



**REFINE
ONESELF**

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CHAPTER I: HELPING ONES SELF FOR SELF IMPROVEMENT

Don't Settle for Mediocrity

True success in life can only come by not settling for mediocrity, we should always strive to achieve and get the most out of life that we possibly can, it is only when we push ourselves and give it all we've got can we then give ourselves a pat on the back for a job well done.

Success in life depends on self-discipline and not giving in at the first hurdle you come across or going into a project only half heartedly, by pushing yourself that little bit further you will be surprised at what you are capable of achieving, this is what separates the winners from the losers or the successful from the unsuccessful. All people say that they want to succeed in life at whatever they do but very few are willing to actually push themselves that little bit further in order to achieve their goals, and this is why some of us succeed in life and others fail.

How well you succeed is all about how bad you want the success, what it means to you, are you willing to succeed a little or are you willing to go the whole way and beyond to achieve a higher status and be outstanding?

We all start out with the best of intentions when racing towards the goals we have set, we shoot out of the starting gate and run down the straight but many of us fall back at the first hurdle, we don't push, we run out of steam when the going gets tough and don't pause to catch our second wind but come to a halt and give up, or stumble on half heartedly and cross the line in second or third place at best.

Those who do have the winning streak in them, who know that with a little extra push and a pause to catch their breath and then a final sprint down the home straight and past the winning post a head in front of their competitors are the ones that end up with the glory and true success in life.

Of course all those who are successful don't just rely on pushing themselves, all winners have a strategy and are willing to be flexible on their way to success because life has a way of throwing many different spanners into the works along the way.

We have to be able to adapt to these unexpected happenings when they occur and not get bogged down, we have to take them in our stride, skip around them and continue in the race.

Never settle for anything less than giving it you're all

Here are some tips to help you remember never to settle for anything but your best no matter what the project is

- It doesn't matter how big or small the project put your all into getting it completed
- If you think you have given it your best shot, pause and ask yourself "could I improve"
- Plan out your project but always be willing to make changes and work your way around the unexpected
- It's ok to pause but get back into the race and carry on until you pass the winning post.

Give yourself a mood boost

There are many little changes we can make in our lives that can give our mood a boost, boosting your mood brightens up your day, brings a smile and makes life that little bit easier to deal with. Just by making the smallest changes and taking as little as 5 minutes from your day you could be surprised with the difference it can make. It doesn't have to be anything outlandish, just something you wouldn't normally consider doing. Here are some tips to help give you that quick mood boost and can be done whenever you are feeling out of sorts with the world or feeling a little down.

If you have 5 minutes to spare you can:

- Take out your daily goal planner and write something down that you already completed today and cross it straight off the list
- Take the weight off your feet and eat one of your 5 daily portions of fruit or veg
- Look at yourself in the mirror and pull as many different funny faces as you can in 5 minutes
- Read the comics in the daily paper
- Take a quick shower or at least splash your face with water

- Use some of that expensive perfume or deodorant you had bought and enjoy the fragrance

If you have 15 minutes to spare you can:

- De-clutter your desk or an area of your home
- Treat yourself to a moisturizing mask
- Change into a favorite piece of clothing and admire yourself
- Do a few quick and easy exercises or stretches
- Read a few pages of a book or magazine you enjoy
- Make yourself a big fresh fruit smoothie, sit down and enjoy it
- Make a list of all the people you haven't been in touch with in a while and schedule a time to call each of them
- Write down what you have enjoyed doing so far during the day in your journal
- Find a comfortable spot, close your eyes and enjoy the silence, sound of rain or chirping birds

If you have 30 minutes spare you can:

- Call someone you haven't talked with in a while and catch up on all the gossip you missed
- Use your computer to look for ideas for your summer vacation
- Take a soak in a tub full of your favorite bubbles or skin softener

- Listen to your favorite CD
- Go to your local store and treat yourself
- Go for a walk and say hello to everyone you meet
- Turn off the TV, phone and anything else that could disturb you and sit down and enjoy peace and quiet for a half-hour
- Plan a quiet romantic meal
- Write a letter to someone special and mail it
- Discover a new recipe on the internet and plan to cook it for dinner
- Replace any old photographs you have in frames with more updated pictures

Tips for Getting Out of a Rut

Do you feel stuck in your life? Has the world suddenly seemed to have closed in around you? In addition, are you are doing the same thing day in, day out? If this sounds like your life then you are probably stuck in a rut, with what seems to be no way out.

Being stuck in a rut can drag you down, make you feel depressed, or as if life is something you just go through but have long since stopped enjoying. You become this way slowly without even realizing it, until one day you wonder what happened and when.

For many of us our daily life is governed by some form of routine which we cannot avoid, for example going to work 8 hours a day, taking the kids to school each morning, this is daily life and routine which for the most part cannot be changed. Another reason behind routine is the safety barrier; we get comfortable with our lives and feel secure in them, so why change?

However, sometimes routine can start to get us down, leave us with a feeling of dissociation and start causing problems in relationships, work and daily life in general, we gradually become unhappy. This is when a change is needed; this is the time to dig yourself out of the hole you have put yourself in and start enjoying life again.

Here are some tips to help you begin to take back control over your life and get out of the rut.

- Do at least one thing everyday that is different to your normal routine, this could be something as simple as taking a short break and going for a walk, sitting down to read a chapter of a book or any other hobby or pastime you once enjoyed.
- Take up a new hobby, make sure that you give yourself some time throughout the day to just enjoy something you like doing.

- Shake up meal times by having something different, you can either try a different recipe or order different take out, try foods from different cultures.
- Get out and meet new people, there are many ways you can achieve this, join a gym, club or attend a self-improvement class or hobby class.
- Drive a different way to work or if possible walk or start bicycling, not only will this break the rut you are in but also get you fitter.
- Take up a new sport; there are many types of sport with something for the fitter to the more moderate forms of exercise.
- Do something each day that is totally out of character for you, start off with small changes and work your way up to bigger ones.
- If you are stuck at home with children then change your routine throughout the day, don't always do the same chore at the same time, shake up the way you do your housework.
- Make small changes around the home or work area.
- De-clutter your home or work area; it is surprising how being surrounded by clutter can get you down.

Excellent Self-care

While the majority of people do actively try to take care of their physical health by exercising and eating a sensible diet most don't stop to think about the other side that completes a happy, healthy individual, their mental health.

Here are some tips for excellent self-care:

- Treat your body – while we exercise to take care of our body we should also remember to give it a treat, pamper it a little. This could be by way of a massage after a hard days work when it is tired and stressed or something as simple as standing up and giving it a stretch to ease knotted muscles.
- Take time out – refresh your body and mind by giving yourself some space, some time just for you, this could be as little as five minutes where you find peace and solitude by closing your eyes and deep breathing. The longer you can take time out from your busy day just for yourself the better.
- Let your inner child out – can you remember how much simpler life was when you were a child; go back to your childhood for a short while.

Do something you used to enjoy doing as a child, this could be anything from rollerblading, lying on your back and finding shapes in the clouds, making a daisy chain or playing on a swing.

- Comfort yourself – we all have something that comforts us in times when we need it, something that make us feel safe and secure. Take time out to comfort yourself every now and again. This could be sitting in front of a roaring fire and watching the flames dance, relaxing in a hot bubble bath surrounded by candlelight, snuggling up in a favorite blanket or a particular smell that relaxes you.
- Relax in fantasy – take time out to go out of your world and into another, this could be by way of a book, magazine or film. Or better yet visualization; go into your own fantasy world, created by your own mind.
- Treat yourself to a mental health day – treat yourself to a whole day of just doing whatever it is you enjoy doing, don't do any work or even think or feel guilty about what you should be doing. Just make the day all about you.

- Rediscover nature – reconnect with the world around you by taking a long walk through the park, notice how green the grass is and how blue the sky and marvel at the weird and wonderful shapes of the clouds drifting over the sky.
- Do something you keep putting off – take time out to do something you have been meaning to do for a long time. Don't keep putting it off, make today the day to do it.

These are just some of the ways you can help to improve your health by taking care of your mental health, just open your mind and be more aware of your body and mind and you will discover many other ways to take care of your mental health which ultimately leads to a happier and healthier you, overall.

Taking Care of Yourself

Taking good care of yourself means eating a healthy diet, getting exercise on a daily basis and learning to relax and take care of your mental health. It is only when our bodies and mind are in union can we feel and be totally healthy and fit, there are many ways that you can ensure you take good care of yourself and which can enable you to live not only a healthier lifestyle, but also a much happier one.

- Learn to let your feelings out, a problem shared is a problem halved, so find someone you can trust and in your times of need lend their shoulder. At the very least get your feelings out by writing them down in a daily journal.
- Never put anyone above yourself, by comparing yourself to others you are frequently putting yourself down and this can lead to low self-esteem or feelings of envy.
- Take time out of your day to just do something which you enjoy doing. By taking a half-hour from the day and just devoting this time entirely to yourself, you are telling yourself that you are worthy.
- When things are getting you down remember to smile, always look for the funny side of any situation no matter how bad it is.
- Use whatever self-help methods work best for you to help you to relax more easily. There are a variety of methods you can use, including audio CDs, books, DVDS, exercise classes, meditation or yoga classes. In order to be happy and healthy you have to be able to release stress before it builds up.
- Don't allow anyone to put you up on a pedestal; this will lead you to believe you have let someone down when things don't go right.

