values

The next step is to work with your Sage to select and agree on your fundamental values. Fundamental values are those that override the individual values, beliefs, and goals of each of your parts. The purpose of specifying them is to give your Sage a clear idea of how you want your Sage to guide you and to resolve inner conflicts.

Again, this is only your initial effort on this issue. As time goes on, and events dictate, you and your Sage will have many opportunities to add, change or refine this list.

If you are unclear about what your fundamental values are, you might decide to choose those suggested by one of the great Sages of our time, a fellow named Robert Fritz, who wrote the valuable book, "*The Path Of Least Resistance*." This following list came from that book, and I personally have adopted these values.

Self Creation

Self-creation means that you accept that you create your own experience of life. You do it by the thoughts you have, how you perceive them, how you process them, what you expect, want and believe, the strategies you choose and the persona you use, and most importantly, by the questions that you form.

To hold self-creation as a fundamental value is to recognize and accept that you are already creating your own experience of your life. Once you accept that, then you can decide to be responsible for that creation. Once responsible, you can choose to make it as joyous, gratifying, satisfying, and delightful as you are willing to have it be.

True to Myself

True to myself means that you recognize you are a unique individual. You have unique goals, dreams, ambitions, want and needs. You have your own values and beliefs, chosen to bring you what you want in life, and to guide you to satisfaction with yourself. By selecting this as a fundamental value, you are asking your Sage to respect your uniqueness and individuality. You are asking that conflicts and challenges be resolved with full respect for who and what you are. You are choosing to be *you* — the best *you* that you can be. You are asking your Sage to use and develop your full potential.

Freedom From External Domination and From Internal Strife

Freedom means that you are asking your Sage to guide you to realize your full potential while remaining *free* of domination by any outside person or force. You are also asking for freedom from internal strife and dissonance.

Health In Body, Mind and Spirit

By choosing *health*, in body, mind and spirit, you are asking your Sage to guide you to achieving what you want in life while protecting your physical, mental, and spiritual health. Given this responsibility, it will be up to your Sage to manage such things as nutrition, diet, and exercise to assure continuing good physical health. Your Sage will become responsible for your mental health by resolving inner conflicts, reshaping paradoxical or conflicting beliefs, and choosing strategies that get your needs met, and take you closer and closer to what you want in life.

What You Can Expect

For some time in the future, your conscious mind will have some difficulty letting go, and may resist allowing the Sage to do what you have asked it to do.

For a while, you will have bad feelings that do not cause an immediate shift to the Sage. You will find that some bad feelings stay with you a while, until finally, your conscious mind invokes the Sage to take over.

You will experience a new and different uncomfortable feeling. This will be your Sage's way of telling you that it wants to take charge and either resolve a conflict, reshape a hurtful belief, or guide you in a strategy that takes you where you want to go.

So, you have set in motion a gradual shift. For a while, until all of your parts get accustomed to their new roles, you will tend to react as you always have. Gradually, one learning experience at a time, each new bad feeling will reshape your patterns toward what you have chosen.

A helpful analogy is that of learning the piano. When you first begin, there are a lot of wrong notes, and progress is slow. As you proceed, however, your skills build, and the results get better and better.

One similarity between this transformation you have undertaken, and learning to play the piano is that both require some self-discipline and practice. As you gain experience and practice, you will discover that

you have installed a somewhat automatic process, which will become more and more automatic over time.

Meta Belief

Here is the new meta belief. (Remember, a meta belief is a “belief about beliefs.”) See if you are willing to choose to believe it. “I believe that I am wise to accept what is and what can’t be changed.” That’s it! That’s all there is to it.

Here is how the process works. Suppose, for example, that you believe that war should be abolished, and that war is a bad thing for the world. Then, suppose that a war starts in the Middle East. Further, suppose that every time you hear about or read about the war, you get a bad feeling. Your Sage will come, ask the four questions, and decide to *accept* the fact of the war, as a strategy for dealing with something that you can’t change. So far, so good. The problem arises if you get a TWISB message that says something like, “I just can’t accept war,” and you get another bad feeling.

