

**10 YEARS IN THE MAKING**

# **CHOICES FROM WITHIN**

.....  
A SYSTEM OF PERSONAL CHANGE  
AND TRANSFORMATION  
A DECADE IN THE MAKING  
.....



**SARAH LEVY**

**Choices From Within:  
A System of Personal Change and Transformation – a Decade in the Making**

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**Disclaimer**

*The ideas, concepts and opinions expressed in this book are intended to be used for educational purposes only. This book is provided with the understanding that the authors and publishers are not rendering medical or mental health advice of any kind, nor is this book intended to replace psychiatric or medical help of any kind, nor to diagnose, prescribe or treat any mental health issue. The authors and publishers claim no responsibility to any person or entity for liability, loss or damage caused or allegedly caused directly or indirectly as a result of the use, application or interpretation of the material in this book. Should you believe you have any mental health issue you are advised to see a qualified professional.*

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## **Introduction**

What you're about to read is a step-by-step system for personal change that was developed by reading hundreds of books on self improvement, wealth and health – scouring the notes taken from them, finding the commonalities and turning the commonalities into a simple set of strategies anyone can use to transform their life.

You're about to shortcut your way to your goals, dreams and the life you deserve!

Let's start by looking at behavioural motivation...

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Humans are motivated in two core ways:

**Towards Pleasure** - Desiring Pleasure

**Away from Pain** - Desiring Avoidance of Pain

The 'Away From' motivator is stronger than the 'Towards' motivator.

That's because the 'Away From' motivator is centred on **survival** and keeping you safe...

..whereas the 'Towards' motivator is more about keeping you **happy**.

**Towards**

**Away From**



**'TOWARDS' Motivator** - **Desiring Pleasure**

**'AWAY FROM' Motivator** - **Desiring Survival**

Your entire 'Towards-Away From' motivational strategies for life can be summed up with these 26 motivators...

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- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. To make money                  | 14. To gratify curiosity                |
| 2. To save money                  | 15. To protect family                   |
| 3. To save time                   | 16. To be in style                      |
| 4. To avoid effort                | 17. To gain respect through possessions |
| 5. To get more comfort            | 18. To satisfy appetite                 |
| 6. To achieve greater cleanliness | 19. To emulate others                   |
| 7. To attain better health        | 20. To avoid trouble                    |
| 8. To escape pain                 | 21. To avoid criticism                  |
| 9. To gain praise                 | 22. To be individual                    |
| 10. To be popular                 | 23. To protect reputation               |
| 11. To attract the opposite sex   | 24. To take advantage of opportunities  |
| 12. To conserve possessions       | 25. To be safe                          |
| 13. To increase enjoyment         | 26. To make work easier                 |

Let's examine these closely. *Why might someone want to start a business?*

Motivators in **blue** could be:

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. To make money                  | 14. To gratify curiosity                |
| 2. To save money                  | 15. To protect family                   |
| 3. To save time                   | 16. To be in style                      |
| 4. To avoid effort                | 17. To gain respect through possessions |
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*Why might someone buy designer clothes? ...*

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. To make money                  | 14. To gratify curiosity                |
| 2. To save money                  | 15. To protect family                   |
| 3. To save time                   | 16. To be in style                      |
| 4. To avoid effort                | 17. To gain respect through possessions |
| 5. To get more comfort            | 18. To satisfy appetite                 |
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| 10. To be popular                 | 23. To protect reputation               |
| 11. To attract the opposite sex   | 24. To take advantage of opportunities  |
| 12. To conserve possessions       | 25. To be safe                          |
| 13. To increase enjoyment         | 26. To make work easier                 |

*Why might someone want to build muscle? ...*

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. To make money                  | 14. To gratify curiosity                |
| 2. To save money                  | 15. To protect family                   |
| 3. To save time                   | 16. To be in style                      |
| 4. To avoid effort                | 17. To gain respect through possessions |
| 5. To get more comfort            | 18. To satisfy appetite                 |
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*Why might someone continue to argue a point even though they have realised they were wrong? ...*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>1. To make money</b>                  | <b>14. To gratify curiosity</b>                |
| <b>2. To save money</b>                  | <b>15. To protect family</b>                   |
| <b>3. To save time</b>                   | <b>16. To be in style</b>                      |
| <b>4. To avoid effort</b>                | <b>17. To gain respect through possessions</b> |
| <b>5. To get more comfort</b>            | <b>18. To satisfy appetite</b>                 |
| <b>6. To achieve greater cleanliness</b> | <b>19. To emulate others</b>                   |
| <b>7. To attain better health</b>        | <b>20. To avoid trouble</b>                    |
| <b>8. To escape pain</b>                 | <b>21. To avoid criticism</b>                  |
| <b>9. To gain praise</b>                 | <b>22. To be individual</b>                    |
| <b>10. To be popular</b>                 | <b>23. To protect reputation</b>               |
| <b>11. To attract the opposite sex</b>   | <b>24. To take advantage of opportunities</b>  |
| <b>12. To conserve possessions</b>       | <b>25. To be safe</b>                          |
| <b>13. To increase enjoyment</b>         | <b>26. To make work easier</b>                 |

*Why might someone be scared to approach someone of the opposite sex they find attractive? ...*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>1. To make money</b>                  | <b>14. To gratify curiosity</b>                |
| <b>2. To save money</b>                  | <b>15. To protect family</b>                   |
| <b>3. To save time</b>                   | <b>16. To be in style</b>                      |
| <b>4. To avoid effort</b>                | <b>17. To gain respect through possessions</b> |
| <b>5. To get more comfort</b>            | <b>18. To satisfy appetite</b>                 |
| <b>6. To achieve greater cleanliness</b> | <b>19. To emulate others</b>                   |
| <b>7. To attain better health</b>        | <b>20. To avoid trouble</b>                    |
| <b>8. To escape pain</b>                 | <b>21. To avoid criticism</b>                  |
| <b>9. To gain praise</b>                 | <b>22. To be individual</b>                    |
| <b>10. To be popular</b>                 | <b>23. To protect reputation</b>               |
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You get the idea.

EVERY action you take throughout the day will fall into one of these categories if you really examine it.

These motivators are desires. They motivate you because you want to gain something or avoid it. You want to move towards or away from.

So the first principle I want you to understand is that we are motivated by unconscious desires to steer clear of pain and to move toward pleasure – **and that the desire to avoid pain is a lot stronger than the desire to achieve pleasure.**

But why is this?

Why is the pain motivator so much stronger?

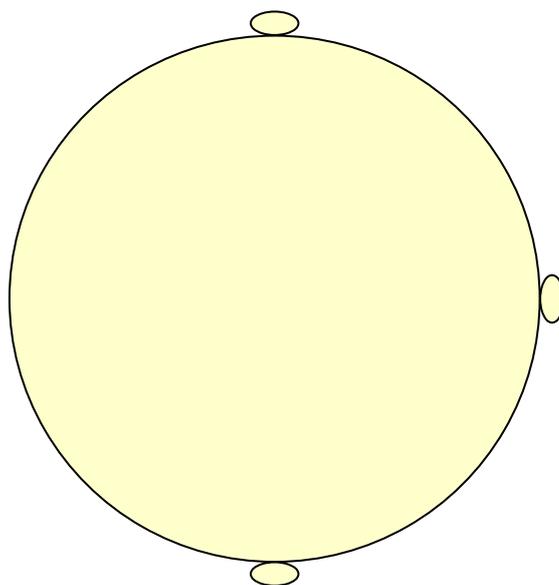
And how does it affect our lives?

To understand this we have to look into how our brain works...

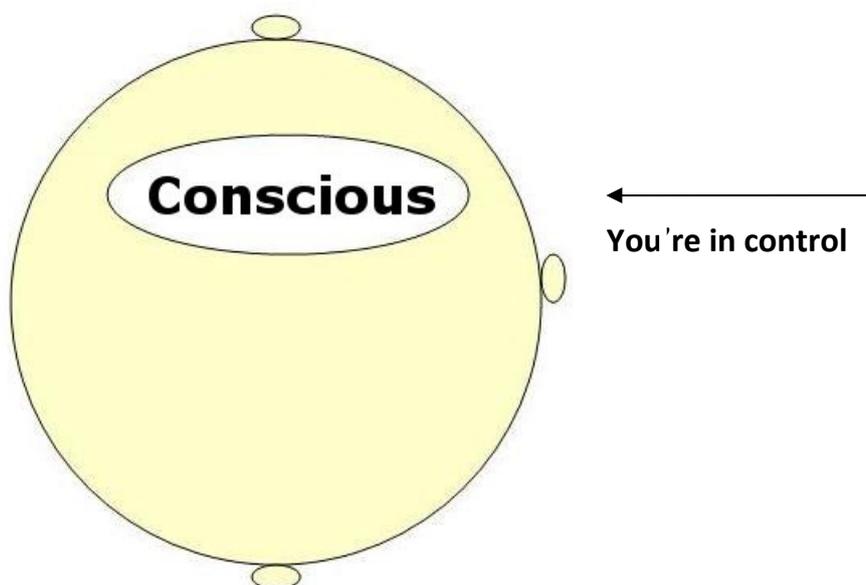
## The Brain Unleashed

I'm going to use images to explain this vital concept. The images, obviously, do not represent the brain exactly as it is but they do explain the idea brilliantly.

Imagine we are looking down, from above, into someone's mind. Their ears are at the top and bottom of the image and their nose is on the right.