- If your work is getting you down then ask yourself, are you in the right work? It is also important to remember that there are always some things that every one dislikes about their work. Take the good and bad into account and weigh them up.
- Remember to take short breaks throughout the day, if at work then this could be something as simple as stretching your arms, legs and back by taking a walk to the coffee machine.
- Practices developing a more positive attitude towards everything in your life, if there is something you are not happy about, ask yourself what you need to do to change things.
- Get some form of exercise everyday, exercise helps to ward off diseases, makes us feel better, sleep better and is a great form of stress relief.
- Eat a sensible diet that includes plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables while cutting down on fatty foods, salt and starch.
- Keep a journal; this can benefit you in many ways by allowing you to get your thoughts and feelings out.
- Make goals that you work towards to achieve what it is you want out of life.

CHAPTER II:

DEALING WITH TROUBLE OF WHAT LIFE BRINGS

Taking life with a grain of salt

Not letting things get to you and taking life with a grain of salt is the answer to living a happy stress free life; it is when we don't realize how much stress is building up because of holding things back, worrying about things and harboring grudges that many problems occur in life.

When things are allowed to build up we get overwhelmed but there are many techniques that we can use to slow down, relax and take life that little bit easier when our feelings threaten to overwhelm us.

If we don't learn to take things with a grain of salt and not worry about every little thing and stress becomes habitual then it can have a severe effect on your health. "Burnout" is the term that is commonly used and you can burnout through problems caused by work, your lifestyle or individual personality characteristics.

The symptoms of burnout can be varied but all have an adverse effect on health and happiness over the long term if you don't change the situation that causes it.

A loss of physical energy

If you are continually faced with stress then it can have a draining effect on your body and mind, this will make you feel as though you have less energy and can make you totally lethargic. You may no longer have the interests you once had or the social life you once did, even the thought of getting out of bed may seem like too much trouble.

Frustration

Stress leads to frustration because you may feel sad for no particular reason, impatient or even ever changing moods, this will eventually lead to you feeling as though you are losing control over your life or that you no longer have the ability to control it.

Problems in relationships

You may find that you are letting relationships slide, this could be because you find yourself losing patience with people around you, you have less interest in things you used to do with others or you feel you cant mix with people you used to like being with.

A pessimistic outlook

When you are feeling burnout it gets increasingly harder to become excited about life and the things you used to do and enjoy, your thoughts turn ever increasingly to negative ones rather than positive and you find it harder to look on the bright side in any situation. It becomes almost impossible to take life with a grain of salt and let even the smallest of things roll off your back and you gradually get deeper into a rut.

Tips to avoid burning out

- Learn a relaxation technique such as meditation
- Get plenty of exercise every week
- Make sure you eat a sensible and healthy diet
- Take time out for yourself everyday
- Learn to shrug your shoulders and cast aside anything that you cannot possible change
- Do something that you enjoy doing everyday
- In a particularly stressful time, relax as best as you can, take slow deep breaths and count to 10

Dealing with problem solving

We all come across problems that affect our life and we have to deal with them. However, its how we deal with them that can make all the difference.

Problems can occur in life through mistakes that we make ourselves or through unforeseen circumstances beyond our control, whichever way they cross our path we should deal with them in the same levelheaded way.

Stay in control

There are basic ways in which we can help ourselves overcome problems easier when life throws them our way but the most important of them is to remain in control of your thoughts and feelings. Remember that worrying and getting upset about any situation won't change the situation in any way, it won't make it go away by magic. Try to think of problems as challenges that arise, tests that are put in our path to see how we deal with them and overcome them.

It is all about how we deal with problems emotionally that matter, our emotional state can take us through our problems if we allow it to. If you are prone to worrying when problems arise and allow depression to set in, you still have to get through the tough times, only they will be so much harder to get through.

The first thing you have to understand is that you don't have to understand the cause of the problem in order to solve it and get past it.

If only I knew why? Is the first question that many of us ask when faced with difficulty, but knowing why doesn't change anything. The solution to the problem lies ahead not behind and this is the way you should be looking, don't spend energy trying to figure why, spend it focusing on looking for the solution.

Don't spend anymore than 20% of your time on focusing on the problem and wondering why; do spend 80% on figuring out a solution to the problem. The only question you need to ask yourself is "what am I going to do about it?"

When problems get you down

If problems are getting you down remember that everyday is a new day, while life seems to be throwing many problems your way right now it doesn't mean it will tomorrow. Leave the past where it belongs and only concentrate on the future and it getting brighter day-by-day.

To lift yourself up out of the blues ask yourself "what is happening in my life right now that I have to be grateful for?" if you sit down and think deeply about this, no matter how many problems you seem to have right now there is always something which you should be grateful for.

So dealing with solving problems is all about how you look at them, face them head on and don't shrink from them in despair. Focus on obtaining a solution for solving the problem and then go for it full steam ahead until you have dealt with it and got through it.

How to Beat the Bad Day Blues

Whenever you have a bad day for whatever reason, what you need to do is think. Think hard, but not about the misery or the misfortune that has hit you. You may be of the opinion, of course, the unfortunate events or experiences of the day are going to haunt you, put you under depression and mental stress, drain your emotions of their usual energy, kill your enthusiasm for life and spoil everything that you hold dear in life.

In short, your negative thoughts may make your bad day seem worse than it actually is. Undoubtedly, that will be the case if you surrender yourself to the consequences, not otherwise.

If you take control, you can devise ways and means of beating the bad day blues. Since negative thoughts and emotions tend to overwhelm you on a bad day, you must think of strategies that thwart them.

Turn to vigorous physical work out. Or, take a long walk or go swimming. Or, just get out into the open and sit somewhere and observe the plants and trees and flowers or the sunset, if it is sunset time. Read a pleasurable book, watch a funny movie or do something that distances you from the bad day situation, preferably both physically and, more importantly, mentally.

The good times

Remember the good ol' days that enriched your life in the past, all the happy experiences that elevated your spirits and all those special friends and relatives who brought cheer and laughter into your life. Think of the good things of your life and be grateful for the blessings bestowed on you. Put against the bright light of your appreciation of all those better days, this single bad day or a small bunch of bad days will pale into insignificance.

Do not wallow in your bad moods and emotions because that is a sure way of plunging deeper into sorrow. A bad day will not become a good day by stewing over it. Remember that a bad day is just one passing day. It might have left a few scars on your mind and body but is important to remember that the pain is temporary. Time is a great healer. Today, just ignore the negative aspects of the day. Instead, look at the positive side of the bad event or happening that spoiled your day.

Are there any lessons in it for your future? How can you avoid getting into the same or similar situation? This does not mean that you start thinking about your purpose in life, your personal relationships, your career graph or your future on a bad day. The day is not suitable for taking any major decisions about your future life, because such decisions cannot be sound, given the dark background. Put off taking important decisions till a better day when you regain your mental poise and composure.

One simple formula that will help you on your bad day lies in the fact that your sorrows get divided and your pleasures get multiplied when you share them with your close friends or confidantes. You may try to overcome your bad day by discussing your problems with your close friends. Any or all of these easy-to-adopt measures will be helpful in providing relief to you on a bad day.

Dealing with Disappointment

No matter how hard we try and how positive we try to remain about situations, we all end up having to deal with disappointments sometime during our life. We plan, we set goals in order to succeed in life but invariably, even though we give it our best shot, things don't turn out as expected and disappointment sets in.

Disappointment in itself is not particularly a bad thing; its how we choose to deal with it that can make a difference. If we simply choose to accept the failure and allow the disappointment to wash over us and quickly go away we don't suffer adverse consequences, it is only when we allow the disappointment to linger and we dote on it that negativity and bad feelings can stay with us.

Some disappointment in life can be good for us because it allows us to grow and develop and practice thinking positively, going through disappointment and coming out the other side still wearing a smile makes us realize that no matter what life throws at us we can overcome it. Here are some tips to help you deal with and overcome disappointment when it rears its head.

- Realize that grief, stress, anxiety, fear, pain and suffering are just a natural part of life that we have to go through, it's how we deal with it and come out the other side that matters.
- If family members or loved ones are causing you disappointments remember that no one is invulnerable, you cannot always live up to your expectations or yourself so how can you expect others to be perfect.

- When faced with disappointment instead of looking at it as though it is a bad thing, welcome it and think of it as a test or challenge.
- When things go wrong analyze the situation, see what you can learn from it and then let it go.
- If you are constantly running into a brick wall when trying to reach long term goals, remember there cannot be failure unless you give up, so keep trying until you get there.
- If you run into a dead end turn around and go another way, by staying flexible you are able to obtain your goal any way you can.
- Don't expect anything more from life than what you are willing to put in, if you don't expect anything more, you won't be disappointed.
- If you are having a particularly bad time overcoming disappointment it can help to talk about it, by talking about it and letting it out you realize that you are not alone when it comes to suffering disappointment.
- Patience can really be a blessing when it comes to dealing with disappointment, just simply let the feelings pass over you and disappear and get back on the right track.

- Don't be conned by foolish and unreasonable expectations about life, if you are constantly looking for perfection then you will be disappointed for sure.

