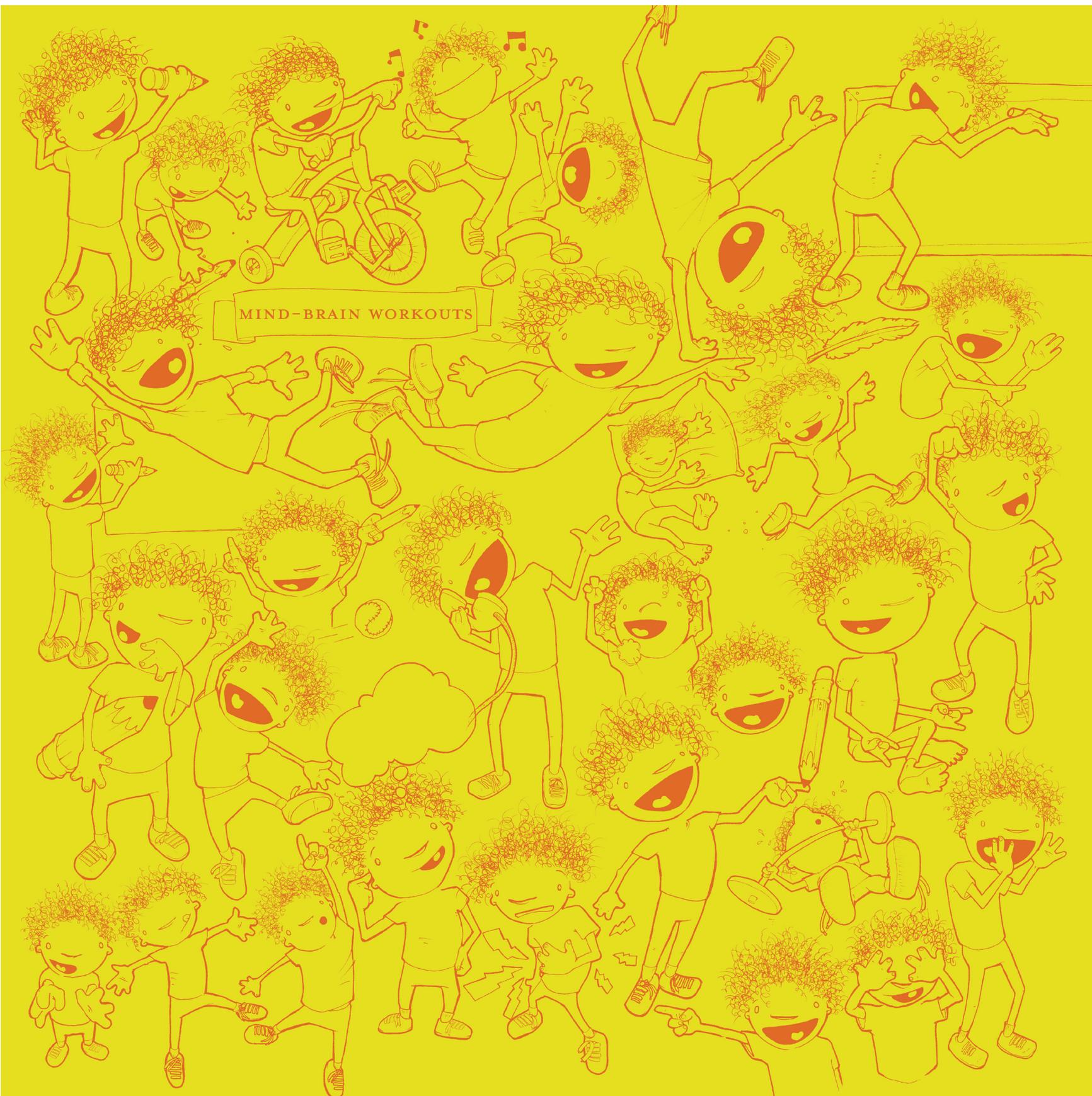


MIND-BRAIN WORKOUTS



MINDING THE BRAIN

EXERCISES THAT GIVE
YOU THE POWER TO
CONTROL YOUR LIFE
FOR THE BETTER

DR.HAVA SCHAVER

Nowadays, it's not just theories; science is telling us that just as you learn to strengthen your physical body's natural abilities, you can discover ways to build those of your mind and brain. Building them up is what enables you to strengthen your natural capability to function better, longer, and to exert more control over what is standing in the way of a more happy, fulfilling and healthier life.