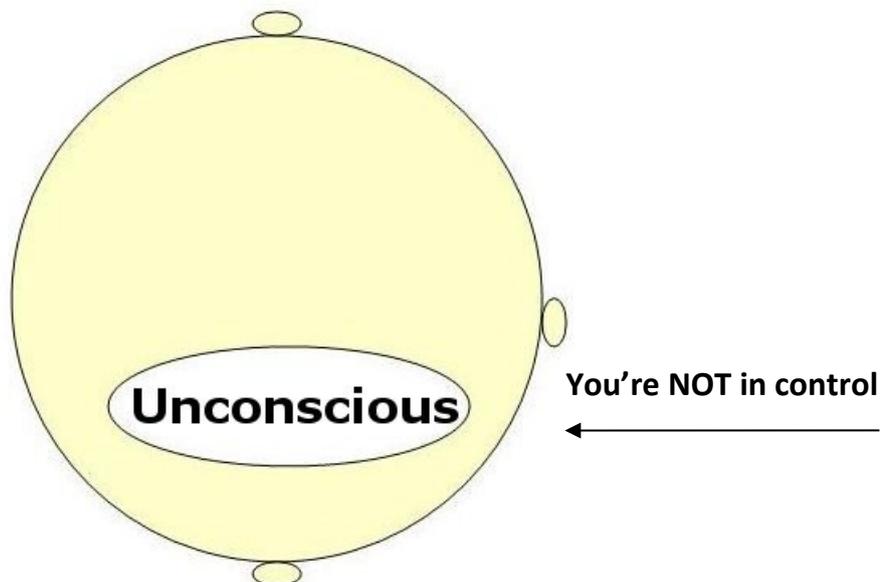
You have a conscious mind – which you can control...



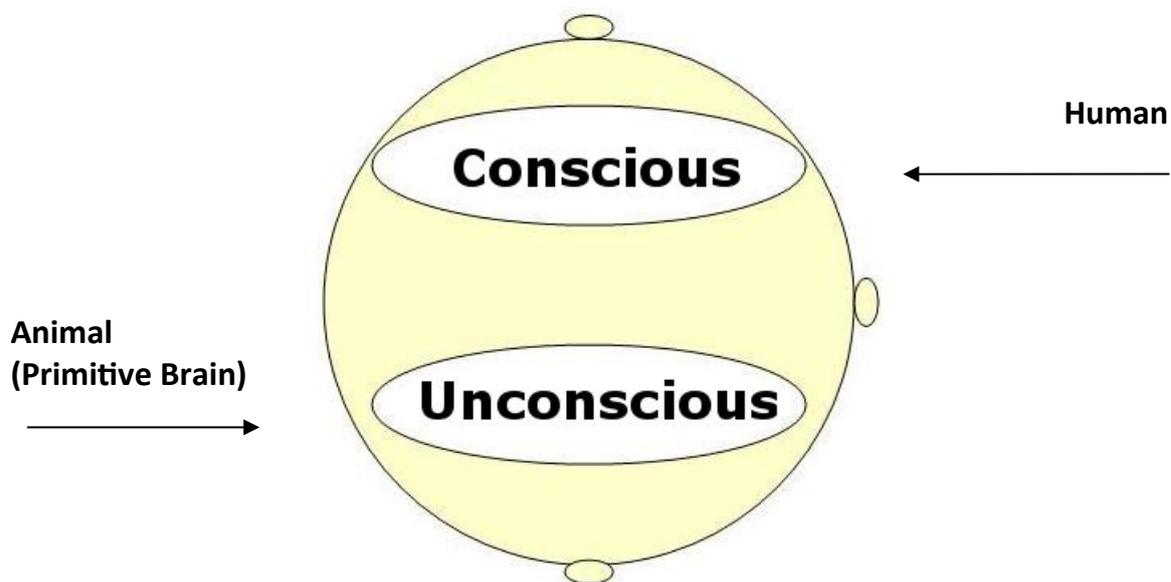
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And an unconscious mind – which you cannot control...



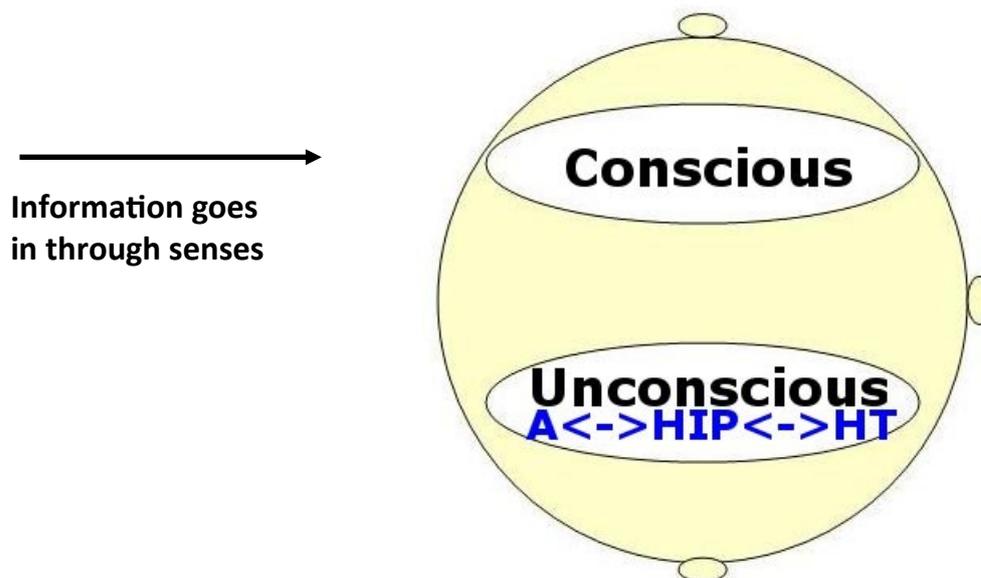
One way to think of it is that your conscious mind is human, whilst your unconscious mind is more caveman, animalistic and primitive.



Your unconscious mind has many different operations occurring in it. But there are three in particular we want to look at...

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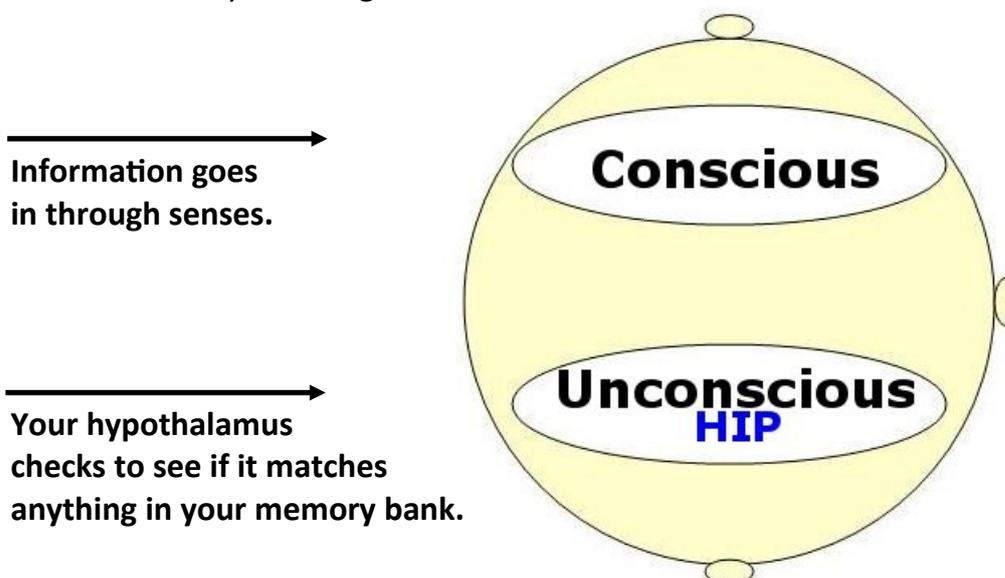


**A = Amygdala** – Centre of the fight or flight response.

**Hip = Hippocampus** – Does lots of things but for this example it scans incoming information to check for danger based on past experiences.

**H = Hypothalamus** – Handles hormones and neuropeptides that are released into our brain and body.

Here's how they work together...



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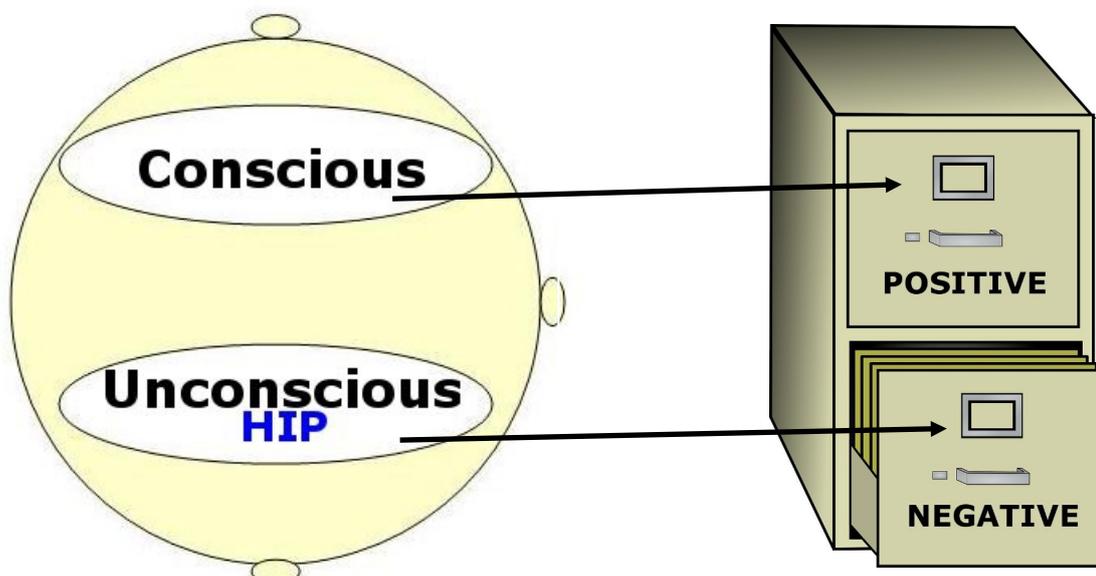
You see, everything you've ever experienced in life is filed away in your unconscious mind. It's like you have two filing cabinets in there. Positive (or neutral) and Negative.



