

**BOOST YOUR BRAIN POWER**



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# ***BOOST YOUR BRAIN POWER***

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **YOUR BRAIN AND ITS POTENTIAL**

Have you ever wondered about the untapped potential of your brain? On average, man only uses about 3% of the power potential of this miraculous, three-pound (approximate weight) organ. This percentage represents the messages that our conscious mind receives and understands. The other 98% of our brainpower is tucked away in our subconscious mind. Each one of us has the potential to tap into this hidden power, and use it to enrich our lives and our livelihood.

### **OLDER AND WISER, TOO**

At one time, people pretty much took their brains for granted. They were what they were, a receptacle for our thoughts and ideas, a storage house for our memories, a problem solving gizmo we were born with. Folks acknowledged that some people seemed to have been blessed with more intelligence than others in the world were graced with. Most felt that it was quite natural to lose a portion of their brainpower as the years went by. Often, this gradual decline would go even further in a percentage of people, leaving them with mental deterioration.

However, in today's world, people have started to live much longer than their ancestors did. They are searching for methods that will allow them to enjoy their longevity with a sharp mind and a keen sense of adventure. It seems that it is very possible for someone to enjoy his or her 'Golden Years' without a worsening memory and the confusion that many seniors suffer from. All it takes is a little effort to preserve the brain power you already have, and enhance it as well. Most people who have tried the methods we will discuss think it is time well spent. They are thrilled to experience the many changes in their lives that effortlessly appear when they take steps to improve their brain power.

The scientific community has discovered that our brains are quite a bit more easily influenced than what was once considered as common knowledge in that group. This book was written to help you to take advantage of this finding, and make the most of your brain's hidden potential. You do not have to possess super intelligence or keep your nose stuck in a book all the time to improve your working memory, or even your IQ. Are you intrigued by the possibilities? Read on, and you will be both fascinated and motivated to harness some of this brain power for yourself!

## 1

### IMPROVING THE WAY YOU THINK

Very few people would turn down a chance to improve the way they think, if they knew how to go about it. When you have the ability to think more effectively, you can make better decisions and become a much more efficient thinker. You will learn new things faster and easier, achieve that potential that has been hiding inside you, and improve all aspects of your life.

That all sounds really good to everyone who hears about it, but their first question is always, "How can I improve my thinking ability so that I can take advantage of all of these benefits?" You will discover that there are many ways to train your brain to think more effectively. You can maximize your brain power and keep your brain agile as well. A more powerful mind can be yours, and you will be enlightened by the process!

### CREATIVE THINKING

How often do you think outside the box, beyond the normal scope of things? You may bemoan the fact that you just do not seem to be quite as creative a thinker as someone else you know who seems to constantly come up with some of the most amazing ideas!

First of all, in order to be a creative thinker, you must stop thinking that you are not. Your thought processes must be allowed to flow freely, without a small inner voice telling you that you do not have a creative imagination.

It has been said by many that creative thinking is rather like a muscle. If it does not get a good workout every so often, it will wither up and be useless, much like a muscle that has atrophied.

How can you spearhead your own creative thinking campaign? Everyone in the world thinks, every single day. However, not everyone thinks in a creative way. Your goal is to come up with different ideas and thoughts that most people would not think of. Many of the products that we use today came from creative ideas that were once thought to be rather fanciful. A creative idea is a concept that not everyone will come up with, though. When the idea hits the mainstream market, you will hear folks exclaim, "Now, why didn't I think of that?"

Allow yourself to think in a creative way. Take deep, cleansing breaths, and focus on your breathing in order to clear your mind and ready it for the reception of creativity. Use your mind power to visualize different objects and scenes, down to the smallest detail.

Ask yourself a lot of "What if?" questions, and visualize the results, complete with dialogue if applicable. Jot down any ideas you come up with at random, and mull them over when you have the chance. Read everything you can get your hands on,

as you never know what might spark a real winner of an idea. One of those ideas may well change your life - or the world!

### IMPROVE YOUR MEMORY

Do not let anyone tell you that it is impossible to improve your memory! Everyone can begin a course of action that will lead to memory improvement. Given sufficient time to practice, you can turn the act of rote memorization into an enviable ability. You will be able to memorize large blocks of information with relative ease.

Does this seem impossible to you? Have you always felt that you had a poor memory? The first step you need to take is one of the most important.

### STOP TELLING YOURSELF THAT YOU HAVE A PROBLEM REMEMBERING THINGS!

Instead, tell yourself you have a good memory that is going to become even better with a little work, and then take steps toward that goal.

We compared the brain to a muscle up above. Of course, you know that the brain is not a muscle, but the comparison is a just one. Giving your brain regular mental 'exercise' will encourage nerve connections to grow there. Once these connections are established, they have the ability to help improve your memory.

### KEEP YOUR BODY ACTIVE

Do some sort of exercise on a regular basis. If you are not used to daily exercise, walking is a good way to get started. Make sure that whatever type of exercise you decide on will increase your body's need for oxygen, i.e., aerobic exercise. This causes better blood flow throughout the brain, and helps it to work more efficiently.

### MAKE SURE YOU ARE EATING A NUTRITIOUS DIET

Plenty of fruits and vegetables for antioxidants, and fish to provide Omega-3 fatty acids can help to improve the memory.