Thanks to new sophisticated technology for neuroscience we are learning now directly from our brains that the key to manage life more effectively is building up mind and brain as well as body resilience. The ability to build up resilience is natural; it exists inside each one of us. Images from the brain verify for us that the adult brain has the ability to change and develop. We are not stuck! With workouts like the ones you'll find here, you can shape up your mind and brain to manage your life more successfully; to get more of what you want.

Minding the Brain is the art of strengthening your mind to utilize your natural (biological, physiological)

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brain potential in different life situations of your choice. It first entails learning more about how your mind and brain work, building up these inborn abilities and finally using them. For some people it could be for building resilience to better manage stress and anxiety, or to maintain or enhance functions such as concentration and memory. For others it could be increase satisfaction in relationships, or learning to set, follow and enhance various personal and professional goals. It also works for achieving peak performance in various aspects of your life.

Exercise is what we do in this program. Here you learn through practice. You'll learn about your mind and brain functions while strengthening them, chapter by chapter you'll practice with an audio CD to workout by. Not too long ago, most people did not know that working out their body and eating right would enhance their physical and mental health. Today, we accept these things as established facts. A similar change is happening right now with the mind and brain. We have come to realize that through proper practice we have power to shape

MINDING THE BRAIN:
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PROLOGUE

our minds, and that our brains, even more than our bodies, are a “use it or lose it” proposition!

Does the world need another self-help program for doing that? Bookstores and the Internet are full of items—that tell you what to do. Knowing what you have to do to improve your well-being, manage stress, enhance your success and even understand how your brain and mind work is one thing. Making it happen is something else! Often knowing what we need to do without knowing how to accomplish it can make us even more frustrated, because of a simple reason. Your mind and brain, like your body, will not change just because you understand. Who ever built their biceps merely by understanding how biceps work or by knowing why it’s important to strengthen them?

There are some things you just plain have to do for yourself. But that doesn’t mean you can’t have a trainer. That’s my job.

I have worked as a clinical psychologist and workshop leader with hundreds of men and women to treat their

depression, reduce their anxiety, stress and chronic pain, improve their marriages and achieve peak performance. What has become clear to me is that most people don’t realize that their brains and minds have the power to make positive changes. Now that we are getting this knowledge directly from our brains (we don’t know everything but we definitely know enough), we can teach people a lot about how their brain and minds work and how to best use them to manage their lives more effectively. My goal here is to train you to discover, strengthen and use those natural powers of yours to direct and manage your life in different situations. People that practice these workouts report a wide variety of benefits. Here are a few examples:

MELISSA, A FIFTY EIGHT YEAR OLD OFFICE MANAGER

The practice of the workouts helped me build up my abilities to concentrate and remember more. I found it to work better and easier for me than some memory courses I took. What I am practicing here is just becoming part of who I am, with not much effort. The only effort was at first to discipline myself to do them. Now that I look back, listening to a CD for twenty five

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minutes a few times a week in the evenings is really not that demanding. The workouts are actually relaxing.

JEFFREY, A FIFTY FIVE YEAR OLD ATTORNEY

I am so much closer with my wife now...I even enjoy just sitting with her in the garden which I could never do before. The sensory element workout trained me to enjoy what's around me. I never looked at trees or flowers before. We went away to Muskegon and I had fun walking with her by the lake. It's like I knew what to look at, how to hear, enjoy touching her hand, I could even smell the fresh air.

EVANNA, A FIFTY NINE YEAR OLD

PSYCHOLOGIST IN PRIVATE PRACTICE

It's such a relief to know that working on changing my eating habits is a natural mind brain and body process. It takes the guilt and negativity out. I like knowing that my old habits are like my software program and that the way my brain and body work are like my hardware and that they all have a say in what I do and how I change things in my life...I like knowing what I have to do for building up my abilities to change my old software programs. I am getting used to listening to

information from myself... I am slowly changing my old eating programs. The biggest challenge is to stop the automatic behavior and to not criticize myself when I can't, but to learn from it...and I am getting it.