Dealing with jealousy

Jealousy is an emotion that can have devastating consequences to a relationship. Jealousy is a negative emotion that many of us suffer from to some extent; it is a feeling of emotions such as anger, hurt, dependency and self-doubt. Self-doubt stems from a fear of losing something, when in fact we ourselves often make this reality by our behavior and actions through jealousy. So how do we take steps to dealing with the green-eyed monster when it rears its ugly head?

- Become independent – you should only truly rely on yourself and never develop dependency on one person, focus on developing self-independence and on what you have in life, not what you don't have
- Give yourself a confidence boost – treat yourself to a new hair-do, a day at the spa or a new outfit, do something to give yourself a boost in confidence. If your confidence is very low then attend a course on how to assert yourself

- List what makes you feel jealous – sit down and admit to yourself what makes you feel jealous, list them down and be open in your thinking, are they silly things that make you jealous? And do they really matter?
- Talk your fears over with the person – sit down and talk with the person who is causing you to feel jealous and let them know how you feel. Are they doing something intentionally to make you jealous?

Or without realizing it? If the person truly cares for you then they are usually more than willing to make changes, especially if they didn't realize they were causing you to worry and feel this way

- Take a good and honest evaluation of yourself – being honest about yourself and admitting you might have problems with low self-esteem or self-worth can be an eye opener and is the first steps to changing your feelings
- Study the person you are jealous about – look at the person openly and honestly, figure out what you dislike about the person and what do you like if anything, about them? Ask yourself if you are being unrealistic in your thinking

- Don't magnify your feelings – unless the jealousy is severe or it has been with you for a long time then chances are it is only fleeting and can have occurred for many reasons, with any luck these feelings will pass over and your relationship will calm down. Until this happens try to keep your feelings under control and don't let them spiral.

There are many self-help methods that can be used to help those who suffer from severe jealousy, these vary from hypnotherapy courses, audio CDs, books and magazines, any technique which can be used to help relax and calm you down can also be helpful, particularly at those times when jealousy first strikes.

Surviving the Winter Blues

With the summer seeming to be a long way off and the dark cold winter mornings set in many of us become affected by the season. Winter depression or the winter blues is also known as SAD, seasonal affective disorder; it is something that is thought to affect millions of people and it ranges from mild symptoms to the more severe. So what are the symptoms of SAD? And what if anything can be done about it to enable you to survive the winter blues?

The symptoms vary from person to person with it affecting some more than others; however the symptoms listed below are the most common with just the severity changing.

- Having problems with sleep is the most common, this usually is sleeping more than normal but not feeling refreshed no matter how long you slept. The feeling of not wanting to get out of bed and also needing to take a nap during the day is also common.
- Many people overeat during the winter months with a particular craving for carbohydrates; this of course leads to piling on weight.
- Depression very often sets in with the darker and colder days and nights.
- Despair and misery often affects the person with feelings of being “out of sorts” to feeling sad and tearful for what seems to be the smallest things.
- Social problems and problems with relationships can also creep in, you find yourself snapping at your partner, being annoyed by them and avoiding going out with friends.
- A feeling of lethargy and everything becomes an effort, you find yourself becoming increasingly tired.

- During this period of time you find yourself catching colds and other illnesses more easily; this is due to lowered resistance to infection.
- Behavioral problems can occur particularly in younger people.

The symptoms of seasonal affective disorder will usually start to occur from around September and can last until around April, but symptoms will of course peak during the darkest and coldest months.

It is thought the reason behind SAD is the lack of bright light during the winter months, which although the exact reasons why this happens is unknown, it is thought that bright light does affect the brain chemistry.

With the knowledge that bright light or the lack of it does have this effect; the treatment used for those who are severely affected by SAD is to be in bright light for periods of time during the winter months. Vacationing in a brighter climate during the winter or purchasing a light box can achieve this.

Light boxes have been designed to have suitable bright lighting that is of 2500 lux at least, where lux is the measurement for brightness.

To put this into perspective a normal living area is around 100 lux, the light however doesn't have to be a special daylight, full spectrum light or color matching light.

If you are severely affected by SAD then there are many websites which can give you specific information on how light therapy can help you overcome the winter blues and where to purchase light boxes from.

Signals that could mean you are stressed

Stress affects people in different ways, but it is usually only the severity of the symptoms that differs while the actual symptoms remain basically the same. Some people are much easier to stress than others while some lose their cool for the slightest reasons, others can seemingly take a lot before they give in to stress and begin to show the common signals related to stress.

Stress can also be divided into two categories, short-term stress and long-term stress. Stress is generally regarded as short term if a situation comes up that you aren't used to in everyday life such as an interview, an exam or going to the dentist.

While the signals of short term stress and long term stress are the same, if you are only stressed in the short term these feelings are only with you on the day of the event or just before and quickly disappear once the event has passed. Once this has passed your body settles down and you think no more about the feelings of stress and anxiety and it passes with no trouble.

However, long term stress differs because it has the same signals as short term stress only they are with you almost everyday, constantly affecting your body and mind and developing into deep seated anxiety and panic attacks occasionally, if left to its own devices.

The common signals listed below could be warning signs that you are suffering from stress, either in the short term or long term and can vary from person to person in the severity

- The feelings of butterflies or knots in your stomach
- Feeling cold sweats and feeling very flushed or hot
- Your mouth feels as dry as a desert or that it is full of cotton wool
- Your heart seems to pound or beat much more quickly than it should

- Your hands may feel cold and they may tremble
- You lose the ability to concentrate and even think properly
- You feel a terrible feeling that you cant describe
- Your head feels as though a tight band of steel is encircling it and is pulling tighter and tighter
- Your skin feels itchy or as some people put it as though something is crawling beneath your skin
- You find it hard to settle down and often your sleeping patterns change with you laying awake for hours while feeling exhausted
- You sleep but wake up feeling more tired than when you went to bed
- Your energy levels drop and you begin to feel lethargic and have no interest in the things you once did

All the above are the most common signals that you are stressed and that you should take steps towards eliminating some of the stress from your life or finding adequate ways to be able to release the stress from your body and mind. If your level of stress is particularly high or if you have long-term stress then you should take advice from your doctor as you may need medication to get you back on track while you develop ways to beat stress.

Signs that you are suffering from burnout

Burnout is a term that is closely related to stress. Burnout occurs when your body and mind are continually stressed to the point when you begin to develop emotional and physical fatigue. If you have been continually subjected to high levels of stress over an extended period of time it can bring feelings that eventually have an effect on every aspect of your life, you are then said to have “burnout”.

While burnout is related to severe stress, it is different from just being excessively stressed. Many people live for years with long-term stress without “burning out”. While signs and symptoms of burnout can be very similar to those felt when stressed, when you “burnout”, you have the symptoms of stress but along with this also feelings of emotional exhaustion and negativity.

The signs that you may be heading for “burnout” include the following symptoms, lower down the scale indicates symptoms you may feel the closer to “burnout” you become.

- You begin to have problems with your digestive system
- Your blood pressure starts to rise
- You begin to suffer severe headaches
- You start grinding your teeth consistently
- You begin to feel extremely fatigued
- You may suffer from heart problems or even heart attack
- You may suffer from stroke
- You begin to feel increasingly hopeless and powerless
- You begin to feel dissociation
- Satisfaction from work and life in general deteriorates
- Feelings of deep resentment build up
- You feel in a rut and there is no way out
- You become withdrawn and totally isolated
- You feel incompetent and a total failure

The end result of these symptoms show one as suffering from “burnout” due to continual and unrelenting long periods of stress, they are nothing more than the result of an extremely tired body and mind. At the time of actual “burnout” you will be experiencing problems not only at work but also with relationships and almost every aspect of what you used to know as “normal” life.

In order to prevent burnout it is important that you recognize the symptoms and try to eliminate as much stress as possible from your life. Stress management is essential to prevent burnout and using stress management techniques can prevent many of the symptoms. To reduce burnout or prevent it you can take the following precautions by making changes to your physical, mental and social well-being.

- Have a complete physical with your doctor
- Make sure you eat a health diet
- Make sure you are getting enough daily exercise
- Make sure you get enough sleep
- Learn relaxation techniques to deal with stress and stressful situations

Top 10 signs that its time to leave a relationship

Usually your gut instinct will be the first sign that things are not going well in your relationship, you will feel that something is just not right, that something has changed and it is not for the better.

Perhaps these feelings will begin to show as anger and coldness where as before you felt kindness and warmth with your partner, these could be the first signs that something is amiss and the relationship is beginning to fail or it could be nothing more than just a stage in your relationship through which you will pass. So how can you tell which it is? There are other signs that could give you a clue as to if the relationship is doomed or if you will survive, some of the most common signs include:

1. An increase in arguing

If before you agreed on almost anything but now you are constantly disagreeing and arguing then this could be a sign that things are taking a turn for the worse in your relationship. This could be more so if your partner is now forever finding faults and bickering about the smallest of things and disagreeing purely for no good reason.

2. A decrease in passion

If you previously enjoyed a good sex life with your partner and this drops off for no apparent reason then this could be a sign something is not right, while some waning is only natural over a period of time when certain circumstances interfere, if your partner resists your advances continually over a period of time then this could be a warning sign.

3. Avoiding one another

Of course you can't always be together but if you were close before and spent a lot of time in each other's company talking, holding hands or cuddling and this begins to drop off to the extent where you are now avoiding each other this is a big sign that you are no longer enjoying each other's company and a warning sign of impending doom.