### BE OBSERVANT

If you consider yourself a forgetful person, perhaps it is because you need to work on being more observant. Have an inquisitive mind, and take notice of your surroundings down to the smallest detail. Of course, this is not a trait that you will be able to develop overnight! You will have to be diligent about making the effort to be observant.

Practice being more observant by perhaps looking a room in your home over carefully, focusing on every little detail. Once you think you have taken it all in, close your eyes and attempt to picture the room and everything it contains in your mind. Keep this up until you can do this exercise without leaving any of the details out. Visualization is a big help in remembering any sort of information.

## DEEP THINKING

Anyone who is familiar with the life and work of Albert Einstein could tell you that this esteemed physicist had a deep thinking technique that absolutely worked well for him. Einstein dubbed this technique 'thought experiments', and though it was not his own method, it worked extremely well for him.

Thought experiments were easy to accomplish and to understand, and they can work for you as well as they did for Einstein. Basically, you sit comfortably with a relaxed mind and start to visualize yourself in a certain scene. Most people choose a subject for their scene that ties in with whatever task they may be trying to accomplish on that particular day.

Once you have reached this point in the deep thinking technique, you will allow the creative power that naturally dwells deep within your unconscious mind to take over. You are creating what some would call a movie of the mind, and you will be watching what your unconscious produces.

In fact, you will be so deep within your subconscious mind that it is likely you will fall into a deep sleep. Einstein managed this interruption by clasping a rock in each hand, so that when he fell asleep, they would fall on the floor. The resulting noise would be enough to wake him from his slumber, and he would immediately be able to go back to his thought experiment.

A deep thinker is in the habit of asking questions of himself and of others that are quite deep and profound. Unlike shallow questioning, these queries can be a question within a question. You will find that you are asking 'Why?' a lot. Each time you ask, the question will lead you further into the subject, and often will branch out into a new one. This is the nucleus of deep thinking.

Take the time to think about the words you use, both in conversation with others and in the running discourse with yourself that you carry on in your mind. Try not to take the definitions of these words too literally, for if you do, you will limit your thinking. Ask yourself why certain words have the meaning that they do.

## DEALING WITH DISTRACTIONS

A typical day is full of distractions for most of us. Distractions can be external, such as someone speaking in a loud voice, an ever-ringing telephone, or anything that can be detected by the five senses. Distractions can also be internal, such as daydreams and persistent thoughts that just will not go away. When your

attention continues to be diverted in any way, shape, fashion or form, you are naturally unable to concentrate on the task at hand.

Research has proven that both mental and physical distractions can affect short-term memory. It goes without saying that if you are forgetting things that just happened, they are not hanging around in your brain long enough to be transferred to your long term memory! Focus is necessary in order to remember, and it is difficult to focus when you are distracted.

You may be in a situation where it is impossible for you to banish the source of the distraction, so in order to continue what you were doing before the distraction started, you must learn to focus your attention on that task in such a way as to not be distracted. Our concentration improves tremendously when we focus on just one thing at a time.

Multi-tasking is commonplace in today's world, but it can also be very distracting when there is a need to totally concentrate on just one thing. Scientific studies have proven that as the brain begins to fill up with information, our concentration suffers, and it may not be possible to summon up enough free memory to have the ability to ignore distractions.

This is especially true when it comes to visual memory, so it is a good idea not to attempt any sort of mental task when there is a chance of visual distraction. For example, driving a car can bombard you with all sorts of visual distractions. Other automobiles and people, trees, flowers, houses and other buildings, and signs and billboards on the side of the road can compete with your thoughts for your complete attention. Driving a car demands your complete attention without roadside distractions or a multi-tasking brain! Be safe, and do not venture into deep thought while driving.

## HOW STRESS AFFECTS YOUR BRAINPOWER

While no one can avoid having some stress in his or her life, ideally, you should attempt to avoid chronic stress. A person who suffers from chronic stress will produce more than the normal amount of stress hormones in their body. These excess hormones will affect the brain as well as the memory.

The worst hormone offender is cortisol, which can actually stop the brain from processing and storing a new memory. Cortisol can also keep the brain from retrieving memories that have already been stored. The neurotransmitters in the brain are what the brain cells use to convey information to each other. This is why you temporarily cannot remember much of anything when you are caught up in a stressful situation. You are confused simply because of a hormone overload! It is easy to see how chronic stress can affect your brainpower.

Recently, researchers discovered that whenever people are involved in stressful situations and are unable to manipulate the outcome, an enzyme becomes active

in the brain. This enzyme goes by the name of PKC, which stands for Protein Kinase C. PKC has the ability to diminish the short term memory.

PKC also can affect the prefrontal cortex area of the brain. This area is used for decision making, and is called the executive function area of the brain because it controls so many important behaviors. The PKC enzyme also affects those who suffer from bipolar disease and schizophrenia.

Studies have shown that stress can often bring on the first episode of either one of these illnesses.

Stress can do long term damage to the developing brain of a child. One study targeted children who lived in poverty. These children were given tests that measured their level of stress. This was done twice, at the ages of 9 and 13. The object of these tests was to determine such things as the amount of stress hormone that was present in each child's system, and what their individual blood pressure readings were.