**To read more about what people that do
Mind-Brain workouts say about them go to page 168.**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hava Schaver is a clinical experiential psychologist and a 25-year pioneer in mind-body therapy. At a time when the connection between mind and body were not yet accepted by the mainstream medical community, Dr Schaver displayed the courage of her convictions by implementing one of its earliest programs. Now she believes that recent neuroscience research findings are connecting some of the loose pieces of the mind-brain-body puzzle, shedding greater light by bringing live images of and from the brain. Her unique expertise lies in bringing mind-body experiential therapy to multimedia products to enhance relaxation, wellness, personal power and peak performance in life.

Schaver holds a Ph.D. in Experiential Clinical Psychology from Union Institute in Cincinnati. She also holds a psychology and education specialist degree from The Center of Humanistic Studies in Detroit, a Master's Degree in Social Work and a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts from Wayne State University in Detroit Michigan.

Dr. Schaver is a Diplomate of the Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress and has taught graduate psychology students at the Center for Humanistic Studies. She is currently an adjunct on doctoral committees and a supervisor of clinical psychologists. She maintains a private practice in metro Detroit and is co-owner of ZeevArts, LLC, which creates multimedia products and programs promoting stress relief and enhanced quality of life for private consumption and for industry.

To Mia and Niv

I feel fortunate and grateful for finding this knowledge.
I hope to share it with all the people that I know
and love and others who are open to this wisdom.

WHAT I 'DISCOVERED' WAS THAT HAPPINESS IS NOT SOMETHING THAT HAPPENS. IT IS NOT A RESULT OF GOOD FORTUNE OR RANDOM CHANCE. IT IS NOT SOMETHING THAT MONEY CAN BUY OR POWER COMMAND. IT DOES NOT DEPEND ON OUTSIDE EVENTS BUT, RATHER, ON HOW WE INTERPRET THEM. HAPPINESS, IN FACT, IS A CONDITION THAT MUST BE PREPARED FOR, CULTIVATED, AND DEFENDED PRIVATELY BY EACH PERSON. PEOPLE WHO LEARN TO CONTROL INNER EXPERIENCES WILL BE ABLE TO DETERMINE THE QUALITY OF THEIR LIVES, WHICH IS AS CLOSE AS ANY OF US CAN COME TO BEING HAPPY.

CSIKSZENTMIHALY, FLOW; THE PSYCHOLOGY OF OPTIMAL EXPERIENCE, 1990, P.2



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IF PUMPING
IRON IS GOOD,
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IF PUMPING
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INTRODUCTION

**YOU KNOW HOW TO EXERCISE YOUR BODY;
NOW TRY WORKING OUT YOUR MIND AND BRAIN**

Thanks to the development of sophisticated scanning technologies for neuroscience, we have the ability to watch the brain in action, doing its thing. The images are beautiful, and the significance of seeing different parts of our brains working in concert when we move or think, imagine, feel or sense is even more exciting. For one thing, seeing the link between brain and mind tells us much more about ourselves than we ever thought possible.

After years of experience as a therapist, and my own reading of the neuroscience literature, I have come to believe that building up mind, brain and body resilience is the key to managing life more effectively, maintaining health, and achieving more wants and wishes. The good news is that the ability to build up resilience is natural; it exists inside each one of us. Studies have shown that the adult brain has the ability to change and develop. We are not stuck! With workouts like the ones you'll find here, you can shape up your mind and brain.

You might be asking yourself right now: "Why would I willingly take on another thing to do? I can hardly keep up with what's on my plate already. And even if I could free some time here and there, what could I possibly get out of this that would make it worthwhile?"

I bet you will feel it is worthwhile when you realize that building your mind and brain's natural abilities enables you to function better and exert more control over what is standing in the way of a more happy, fulfilling and healthier life.



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The practical applications of doing the workouts are similar to those of physical workouts; getting in shape, building resilience, maintaining present capabilities for as long as we can. We do physical workouts not just to strengthen our individual muscle groups, keep our heart in shape, loose weight or relieve venomous energy from the stress response. We also work out to build up our abilities to function better and longer—to be able to walk up the stairs, sit at the computer or bend down without breaking our backs. This enhances the quality of our lives.