The Positive (Neutral) folder is full of experiences that did not harm your 'survival'.

The negative folder is full of things that DID harm your 'survival'.

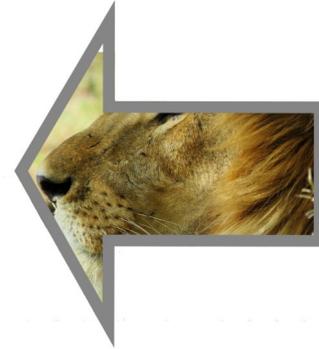
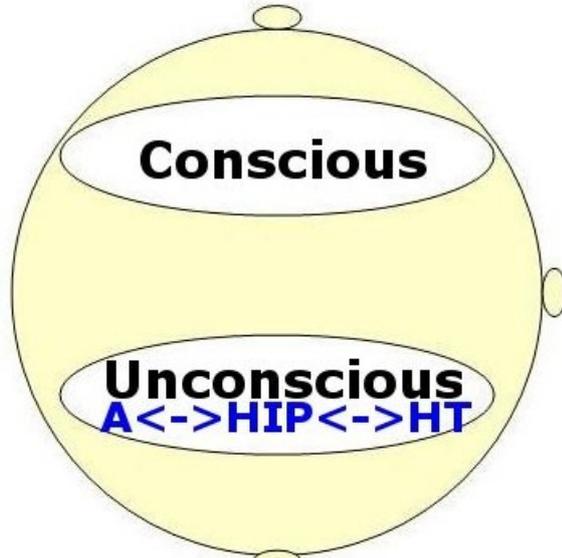
When you take in information through your senses, your hippocampus scans what is going on outside and sees what it matches in your unconscious filing cabinet.



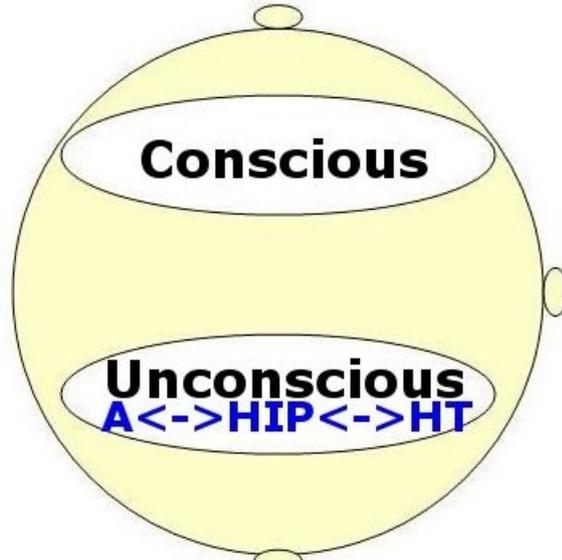
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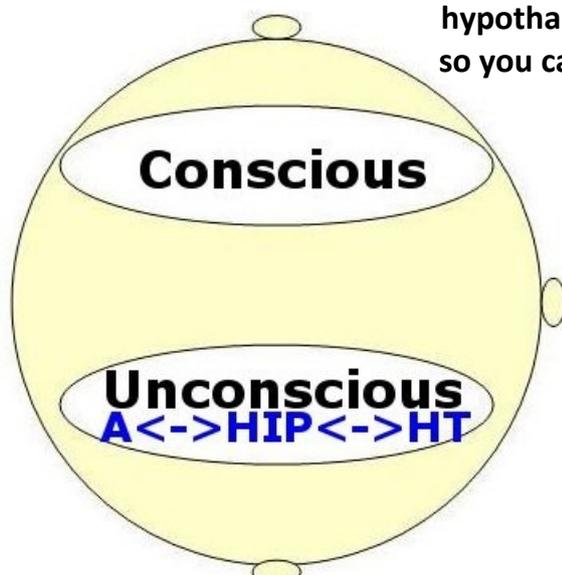
Most of the time it's fine. But occasionally it finds things that freak it out...  
Imagine you're walking down the street and you see a lion. Your hippocampus will scan your memory bank and find "lion = threat"...



... It will kick your amygdala into gear...



... which triggers the hypothalamus into releasing adrenaline so you can fight or run from the danger.



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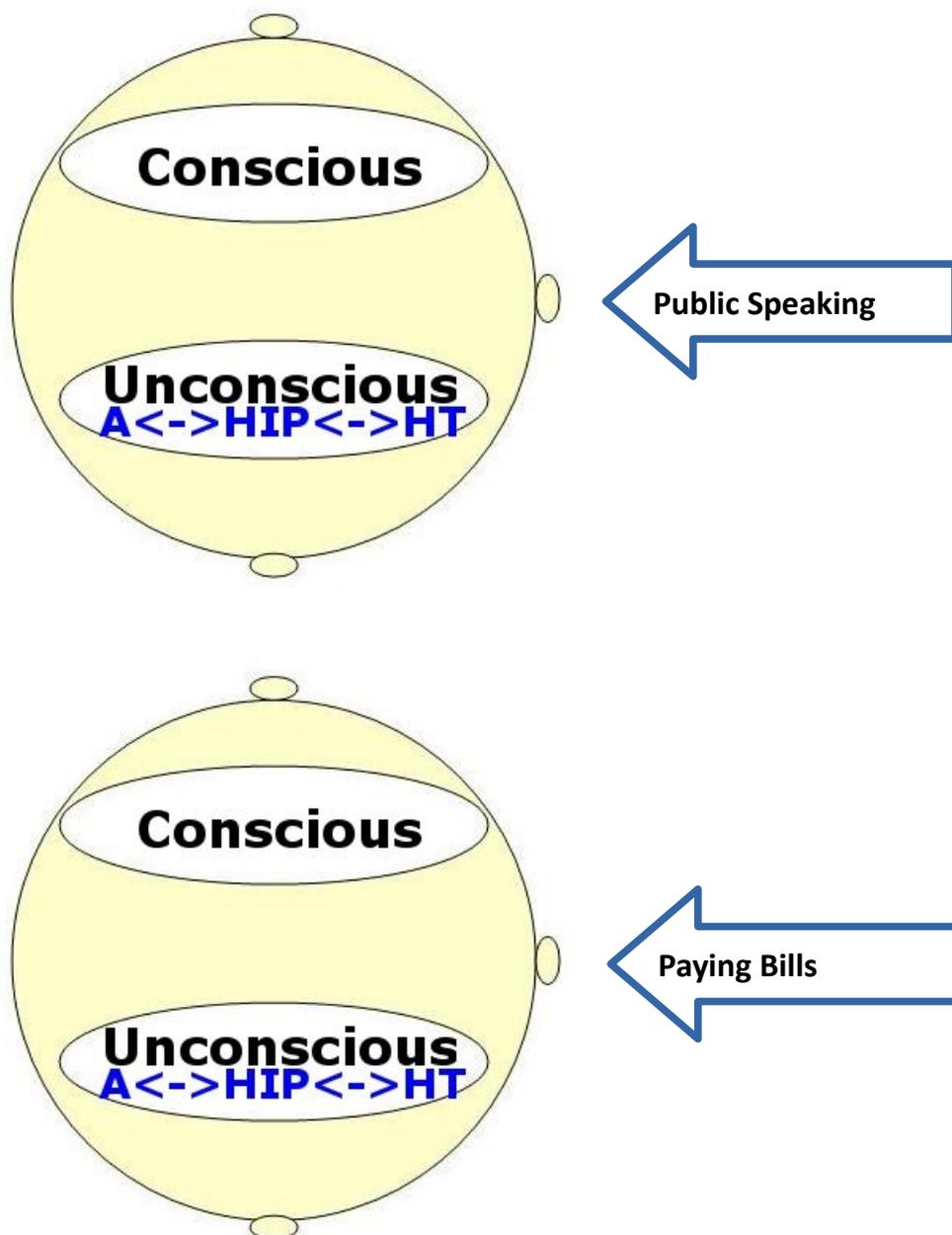
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**This is called 'The Fight or Flight Response'**

This mechanism had to evolve in order for the human species to survive. It is an evolutionary echo from caveman times and a defence responsive designed to keep them safe.