All of this information was carefully noted and filed away until these children reached the age of 17. At this point, they were all given another test. This test was to measure their working memory. The results were rather shocking. Their degree of working memory depended on how long they had been poor. Long-term poverty equaled a damaged working memory, and stress was determined to be the main reason for this memory loss.

Stress can even affect those who have yet to be born. Another study took pregnant monkeys and subjected them to the stress of a loud noise for 10 minutes each day. The infant monkeys were tested, and found to have fewer neurons than infant monkeys who had not been stress. A shortage of neurons, or brain cells, can thus be associated with stress.



## **2**

### **EXERCISING YOUR BRAIN**

According to scientific research, keeping your brain active by doing brain exercises can cause your brain to maintain a greater number of neurons, commonly called a neuron reserve. These neurons can help you to maintain brainpower as you get older, and in some cases, can hold back the signs of Alzheimer's disease.

Many people do not realize the importance of exercising their brain, yet almost everyone realizes the importance of bodily exercise such as aerobics. It is just as important to keep your brain flexible and strong as it is to keep your body exercised and well toned. If you do not exercise your body, eventually you will get all flabby and out of shape. The same goes for your brain. No one wants a flabby brain, as once it gets out of shape it can be difficult to get it back into prime form again.

How can you exercise your brain? Crossword and word find puzzles do an excellent job of keeping your brain alert and active. Anagrams are useful as well. Some studies claim video games are also good brain exercises. Any task that requires some sort of mental effort makes an excellent exercise. The key to success is to do some form of brain exercise on a regular basis, just as you schedule physical exercise.

#### **PROBLEM SOLVING**

Working crossword puzzles, solving anagrams, or playing video games are a type of problem solving exercise. The difference is that with these problems, the solution is readily available somewhere. With puzzles and anagrams, the solution is typically in the back of the book or in the next day's edition of the newspaper. Video games have tip lines to call and strategy guides available that will talk or walk you through any trouble you may be having with the game.

There is no tip line or strategy guide for the problems of life. We must solve this type of problem ourselves, using our brain power. Normally, there is no one correct solution to a problem, but some of the ones we can come up with are certainly better suited for the problem than others. This is where the technique of brainstorming can come in quite handy for all but the most personal of problems.

A group of people can come up with many solutions that are quite creative. No one is timid about offering up possible solutions that seems to be rather unusual, for one of these may be just what is needed in order to take care of the problem.

What is most interesting about brainstorming is that someone who is not deeply involved with a problem can often come up with a perfect solution. This is a perfect example of being on the outside, looking in.

## MIND GAMES AND MEMORY EXERCISES

An aging brain can definitely benefit from the stimulation involved in playing mind games. These should be started no later than the age of 40, preferably much sooner. Even children can benefit from including mind games into their daily schedule. Studies have shown that the fitness of the brain can be improved by spending just a half hour a day with these pleasant little games.

Word games, brain teasers, logic puzzles, and math puzzles can give your brain a real memory workout. Memory exercises can improve both the memory and the attention span, and they don't have to cost you a thing, as many of these games are online. With just a little searching, you can set up a veritable brain gym for yourself and the members of your family, right on your home computer.

The game of chess has always had a reputation for being tailor made for super-intelligent people. Chess is an excellent game to improve the mind, but there are other games that would do much the same thing. A lot depends on the individual who is playing the game. If a certain game is a challenge for you, and you can tell it makes you think a bit harder than you normally do, then that game will be just right for you to use in order to exercise your mind and memory.

## LIFESTYLE CHOICES FOR KEEPING YOUR MIND SHARP

Games like the ones that are mentioned above can have inestimable intellectual value for you, but they are definitely not the be all and end all for a fit and healthy brain. If you want optimal brain function (and I am sure you do, or you would not be reading this book!) then you may need to make some lifestyle changes.

## PROPER DIET

We touched on proper diet earlier in this book, but nutrition is such an important part of keeping the brain in good shape that the subject deserves a bit more page space. You are what you eat is a saying that could not be more true when it comes to the brain.

Our brains have high nutrient requirements, as they use more energy to function properly than most people realize. It takes anywhere from 20 to 30 percent of your daily energy intake for your brain to function while it is at rest! If your brain is not receiving the proper nutrients, the entire chemistry of the organ can change. The nerve cells can also cease to function correctly without the proper diet.

Remember all those studies that were done to prove that children who did not eat breakfast were at a disadvantage when it came to learning in the classroom? They found that skipping breakfast lowered a person's problem solving ability. It's no wonder that some children are diagnosed as having learning disabilities early on.

Nutrition is important in regulating the neurotransmitters in the brain. Neurotransmitters are chemicals whose job is to convey nerve impulses from one nerve cell to another. Lest you think that neurotransmitters are not important, you should know that they are responsible for the kind of mood you are in, the type of sleep pattern you have, and also the way you think.

It takes a fine balancing act of nutrients for these chemicals to do their job correctly. Too much or too little of certain vitamins and/or minerals have been known to cause memory changes, interfere with how the brain functions, and can damage nerves in your brain.

## SOCIALIZATION AND EXERCISE

The brain craves social interaction with other people. Your brain also requires brisk blood flow, as well as the amount of oxygen that accompanies this blood flow. A perfect way to get in both of these requirements is to join an exercise class. Cardiovascular exercise, done in the company of others, is something most people thoroughly enjoy. Scientists have learned through extensive research that those who get sufficient exercise and have an active social life are quite long-lived as well as mentally healthy.