The same is true for mind brain workouts. We aim to strengthen our separate mind brain systems and their special potential, such as our abilities to be aware and experience our senses, our feelings or observe and direct the content and clarity of our thoughts. We aim to learn how our mind and brain work and how to utilize them best. But we actually aim to build up our capability to function better, healthier and longer. In essence we need to strengthen our natural capacities in order to maintain and improve such basic things as our memory or abilities to focus attention, have better relationships, perform better, enjoy more. Building mind-brain resilience is necessary to improve the general quality of our life, our outlook and even to affect our physical health. We have known for a while about the connection of mind and body. Now through the eyes of new scientific technology we know that all mental states are brain states which effect and direct our physical bodies, our health. Therefore the state of your mind affects your physical body just as lack of exercise or obesity do.

IF PUMPING
IRON IS GOOD,
PUMPING LIFE IS
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INTRODUCTION

Knowing what you have to do to improve your well-being, manage stress, enhance your success and even understand how your brain and mind work is one thing. Making it happen is something else. Often knowing what we need to do without knowing how to accomplish it can make us even more frustrated, because your mind and brain, like your body, will not change just because you understand. Did you ever built your biceps merely by understanding how biceps work or by knowing why it's important to strengthen them?

There are some things you just plain have to do for yourself. But that doesn't mean you can't have a trainer. That's my job.

There was a time, and it wasn't that long ago, when the idea of gyms and weights, treadmills and steppers would have elicited responses like: "Now let me get this straight. You want me to pay money to go to a place and sweat while I walk to nowhere, or I climb onto and off of a step, thereby making my legs ache?"

Most people did not know then that working out would enhance their physical and mental health. Today, we accept these things as established fact. A similar change is happening right now with the mind and brain. We have come to realize that we have power to shape our minds, and that our brains, even more than our bodies, are a "**use it or lose it**" proposition!

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WELCOME
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WE ARE MORE THAN OUR PARTS

We have been taught to strengthen parts of ourselves. But a strong or thin body alone or a sharp intellect by itself or even opening up to emotions does not make our lives complete. Suppose you were really concerned about your abdominal muscles. You wanted six-pack abs more than anything. You obsessed about it. You did “crunches” like a maniac. And, through hard work, you finally achieved that rock-hard belly. But, because that’s all you did, you ended up with a terrific midsection, and geeky, pipe stem arms, and the legs of your grandmother. Can those arms carry your groceries? Can those legs walk up a few flights of stairs? Sure, you want to work on your abs. But, at the same time, you need to strengthen all of you.

It took me many years to get to that global perspective, to find my natural powers and to build them up. Along the way, I studied the research of the most prominent psychologists, philosophers and neuroscientists, applying their discoveries to my life, then the lives of the patients I treat in my clinical psychology practice, and now to the workouts you are about to do. Part of

why I gathered all this varied, important information and developed this *Mind-Brain Workout* program was because if something like it existed, my journey would have been much simpler and smoother.

We know now that our mind, brain, body, genetics, life experiences, even our beliefs and spirituality are interconnected. The way we think, behave, feel, and move result from complex interconnections in the brain, some of which have been located and identified through various new imaging techniques. So trying to change just one aspect of our lives – our weight, our house, our marital status, our bank account, our level of education or even our exercise habits – ignores how much everything is interconnected.

WHAT ARE MIND-BRAIN WORKOUTS?

In the mind-brain workouts, you’ll concentrate on building up the areas in your life of your greatest preference, but you’ll also concentrate on your whole. In using your mind and brain in conscious and purposeful ways over time, with practice, just like your physical exercise program, you will build

up resilience—one of the keys to happiness, peak performance, stress management and the ability to change. Just as you know how to move your arm to build your biceps, you will learn how to “move” your sensory, emotional, and other mind-brain systems to strengthen them. And once those systems are clear, and you know how your brain and mind naturally work, you’ll have the power to use them effectively at your will.

In this workout program we use the mind to affect the brain. The new brain imaging technologies have shown us that different, but interconnected parts (systems) of the brain are activated when we think, love, feel, move or even pray. And they suggest in pictures the interconnection of mind, brain, body and even spirit. We now have hard science showing us the mechanics of these correlations. Science allows us to identify what areas of the brain participate when we have different experiences. Other brain research has shown that the “shape” of your brain, just like the “shape” of your body, depends not just on your genetics, but also on your life experiences and on how you use your mind and brain. Yes, how

you use them! This revolution is about using the power of your mind to shape your brain, which then in turn affects your state of mind and body.