This is where the meta belief comes in. You now believe that it is wise for you to accept what can’t be changed. In effect, you have two beliefs that seem to conflict. One belief is that war is unacceptable, and the other belief is that it is wise to accept what you can’t change.

The resolution is simple. Your Sage will help your other parts to understand that you are not accepting “war.” You are simply accepting that there *is* a war, and that you are not going to change that reality.

Notice the difference. You are not choosing to accept war. You are choosing to accept that *there is* a war (a change in level). Now, both beliefs are still valid. War is bad, and it is wise to accept what is and what you can’t change. There may be some part of you that says, “Wait a minute, I could devote myself to stopping that war, so it really can be changed.” Perhaps so. The next question is, “Is that what you want for your life — stopping that war?” If your answer is “yes,” then you may decide to dedicate your life to changing something that *can* be changed. But, if you are not willing to change your life mission, then you must accept that *you* can't change what is.

That has been a long explanation of a simple idea. As soon as you adopt the meta belief that you are wise to accept what is and what can't be changed, then you and your Sage have the tools you need to resolve a number of painful difficulties.

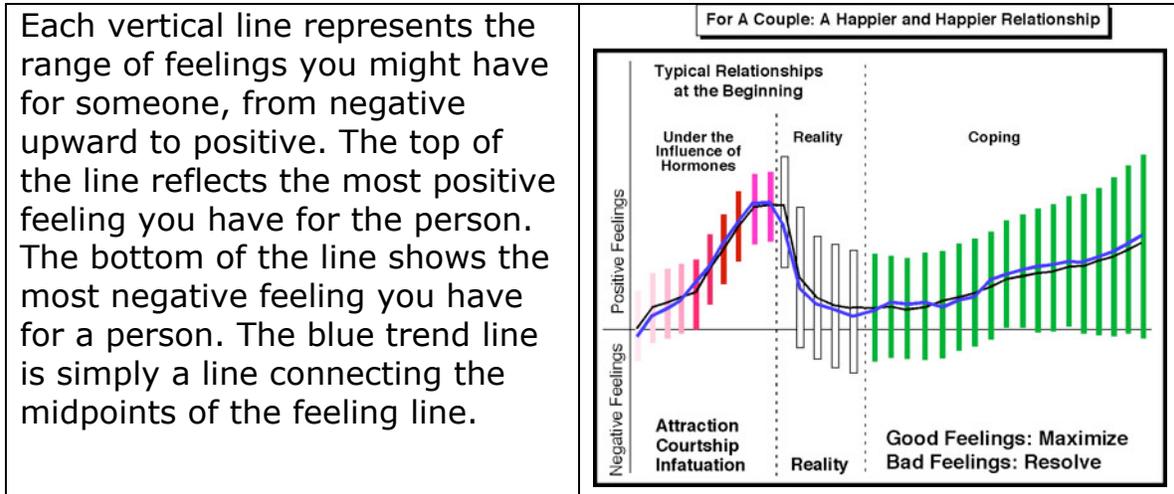
Conclusion

The purpose of a belief is to make us comfortable, give us peace of mind (produce good feelings), and enable us to get what we want in life. Beliefs are the answer to resolving the tension produced by questions that have no answer, or to which the answers are not yet known. Beliefs are chosen.

Note: The material above was excerpted from the book "Sagery: A User Manual from the Mind," by Ken Johnston, available at www.visionarypublications.com

APPENDIX C: Kinds of Relationships

Here is a visual way to represent a relationship. The one following is what we call a “Happier and Happier Relationship,” which could be considered ideal.



Each relationship starts with *attraction*. You find something that attracts you to the other person. You have some good feelings and typically also have some negative feelings.

The next step is *courting*. As courting proceeds, you create more positive feelings about the person and you tend to be less negative about them.