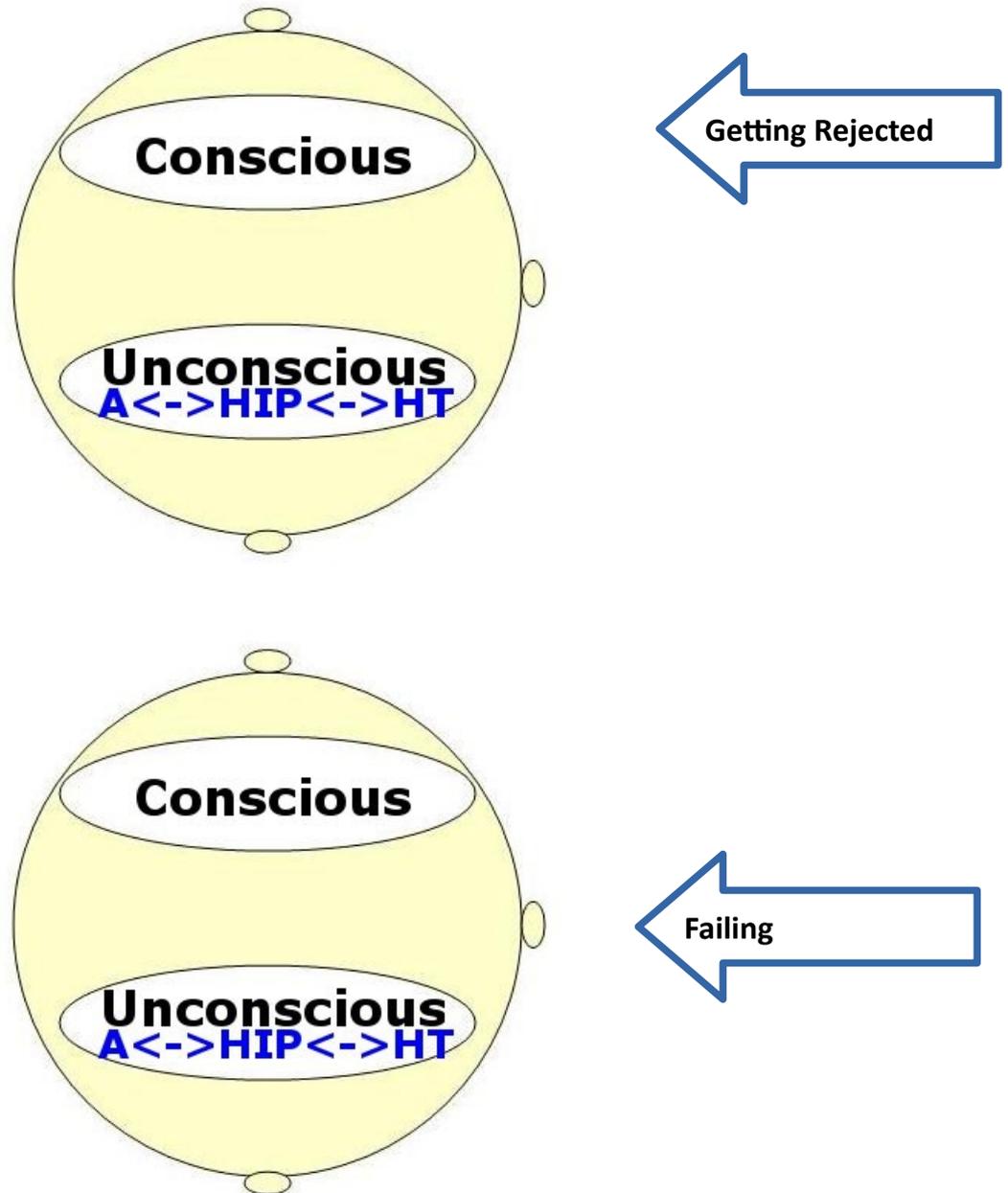
The fight or flight response was ESSENTIAL to survive in days gone by – but in today's society it is not as necessary. Most humans today are lucky enough to not be faced with life or death situations each day.

Whilst it is VERY fortunate that our daily survival is no longer a struggle – instead the “fight or flight” system gets triggered by other things...



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Many of the times it gets triggered are because of these...

1. To make money
2. To save money
3. To save time
4. To avoid effort
5. To get more comfort
6. To achieve greater cleanliness
14. To gratify curiosity
15. To protect family
16. To be in style
17. To gain respect through possessions
18. To satisfy appetite
19. To emulate others

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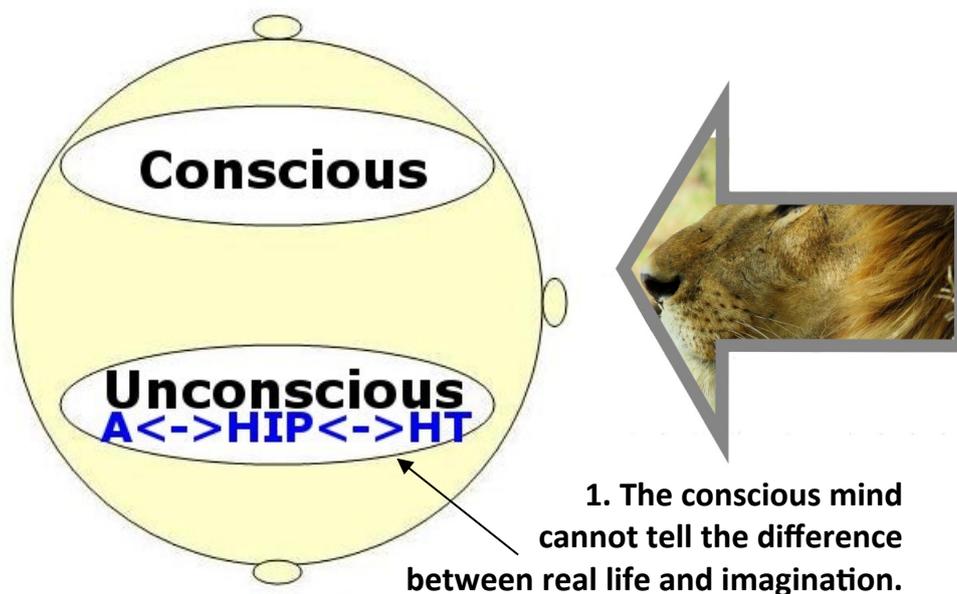
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- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 7. To attain better health      | 20. To avoid trouble                   |
| 8. To escape pain               | 21. To avoid criticism                 |
| 9. To gain praise               | 22. To be individual                   |
| 10. To be popular               | 23. To protect reputation              |
| 11. To attract the opposite sex | 24. To take advantage of opportunities |
| 12. To conserve possessions     | 25. To be safe                         |
| 13. To increase enjoyment       | 26. To make work easier                |

The threats have gone from being genuine threats to our survival  
to being threats to our emotional wellbeing -  
yet our fight or flight response still gets triggered.

Often we only have to THINK about something bad that has or could happen and we feel a little breathless, shaky, butterflies, maybe sweat a little...

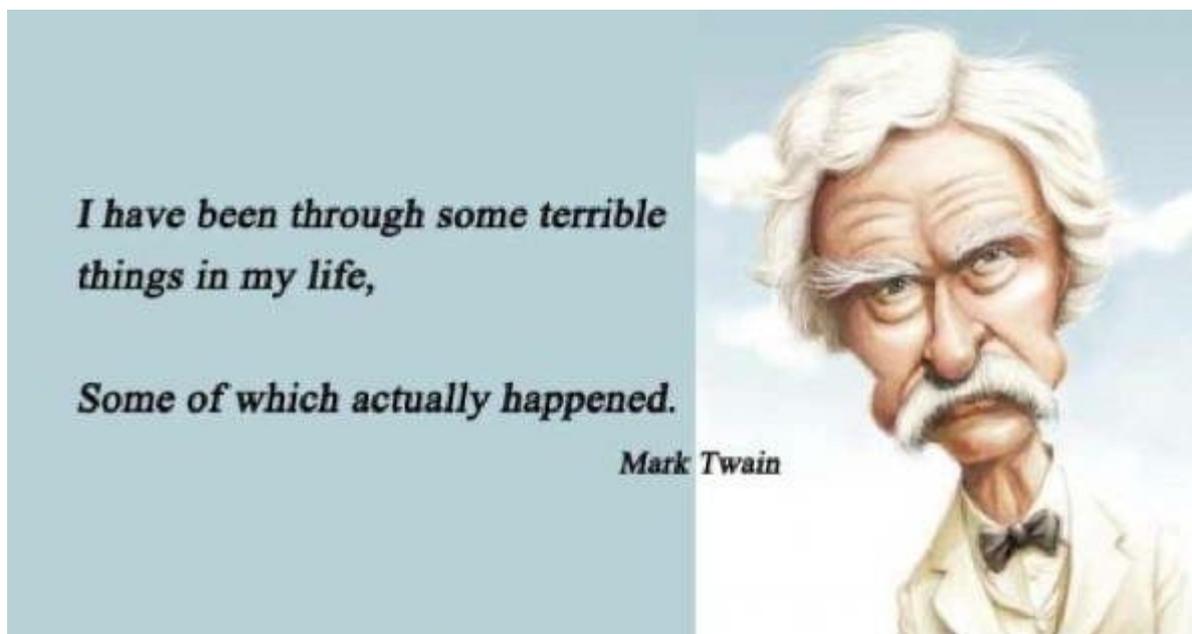
So what does this tell us?



2. Your thoughts trigger your feelings.  
Thinking of a lion will make you feel scared.  
Thinking of lying on a sunny beach will make you feel happy.

## YOUR THOUGHTS TRIGGER YOUR FEELINGS

Your emotional well-being depends on how clearly you understand that concept.



We use words to describe the way we feel. Sad, happy, scared, anxious, insecure.

But a feeling is a particular mixture of neurochemicals that are released into our bodies.

There is a certain combination of neurochemicals released when you're sad... a certain group when you're happy...a certain group when you're scared, etc.