4. Jealousy

If your partner suddenly starts flirting with the clear intention of making you jealous then this should be regarded as a warning sign, your partner could be feeling insecure and is looking for more attention or it could be a sign that they are genuinely trying to attract someone new and is losing affection for you.

5. Interference from family members

If your partner begins to use family members such as children against you then this could spell danger in a relationship, bringing family members into it can cause nothing but disharmony and will drive a wedge between any relationships.

6. Growing dependency

If your partner suddenly shows a growing dependency on you then this could be a problem, it could mean that they realize something is wrong between the two of you and are clutching to you.

7. Anxiety or depression

If your partner is suddenly anxious or gets depressed then this could spell trouble, it could mean that they have unresolved issues and unless there is clear reason as to why it could mean your relationship is the main problem.

8. Expecting change

If your partner suddenly wants you to change then this could be a sign something is amiss, they could be indicating that they aren't happy with the way things are and that things are going downhill.

9. Spending more time at work

If your partner suddenly starts spending more time at work or out with friends than they are with you then this is a big sign that something is wrong.

10. Being secretive

If your partner starts becoming secretive then this is a warning sign, if they tend to hide things from you such as mobile phones, letters or start spending a lot of time online then they could have found a new love in their life.

CHAPTER III: ANGER AND HAPPINESS

About Anger

Nearly anyone and everyone – people of all ages worldwide – is prone to displays of anger. The degree of frequency and level of intensity of the emotion are what vary most and most often result in how well a person handles the anger and whether there are positive or negative results.

A key to those who successfully manage anger is gaining control. And in order to gain control over the emotion, it helps to first take a look at anger itself, what it is and how to deal with it effectively.

Anger is an emotion. It can be triggered by a variety of things, issues, people, places, etc. Some of the top triggers are jealousy, confrontations, failure, greed, fear, low self-esteem, assertiveness, feeling threatened and pain.

When a person gets angry, the negative emotion can actually harm the person's physical and emotional well-being. The heart rate increases, stress levels rise, and often a fight or flight reaction is the immediate response, neither one always presenting a healthy alternative.

What counters anger best is to be prepared in advance to learn major triggers, how to tell when they are about to happen, when possible, so as to avoid them, plus a variety of coping skills in order to deal with what is necessary. To help, keep a private journal to note any anger triggers, ways to possibly avoid confrontations down the road and possible coping techniques to try. You can use the following triggers, coping techniques and helpful tips as a good starting point.

Trips Your Trigger

When you're calm, make a list of things, people, places, events, etc. that tend to trip your trigger:

- Calling businesses and getting automated menus to choose from that run you in circles, accomplishing nothing productive.
- Handling angry customer service calls
- Going to visit in-laws
- Heavy traffic during rush hour

- Loosing with my Mutual Funds account in the stock market

Anger Aids

List ways to deal with anger when you're have a positive frame of mind and are in a good mood, to spark better creativity:

- Cool off with ice cream – As simplistic as this sounds, something cool and soothing can often help take the heat off the moment and begin cooling the entire body down.
- Take a hike or walk – Taking a step back, away from it all, can do wonders to give you a more world-view of the situation. Being in the center of issues can make them seem larger than they really are, making the proverbial mountains out of molehills.
- Dance – Let it all out via your own expression. Dance to the beat of the music of your choice.
- Write it out - Journal and create a column of 'lemons' along with another column alongside for solutions or 'lemonade.'

- Avoid / alter path of destruction in advance – Take a different route during rush hour or alter your schedule.

By planning, you can prepare yourself in advance. Plan and conquer, and keep at the process on a regular basis.

The Top 7 Ways of Controlling Anger

Everyone gets angry at sometime in his or her life over something that happens. However, anger is a negative emotion that leads to feelings of sadness, guilt, frustration, unhappiness and helplessness.

Anger is an emotion which we must recognize and be able to let go in order to be happy and successful in life, finding a resolution for the anger is essential in being able to let it go and move on.

Knowing what you are actually angry with helps, do you feel angry at another's actions or are you angry at your own reaction? Finding out what actually upsets you is an important factor in actually narrowing down what it is that is bothering you.

The more you practice controlling your anger the easier it becomes to let it go and move on and by learning to control your anger you are effectively learning to take control over your life and happiness. Here are 7 top tips for gaining control over your anger.

1. When you feel anger beginning to build up inside of you, let your whole body droop and relax to the best of your ability while beginning to breathe from the diaphragm, breathing in this way helps to calm both the body and mind which leads to letting go of the anger before it takes a hold.
2. Ask yourself if being angry and working yourself up is going to make any difference to the situation, for example if someone cuts in front of you, is it really going to change anything if you curse and blow your horn. Is it worth stressing yourself?
3. Visualize a stress free zone in your mind, this should be a place where you feel totally relaxed and calm and a place which only you knows about where you can quickly go too when you feel anger beginning to build up inside. It can be a totally imaginary place or one that you have visited in life where you feel totally relaxed and at ease.

4. When you feel anger beginning to build up due to someone else's actions think of yourself doing exactly the same thing as they did, would you be angry with yourself if you were the one doing it?
5. Realize that it's you and you alone that is allowing the anger to build up inside of you, while it may have been caused by someone else, you chose to let it bother you and to get angry.
6. Counting to 10 really can help to diffuse anger, by concentrating on counting you are forgetting what happened and are consciously letting anger go.
7. Repeat an affirmation or mantra to yourself whenever you feel anger beginning to build up inside, for example tell yourself to "take it easy", "I feel calm and relaxed", "anger isn't going to get me anywhere" or "let it go". Affirmations can help to diffuse your anger and get you back on the right track to thinking in a more positive and calming way.

Turning hate into good

How many times have we said to ourselves “I hate this or that” or even “ I hate him/her”, but where does hate get us, does it make us feel any better by declaring we hate something or somebody? Hate is a negative feeling and negative feelings only bring about bad.

When we think of the word hate we start to have thoughts of coldness towards others or something, we automatically isolate ourselves from that person or situation and nothing good can come from feelings such as these. There are many types of hate such as racial, sexual, ethnicity or just plain disliking a situation or disliking a situation due to a phobia, here are some ways you can think about turning the hatred into a more positive and good approach.

Racial hate

People are people, we are all flesh and blood whatever the colour of our skin or our background in life, we all have the same color blood flowing through our veins; we have the same shape hearts and brains, we all have fingers, toes and the ability to communicate. Why then do so many people profess to hate someone else just because they have a different color skin or come from a different country?

It is worthwhile remembering that underneath we are all basically the same and want the same out of life for ourselves and our families, there are good and bad people of all colors and nationalities in life. So instead of just hating someone because they look differently to you look deeper inside than the color of the skin and see the true person.

Sexual hate

What difference does a person's sexual preference make to the person that they are, many people hate others solely based on their sexual preference, but why? For example you could meet someone quite by chance enjoy being in their company, laugh, talk have a great time until you found out that they were gay.

All of a sudden your feelings alter towards this person yet nothing has substantially changed from a few minutes ago, the person hasn't changed, they are still the same person you were having fun with whom you liked being with, yet this simple point changes everything. Maybe it's just a matter of ethics, how you were brought up, what you were brought up to believe in, but why can't you change your thoughts and feelings, why can't you just allow yourself to continue having fun and enjoying being with that person?

If they were a good person before their admittance of their sexual preference then they still are now.

Hate due to a phobia

People can truly hate certain situations or objects in life due to an excessive phobia, this could be a hate of heights, spiders, snakes, the dentist or being enclosed in elevators. This type of hate is brought about by fear, a deep fear of something or situation that for those affected have hardly any or no control over, however since fear is all about feelings and thoughts, fear and hate of this type can be controlled with the mind with a little help and know how. An analyst can help to turn this type of hate and fear into a more positive outlook and help the person overcome the phobia and turn a fearful situation into a good one.

What does happiness mean?

Do you feel there is something missing from your life? That perhaps the world is against you or that other people seem to smile, laugh and be a lot more happy and contented in life than you are? Have you ever stopped to wonder why this might be? Moreover, what you can do about it? Have you even considered what happiness actually is?

Happiness and contentment in life differs for all of us, what makes one person happy doesn't necessarily bring contentment to another. Very often we are happy in life but we just don't realize it. Very often the hustle and bustle of life can completely overtake all else and leaves us little time to enjoy the things that make us smile and enjoy life to the fullest. If you stop and sit down and think about what actually makes you happy and feel contented, you might actually find you have those things already around you but you just didn't realize it.

However there are times when we can get into a slump and haven't yet come across the conditions that we regard as bringing happiness and contentment. If this is the case then you have to figure out what changes you need to make, to bring happiness into your life, in most cases it is the smallest of things which bring happiness and you have the power to gain them by working towards them.

Your happiness and contentment depends entirely on you, no one else can give it you, it is something inside you that you have to find and work towards. You can either decide to stop in the rut or to take positive action and make changes to your life or yourself in order to accomplish contentment.

In order to understand what happiness means to you, the first step you should take is looking at your emotions, ask yourself questions such as “if I could be enjoying something in my life, what would it be?” and “what makes me feel contented in my life right now?” Once you understand what your vision of happiness and contentment is you can build on what you have now or focus on changing your life to what you would like it to be.