Exercise forces you to use your brain power! Your brain has to send signals to your upper and lower body in order for you to move your limbs and exercise. Your eyes depend on the signals from your brain in order to see.

Any time you have an exercise partner, you tend to think getting exercise is a lot more fun than if you were working out alone. Even if you have decided to walk for your daily exercise, it is a lot more motivating to have a friend to walk with.

A study involving Alzheimer's patients who lived in a nursing home found that those who got a moderate amount of exercise had much slower deterioration than those patients who did not exercise. Another study found that social interaction among seniors was a critical factor in the maintenance of mental health. Memory and brain power also benefit from inclusion in a social group.

Although older adults seem to benefit more from socialization and exercise, even children get a mental boost from exercise, and it shows up in better grades for them. The extra oxygen that comes from getting enough exercise is thought to be the key ingredient in this change, as the brain loves oxygen! Exercise also causes the brain to produce more brain cells, so people of all ages can benefit from physical fitness.

## MINDFULNESS EXERCISES

Mindfulness is also called awareness or insight meditation. When you meditate on a regular basis, the blood vessels get larger, and the cerebral cortex of the brain gets thicker and larger because of an increase in blood flow to that area.

Western meditation, which is the most basic of all the meditation types, also increases the attention span, and allows you to focus more clearly.

You are more aware, more mindful of what you are meditating on, which is why this form is so aptly named. The mind is at rest as well as alert while you are meditating. In the Sanskrit language, the word meditation means 'peacefully abiding', and this is the way our mind is supposed to be. Calm, clear and happy is a natural state of being for the human brain, yet how often is the average person able to achieve this?

Mindfulness therefore means that we are completely in tune with our mind. You can train yourself to enter this state. With the ability to get away from the chaos of daily living, mindfulness meditation helps us to see just how our mind works. You will want to practice mindfulness exercises on a daily basis, and it is a good idea to choose a certain time of day, and then stick to it. Some people find mornings a perfect time, while others prefer to meditate in the evenings as a way to throw off the cares of their day.

### **3**

## **HOW THOUGHT IMPROVEMENT CAN HELP YOU TO BE MORE PRODUCTIVE**

### **ALWAYS THINK POSITIVE**

If you really think about it, you would agree with the theory that positive thinking can make life a lot better for you. When you look at the events of your life as positive, you are naturally going to look and feel happier. You will be better equipped to throw off stressful occurrences, and every aspect of your life will go better for you. Of course, even if you make a strong effort to be positive, you are going to have days when nothing seems to go right for you. Things will happen in your life that you will have to make a huge effort to accept with aplomb.

Some people seem to be what has been dubbed 'eternal optimists'. They are unrealistically optimistic, to the point where an earthquake would make them smile and say, "Oh, well... I needed to redo the garden anyway, and now I won't have to paint the house in the spring." People who go through life like this have also been called 'Pollyanna' after the character in the children's book and movie by the same name.

The ability to think positive is actually a science. Researchers have claimed that when people think positive, it has a placebo effect on the body. At one time, this placebo effect was thought to occur in test studies because the human brain was intelligent enough to fool test subjects into thinking that the sugar pill they took in lieu of the 'real' medication had actually helped them.

New studies have shown that when people swallowed a sugar pill, thinking it was actually a helpful medicine that would make them feel better, their body did a wonderful thing. It produced several chemicals that imitate the type of healing that would have occurred had the person actually taken the 'real' medication.

This experimental study can tell us a lot about how our brain power works for our greater good. When someone is sure that they are going to feel better and get well, the brain responds to those feelings and actually improves our feelings and heals us! Do you know someone who is always crowing about how healthy they are? These findings could be the reason why this is so.

Research has also discovered that those who look at life through optimistic eyes live longer than the cynics of the world. Their death risk is an astonishing 55% lower than that of the average person.

### **REPLACING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS WITH POSITIVE THOUGHTS**

If you sail through life believing that good things are going to happen to you, it can make a big difference in the outcome. The same is true for people who are

trudging through life with a constant negative attitude. They expect bad things are going to happen in their world, and nine times out of ten, they do.

The difference in these two ways of thinking makes a powerful statement to our brains. It is a cumulative statement in that the effect builds up the longer it is experienced. Having a negative attitude can spill over into other aspects of your life, and spawn bad habits that can be detrimental to your health and to your career.

Your personal relationships can also be affected by a negative attitude. Can you recall the last time you had a conversation with someone who sports a negative attitude? It is probable that you felt a bit negative when the conversation was over, no matter how chipper you may have felt before it began.

Imagine how glorious life would be if you could train yourself to never have another negative thought! Positive thinking can affect the people around you almost as much as it can help you.

Remember the little jolt of goodwill you felt when a stranger was kind to you? Wouldn't you rather make people feel good about themselves and the world, rather than negative?

#### THE ART OF POSITIVE THINKING IS NOT LOST!

When you are in a bad mood, it is likely that you are quick to blame something or someone for your sullen disposition. If you would admit the truth to yourself, you would see that you and you alone are responsible for your moods. Not the weather, not the argument with your spouse or partner, and not the fact that those pants you just bought last month would not even come close to fastening this morning!