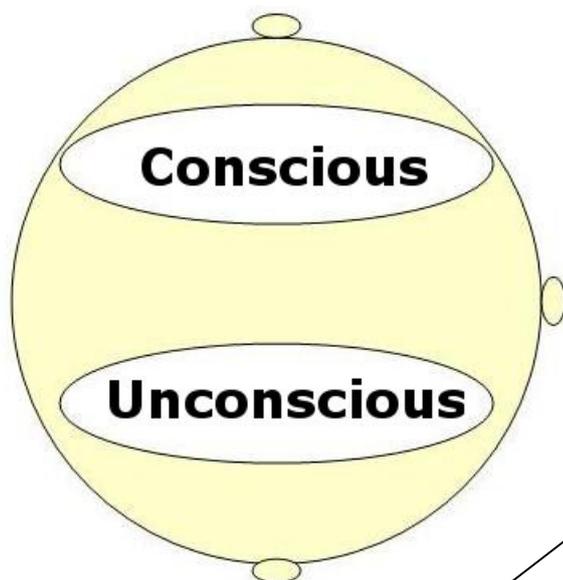
Your **thoughts** trigger these neurochemicals to be released.

In the old days the caveman would have **used** the chemicals from the fight or flight response. He would have run away, or climbed a tree, or fought back. The chemicals would have been used up.

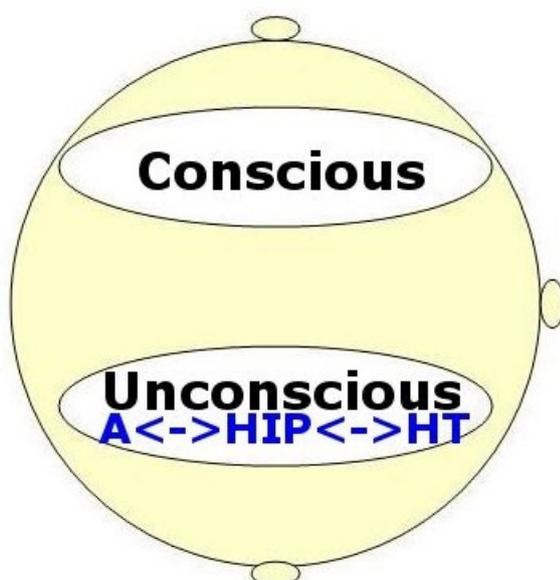
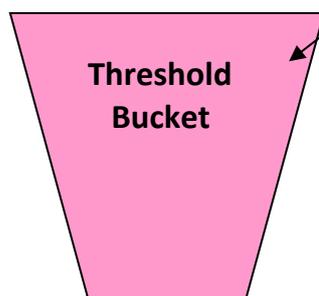
However, we humans are triggering our fight or flight response A LOT, and NOT using up the chemicals by running, fighting, etc. - so where do they go?

Let's take a look at 'Threshold'...

## Your Emotional Threshold



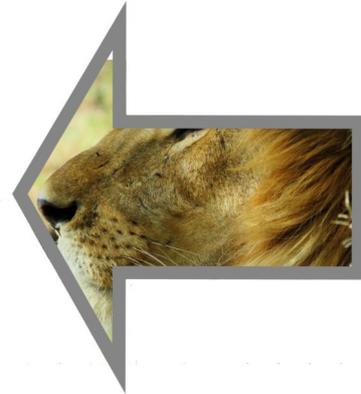
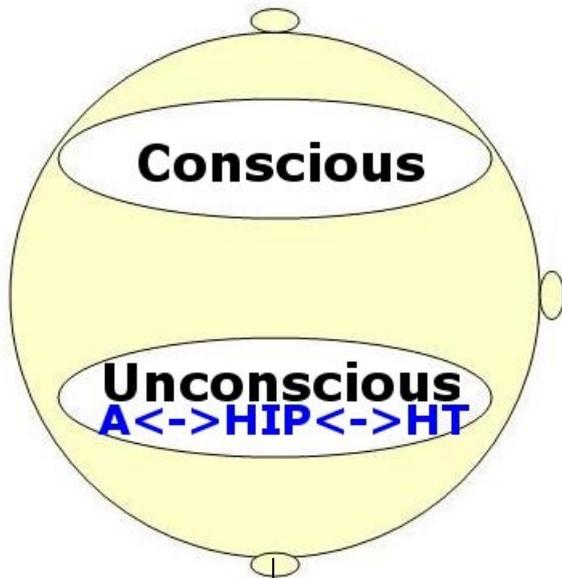
Imagine there is a bucket inside of you. (There isn't but this is a good way of explaining it.) We'll call it your Threshold Bucket.



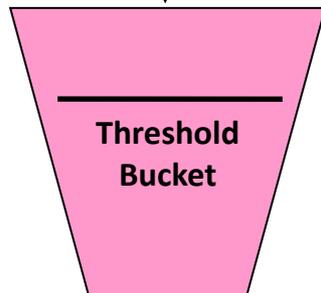
Each time you are focusing on negative thoughts, you are activating the Fight or Flight response...

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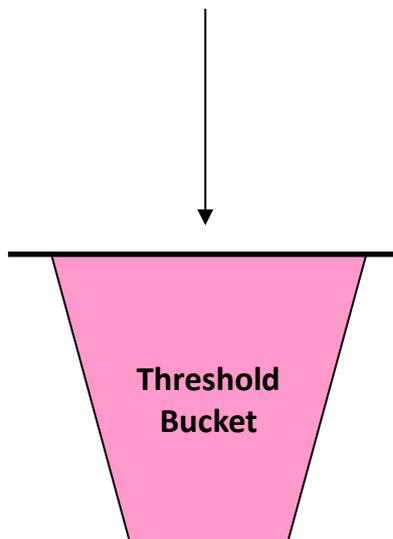


... and dripping negative neurochemicals into your bucket.



Because you are not fighting off the 'threat', the chemicals in your Threshold Bucket build up...

Eventually you can reach your threshold and the neurochemicals overflow – there is just too much in your system for you to be able to cope with . . .



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When this happens you 'lose the plot'. You might completely overreact to something someone says and shout at them...and then minutes later feel really guilty.

You may feel helpless, insecure, like crying...

You may feel hopeless, useless and overwhelmed...

So what kinds of things trigger YOUR fight or flight response?

*Traffic jams?*

*Rudeness?*

*Paying bills?*

*Friend turning up late?*

*Looking at yourself in the mirror and hating your body?*

*Getting wet in the rain?*

*Etc., etc., etc.*

What I am going to say next can change your life so listen up...

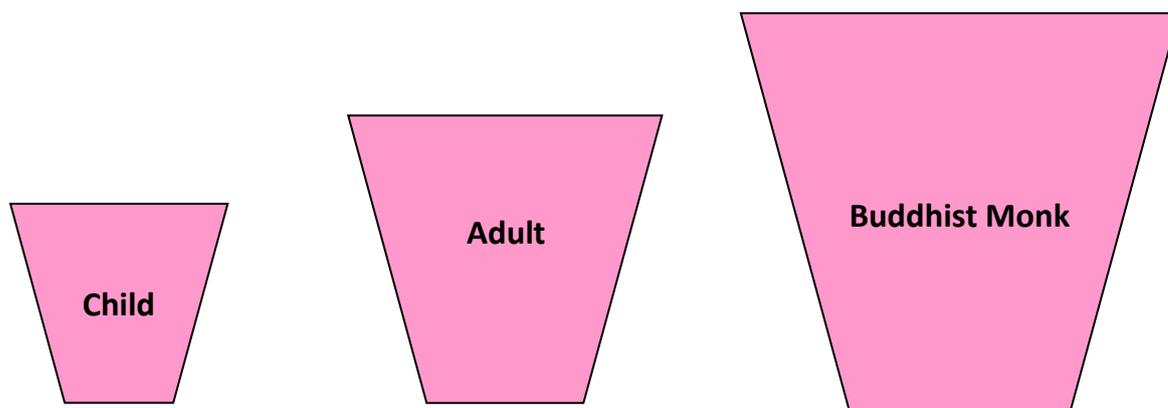
**There are ways that you can learn to  
RAISE YOUR THRESHOLD**

In other words there are ways that you can retrain your brain so that you can handle more of what life throws at you. You can retrain your brain so that it does not trigger the flight or fight response anywhere near as much as what most people experience. Think of it like this...

On the next page you'll see three different thresholds...

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A child has a very low emotional threshold – often getting overwhelmed and struggles to handle life.

An adult handles life more, but still gets stressed out and emotionally triggered often.

A Buddhist monk will not find life a struggle at all.

What's the difference?

The emotional threshold, and I am going to help you move towards Buddhist monk territory.

**By raising your threshold you will:**

- **Feel less overwhelmed**
- **Get less frustrated**
- **Feel more in control**
- **See things from an 'adult perspective'**
- **Procrastinate less**

**We are going to look at very specific techniques we can use to raise your emotional threshold. Techniques that will have a positive impact on ALL areas of your life.**

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## **Raising Your Threshold**

As we have seen, negative chemicals get released into the body when we encounter experiences that match something in our negative file and when we imagine negative things.

In order to override these negative chemicals we need to create **positive** chemicals in the body.

The **Sympathetic Nervous System** is responsible for releasing fight or flight chemicals.

The opposite of that is the **Parasympathetic Nervous System** which releases positive chemicals.

### **Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS)**



### **Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS)**



The more you are able to activate the **Parasympathetic Nervous System** the more you will be able to handle in life.

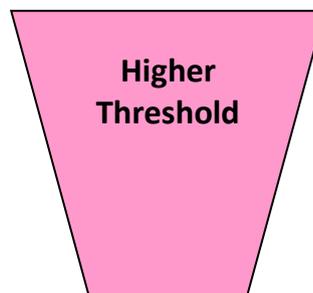
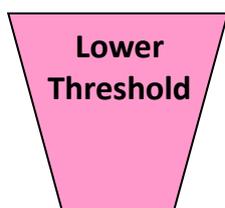
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**Sympathetic  
Nervous System  
(SNS)**



**Parasympathetic  
Nervous System  
(PNS)**



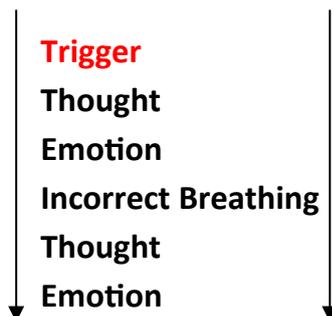
Here are some ways to activate the PNS...