The bright red lines represent the beginning of *infatuation*. Notice that as infatuation grows, the most negative feelings you have for the person are still in the positive range. This is what people mean when they say, “Love is blind.” When you are infatuated, even the person’s faults are lovable.

As infatuation peaks out, *reality* sets in and you begin to see the other person more realistically; the flaws and blemishes you see again create some bad feelings. Still, your overall feelings are mostly positive, and they outweigh the negative feelings. As reality is established, the formation of the relationship is complete.

Nature, with its genes and hormones has brought us this far. Virtually every relationship, no matter how good or bad it will eventually be, goes through some variation of this pattern. The key to whether the

relationship will be loving and satisfying over the long term, lies in the *coping* patterns of how feelings are handled.

Coping Patterns

Each of the following relationship diagrams contains a different coping pattern, with a different pattern for handling feelings. In the following diagram of a “Warm, Loving Relationship,” the individual is maximizing good feelings and resolving bad feelings.

As you look through the remaining eight diagrams, notice that the beginning pattern is always the same (Attraction, Courting, Infatuation, Reality). After that point, the choices for coping with good or bad feelings are indicated as follows:

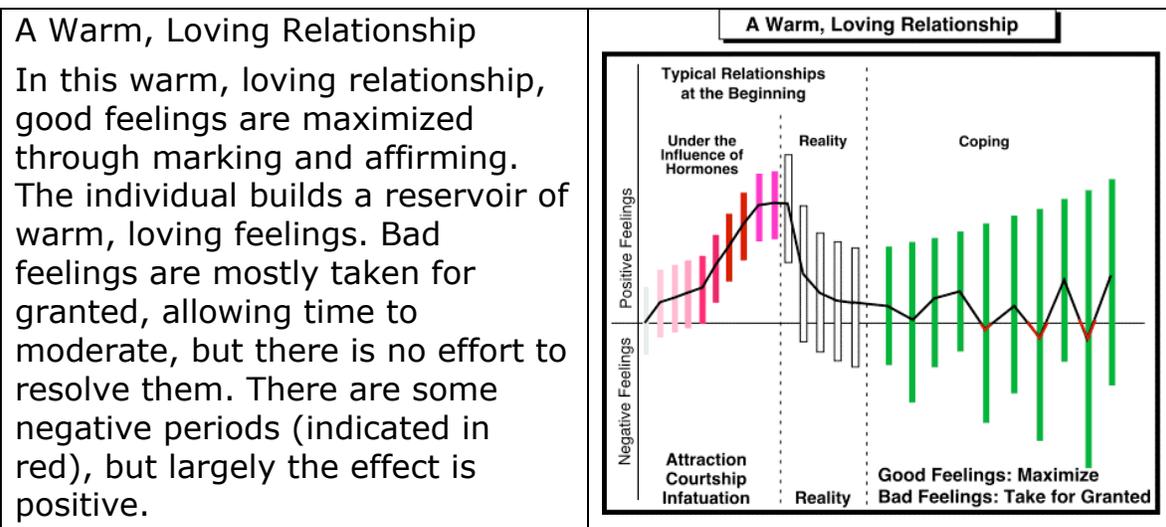
Good Feelings

- Maximize good feelings
- Take good feelings for granted
- Discount good feelings

Bad Feelings

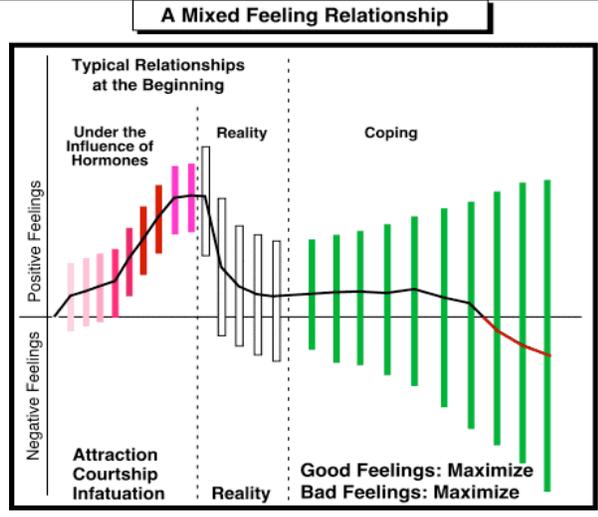
- Resolve bad feelings
- Take bad feelings for granted
- Maximize bad feelings