The important thing to remember is to examine your feelings by way of the answers you give to your questions, examine them honestly and concentrate on the good or bad feelings that you get from your questions and answers.

There is no magic spell or potion that can bring you contentment and happiness, it is something that is already right there inside of you, you just have to realize what it is and develop and bring it out to start enjoying life. Happiness can be found in family life, work, relationships, nature or a pet, to name just a few, in fact it can be found in anything and any situation if you just know where to look and look in the right direction, the inner you.

Developing Relationships for Happiness

Learning to develop your relationship skills can have a huge affect on your life and happiness in life, we all have relationships whether they are marriage, living together, sons, daughters, friends and family and having a good relationship with them makes a big difference.

The biggest downfall in relationships is poor communication, communicating poorly in a relationship leads to problems such as misunderstandings, disagreements, and anger and eventually putting your relationship at a distance. Improving your communication in relationships can help you to develop a deeper, lasting, more meaningful relationship and so a much happier life. There are many tips and techniques which are quick and easy to learn to get more out of your relationships and develop them into more meaningful ones, here are just a few.

- When dealing with conflicts in relationships never bring up the past, try to stick to the issue at hand and working towards a solution, bringing up past issues will only confuse the situation more and is very unlikely to go towards resolving the problem.

- Try to see any conflict from the other person's point of view, if you are both only focusing on your own point of view there will very likely be no give and take and ultimately no solution to the problem.
- Always listen to what the person is saying, while many of us think we do very few actually do listen whole-heartedly, most of the time we drift off to think about other things or think about what the person is going to say next.
- Don't immediately get on the defensive when you are criticized, while this is hard to do, as no one like to hear criticism it is important to understand the others thoughts.
- Instead of being pig headed and always trying to win the argument, try looking for ways that you can come to some sort of compromise together, working together is more productive than working against each other.
- If tempers become frayed while discussing a difference of opinion, take a break; going at it all out will only lead to one or the other saying something which they will regret when cooled down.
- Don't always put the blame on the other person, realize that you are not perfect and not always right all the time.

- If you feel your relationship is going downhill fast then don't be afraid to get some help via counseling.
- Make time for your relationships; take long walks that give you the opportunity to talk instead of sitting down in front of the TV.
- Make a surprise and unexpected call to your loved one, family members or friends if for nothing else but just to say "Hi, I was just thinking about you"
- Make them feel special every now and again, give them a token of your appreciation to let them know you care or to say thank you.
- In loving relationships make sure the other knows how you feel, when talking hold hands or show some other sign of affection to them.

How to make everyday a great one

The key to enjoying life and making the most of everyday is to notice the little things in life that happen all around us, taking a moment at a time and slowing down, relaxing and just enjoying each and every precious minute throughout the day.

Today's world is filled with hustle and bustle, people rushing here there and everywhere without a minute to spare, we have more advancements in technology to help in our life yet we still don't seem to have a minute to spare for ourselves.

Perhaps it's all these advancements in technology such as computers, video games, cable TV and the like that have made us forget all about enjoying the simple things in life such as just sitting and talking, sharing a family meal around the table or going for a walk. In order to fully enjoy every moment of everyday it is essential we slow down, learn to relax a little and think about ourselves, what we want out of life, what we enjoy doing, what makes us happy and puts a smile on our face.

In order to get the most out of everyday you have to start with yourself, it is essential that you look after yourself, eat a healthy diet, get plenty of exercise, make sure you get enough sleep and take care of yourself in general. Having a daily schedule is also a necessity, by planning a daily schedule you are to make sure you give yourself some "me" time, we all need time to our self to just enjoy doing what we like, be it listening to music, talking a walk, a long hot soak in the tub or a hobby.

So what can we do to make sure we get the most out of everyday? Here are some tips to help you

Forgive yourself

If at the end of your day you find you didn't accomplish all that you set out to do then forgive yourself and say to yourself "I did the best I possibly could and made the most of today, tomorrow is a brand new day".

Don't beat yourself up about some minor things didn't accomplish and worry about it, there's always tomorrow and as long as you made the most out of today that's all that matters.

Your daily to-do-list

We all have certain chores that must be taken of on a daily basis, do these chores in order of importance and don't let them pile up, however sing along to the radio while you are doing the dishes, dance along with the vacuum as you push it around the house.

Take pleasure in doing mundane chores and turn them into an enjoyable experience instead of moaning and grumbling about having to do them.

Take regular breaks

Whether you are at home or work, give yourself a break every now and again, even if its only for 5 minutes, learn a quick relaxation technique and unwind if you are beginning to feel tense.

If at work then get up and stretch your legs or grab a cup of coffee and say hello with a smile to everyone you pass on your way to the coffee machine.

Do something you enjoy doing

Make it a point to set some time aside just for you, to do what you want to do, this could be reading, taking a bubble bath, meditating, going to the gym or basically anything which you really enjoy doing and which makes you feel good and puts a smile on your face.

Positive thinking

Try to have a positive attitude towards to life even when things aren't particularly going the way we want them too, look for the good in the situation and what you can learn from it, rather than looking at it in a totally negative way.

Stay Happy: Don't Hold onto Grudges

By holding onto grudges, we are holding onto the past and this holds us back and stops us from growing and going onward with our lives.

Grudges and not allowing ourselves to let go of the past is negative and negativity holds us back and stops us from achieving what we are capable of achieving out of life and encourages resentment, unhappiness and fear instead of being happy in life and finding peace within ourselves.

Forgiveness is the key to happiness, true forgiveness is when you can release all your negative feelings towards another and let them go completely, you have to let the grudge go not only through words of acceptance but also feel it in your heart and soul.

Why is forgiving so difficult to do?

It is our negative ego that causes us to hold a grudge and tells us not to let it go, like all things that block success and happiness in our life, negativity again plays a huge part, only this time it affects our ego.

By letting negativity affect our lives this way we are opening up the door and welcoming bitterness and deep resentment and these manifest deep within us and show themselves in our health.

Holding onto a grudge causes ulcers, stress and general overall poor health so it is essential that we learn to let go of our resentment and move on with life by letting go of our grudges. As with every other problem relating to negativity in our lives it is all about how we think, forgiveness is all about letting go of harmful train of thought patterns and developing new ones.

Developing the ability to let go

Developing the ability to let go takes time, if you allow yourself to look at your feelings honestly and calmly then you will realize that negative feelings evaporate and you begin to feel peace of mind through letting go of deep resentment. The key to truly forgiving is first being able to release your hurt and anger that person has caused you, without letting go of these feelings; true forgiveness is next to impossible. If you try to forgive without releasing these feelings then the hurt and anger you feel will only continue to build and will manifest as resentment further down the road and resentment will eventually rear its ugly head, have no doubt about that.

A great way of releasing your feelings is to look directly at them and in great detail, admitting what it is that has hurt you and why it hurt you and realizing why you have to let it go, look at your feelings in a different light and gradually allow yourself to forgive and let go. Forgiveness has to come from deep within you, there is no outside force which keeps a grudge building up, the feelings of forgiveness can only be generated from within yourself, only you can take responsibility and forgive and let go and move on in a more peaceful and contented life.

Success and Happiness is not Always Material

When most people think of happiness and being successful they think of owning big houses, fast cars, expensive designer clothes and how big of a bank balance you have, however, how successful and happy you are does not necessarily depend on the material things you have in life.

If you are happy in life with what you have got regardless of the material possessions that you own or don't own, then you are a very wealthy and successful person indeed.

It is very often the smallest things in life which are priceless but are not of any great value other than the particular person who cherishes them for one reason or another, these can be photographs, cards, a song or even memories can be precious to an individual.

In a society where we have been brought up believing material possessions are what is important it can be hard to believe that owning material possessions isn't what makes us happy and brings success, how common it is to hear someone say "if only I had this or that, I would be the happiest person on earth", however should we get what it is we wish for we are never satisfied and only begin to dream and wish we had something better.

The newness of having a material possession soon wears off, and this pattern is continued throughout life in the majority of people. This is perhaps easier to realize if you think back to when you were a child, your parents would spend hundreds of dollars on birthdays and Christmas presents because you had to have that "special" toy, but how quickly they were discarded when something new came onto the scene. The same applies to wealth, it doesn't matter how much money you had, would you really think that you had enough?

Would having a bank account with thousands of dollars make such a difference to your life, would it bring you anymore happiness or success than you have now?

We all want to live a comfortable life, without struggling each month to pay bills, that's only natural, but apart from that money doesn't bring true happiness and success, you can have thousands in the bank but if you're alone in life, without real friends and family, without love, then you can never find true happiness and success.

What is success and happiness?

In order to determine actually what success and happiness means you should first ask yourself this

- What is the meaning of success and happiness?
- What would being truly successful and happy mean?
- What do I want out of life?

These are the core questions behind understanding what happiness and success really would mean to you as an individual, for happiness and success means different things to each of us.

You can be rich and successful in many more ways than having material possessions and money, think about some of the things you have in your life now, are you one of the richest and most successful people on the earth?

- True friends – if you can count on one hand five true friends who are always there for you through thick and thin then you are rich indeed
- Health – if you have good health through taking care of what you eat, exercising regularly then this is far more valuable than any amount of money in the bank
- A family – if you have a family around you who loves you then you will have a successful, rewarding and very happy life
- A good character – if you are an honest, kind and truthful person in all situations then you have success beyond your wildest dreams.