When we're stressed we either over-breathe or hold our breath – often a combination of the two.

**Not breathing correctly INCREASES thinking** – exactly what you *don't* want to do when you're stressed. It becomes a vicious circle if you don't get a handle on it...

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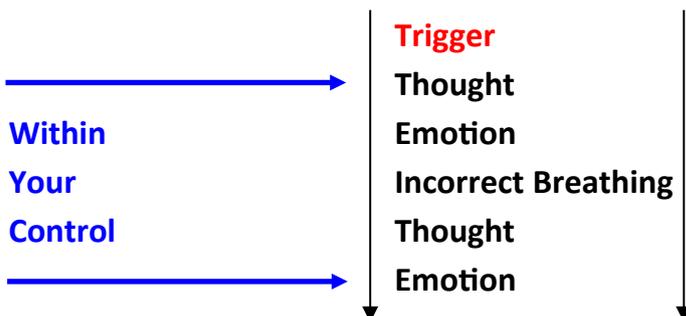
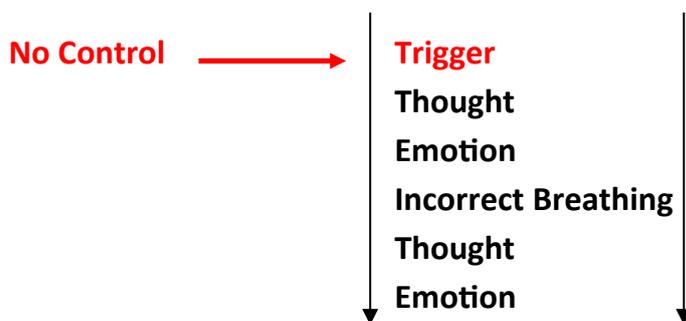


*“Correct breathing allows normalisation of the partial pressure of carbon dioxide within the lungs, thus improving oxygenation of the brain and resulting in far less brain cell excitability. An anxious person may attend many psychotherapists, counsellors, psychologists and psychiatrists in an effort to get to the root of his or her condition. However, unless chronic over breathing is addressed, he or she will be at a significant disadvantage in making progress.”*

Anxiety Free: Stop Worrying and Quieten Your Mind – Patrick Mckeown

**So your first port of call is ALWAYS your breathing.** Without breathing correctly you will NOT be able to get a handle on stress, overwhelm and frustration. It’s physiologically impossible.

It’s very important you understand that whilst you cannot control life – you CAN control your response to life, and it begins with the way you breathe.



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You can use a technique called diaphragmatic breathing to switch from the SNS to PNS – this is the foundation of my book *The Simple Switch*, but I will cover it again briefly here...

*Place your hand on your stomach a couple of inches beneath the upside down V at the centre of your rib cage and breathe normally. You'll probably only see your hand move a little bit.*

*Keep your hand there, but this time breathe in through your nose as you push your belly out. Then let your belly fall back naturally as you breathe out through your nose. Do it slowly, for five breaths.*

That way of breathing is how humans SHOULD breathe. If you watch a baby breathing that's how they breathe but as we grow up, due to stressful experiences, our breathing slowly changes.

Way, way before medical science noticed this, old practises like yoga, meditation, Qi Gong, Tai Chi and more have focused on this way of breathing in order to create relaxation. They may not have known *why* it worked – they just knew it did work.

**We now know why it works.**  
**It switches you from SNS to PNS**  
**and starts to empty your threshold bucket**  
**of the negative chemicals that have built up.**

Let me be VERY clear about this. The FIRST thing you should do when you notice yourself being triggered is to switch to diaphragmatic breathing.

By taking five to ten diaphragmatic breaths you will switch to the PNS and be able to handle more.

Here's where a problem arises...

Many people don't even consciously recognise that their thoughts are causing most of their problems.

*They wake up and think, "I wish I had an hour longer in bed,"  
(even though there is no chance of that happening).*

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*They brush their teeth whilst looking in the mirror and thinking,  
“I’m so damn ugly.”*

*They leave the house, see it’s raining and spend the time walking to the bus stop  
thinking, “I hate bloody rain. England’s so wet. I look like a drowned rat.”*

*They get to the bus stop, see there is a queue and think,  
“Great, now I’m not going to get a seat.”*

*They get on the bus and stand next to a guy talking on a mobile phone and think,  
“I don’t want to hear this moron talk about football. Just SHUT UP.”*

*They get to work and their boss comes over and hands them a sheet of paper  
telling them the work needs to be done within two hours.  
They think, “Who do you \*\*\*\*\* think I am? Albert Einstein?  
How am I supposed to do this in two hours, you bastard!”*

**And that’s just within the first hour and a half of waking up!**

Most people are walking around completely unconscious, triggered by good and bad things, and never fully taking notice of the fact that most of their problems are caused by the thoughts in their head.

**And this is where meditation is changing people’s lives around the world.**

But don’t take my word for it. The mainstream media is now waking up to just how life changing this practise is...

*“Everyone benefits from meditation,” Russell Simmons, who is on the board of the David Lynch foundation, told CNN. “This idea of letting your mind settle is in every religion, but is also in every spiritual teaching. But also, everyone needs to look inside for reflection in order to work outside. Operating from a calm space has gotten to be the greatest gift that anyone can be given . . . all happiness comes from inside.”*

Source: Huffington Post

**Meditation is helping students, especially in low-income areas.**

*“Meditation has been proven to have a number of benefits for students: It can boost focus, attention and memory, lower stress levels and improve sleep quality, and some studies have even found mindfulness training to improve test scores. An increasing number of schools, both private and public, from elementary to high school, are beginning to integrate*

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*mindfulness into their curriculums.”*

Source: Huffington Post

### **Veterans and soldiers using meditation to cope with PTSD.**

*“Meditation is becoming increasingly common among a population that’s at high risk for stress and stress-related health problems: Soldiers and veterans. Through Operation Warrior Wellness program, the David Lynch Foundation is bringing Transcendental Meditation to over 10,000 veterans with PTSD and their families. The program is helping to promote resiliency and well-being among soldiers, empower the families of veterans, and relieve symptoms of PTSD, which as many as one in eight returning soldiers may suffer from.*

*The research...found about a 50 percent reduction in symptoms of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. The research shows a reduction in heart disease, which is a by product of PTSD, as well as anxiety and sleep disorders,” Bob Roth, executive director of the David Lynch foundation, told CNN on Veterans Day in 2012. “It’s medically sound and scientifically-tested.”*

Source: Huffington Post

### **Mindfulness is transforming end-of-life care.**

*“Meditation has been shown to have significant health and well-being benefits for the elderly. Mindfulness meditation can combat loneliness among adults and Transcendental Meditation has been shown to boost longevity in elderly practitioners.*

*More generally, mindfulness can help all of us to better cope with ageing and death. Two Zen Buddhist monks, Koshin Paley Ellison and Robert Chodo Campbell, are starting a movement to transform end-of-life care through mindfulness and other Buddhist principles. They found the New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care to help both the terminally ill and their families and friends come to a more peaceful acceptance of death.*

*“Our culture has a tendency to fear and push away death,” says Ellison. “Often times when a person is dying, the people around them become so uncomfortable with what’s happening that they try to avoid facing the reality.*

*But the more accepting and intimate we become with death – an attitude that mindfulness can help us to cultivate – the more we’re able to accept it.”*

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**Mindfulness has become part of a revolution in mental health care.**

*“The potential for mindfulness practices to revolutionize mental health and psychiatric care is enormous, and it’s already well underway. With his Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program, meditation expert and MIT medical professor Jon Kabat-Zinn helped to bring mindfulness into the world of psychiatry. So far, the research has proven meditation to be an effective, low-cost, side effect-free intervention that can reduce anxiety and depressions, as well as lowering stress levels and boosting emotional well-being. Mindfulness has even been used in addiction treatment and has been shown to help smokers kick the habit.*

*“Get out of our heads and learn to experience the world directly, experientially, without the relentless commentary of our thoughts,” Mark G. Williams, John D. Teasdale, Zindel V. Segal and Kabat-Zinn wrote in ‘The Mindful Way Through Depression: Freeing Yourself From Chronic Unhappiness.’ “We might just open ourselves up to the limitless possibilities for happiness that life has to offer us.”*

Mindfulness practices like meditation are now used in technology companies such as Google and Twitter (amongst others), in traditional companies in the car and energy sectors, in state-owned enterprises in China, and in UN organizations, governments, and the World Bank.