In the first diagram — a “Happier and Happier Relationship,” — notice that all of the chosen actions were maximizing good feelings and resolving bad feelings. This is what it takes to create and maintain a magnificent relationship. In the next two diagrams notice that the good feelings are maximized, but bad feelings are either taken for granted or maximized, producing differing kinds of relationships. As you look through the remaining diagrams, notice the effects of other patterns. Some will result in long-term relationships; some will result in divorce or alienation.



A Mixed Feeling Relationship

In this relationship there is volatility as both good and bad feelings are maximized. They mark — pay attention to and remember — both the negative and positive feelings. The result is a relationship with moderated, mixed, overall feelings.

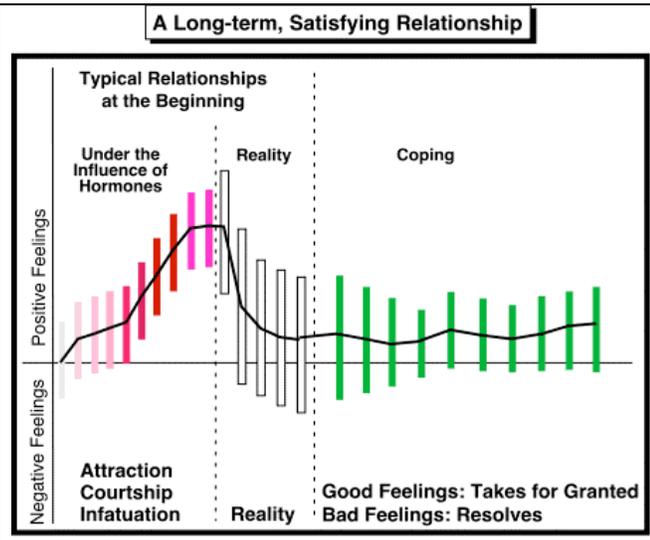


Taking Feelings for Granted

In the next three diagrams, good feelings are taken for granted, however, bad feelings may be resolved, taken for granted, or maximized.

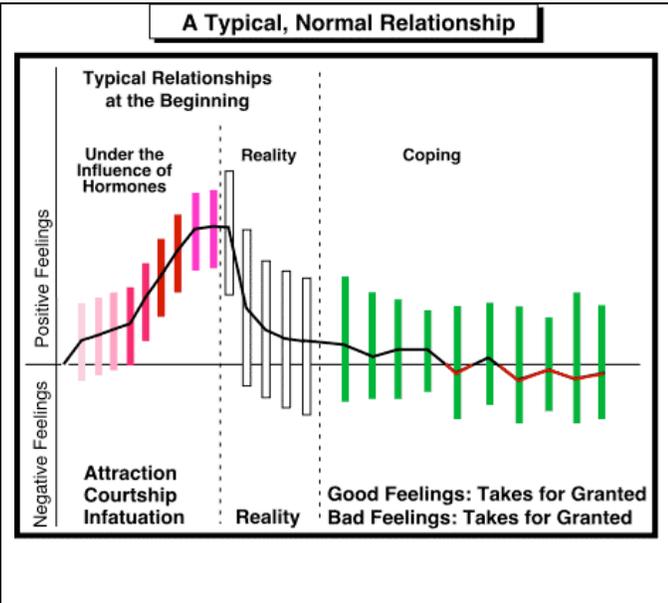
A Long-term, Satisfying Relationship

In this kind of relationship, the individual actively works at resolving bad feelings, but mostly takes good feelings for granted, making no effort to mark them (notice or remember), or loop on them (replay in the mind).