You can change and improve your life so much by training your mind to think positively instead of negatively. No longer will the small annoyances in life make you grouchy, and the big problems will become much easier for you to handle with positive thinking.

#### BE MORE PRODUCTIVE BY THINKING POSITIVE

Positive thinking means that you will always look on the bright side of things, and always see the silver lining in the clouds of life! Instead of fretting about all the things that could go wrong, you spend your time thinking of all the things that are going to go right for you. This type of thinking will bring positive benefits to you. Some of the most important benefits are the lack of job stress you will feel.

Stress can make us feel both threatened and overwhelmed, and neither of these are going to help you to get ahead in your career. If you are a career professional, the demands on your time at work are more than likely even greater. You feel stretched in all directions, with no time for yourself. This makes you tend to judge

yourself quite harshly when you are unable to be three people at once, and make everything go just the way you want it. You feel as if nothing you do turns out well, and that everyone is judging you harshly because of it.

By feeling this way, you are caught up in a vicious circle! Because you are upset with yourself, you tend to get even less done at work, or at home. That causes you even more stress, and the circle just keeps rolling along while you feel worse and worse.

Imagine how much better things would go for you if you were a positive thinker, and could say to yourself that you were sure you would be able to handle anything that came your way. It would not matter if it were job related, or had something to do with your family.

The fact that you had faith in your abilities would be enough to make your level of stress almost non-existent. Remember that negative thinking automatically sets you up for failure, whereas positive thinking allows you to get more done and meet the demands that life places in front of you.

### REFOCUS YOUR THOUGHTS AND CHANGE YOUR LIFE!

When you study your life through this new perspective, seeing the world through rose colored glasses seems to be the thing to do. At this point, you may be asking how you can achieve this balanced state? Be aware that no one can manage to achieve Nirvana and never leave this blissful tranquility!

It takes practice to eliminate negative thoughts from your life, and there will be times when you will try and fail to do so. However, as you struggle to always think positive, you will find that it becomes easier as time goes by. The old saying 'Practice makes perfect' does fit in well with the art of positive thinking!

How do you practice thinking in a more positive manner? Start out by accepting the fact that you are not perfect. No one can make an enormous change like this overnight! All you can do is take it one day at a time.

For starters, believe in yourself! If too many negative thoughts continue to force themselves into your mind, sit back and take a deep breath. Ask yourself what is happening on this particular day that is causing you to have so many negative thoughts. When you are able to pinpoint the reason, you can start to do what needs to be done in order to make you feel more positive about the situation.

One way for you to feel more positive is to boost your confidence in yourself by affirming yourself. Affirming the things you want to happen can make you see things in a more positive light.

Suppose you have a report that is due on your supervisor's desk at the end of the day, and you honestly have no idea how you are going to be able to finish it. A

self-affirmation that goes something like this could give you the confidence you need in order to get your work done on time.

I know I can do this report and turn it in on time.

I am good at this sort of thing, and I am sure I can do a good job.

You might be surprised at just how effective this can be. An old song from the 1940s has lyrics that urge the listen to "Accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative". That is exactly what you must do. The more you think in a positive manner, the more you will get the kind of results you need in order to successfully change your life for the better.



## **4**

### **THE BEAUTY OF MINDMAPPING**

Most people are quite familiar with road maps, especially if they do any sort of traveling that entails driving in unfamiliar territory. These maps help them to know which direction to take in order to end up at a certain location. You could consider a road map as a sort of instruction manual for driving, as a large segment of the population could not manage to travel more than 20 or 30 miles without one.

Our brains have been compared to computers by many researchers. To a certain extent, this is very true. When you buy a new computer, most of the time it comes to you with some sort of operating system already installed. Included in this operating system are various types of software.

Each software program does something different. A word processor is for typing letters and reports. A web browser is used for going online. Your email program downloads your email from the server. The programs that are on a computer when you purchase it are usually just the basics.

When using your computer, what do you do if by chance you need to complete a task, and you find you do not have the proper software? You either download or purchase a program that will help you to do the task.

#### **WHAT ARE MIND MAPS?**

Your brain is your operating system. Even though everyone thinks in a different way, you use the same techniques that the majority of the people in the world also use. When you were born, you had certain 'programs' already 'installed' in your brain that are there to help you learn and memorize the things that are going to happen to you during your entire lifetime.

You have a program that remembers images, a program that remembers how things link together in order to form a system, and a program that remembers words and what they mean. Does this sound a bit like your home computer?

When you use mind mapping, your brain is working like your computer! Mind mapping is a moniker coined by none other than best-selling author Tony Buzan, who has taught this concept to people all over the world for the past 30 years.

Mind maps are a very effective way to get information that you want or need to remember, in and out of your brain. The brain has certain basic ways of doing things, just like a computer does. The difference is that the brain can take these basic 'programs' that it entered the world with, and refine them to help make the most of your memory and your sense of creativity.

You already have this power latent in your mind. Mind mapping simply takes advantage of the power within you in an innovative way.

Mind mapping has its own basic elements. The one that are absolutely necessary to harness the power of this amazing method are as follows:

### THE USE OF PICTURES AND IMAGES

When children are learning to read, most systems which were made to teach them the basics of reading use many pictures. This is because our brains have an awesome capability in that they can recall pictures and images very easily. It is as if you have a huge hard drive in your head that has a limitless capacity for 'brain shots'.