As Loic Le Meur, a serial tech entrepreneur from Silicon Valley puts it: *“It’s funny, everyone I know has started meditating. In the Valley, there’s a real social pressure on you [to do it]. Six months ago I gave in and started my own daily practice.”*

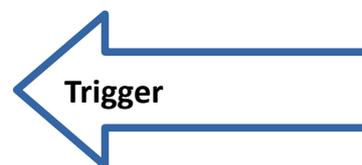
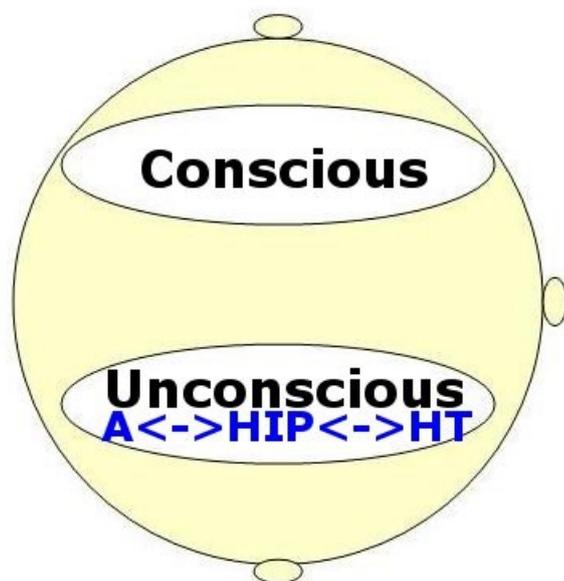
That’s enough proof! Let’s look at some of the benefits of meditation...

**Research has proven that those who practise meditation show a decreased activity in the amygdala during stressful moments...**

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Remember the role of the amygdala...



The Amygdala triggers the hypothalamus into releasing adrenaline so you can fight or run from the danger.

**In other words, meditation RAISES YOUR EMOTIONAL THRESHOLD by Ensuring the Amygdala Doesn't Get Triggered So Easily!**

**Quite simply, those who meditate make changes to their brain that allow them to handle stressful situations, like overwhelm, much better.**

Another benefit – The pre-frontal cortex begins to thin with age, contributing to cognitive function decline in later life but research has shown meditation practitioners can slow and even reverse this decline.

Stress can also negatively impact the hippocampus, where memory, creativity and positive mood are generated. Cortisol shrinks the neurons in the hippocampus but the hippocampus is self healing and can heal if the stress is discontinued. Meditation helps lower cortisol and stress levels and therefore helps with the memory.

It can also help with blood pressure. 60 hypertension patients were prescribed a daily meditation developed by a cardiologist called "Relaxation Response". After three months 40 of the 60 were able to reduce their medication thanks to reduced levels of blood pressure.

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They found the meditative practise helped the body increase production of nitric oxide – a gas it can use to expand blood vessels, increasing the channels through which blood can flow, lowering the pressure required to pump it through the body.

It can even help reduce pain!

Kober and Associates did a study where subjects were given a hot stimulus on their arms. They were given the hot sensation without any instruction and then again with the instruction to practice mindfulness.

The subjects experienced 27% lower pain and 45% less brain activity in the pain matrix when they used mindfulness.

They also found the number of hours of meditation a person had completed was directly related to his or her ability to handle the pain during the experiment.

So the bottom line is this...

**Meditation is another way to switch from the SNS to the PNS because you are focused on diaphragmatic breathing. However it also helps you to NOTICE when you are getting caught in thoughts and emotions that trigger the SNS into action.**

### Here's why...

Mindfulness meditation is simple. Sit down, (don't lie down as you'll probably fall asleep) and close your eyes. Start your diaphragmatic breathing. Concentrate on either the breath going in and out of your nose, or on your belly going in and out.

Your mind WILL wander. You'll start thinking about your 'to-do list'. You'll think about the clothes that need to be washed or bills that need to be paid. You WILL think about other things other than the breath going in and out of your nose or your belly going in and out.

THAT'S OK!

Too many people think the point of meditation is to not think of anything ever. That's wrong. The point of mediation is:

1. To relax – and switch on the PNS

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2. To create more of an awareness of your thought process

Meditation will allow you to notice just how much your mind goes off into the future and the past. You start to notice how rarely you are actually present and that your thoughts create your reality.

If you meditate for ten minutes a day you'll start to notice a few things...

**1. You're not as stressed**

This is because your Threshold Bucket is getting emptied when you meditate so the stresses from the day before, or that day, don't build up on each other. Switching on the PNS starts to lower the negative chemicals in your body

**2. You're more aware**

You start to notice your negative thought patterns more. At first, this can be quite startling as you see just how often you think negatively, but it's a realisation that can change your life forever.

You start to notice when you're laying in bed projecting into the future and making yourself feel anxious...you start to notice when you're looking into the past wishing you could change something you can't...this all lessens the impact of your thought patterns.

**3. You're able to take positive action with your breath**

When you notice negative thought patterns you're able to take a step back, rather than get caught up in them, and take some diaphragmatic breaths which slow everything down. You switch from SNS to PNS and put a halt on the nasty chemicals going into your threshold bucket.

**4. You Feel a Deeper Connection**

This one is a little bit "woo-woo" and spiritual, and it's also hard to explain, but you start to realise just how insignificant most of the things we get worked up about as humans are. You start to feel more empathy for people because you see how caught up in their emotions they are. You also feel more connected to earth and nature. I know it sounds weird but you do.

I cannot stress enough just how important I think meditation is for human beings. In today's technological world we are nearly always watching TV, on the internet, speaking on the phone, playing computer games, 'interacting' with friends on Facebook...

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It's rare for a human being today to take some time for themselves. Mainly because they don't realise how important it is to do so. You do. You now know WHY meditation helps – it starts to empty your threshold bucket. It also makes it bigger because you learn how insignificant most things we stress about are.

So there are two ways to start to cope with life better:

1. Diaphragmatic breathing
2. Meditation

Let's build on the first two...

### **Threshold Raising Level Three**

Self Hypnosis is an AMAZING way to raise your threshold. A lot of people don't really understand hypnosis, what it *really* is and why it works so well. So let's explain a little more about it so you truly understand why it is so effective...

There are four brainwave states: beta, alpha, theta, and delta.

**Beta – Conscious mind.** Normal walking around, conscious state we are in every day.

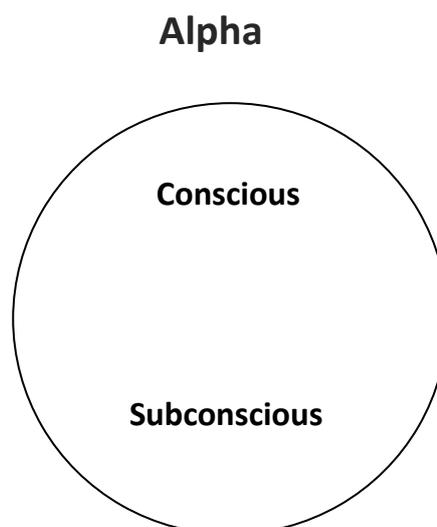
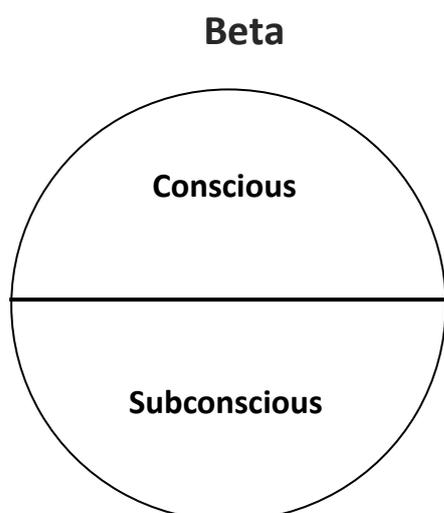
**Alpha –** Relaxed, drowsy state.

**Theta – Sub conscious mind.** Light sleep state or deep meditative state.

**Delta –** The deep sleep or coma state.

**Alpha** operates as a bridge between the conscious mind (beta state) and the subconscious mind (theta state). The alpha state allows us conscious access to the unconscious material located in our subconscious mind.

**In this state the 'critical factor' is removed . . .**



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When in a hypnotic state, this "alpha bridge" affords us the opportunity to access our subconscious mind and change our habits and belief systems. This is what hypnosis, or guided meditation, does. You are actively changing your brain state to be able to access the subconscious and implant new information in there.

It's important to understand that brain wave states are not exclusive. In other words you can be walking and talking (beta) but still be producing some alpha waves. Or if you're daydreaming you may have a mixture of alpha and theta and a little beta.

Many of us have a faulty perception of hypnosis due to stage shows. We think hypnosis is all about someone clicking their fingers and making us cluck like a chicken when the phone rings. We watch someone get touched on the shoulder and see them slump forward and think, *"They're faking,"* or *"That could never happen to me,"* and you might be right...

According to research it's estimated that 20% of the population can go into a light trance, 60% mid level trance and 20% deep trance (stage hypnotists use tests on the audience to see who can go into deep trance – and they get those people up on stage).

Trance is just a change in brain state and suggestibility, and we can ALL go into some level of trance.

An example of a trance people go into regularly is driving. Have you ever driven somewhere, got there and realised you weren't concentrating on the road at points and were instead daydreaming? That's a trance. Your conscious mind switches off and your unconscious takes over.