THIS STUFF IS FOR REAL

Think of the brain as a computer with hardware and software systems. We are born with a lot of the hardware systems genetically mapped for us, but we make our own software from the hardware we have available to us and what we learn and remember from our life experiences. Our earliest experiences are the most important ones since they set the basic format of our software programs.

How do those software programs form? The brain works by associations. Neurons from within and between separate brain systems get activated. Neurons that get activated together “wire” together. Wiring by association is how our brain cells connect. They do it at the synapses, the gaps between them. And this is how we process information. This is how we learn and remember!

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“The essence of who you are is stored as synaptic interactions, in and between the various systems of your brain,” writes Joseph LeDoux, a New York University neuroscientist, in his book, *The Synaptic Self*. (2003, pg.267). As you go about experiencing your life, brain cells from within and between different systems of your brain are connecting with each other; they’re wiring together through electrical and chemical processes to create patterns that neuroscientists call “synaptic connections”. These synaptic connections connect with others to form pathways. Pathways connect to form brain networks. It’s very much like the country lane is part of a larger network of county roads and those are part of the networks of state highways, which finally become part of the interstate system. But here we’re not moving traffic. We’re moving information... lots of very important information. These pathways and networks make your personal “software”; they create habits of things like beliefs, preferences, perceptions, love, personality, decisions, body movements ...everything. You might begin to realize that getting what you want has a lot to do with how your brain is wired and how it functions.

Let me reiterate an important point; our earliest life experiences have the strongest impact on the formation of our personal software programs. Those programs continue to direct our present and our future. Unbeknown to us, we continue in many situations using old programs in adulthood even though they don’t fit anymore. And repetition makes them even stronger! I don’t have to tell you that this has great bearing on how we love, work, see life, make decisions...live.

And now to the good news: Brain Neuroplasticity Neuroplasticity is the term scientists use to refer to the abilities our brains have to change. While brains do most of their developing in the first few years of our lives, neuroscience now says that our brains are capable of reorganizing themselves, either in response to life experience, or in response to what we intentionally send their way. Our brains grow and change not only during our first few years, but throughout life. What is the connection between this brain plasticity and our psychology? Our state of mind.

On the PBS series “The Secret Life of the Brain” (2002, pg.253), Dr. Steven Hyman, past director of the National Institute for Mental Health, explained it best: anytime we learn something new, remember, even when we look at something we already know in a different way, we are actually changing the physical structure of our brain, we are physiologically changing synaptic connections. Learning from experiences on the physiological level culminates in different processes of synaptic connections or “wiring”. On the mind level, learning from our experiences is expressed in ways of thinking, feeling, perceiving, moving, or feeling physically, which is what affects our quality of life.

In practical terms this means that learning from experiences is how our brain naturally works and it can occur at every age. “Now there is no question that the brain remodels itself throughout life,” writes neuroscientist Jeffrey Schwartz in *The Mind and the Brain*. (2002) “It changes itself as a result of passive experiences, behavior changes, and with willful self-directed attention.”

Pay particular attention to the end of that quote...the part about “self-directed attention.” We’re going to talk a lot more about strengthening your abilities to intentionally direct your attention since it is essential for managing your mind, your brain and your life. It is one of the fundamentals of the mind-brain workouts.

USE IT, DON'T LOSE IT

Our brains need to be stimulated appropriately throughout our lives. Appropriate stimulation builds synaptic connections and denser synaptic connections can be compared to stronger muscles. New experiences not only stimulate brain cells to fire and connect; in many cases they are required for further brain development. These workouts are based in a specific kind of stimulation called “novel (non habitual) enriched stimulation,” which is designed to naturally stimulate the different mind-brain systems. By practicing the workouts you train yourself to appropriately stimulate different systems of your mind and brain. The strengthening exercises are designed to help you respond better to real life situations. It could be to manage your life better, to effect your

WELCOME ²⁴ TO THE NEW FRONTIER

CHAPTER
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physical health (use your mind to manage stress and alleviate stress response), or for maintaining and enhancing the potential of your mind and brain.