Brain shots are 'photos' of your life that you can bring to the forefront of your mind whenever you want to see them. This is a big part of using mind mapping! Since it is easier for us to remember an image than it is a group of words, mind mapping takes advantage of this capability.

### HEADINGS AND CAPTIONS

The brain has a much easier time remembering words that stand alone, short groups of words, and short sentences such as captions. Headings are also very easy to remember. Take the front page of a newspaper for example. You could make the attempt to memorize the entire front page. You would have to do an awful lot of studying to be able to quote it verbatim, and it is doubtful that you could accomplish this task without making any mistakes.

A much easier method of remembering the information would be to write down the headlines and headers for each story, and then commit those to memory. This way, the headlines and headers would help you to remember probably 95% of each newspaper story, as long as you had read them thoroughly and thoughtfully.

### MAKING A CONNECTION

One of the things that your brain does best is analysis. It is an automatic occurrence that is similar to logic. It is natural for the brain to analyze how events, situations, actions, and more are connected to each other. Once your brain has figured this out, it will then create a picture that will bring to mind that structure. Much of the work that our mind does has to do with things being connected together in our memory. These associations work together to create a system.

Your memory is at its best when it is allowed to work the way that it was meant to. If you try to force yourself to remember things in a way that goes against the brain's natural ability, you will find it tough going, indeed. Doesn't it make more sense to work with your brain, instead of trying to go against it? Mind mapping is

so advantageous because it falls right in line with the way that the brain works. Research has proven that the basic way man remembers things is by using his imagination and associating it with images.

When you think of a horse, does your mind see the letters H O R S E in neon lights? Of course not. It sees the image, or picture of a horse. We think in images! When we remember things, they appear in our mind as images first. The images then trigger words.

Mind mapping takes advantage of this. It is a way of taking notes that will enable you to learn things faster and easier than ever before. When you need to come up with an idea for something quickly, mind mapping is the way to go. Mind mapping can help you to take a complicated idea, and give it structure so that it is much easier to understand.

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

People who are relatively new to mind mapping say that after completing a few of them, they feel that they actually think in a different way. When you consider that mind mapping is the way our brains were originally designed to work, you can better understand why they would say this.

An idea map is a visual picture of the problem, topic, question or issue that you need a solution to. It is eye catching and colorful, and fits on just one sheet of paper. It is a different method from the usual step-by-step, linear method that most people use! When you have a picture of what is going on right there in front of you, it somehow makes you feel energized, and more capable of handling the project or problem at hand. With a visual 'map', the brain can think and plan in a different way - the way it was meant to think.

Mind mapping is a lot easier to learn than you might think from reading about it. It is a great deal like brainstorming, where a group gets together and shares their individual ideas and solutions for a common goal. Once you have learned the basics of mind mapping, you won't want to think or learn new things in any other way. Your efficiency will be a peak level at work and at home, and you will be using more of your brain power than ever before.

### THE INNER CORE CENTRAL TO MIND MAPPING

Mind mapping uses basic logic, and the brain's proclivity for association to create a structure to build upon. Since our thoughts start off in the center of our mental state, mind mapping starts in the middle of a sheet of paper. Here, you will place a word or an image that will represent the idea/subject that you are thinking about. You will use colors to make this image, so as to make it stand out both on the paper and in your mind.

Think of this center image as the title of a book. What comes next in a book on the first few pages? The table of contents, which as you know is a listing of the chapters of a book. You want the main themes of your idea/subject to branch out from around this center image, just like the chapters of a book seem to flow outwards from a table of contents.

You have the option of printing (the brain reads printed letters more quickly) a word or words for this main theme, or you can create another image if you prefer. These central lines are the first level of thought, much like the main branches of a tree join to the tree's trunk. You want the colors to match the ones on the middle image, and draw lines that are the same length, and curve toward the outer edge of the paper.

## THE SECOND MAP LEVEL AND BEYOND

Now you will begin to create your second thought level. The words or images on this level will be linked to the central branch that they are an offshoot of. Your lines will be thinner, but of the same color as the main branch they started from. Use single words if possible, and make sure you arrange each image or word on its own individual line. The lines show the association between the main center image or word, and the ideas that are represented by the single words and/or images.

See how your thoughts flow? They go from the main idea and branch off into more ideas, which are all related to one another in some way. Keep in mind that if you are doing mind mapping as a group exercise, no two mind maps are going to look alike. Everyone's brain will use different words and images to associate ideas and plans.

## WHAT MIND MAPPING CAN DO FOR YOU

Mind mapping allows your creativity free reign. You are creating a diagram in a sense - a diagram that represents the main idea you are thinking about, and arranges other ideas and activities relevant to the main idea around it. Mind maps arrange these ideas in such a way that represents the connections they have to each other.

People have found mind mapping to be very useful in their business, personal life, family life, and to help them to learn large amounts of information in a relatively short period of time. Anytime you want to be able to think and remember better, you should consider drawing a mind map to help you see the big picture of what you want to achieve.