CHAPTER IV:

CHANGE FOR GOOD

Changing bad habits into good ones

We all have habits and some of these habits are bad ones, kicking a bad habit and turning it into a more positive one is hard but is well worth the effort if you put your mind to succeeding. Our habits can determine our life to an extent and affect the way we feel and think, bad habits affect our self-esteem and lead to negativity while good habits lead to a feeling of achievement, accomplishment and positive thinking. So what is the key to successfully breaking our bad habits and replacing them with ones that are more positive? Listed below are some helpful techniques that you can put to use to change your bad habits into more positive ones.

Make a list

Make a list of all the reasons why you want to stop your habit, really give it some thought and list as many reasons as possible for giving up.

For example if smoking is your habit and you wish to give up then you could put down things like its costs me x amount of money every year, it makes my clothes, hair and breath smell, it makes the whole house smell.

By listing as many reasons as you can as to why you want to give up it will allow you to see in black and white what it is that you don't like about your habit and why you should give it up.

Analyze yourself

Ask yourself what it is that you are getting out of your habit, are you really getting what you want from it? Do you really enjoy it?

Or is the habit exactly that, just a habit that you have done for so long that you would feel uncomfortable without doing it?

List positive things you could swap your habit for

Stop and think what you could do to replace your habit that would be more positive, for example you could take up a hobby, workout, read, go for a walk, do chores around the home or take up an adult education class.

All of these can help you to take your mind off and break your habit.

Visualize

Visualize how you would feel and the changes there would be if you broke your habit, for example if you are a smoker and wish to quit then picture the differences it would make if you did quit and replaced smoking with say working out. Picture yourself being able to breathe easier, your taste buds improving, your clothes, hair and home smelling fresher and cleaner and what you could buy from the money you saved.

Take one day at a time

Always take one day at a time when trying to break a habit, never look into the future and start to think how will I cope in certain situations. Choose a day to give up your habit and stick with it no matter what comes up, keeping a journal can also help you to deal with kicking your habits and is helpful to get your thoughts and feelings out at the most frustrating times.

Turning Change into Choice!

Change is something that happens in our lives naturally, whether we like it or not. Day turns into night. We grow older, as do our children. We buy houses, change homes, lifestyles, jobs and more. Some of us don't handle change as well as others.

You see others happy to be changing careers, relationships or moving to another home. You wonder why they are so happy. What is it that so exciting about change? And why do you only fear change?

Unfortunately, fear can be a paralyzing emotion and feeling. It can make us afraid to do anything and we simply stand still. The biggest fear of all humans is the fear of the unknown. When we can't predict the outcome, we usually become afraid. Most of the time, with any type of change we can't predict the outcome. That can be scary. However, one of the things in life that will definitely happen is change.

How to Handle 'Change' Better

But fear not! There is a better way to handle change so that it's not so scary. In fact the reality is, change is not so much about handling something new and different as it is about making the new and different things a choice – your choice, owning them as your own. And the best way to conquer your fear of these new things or changes is by taking control, having a positive mindset and taking charge in a manner that says it is your choice to change. Make this a conscious decision – take ownership of the facts.

Planning for Change

Let's say you need to make a career change. Plan out everything. How many interviews will you do a day? How will you obtain those interviews? Will you be switching to a different career or stay in the same type of career? What do you want to do? Where do you see yourself in six months?

Answer these questions in a notebook or journal. Outline what you plan on doing. Now most of the unknown is known! You have chosen to take ownership of your change and you hold the controls.

Don't stop there, not even after you make your career change. Set long term and short term goals for yourself. The best way to conquer a fear is to face it and do it often. If you do this on a regular basis, you will soon wonder what made you so nervous. Make change your choice! And get help regularly from the pros by checking out library and online books, audio recording, videos and other helpful information focused on motivation and inspiration to learn more about how successful people have accepted and taken charge of the changes in their lives.

Improving your emotional well-being

There are many things in life that can affect our emotional well-being and our emotional well-being is one of the most important aspects when it comes to being healthy. In order to be truly healthy it is essential to have stable and healthy emotions. If your emotions are not stable then your whole body will be affected and this will lead to a decline in health and overall well-being.

If you follow the holistic belief of health then this dictates that along with healthy eating, exercise and dieting we have to take care of our mental health as well. It is only when body and mind are fit and healthy can we gain true overall health. Emotional well-being, physical well-being, intellectual and social well-being all come together and if any of these are affected it will affect our health. There are many factors that can affect these, including problems in relationships, unemployment, money problems, social problems and physical problems to name but just a few. Improving your emotional well-being depends on altering aspects of your life that affect it.

Stress is the biggest enemy that can change our emotions and feelings so it is imperative that you remove as much stress from your daily life as possible, you should learn new techniques to banish stress quickly and effortlessly without allowing it to build up. There are many techniques you can choose to combat stress, from practicing yoga and meditation to simple breathing exercises and affirmations, the key is to find the method that works the best for you.

Negative thinking is another downfall many of us acquire throughout our lives and this can cause many problems with emotional well-being, always thinking the worse or continually putting yourself down will lead to low self-confidence and low self-esteem. Affirmations or positive self-talk is an excellent way to help you deal with negative thoughts and feelings. Changing the way you think will change the way you feel and when you feel better about your life and yourself you will have a different outlook on life which will lead to a healthier you.

Situations that occur in your daily life can change your emotional well-being and while we often cannot change situations, we can change how we deal with them, how they affect our thoughts, feelings and emotions.

Feelings of anger, sadness and uncertainty all cause problems without emotional well-being and ultimately our overall health, the trick is to not hold your feelings inside but let them out. Harboring anger, resentment or sadness for long periods of time can be devastating for our emotional well-being. Keeping a journal to write about your thoughts and feelings can help as can having someone to talk to; the main point is getting your feelings out.

Key points to improving your emotional well-being are

- Learning how to relax and let go of stress
- Eating a sensible diet and exercising on a regular basis
- Get a good night's sleep every night
- Deal with problems as they arise
- Give yourself a break and stop putting yourself down
- Don't let things build up, get thoughts and feelings out
- Do something everyday that you enjoy doing

7 Simple Steps to Stop Procrastinating

Are you a victim of laziness, a root cause of procrastination? Do you often suffer because of what you initially considered as easy has turned difficult with the loss of time, and what appeared hard, due to further delay, has become impossible now? You may draw comfort from the fact that you are in the company of many that are affected by procrastination. But you must realize that you will experience true comfort, if you get rid of your laziness by shaking yourself up into action. Like many others, you can indeed stop procrastinating and start meeting deadlines, by following a few simple steps that teach you effective time management.

1. Plan your daily must-do activities. Draw up a to-do list; preferably, write it down on paper; or, use a computer if you prefer.

2. Prioritize the activities, the more important ones taking precedence over the less important. If there are urgent things to do, but not important enough to be worried about if not done, put them below the important ones.

The idea is based on the established principle that 80% of rewards accrue from 20% of effort directed towards accomplishing important work.

3. Estimate the time required for each of the listed activities after analyzing their complexity. Avoid underestimation, as you may not have enough time to do well a particular of piece of work. Similarly, avoid overestimation, for that may leave some activities without enough time. A realistic budgeting of time is a must. Time allocation is a skill that is acquired with experience. So keep reviewing and revising your time schedule as you progress.

4. Organize your life. That will help you avoid wasting your precious time and leave more time for the actual work. Remember indiscipline causes confusion, even chaos, in life. It eats into your time. Avoid sloppiness.

For instance, leave your personal belongings of daily use, like your glasses, your clothing, your computer etc., in the same place. If you do, you won't need to spend time looking for them all over the place.

Apply the principle of doing work first and then taking time for pleasure and relaxation. Reverse the order only at the pain of falling prey to procrastination.

You can get time for rest and relaxation if you are efficient in doing your assigned work.

5. Start working bit by bit. You may see a mountain at first, but mountains can be moved, especially if you begin by moving just a small stone from it. You know you cannot move the entire mountain all at once.

Do not be overwhelmed by the immensity of the task before you. That will put you off. And you will put off the task for another day, which will never come. Just begin by taking one small step and you will invariably reach your destination.

6. Put first things first early in the day. Remember procrastination grows into a habit by the minute. Begin your day by launching yourself head first into the most important job waiting to be done.

7. Learn to cope with anxiety, depression, stress and other similar conditions of the mind related to your problems in life. Keep yourself fit, not just physically but mentally as well. Learn and practice suitable mental relaxation techniques such as meditation.

New Year's Resolutions You can Keep

Do you know most people who make resolutions on the eve of a new year break them within the first three or four months? Do you know why? If you do, you won't make impractical resolutions. If you don't, you might ask what resolutions you will be able to keep or how to make only those resolutions that will really work for a long time.

The answer is simple. Be realistic, not idealistic, in making your resolutions. If your goals are set too high to reach, you are bound to give up your attempt half way through rather than to stick to your resolution.

Anyone can make a halfhearted resolution for the New Year. What is difficult and requires commitment is to actually keep it. In order to overcome the hurdles and sustain your resolutions you need to do a little bit of brainstorming. Think about all the possible restrictions that the New Year's resolutions will impose on you. Think about all the changes that you must make to have successful resolutions.