For example; if you habitually have a negative attitude at your job, even though you have a good job, this prolonged negativity is a prime state for producing physiological stress response. This is likely to produce negative experiences at work, and also perpetuate negativity that could impact other areas of your life such as your relationships or even your physical health (see chapter 10). Those pathways of negativity, through repetition, become the software that directs your life even though you don't really like it. This not only makes life unpleasant, but may reinforce the wiring in your brain to follow suit. Conversely, strengthening your familiarity with your mind-brain systems enables you to intentionally re-direct some of your mind activities. First of all be aware of this negativity. You need to be aware in order to do something about it. Once you are aware you look at your choices. You might experiment with injecting attitudes of curiosity, or focus on what could be pleasurable there. With intentional

appropriate practice, you could (hardware permitting) wire the brain to anticipate enjoyment and pleasure, building for yourself newer more desirable software.

In the parking lot of my daughter's office building, there are two attendants. One is cheerful, friendly, knows all the regulars. He greets you with a smile. The other is solemn, serious, and non talkative. The same exact job; which one of them has more pleasure?

In short, ample new discoveries in neuroscience lead us to believe that you can intentionally direct some of the ways in which your brain rewires itself.

THE GOAL OF THIS PROGRAM IS TO TRAIN YOUR MIND AND BRAIN TO HELP YOU:

-Keep your mind and brain active and in shape.

-Realize your possibilities, wants, wishes or needs by managing your experiences effectively.

-Manage stress constructively and thus maintain and enhance your physical health.

CHAPTER
TWO

WHAT IS
EXPERIENCE?

**EXPERIENCE SHAPES THE BRAIN,
SAY NEUROSCIENTISTS;
SO, WHAT IS EXPERIENCE?**

To have an experience you don't need to take a vacation on a dude ranch in the Rockies, pay for a massage, or see a scary movie. In fact you are having experiences all day long, every moment of the day and night. They may not be as dramatic as a first kiss, or as pleasantly surprising as the discovery of a new favorite ice cream flavor, but your brain never stops. You have aware experiences—the ones you know you have—and non-aware ones, the ones that your brain processes automatically when you are awake or sleeping.

Experience happens on two levels; on the physiological brain level it is the activation of neurons (brain cells). Experience on the mind level is the quality of your life. It is how you love, play, work and pray. Experiences can be from external or internal sources. Yes, even internally generated activities, which are not connected to outside triggers, can lead the brain to change and develop. These changes result from activities of your mind (which are based in the hardware and software of

your brain). Positive, optimistic thoughts, negativity, judgmental attitudes, or gratitude—all affect your brain. Scientists have discovered that simply thinking about performing an activity activates many of the same brain centers that are activated by actually performing that activity. So now you know why thinking about lovemaking with your special someone is the pleasant turn-on that it is. It may not be as good as the real thing. But you have to admit, it's pretty nice.

If you ask most people to describe their present experience, they will answer with a puzzled look. What is your present experience? We provided space (A.) for you to do it now. After you have practiced all the workouts in this program do it again in space B. and observe the difference.

I've come up with what I believe is a simple recipe to explain what goes into making an experience. I will teach you the ingredients; however their quantities are totally a personal matter. Instead of just handing you a recipe card to memorize, I'll take you into the kitchen where you'll learn by practicing. (workouts).

DATE:

A.

HOW DOES EXERCISING YOUR EXPERIENCES
BENEFIT YOUR MIND AND BRAIN?

The basis of physical workouts is our body; in doing them we employ different body systems: skeleton, muscles, lungs, heart and so on (in some forms of physical activities such as yoga, martial arts or sports, we intentionally employ our mind). The basis of the Mind and Brain workouts is our present experience. In doing these workouts we utilize natural mind and brain processes and employ the various mind, brain and body systems present in each experience

When you make physical movements you have some sense of unity and coordination in your body. You know that if you want to walk forward you look forward, point both legs forward, and alternate them one at a time. You know that when the opposite hand moves backwards it gives you more balance. The same coordination exists in brain processes. However those are not visible to us. So many of try to move forward without realizing that we're stuck looking sideways. We keep doing what we think will take us where we want to be, but we never get what we want.