## BASIC PRINCIPLES AND MAJOR BENEFITS OF MIND MAPPING

In summary, the basic principles of mind mapping are:

- Express ideas through the use of single, key words or by drawing colorful images
- Associate these ideas
- Structure these ideas into a group
- Group ideas in order of importance
- See your ideas by creating them in image form
- Use colors and images to further stimulate your mind
- The major benefits of mind mapping include:
- Creative thought is stimulated by the use of colors and images
- Creative thought is further stimulate by the use of associations and power words
- Thinking in depth about what it is you are trying to learn or accomplish
- Time and paper saved versus taking notes the old-fashioned way

## **5** **RADIANT THINKING**

### **WHAT IS RADIANT THINKING?**

Radiant thinking can complement mind mapping by enhancing the thought processes that result from non-linear thinking. It is a process that can help you to maximize the untapped potential of your mind.

Radiant thinking works by acknowledging the fact that no one's mind works without connecting associations together. It is not natural for the mind to work in any other way, yet many people believe that the mind works in a straight line way of thinking. Our mind is made up of a huge network of associated thoughts, and we can take advantage of the hierarchy of those thoughts by using the concepts of radiant thinking..

How many neurons do you think you have in your brain? Too many to count, really. The way you take advantage of those neurons can make a vast difference in your life. Radiant thinking shows us how the average life is spent in a way that is counter-productive to the intended purpose of life. We are not here to live in negativity, yet that is exactly what most people are doing. Those who aspire to banish the negativity from their lives can count on an existence that is entirely positive.

What if our entire world population decided to ban negativity? This is what radiant thinking is all about. A world that existed in a state of positivity and was able to ignore the negativity of life would be a world of peace and happiness, no matter what the circumstances.

### **YOUR BELIEFS HAVE POWER**

Those who subscribe to the idea of radiant thinking believe that they can have the things they want from life if they believe in them. In a radiant thinking world, nothing is impossible, and no belief system is really wrong. Beliefs have the ability to either hinder a person or engulf them with power.

What you believe has power, more power than you ever dreamed. Your beliefs zero right in on your nervous system. Earlier in this book, we spoke of the placebo effect, and how people who believe they have been given medication that is going to help them get well will actually recover from whatever was wrong with them even if the medication given to them consisted of nothing more than sugar. This is a belief system at its finest. They believed something was so, and things turned out so that they were absolutely correct in their belief.

A person's belief system has the ability to define just how much of that individual's potential can actually be harnessed from the mind and put to use by

the body. The forces within a person can go to work with positive affirmations uttered by this person in order to change their life for the better.

## HOW RADIANT THINKING CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE

How can you use the power of radiant thinking to change your own life and make it better in every way? The answer to this question is almost too simple to be believable, yet if you truly believe, it can happen for you. It is not difficult to set your own healing forces into action. A little effort and determination is all it takes! Just get used to uttering positive affirmations daily. Some people find it useful to record these affirmations on tape, then play the tape as often as you see fit each day.

You need to become very aware of your thoughts, because everything that happens to us in life starts off as a thought in someone's mind, not necessarily your own. Observe your thoughts as if you were someone other than yourself, and try not to get too caught up in them. It does not matter if these thoughts are negative or positive. You are watching them and observing them for a reason.

You will not have to do this for very long before seeing a pattern emerge. It may be necessary for you to start a thought notebook in order to keep track of all of them. Write them down, both good and bad, and also note whether or not you were able to use a positive affirmation in order to banish the negative thought. Be aware of the events in your life that cause you to have negative thoughts. Analyze these events, and if the negativity created by them is severe, you may want to consider eradicating them from your life.

## BANISHING THE NEGATIVE

Negative thoughts can be more easily banished with the right mindset. Your imagination can be a big help to you. Using your powers of creativity and imagination together, you could imagine that you have befriended a powerful dolphin who has taken the initiative of being your good friend and protector. Imagine further that this dolphin has the ability to leap out of its home in the sea of your mind, and swallow your negative thoughts whenever they appear. Once the negative thought has been figuratively swallowed by the dolphin, replace it with a positive thought immediately.

## THE POWER OF IMAGERY

Imagery can be very powerful. By taking advantage of its power, you can successfully limit the number of negative thoughts that enter your mind. While this is going on in your conscious mind, bolster your unconscious mind by surrounding yourself with positive people if at all possible.

## POSITIVE SURROUNDINGS CAN BE YOURS

If this is difficult for you, then make your home a positive oasis. Refuse to allow negativity to even cross the threshold of your abode! Think positive thoughts, read only positive books, and get yourself a book of positive quotes that were once uttered by famous people. Write some of the best quotes on index cards, and tack them up around your home. Place them on mirrors and on doors. Fasten them to the refrigerator and use them as bookmarks in your current reading material.

Place these cards anywhere and everywhere you will be able to see them on a daily basis. Make sure you do not leave the same ones in place too long. Rotate the cards on a weekly basis, and soon you will know these quotes by heart. They will be very useful for counteracting any negative thoughts that creep into your mind. This may seem like a lot of fuss, but research has proven that anytime you keep something in the back of your mind at all time, it will become a part of you. By having these quotes scattered about in the areas where you spend most of your time, your absorption of their truths will be complete.