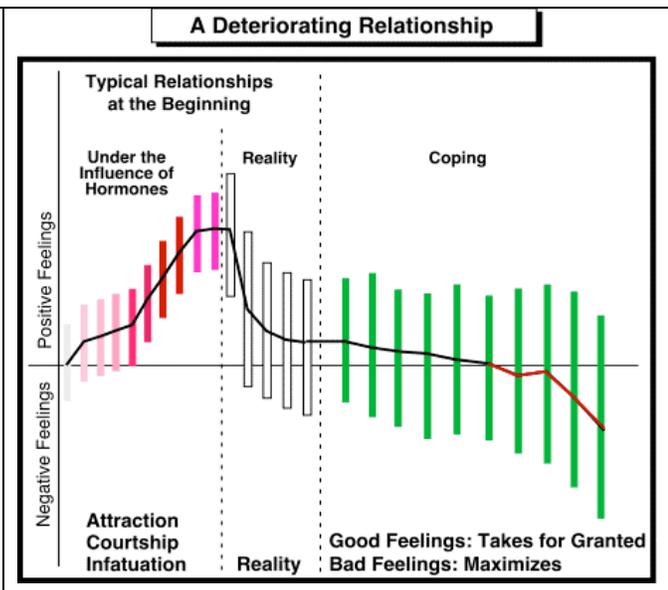
A Typical, Normal Relationship

The typical, normal relationship may take both the good and bad feelings for granted. The most recent feelings will predominate, whatever they are. However, there is a gradual, downward trend on the overall perception of the relationship. This is due to the human tendency to give more weight to bad feelings than to good feelings.



A Deteriorating Relationship

In a deteriorating relationship, good feelings are taken for granted and bad feelings are actively maximized. People harbor, nurse, and loop on (replay) the bad feelings, which results in a relationship that becomes gradually more and more negative.

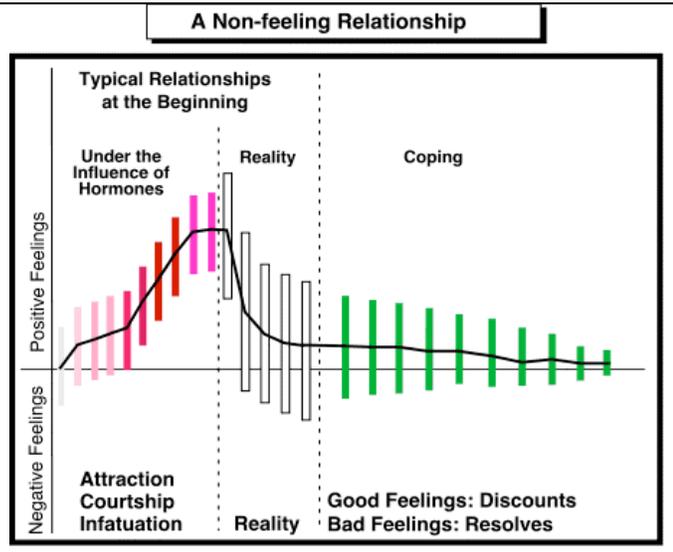


Discounting Good Feelings

In the next three examples, good feelings are discounted, and bad feelings are resolved, taken for granted, or maximized.