The neuroscientist Joseph leDoux (2003) says that our internal brain unity and coordination is critical in maintaining unity of our mind and behavior. It used to be that we either had that coordination or not; now we know how to train ourselves to develop it.

LET'S LOOK CLOSER AT TWO SPECIFIC REASONS
FOR EXERCISING YOUR EXPERIENCE:

1. *Increasing mindfulness (the power of your mind to utilize your brain potential)) by training yourself to discover information from within yourself; this includes getting acquainted with your software and how your hardware works:*

Your physical brain is constantly gathering and processing information. It takes sensory information from the world (what you see, hear, smell, taste, touch and feel), integrates it, and changes it into mental (mind) models with their own languages such as emotions, thoughts, images, spiritual experiences, and physical models of movements, body sensations and physical, physiological processes. Even though the brain works as one integrated and unified complex system, neuroscience and

DATE:

B.

psychology identify information specific to each one of the main functional systems of the brain.

For example: I see so many people who are not aware of information from the system of their emotions; therefore they can't use it effectively. They become aware of information only when it screams and shouts at them so loud that they cannot avoid looking at it. Either they are physically sick from the effects of its stress, overwhelmed or depressed, angry or withdrawn.

It is important to remember that our programmed software are made up of those different mind/brain systems, therefore practice of the workouts will strengthen awareness not just to information from the individual systems but to how they habitually connect in different experiences and situations. **SEE NOTE #I (PG.156)**

2. Take control: utilizing mindfulness with exercises for building up your abilities to have a say in directing and managing your experiences. This is what will get you where you want to be (including the ability to update your software, some neuroscience

research says that we can even update some hardware).

We are always told to change our behavior; this is vague and mostly meaningless. Behavior itself is the visible crust encasing experience. You can mimic some behaviors without being fully engaged in them, therefore not getting the proper benefits for your brain, mind or body. Our mind brain (and body) work more efficiently when their systems and processes function in harmony. Knowing how your experiences are constructed will strengthen your ability to create experiences that are more in line with what you really want by engaging your different mind/brain systems to harmoniously activate yourself. Similar to forcing yourself to achieve at work without knowing how to engage your systems and processes around it in some unity could easily induce stress response. Forcing yourself to diet without engaging as many of your mind/brain processes could easily induce reactive behavior with non desired results.

We are used to equating peak performance with performance in sports. This potential is way beyond that. Peak performance is about knowing how to

utilize natural potential and possibilities in everyday functioning. Individuals who are “Peak Performers” know how to create constructive and meaningful experiences. They know what to do to and how to get their “want” and “wish” lists. Research with those individuals shows that they don’t just mimic behavior, they know how to build desirable experiences for themselves. You can achieve peak performance in work, and in any personal areas of your life such as in your relationships or hobbies. Personal power is your ability to tap into and use your natural resources to make for yourself rich and meaningful experiences that will take you toward your goals.

Please don’t fret about these philosophical concepts you will learn them through doing the workouts. Let me be even more precise, you know many of them; but here you’ll practice strengthening your abilities to use them intentionally at your will. I designed the program to help you learn easily through practice. When you get going, there’s really nothing philosophical to figure out. Sort of like explaining to you the behind the scene processes that go on in your body when you do your physical workout,

sounds a lot more complex than just doing them. Since experience is how we naturally function, this Recipe of The Aware Experience is the basis of my whole mind/brain program. If you are interested to see the written ingredients look at note 2, (PG.157). However, it is not necessary. I will train you to use your present experience as a base from which to strengthen your mind/brain processes. These exercises are designed experiences, structured to strengthen your natural abilities to get information about yourself and the world around you and to effectively form (shape) your present and future experiences to manage your life for the better.

CHAPTER
THREE

USING
MORE OF
YOUR
BRAIN

MORE THAN YOU KNOW: USING MORE OF YOUR BRAIN

Maybe you're sitting there, still hoping that maybe your brain works differently, and saying to yourself: "Cool, so I just read a book, and I get exercise for my mind and brain and I get peak performance and greater personal power in my life." Well, not so fast. I wish I could tell you that it will happen just by reading about it or understanding it. But the truth is, like everything from physical exercising to learning a foreign language, playing the piano, or lovemaking... the old adage "practice makes perfect" still applies. Neuroscience affirms what we intuitively knew; we need to activate our minds and brains in certain ways in order to get what we want. Understanding the concepts is important. This is what this section of the book is intended for. The exercises in this program have been carefully developed; it is their repeated practice that strengthens. If you don't do the exercises, well, then you might be as disappointed as someone who only tried bodybuilding for one session, or listened to a foreign language tape only once, or took one piano lesson, or experienced the clumsiness and self-doubt of a first-time love-maker.