### RECREATING YOURSELF WITH RADIANT THINKING

Never forget that you have the ability to recreate yourself with the power of thinking positively. Positive thinking adds new meaning to your life, and helps you to recognize the many possibilities that await you. Negative thoughts can erase possibilities, and can make you believe that nothing good or productive will ever come your way again. However, positive thinking unlocks your brain from its stagnant state, and opens the floodgates of possibility that are all yours.

You will feel the change in yourself when negativity releases its grasp on your mind. You will no longer have that hopeless feeling, no longer fear the future, and no longer doubt yourself and your capabilities. Radiant thinking causes you to become aglow with the sensation of living a life that is totally fulfilling.

### NO MORE NEGATIVITY

Without negative thoughts, you will feel more loving toward the world and all its inhabitants. This in turn can cause you to feel even more content and full of joy. Your dealings with others will have a different feel about them, and those in your world will approach you in a different manner, for they will be able to see the change in you. They may want such a change in their own life, so you must be prepared to tell others about the power of radiant and positive thinking.

You will look forward to each new day and the things you will be able to accomplish. Radiant thinking can fill you with a peaceful energy. So many times, people think they are energetic, but they crash at the end of the day. A frantic pace mixed with caffeine fools them into thinking that they have energy. Their mind, however, can tell the difference, and this is why their energy never seems to last long enough for them to accomplish lasting joy and peace. Again, do you see how the whole world could benefit from radiant thinking?



While you are beginning your journey into the world of radiant thinking, it is a good idea to try and take each day as a separate entity. Don't think about the bills you need to pay, the car that needs a wash, the hole that the dog dug in the garden last weekend. Forget all those old memories that wash over you without warning, and leave you feeling empty and depressed. Be happy and cheerful, no matter what the circumstances. Take the time to enjoy the sunshine, the song of a bird, the caress of the wind on your cheek. Be at one with the world, and do not allow the negativity that is so pervasive in today's environment to touch you in any way.

### THE POWER OF THE AFFIRMATION

With practice, every day could be like this for you. Along with your positive affirmations, radiant thinking can rejuvenate you. Affirmations are perhaps the most powerful weapon you have in your quest for improving your brain power. Never take an affirmation lightly! Affirmations do work, though perhaps not as quickly as you would like for them to.

You may be interested to learn that you do not even have to utter an affirmation aloud for it to work, and work well. Whenever you simply think an affirmation, it precipitates a type of vibration deep within your subconscious mind. The vibrations will overwrite what was placed in our subconscious mind previously. Since the subconscious produces our attitude toward others and toward the world in general, and also have some bearing on our habits and behavior, it is easy to see how affirmations can help us to make our existence a positive one.

We are what we think! This has been proven time and time again, ever since the world has been inhabited by man. If you have a negative self image that is causing you to have negative thoughts, positive affirmations can help you to repair your state of mind and make it easier for you to embrace the art of radiant thinking.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **TURN YOUR BRAIN POWER ON!**

You can definitely turn your brain power on, using the suggestions in this book. You can use the power of your mind to get away from all of those self-defeating thoughts that are keeping you from being as successful as you can be.

You can rid yourself of the job stress that is slowly eating away at you. You can harness your true potential and make a real difference in your life by taking advantage of the power that is lying dormant in your brain. Meditation can help to relieve any stress you may experience, as well as allowing the brain to function on a higher level.

You can not only improve your memory, but condition your brain to be able to store a virtually unlimited amount of data. When you start to look after your health by making sure you are consuming the proper foods, you can improve the condition of not only your brain, but your body as well. Since your body and your brain work together as a team, it is very important for you to feed your brain the vitamins, minerals, protein and carbohydrates it needs to function properly.

Your brain cells crave stimulation. If they are not used, they merely sit there and take up space. If you want to use the maximum potential of your brain, it's up to you to do exercises that will stimulate them. With the many games and puzzles that are available to you on the Internet for little or no cost, you can receive the vital stimulation that your brave cells are craving right this minute! Without this stimulation, your brain can only hold so much information. If you overload your brain, its performance will be sorely lacking, much like a computer hard drive that is almost filled to capacity. You must train your brain in order to see it reach its full potential!

Just because you are getting older does not mean that you are destined to develop old-age dementia or Alzheimer's disease. By enhancing your brain power with stimulation, you can see to it that you brain functions just as well at the age of 70 as it did when you were 25.

Your brain is more powerful than any computer known to man. Very few people have taken advantage of this power by taking the steps needed to improve the functioning of their brain. These same people will run, jog, lift weights, play tennis, and do all kind of various exercises in order to keep their body physically fit. It is much easier to get your brain in good shape, and best of all, no sweating or tennis elbow is involved! Take the time needed to exercise your mind, for its fitness is just as important, if not more important than the fitness of your body.

Concentration and memory are important to students as well as those in the business world. Improving your brain power can help you to overcome the distractions of life, and can give you a memory boost that is quite unlike anything

you have ever experienced before. Most of the time, folks who have trouble remembering and concentrating have berated themselves for the trouble they are having with these two concepts. By thinking in a positive manner, you can train your brain to concentrate, understand, and remember. Mind mapping is a powerful way to take notes on a subject in a way that will give you a visual map, complete with graphics. Mind mapping takes advantage of the way your brain actually works, and can engage your brain in a totally different way than usual. Linear thinking not only will boost your creativity and efficiency, but is fun to do!

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