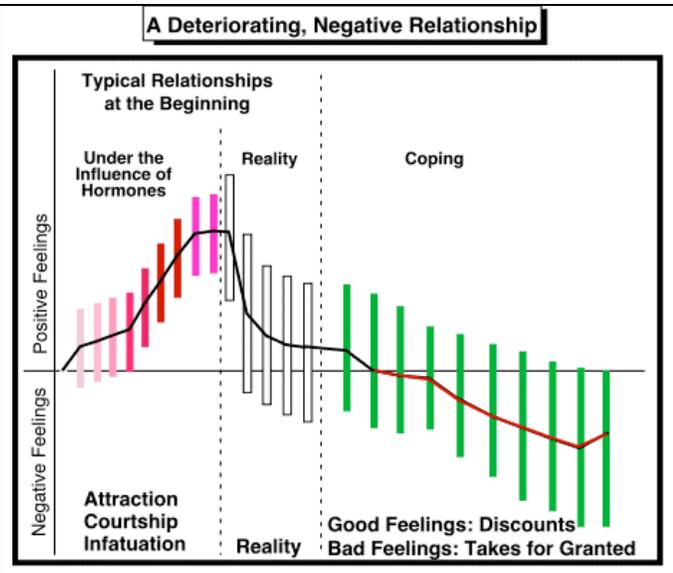
A Non-feeling Relationship

People in non-feelings relationships will discount and ignore good feelings, but still try to resolve bad ones.

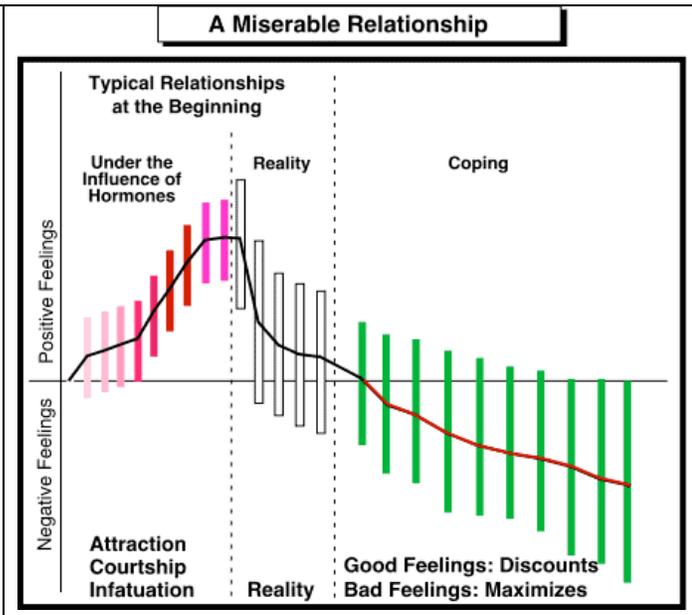


A Deteriorating, Negative Relationship

This is an example of a deteriorating, negative relationship, where good feelings are discounted, and bad feelings are taken for granted.



A Miserable Relationship
 A miserable relationship is created when good feelings are discounted, and bad feelings are maximized. As you can see from the diagram, the relationship is heading steadily downhill, probably ending in some kind of termination.



As relationships change over time, and people choose to “work on them,” the relationship may move from one of the examples, to another. That’s good, if the coping skills are improving, not so good if they deteriorate. You can see how important the skill of dealing with feelings is, in terms of the long-term viability of the relationship.

Summary: Sam and Edie

Once more, as a form of summary, let us go through the cycle.

Sam and Edie meet and each feels an attraction for each other. They enter the courting process. Over times they test the strength of the attraction, they demonstrate their feelings for each other, they become exclusive, they become a twosome, they become accepted by outsiders as a twosome.

Their feelings escalate and they experience infatuation. Every shared experience has a new intensity. Everything about the other is just great and they put everything else in the background for a while.

Their shared experiences bond them with a thousand little things that they can laugh about and enjoy together. The enjoyment, the laughing, the intense feelings, their song, their restaurant, their movie, all form the little, intensely felt and joyfully shared experiences that bond them together.

They marry and experience the adjustments of sharing a life together and all the little accommodations that living together requires. They

quarrel and laugh about it later, secure in the knowledge that their love is larger than the difficulties. They have problems, but they cope. Each is committed to the goal of making the marriage strong enough to handle anything that can come up. Each crisis is the basis, for a stronger bond. Each difficulty is an opportunity for to overcome it and prove again that love can bridge any difficulty. They cope successfully and then and only then do they live happily ever after.

If you want to read more about relationships, read the *Metamating Series*, available at www.visionarypublications.com.