Think of it this way: nobody ever got better health or a better body by merely buying a treadmill. You've got to get with the program in order for it to work.

**WHY LEARN ABOUT EXPERIENCE
THROUGH EXPERIENCING?**

Reading about experiential learning and brain/mind workouts will help you understand intellectually and probably gain a few, or even many new facts. However, consistent research findings show that human behavior which is essentially anything appearing on your "want" or "wish" list concerning your personal and professional life—involves the deeper parts of your brain. It is not enough to stimulate your neuro-cortical understanding (the newer top layer of the brain), which is more directly involved with intellectual understanding. Intellectual Learning is good for studying geography, history or sciences. In order to live your life fully or to bring about change, you need to engage more brain areas (systems). In order to strengthen or make changes to habitual brain organization of software, and even hardware, you need to physiologically activate the brain processes involved, and this is exactly what

we do in experiential learning; we stimulate and activate those brain areas by engaging our minds.

WHAT IS AWARENESS?

Awareness is knowledge gained by learning, not from reading or hearing about something, but through utilizing your mind-brain systems. I will train you (in the workouts) to find and understand this information, using your present experience as a porthole through which to gather information about yourself. The fascinating thing is that at the same time you'll strengthen your mind-brain processes.

Awareness is the kind of learning a person gets from doing meditation. The meaning of the word meditation is learning from discovering within yourself. This kind of learning is not unique to eastern cultures; "self directed learning" techniques are naturally employed by creative and peak performing individuals and have been very successfully incorporated to our western education system.

Awareness has many levels. Our brains constantly associate, learn, remember, act and heal by processing billions of varied activities every second. Do you have any idea of how complex and brilliant you are and how much knowledge you actually have and juggle every second? What you might not know is how to use so much more of what is available for you in order to manage your life more intentionally and effectively.

Neuroscience research has unveiled the infinite possibilities that exist for awareness because of the tremendous possibilities our brains have for neuronal wiring. Some people, however, do not realize this. They cannot tolerate learning anything new, because they think they should have already known it somehow. To them, learning something new means that they are stupid, because they did not know it already. In fact there is always so much more to learn! You know more now than you knew this morning, and tonight you will know more than you know now, and all of this learning comes from living life.

You might begin to have a sense now how important it is to concentrate on building up your awareness—your abilities to discover and receive information that already exists in you—which you need for strengthening your abilities to influence your experiences. Doing the workouts will make this awareness more real.

Slowly and comfortably is the key here, if it is hard and painful who would want to do it? Not me! I need slow, pleasant and as comfortable as possible. Safety is a key to learning. Your brain's main job is to scan the environment for safe survival. Lack of safety is a priority for your mind and brain. It will trigger the stress response and hinder higher thinking and learning. I do not believe in learning through suffering; it's best to learn by having fun. You can't however, build or strengthen anything if you don't push to change your previous habits (old software) a bit at a time; otherwise you just stay in the same place. Changing old software could cause some discomfort. That's natural, just like building your physical muscle entails experiencing some effort and muscle burning, which signals the physiological

processes taking place. But this is not bad for you. This is actually a helpful sign; this is the only way to build your muscles. The equivalent to these sensations in mind-brain workouts could be confusion, irritability, tiredness, or boredom (attempt to disengage).

A CAUTIONARY NOTE:

Before we continue—learning from focusing on experience has the potential to make meaningful changes in many people's lives. However, if there are issues with biological functioning of the brain (brain "hardware"), genetic conditions such as predisposition to depression or anxiety. Likewise, conditions such as closed head injuries or severe and especially early traumas require the individual assistance of therapists and psychiatrists and perhaps medications. Medications directly affect brain processes, making it possible to engage the mind more effectively. If you have any concerns about this, please seek a professional evaluation.