If you want to completely stop smoking, think of the various steps you will take for resisting the temptation either when you are alone or when in company. Ask yourself whether you will enforce self discipline in order to reduce the habit gradually in stages and to reach the final goal set as per the time frame you chalked out for yourself. Monitor your progress periodically and devise corrective measures wherever necessary. That way you can keep a tab on yourself to follow the resolutions you have made.

Get others involved

Another way to keep your resolutions is to tell your family and friend about them and to seek their active help and support. You should never depend on your own plan, but seek the support of others. You may have all the discipline and motivation in the world, but you will receive unmatched support from loved ones when you are trying hard to do something. This external encouragement will help support and reinforce your own efforts.

Don't get disheartened if you deviate a little from your chosen path occasionally. Don't let any of your minor slips and setbacks fill you with a guilt feeling severe enough to make you drop your resolutions.

Even if that happens, start all over again more vigorously, this time with a better action plan and follow up program than before.

See if you can make and keep at least some of the following New Year's Resolutions:

- Focus on health by eating a substantial breakfast that includes fruits and vegetables; by sticking to fixed meal times; by drinking beverages like fruit juice or milk; by drinking plenty of water; by following a simple fitness program like walking; by doing yoga and meditation or participating in outdoor games and sports and so on.
- Kick your addiction to tobacco, caffeine, food, drink, pornography and so on.
- Devote time to be with your family every day or every week.
- Learn something new as a hobby or for interest;
- Widen your mental horizon by reading, doing crosswords or picking up a sudoku puzzle.

These are just some examples of the most popular resolutions that you might be considering. Feel free to make your resolution as intricate or simple as you wish and tailor fit it to meet your needs.

Don't Let Addictions Control Your Life

First of all, have you even realized you need to break free from your addictions? If not, now is the time to make a conscious decision about regaining control over yourself by really trying to kick your harmful habit NOW. You can't wait forever for an opportune moment, because it will never come if you don't want it. Once you decide to quit, make your decision public. Tell your family, your friends and everybody and anybody interested in your well being about it. By doing so, you are making it rather difficult to back out. You are perhaps also indirectly indicating to all of them that you are seeking their support for your decision. Actually, it is important to openly enlist their help and co-operation to help kick your bad habit.

Avoid getting into situations full of temptations. No matter how strong you are, the temptation will be overwhelming. When you are trying to give up smoking, for instance, hanging out with your chain smoker friends will do you no good. Don't accept invitations to party, when you know you will be subjected to peer or situational pressure to take the very things you are trying never to use.

If you do, you will never come out of your compulsive weakness for a particular drug, drink or smoke or some habit you have decided to kick.

You may need professional help

If you are a long-term slave to alcohol or drugs or tobacco or pornography or any of the several other equally harmful substances or things, you may need professional help in addition to the support from your family and friends. After an in-depth look at your case, specialists will chalk out a program for you to follow under their supervision over a specified period of time.

Several support groups may join in. Following the rehabilitation program is key to getting yourself back on track. Ultimately, your own will is the only thing that can get rid of the addiction for good. People under some stress or tension wrongly believe that they can calm themselves and feel relaxed if they use tobacco or alcohol or drugs. They first try to drown their sorrows in addictive substances and habits injurious to health, but end up drowned in their addictions. If only you realize the futility of seeking relief from your grief in addictions, you will never put yourself under the risk of damaging your health and losing your wealth as well as destroying whatever happiness you have had so far.

There are better ways to confront and conquer your problems than giving in to addiction.

Outlets for addiction

Learn to relax and rebuild your physical and mental reserves by doing regular physical exercise, yoga, meditation or taking to hobbies by exploiting your creative interests. Instead of attempting to escape from reality through the door that addictions seem to open for you, learn to adopt a positive attitude and face the inevitable and overcome the consequences with courage.

YOU are in control

Remember there are few quick-fix solutions to life's problems. Likewise, there are no easy ways to overcome your addictions. Only concerted efforts on your part will help you in the end. Take control of yourself by training your mind to face life's tough challenges.

CHAPTER V: HEALTHY COMMUNICATION

Developing healthy communication skills

Developing good communication skills is essential in all walks of life and different situations. Relationships rely on good communication to survive and strengthen, how you live among your neighbors requires good communication, in your work, doing well in school or college and dealing with difficult people are just one of the ways excellent communication skills can help in life.

Most of us have to deal with difficult people at some stage or another in our life, so it is essential that we know how to deal with them effectively, to get the best outcome. If we are faced with difficulties as a common part of our day-to-day life it will gradually have an effect on your life, you will become nervous, anxious and stressed. The easiest solution is to eliminate the difficulty from your life; however this is impossible if the problem lies with a co-worker or a loved one.

If this is the case then you have to develop strategies to help you develop healthier communication between you and them. Here are some tips to help you

- Where possible avoid getting into any personal discussion such as religion or politics, basically avoid any subject that can easily cause conflict. If you sense the other person is trying to goad you into a discussion that will probably lead to an argument then change the subject or leave the room.
- Trying to change the difficult person you are dealing with will only result in them becoming defensive; it will eventually turn into a power struggle and make the person even more difficult to deal with.
- Try changing how you respond or see the other person, if the person is treating you unacceptably then draw boundaries that they cannot cross.
- Try to see the other person's point of view and remember that you are not always right.
- Focus on the positive aspects of the other person; this can be especially helpful if the person is a family member.
- Accept the person for who they are, good or bad

- Learn to recognize when you need to put a distance between you and the other person and act on it when the time comes.
- When you feel negative interactions try not to blame either one of you for them.
- If worst comes to the worst then just being polite could be the best you can hope for with certain people, sometimes people just don't get on, no matter what.
- Try to keep your sense of humor when around someone who is being difficult.
- Be sure to have positive relationships around you to offset the negative ones.

These are just a few of the ways which you can use in your daily life when faced with difficult people, while they won't change the person, they can make life and the person involved a lot easier to deal with.

Along with developing healthier communication skills you should also practice ways of de-stressing, particularly if you are confronted by facing and dealing with difficult people who you cannot avoid on a daily basis.

10 tips for effective communication

The ability to be able to communicate well is essential in all walks of life if we are to succeed and accomplish the goals we set out for ourselves. The key to any successful relationship is having the ability to communicate and this applies equally to personal relationships as well as building interpersonal relationships within the workplace. Here are ten tips for developing good communication skills that you can use to build upon.

1. Always let the person who is talking finish what they are saying before you speak, if you speak before they have had their say then you could miss a valuable point, if you break into their conversation it also shows that you think what you have to say matters more than what they do and is extremely bad manners.
2. Listen intently to what the other person is saying to you, if all you are doing is thinking of how you are going to reply to the person then your full attention isn't focused on what they are saying and you could miss something important.
3. Always stay focused on the present and never bring up past issues, however related it may seem.

This only cloud the present issues and can make the conversation difficult and even more confusing.

4. Really listen to what the other is saying to you, it is so easy to drift away with thoughts of your own especially if you don't agree with what the person is saying to you, try not to get defensive and don't interrupt them before they have made their point.
5. Instead of trying to win an argument or conflict try to reason and find a solution that is agreeable to both parties, this is a much more effective way to communicate than trying to battle it out just for the sake of winning, this way no one is the loser.
6. Take a break if you cannot come to a reasonable agreement in a conversation when at odds, taking a break will allow you to cool down and gather your thoughts before communicating again.
7. Try to see the others point of view and don't just stick with what you have in mind, talk over the ins and outs and explain simply and fully why you don't think their idea is a good one while making suggestions of your own, but don't be too quick to dismiss the others idea until you have the full picture.
8. Even if you don't like what other person is saying try to be respectful of their opinion and do listen to what they have to say even if you don't necessarily agree with them.

9. Don't blow things out of proportion while conversing, if possible avoid starting sentences with "you always" or "you never", always think about what you are saying and make sure that what you are saying is true, blowing things out of proportion, blaming and bringing up the past only creates more negativity.
10. Don't always put all the blame on the other, sometimes we handle conflicts by blaming things entirely on the other and criticizing, try to analyze the situation objectively to find a solution.

10 tips for interview success

Attending an interview can be a nerve-racking for even the experience professional. However, there are a few points to remember that can ensure your interview gets off to a great start and to give you the knowledge and comfort you need to reduce anxiety and calm you down. Here are the 10 top tips when attending your interview and getting successfully through it.

1. Do a little research – researching the company beforehand and finding a little about what they do and who they are can go a long way to being a success or not, it could make all the difference to them hiring you.

Understanding what they are looking for in a person can also greatly increase your chances, you can use the companies prospectus or the internet to do your research on the company,

2. Present yourself well – preparing yourself is essential for success in your interview, always give yourself plenty of time to shower, groom and dress appropriately for your interview. Choose your outfit wisely and dress appropriately for the type of job you are applying for.
3. Arrive early – always make sure you arrive at the interview roughly 10 minutes before the actual interview starts, this will ensure that you don't arrive flustered after rushing around and will show the interviewer that you are punctual.
4. Ask questions yourself – while it is you that is being interviewed you should also prepare questions to ask the interviewer, by preparing questions to ask beforehand it will show the interviewer that you have taken the time, have shown initiative and are interested in finding out more about the position or company.
5. First impressions count – always remember that first impressions count for a lot, walk into the interview with your head held high, smile and give a firm handshake.

Showing you have confidence in yourself is essential and can make all the difference to you being successful.

6. Show interest – make sure that you show interest in the person conducting the interview, ask them questions such as how long they have worked for the firm and what involvement with members of staff are.
7. Watch your body language – be confident in your body language, the way you conduct yourself is a tell tale sign in your body language and will give the interviewer insight into the type of person that you are, interviewers place a lot of faith in a persons body language so make sure yours doesn't let you down.
8. Make sure you understand the requirements - if you are unsure of any questions that the interviewer asks then be sure to ask them to clarify what they mean, if you answer without fully understanding the question you are only asking for trouble.
9. Ask about follow up – make sure that the interviewer knows how interested you are by asking about what happens after the interview regarding follow up, make sure you know how and when they will contact you if you are successful.

10. Make sure the interviewer knows you want the job – at the end of the interview make sure you reiterate how much you are suited for the position and what you could give to the firm as a member of staff.

CHAPTER VI: FOR SPEED AHEAD

Real Life Applications of NLP

Once, as the story goes, Buddha was on his rounds seeking alms when he was subjected to verbal abuse by someone. Buddha, enlightened as he was, simply smiled and moved on. When a disciple of his asked him how he could keep himself from retaliating against the undeserved abuse, the Buddha observed that the evil words did not at all touch him or his philosophy of life.

They only exposed the ignorance of the person saying it. Of course, although the Buddha did not have the benefit of NLP in those days, he demonstrated how, due to his mental perception of the offensive as the inoffensive, he remained unaffected by the abuse. However ancient the story, this is a prime example of how NLP can be applied to real life situations. Obviously, we rely on our sense perceptions in our effort to understand, interpret and interact with our environment.

NLP assigns a lot of importance to eye-movements, to observing and reading others' body language as well as to controlling our body language or gestures as a means of communicating with others. Synchronizing your body language or non-verbal means of communication with the verbal means enhances the effectiveness of your communication.

Your choice of words and sentence structures delivered using the right tone can go a long way in casting a spell on the audience, in convincing them and in bringing about desired outcomes through them.

Your language, if used appropriately, can appeal to the subconscious mind of a hostile audience in order to obtain conscious compliance from them as a result.

Influencing others' minds through a captivating speech so as to completely change moods and attitudes in favor of achieving your desired result is not new, but NLP puts considerable emphasis on the techniques involved in the process.

These techniques are concerned with using your head position, eye movements, gestures, breathing rhythms and language as well as visual and auditory senses.

Modelling excellence

One of the applications of NLP is to do what is called “modeling excellence.” When you recognize a genius or exceptional person who has a great ability to accomplish certain things or is excellent in a particular field, you may wish to use this person as a model. Through imitation, you can use these same factors or qualities that you admire in the person and apply them to yourself. NLP techniques aim at discovering the most important elements that contribute to the person's excellence, and at transferring them to you so that you can replicate that excellence.

Therapeutic NLP

There are some therapeutic applications of NLP, which are mainly borrowed from the practice of hypnosis. These applications rely considerably on the terminology employed by an American psychiatrist, Milton H. Erickson, like hypnotic phenomena, therapeutic metaphor, story, rapport, age regression, conscious and unconscious communications etc.

Advocates of NLP hold that its techniques, especially, those dealing with communication, can very well be applied in business for its promotion. One has to first master the NLP techniques and then skillfully use them to see the results for themselves.

Why you need a life coach

If you would like to achieve more or enhance your life then you should consider getting advice from a life coach. A life coach can be many things including your personal consultant, someone who listens or your manager, they can help to set you in the right direction in life, help you to get the most out of life and determine your goals in life and help you reach them.

The many ways you can benefit by having a life coach

- Help you to gain more control over your life
- Develop better strategies for managing your time
- Reduce stress and increase your productivity by simplifying your life
- Helping you to realize and maximize your potential
- Help improve your relationships with others
- Help you to prioritize tasks and meet deadlines more easily
- Help with important decisions you have to make in life
- Show you techniques to enable you to deal better in stressful situations
- Help you to balance your work and social life
- Help you to develop plans of action and life goals

A life coach can help in both professional and personal life and are there to help you obtain better results and gain a better quality of life in all aspects. Life coaches have been trained to adapt to listening, observing and then developing individual strategies to help people get out of the rut they find themselves in.

Do I need a life coach?

In order to determine if you benefit from having a life coach the first question you should ask yourself is “what do I wish to accomplish with a life coach?” if you can answer this question then a life coach would be able to work successfully alongside you to help you develop a strategy to obtain your goals. Life coaching is all about developing a partnership between the two of you and it is essential that you are able to be open to advice and constructive criticism; if you are not, then a life coach may not be the best option for you. Listed below are some questions that could help you determine if you could benefit from a life coach, if you can answer yes to any of them then you could possibly benefit from having a life coach.

- Do you feel there is a lack of support in your life?
- Do you have problems with low self-esteem issues?

- Do you feel everyone has a plan or goal in life but you?
- Do you feel you are going through a tough time and need a helping hand?
- Do you feel bogged down with deadline and don't know which way to turn?
- Do daily tasks make you feel overwhelmed?
- Do you feel as though the entire world is against you?
- Do you feel everyone knows the secret to being successful but you?
- Do you feel you could get more out of life or better yourself?

Signs that Indicate you are Getting There

Perhaps the biggest sign that you are getting where you want to be in life is the deep feeling of utter contentment and happiness you feel, how when you get out of bed first thing in the morning you awake looking forward to a brand new day. However, there are many smaller signs that you are going in the right direction towards getting there, which can help us to stick with our plans for change and get us through those periods when we are uncertain or feel like giving in.

We all have different reasons for wanting to change ourselves for the better, perhaps we have to go on a diet to lose a few pounds, we might be trying to quit smoking or drinking, we might have problems with low self-esteem that we need to overcome or need to develop our communication skills.

These are just some of the aspects in life that we have to deal with and overcome in order to better ourselves, and of course, as with anything, making any changes to your lifestyle will require some patience. Noticing changes in yourself won't happen overnight, it could take weeks, even months for you to start feeling the benefits of your changes and seeing those changes but there are many positive little signs that should give us encouragement and which can tell us we are getting there. Here are just a few of the signs

- Every time you look into a mirror, the first thing you do is smile at yourself.
- You suddenly find that you have a whole lot more choice when it comes to buying clothes
- You stop putting blame on the world or those around you for your mistakes
- You jump out of bed full of energy looking forward to a new day, instead of pulling the covers around your head and going back to sleep

- You find you no longer worry whether other people like you are not
- You do what you want to do instead of what you think others want you to do
- You get more comments about the big change in you
- You find the word “no” is in your vocabulary
- Your teenager starts to borrow your clothes
- You no longer fear making new friends
- You actually feel proud of what you have accomplished
- You can laugh and see the funny side when you make a mistake
- You automatically learn from your mistakes and shrug them off more easily
- You are able to reach the goals you set out for yourself more easily
- You find that you are no longer putting things off, but looking forward to them instead
- You make changes to your life naturally without even thinking about them
- You can't remember the last time you had a bad day
- You just feel you are heading in the right direction

Moving on with Life

Sometimes life has the habit of kicking us in the teeth, perhaps through no fault of our own. Things get tough and we have periods of sorrow and hurt, this could be the death of a loved one, a breakup of relationships or sickness. We have two options to dealing with what life throws at us and these are to give up and go into depression or to accept whatever happens in life and then move on with our lives, if we make the right choice then we grieve of course, then pick ourselves up and move on with our life.

Bereavement

Bereavement comes to us all eventually in life, sometimes it comes cruelly and strikes the young while others are taken expectedly when they have lived out their years, whenever bereavement chooses to strike it is just as heartbreaking for those left behind. Grieving will of course vary from person to person and there isn't any set limit on the amount of time which we should or shouldn't grieve, there are also many stages to grieving starting with shock, numbness, fear and unsettlement being just a few of the many feelings which can flow through a person during this time.

Grieving however is a normal occurrence and an important one if we are to get over this time and eventually move on with our life, it is human nature's way of letting go and you shouldn't try to hide any feelings or thoughts during this time.

Having someone you can turn to such as a family member or friend can help greatly during your greatest time of need and if you are lucky enough to have someone like this then it is essential that you take them up on their offer of being there for you.

Illness

Coping with a severe or life threatening illness can be devastating; it can bring a whole range of emotional problems along with physical disabilities. Finding that we have or someone we love very much has a life threatening or severe illness is devastating and brings feelings of fear, uncertainty and even denial before true acceptance.

Denial to a degree is not necessarily a bad thing, if denial is used in a positive way, it can help to overcome problems to some degree and enable you to get back to living your life. However total denial and not accepting at all is something entirely different and if this is the case then you might need to seek help.

Break up of relationships

The break up of any relationship can be traumatic particularly if you have been together for many years and/or there are children involved in the relationship. Again fear plays a big part, fear of what the future will bring, how you will cope, feelings of betrayal and desertion all play an important role. Time usually plays a crucial factor in healing after a breakup and grieving to an extent over what is essentially a loss helps to get your thoughts and feelings out and enables you to move on with your life and take the next step forward into a new chapter.