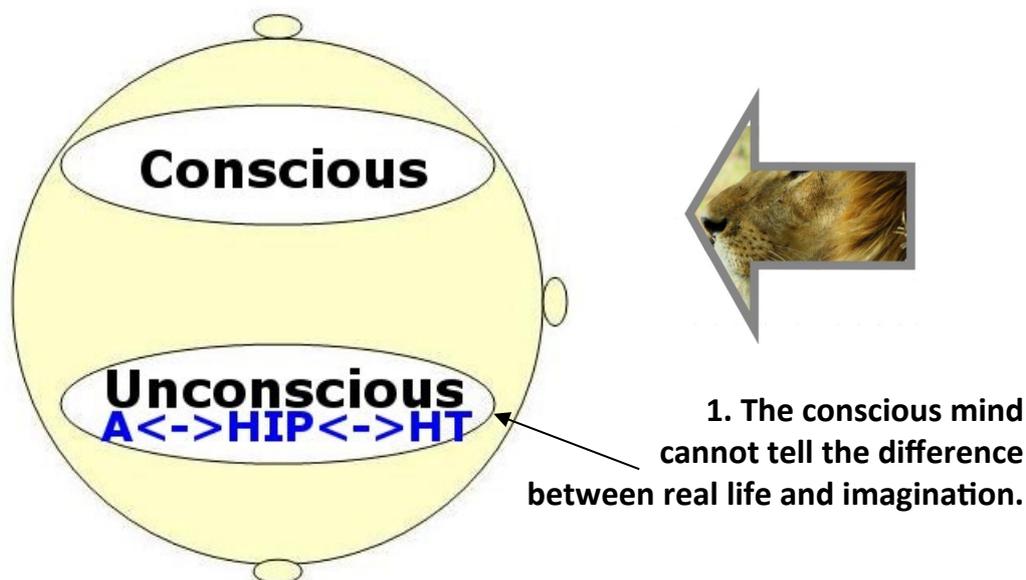
Have you ever watched a film or read a book and completely forgotten your surroundings? That's a trance.

We've all done it and experienced it – most just don't call it a trance.

Think of trance as a guided daydream. Which takes us back to what I said earlier...

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Your sub conscious cannot tell the difference between a real event, and an imagined event, hence the reason fight or flight can get triggered with just your thoughts.

If you lie in bed at night and imagine what you DON'T want – you'll likely experience it.

If you lie in bed at night and imagine what you DO want – you'll likely experience it.

What we want to do is focus on 'tricking' your subconscious into believing you have already experienced what you do want.

For example – more money, more confidence, more self esteem, more success, etc.

Remember, two ways to take back control are diaphragmatic breathing and meditation. Hypnosis is like guided mediation. So if you spend a month meditating for ten minutes a day you'll be able to get into a decent level of trance quickly.

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Then...

- 1. Picture what you want to achieve -  
More confidence, more success, stopped smoking  
or any other goal you have.**
- 2. Make it a SPECIFIC image. See what you want to see,  
Hear what you want to hear and experience what  
you want to experience.**
- 3. If you start seeing what you don't want to happen -  
imagine pressing rewind and just start again.**
- 4. When you can see what you want to see, try and make  
it as VIVID as possible. Turn up the colours and see it  
through your own eyes. Step into your own body.  
Feel the emotions you want to feel.**

This self hypnosis technique could also be called a guided meditation or creative visualisation technique. It doesn't matter what you call it – it works!

The more you do this, the more your subconscious will start to believe that this specific image is a memory that actually happened – and it starts to change the way you think.

Now some people find it easier than others to do this but you can ALL visualise something in your head. (What colour was the front door of your house when you were a kid? What did your first car look like?) It may just take practise – like everything worthwhile in life!

Also, do not think that anyone visualises really clearly – as clear as you would a picture on TV. Most people can only get snapshots of what they are trying to visualise not necessarily a never ending stream of one scene.

If you want to REALLY kick things up a notch make your own guided meditation audio CD/MP3. Because you speak to yourself in your own voice it can be more effective.

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This exercise will help you to:

1. Reprogram your subconscious and make it think you have experienced things you want to.
  
2. Empty the bad chemicals in your body because you will be in the PNS than the SNS due to the positive chemicals your body will release when you experience positive feelings and emotions.

Ready for another technique? Then let's move on...

## **Tricking the Amygdala into Calm**

The technique I'm going to share with you now, I dismissed when I first heard it. It sounds that strange that I thought there was no chance of it working.

Shame on me!

The more I kept hearing the technique mentioned in my research the more I stood up and took notice, and thank goodness I did, because no matter how strange it sounds – it works.

The technique is called “Emotional Freedom Technique” - or is more commonly known as “tapping”.

Research done at Harvard Medical school during the last decade found that the brain's fight or flight response could be lessened by stimulating the meridian points used in acupuncture, acupressure and tapping.

Dr. Dawson Church and his team performed a randomised controlled trial to study how an hour-long tapping session would impact the stress levels of 83 subjects. To do this, Dr. Church and his team measured their level of cortisol.

Their findings?

The average level of cortisol reduction was 24%, with a whopping reduction of almost 50% in some subjects! In comparison, there was no significant cortisol reduction in those who underwent an hour of traditional talk therapy.

Dr. Church also created The Stress Project, which teaches tapping to war veterans suffering with PTSD. The results have been astounding: an average 63% decrease in PTSD symptoms after six rounds of tapping.

There is also a HUGE community of ‘tappers’ online who swear it has changed their life.

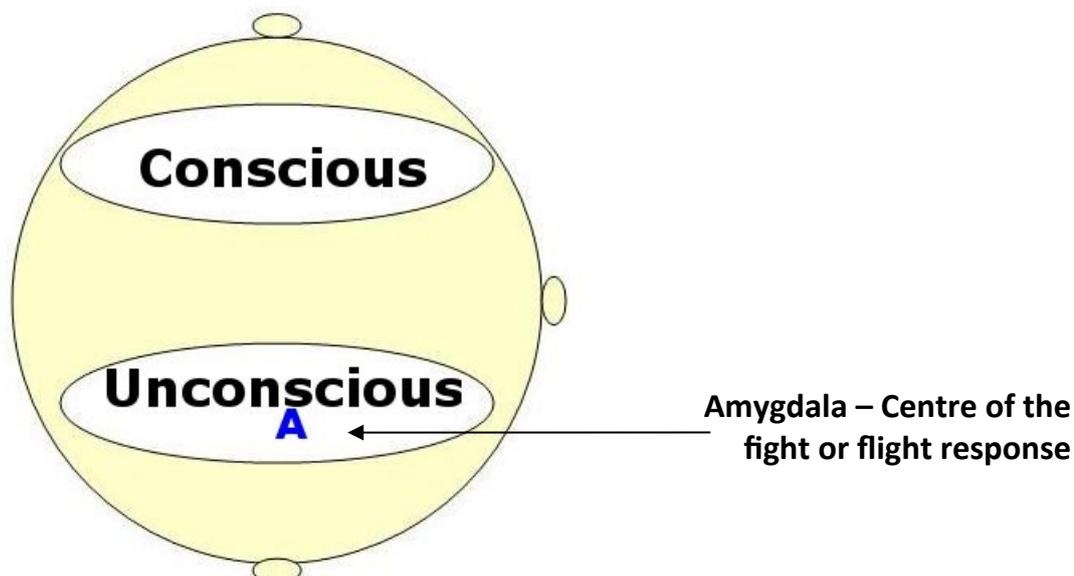
All I can say is try what I am about to show you – give it a real go, not just a one off half hearted attempt – and PROVE to yourself it works.

So what is tapping and how can it help you?

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Remember this...



**Tapping helps to deactivate the fight or flight response and sends calming signals to the body which helps the amygdala to recognise it is safe.**

So when you're stressed out about something you can tap and calm the amygdala.

If there is a specific memory in your past that troubles you, you can think about it, tap, remain calm and the hippocampus categorises the experience as non threatening.

The formerly upsetting event is now categorised as no big deal and put in the neutral filing cabinet.

For Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, for example, you can use tapping to take the 'charge' off the memory. You are not altering the memory, just re-filing it away as 'neutral' so when you think of the memory, it no longer triggers the fight or flight response. This is why the military are using it with their troops who suffer from PTSD.

Tapping is based upon concepts which have been in practice in Eastern medicine for over 5,000 years. Like acupuncture and acupressure, tapping is a set of techniques which utilise the body's energy meridian points. You can stimulate these meridian points by tapping on them with your fingertips.

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I know how weird this sounds, which is why I (stupidly) dismissed it for a long time. When something doesn't fit into what we 'know' as true we dismiss it. Don't. Try it and see how you feel.

I advise you buy the book "The Tapping Solution" to learn this technique properly, but here is the gist...

### **Step 1.**

Decide on what exactly it is that is causing you negative emotion, e.g.

- Struggling to set up a blog and feeling overwhelmed.
- Feeling insecure because you don't like the way your hair looks.
- Feeling sad because you're lonely.

### **Step 2.**

Rate the intensity of how you feel. 10 being the most severe and 0 being non-existent.

### **Step 3. (Optional)**

Decide on a set up phrase, e.g.

*"Even though XYZ I deeply and completely accept myself."*

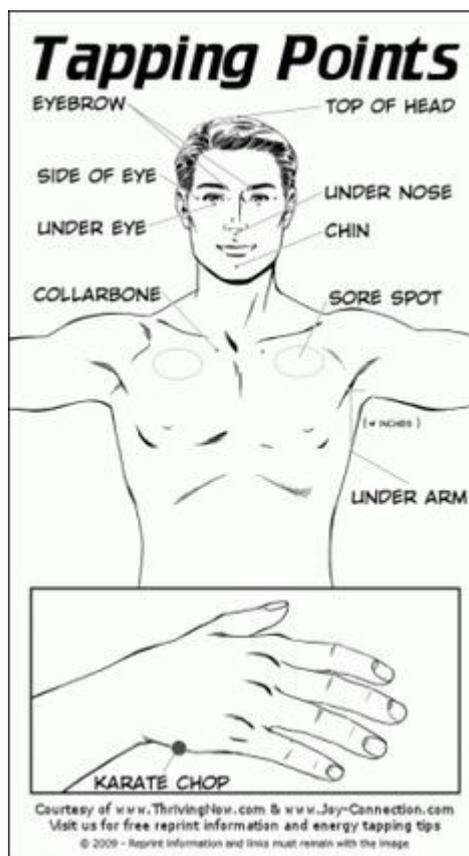
*"Even though I am worried about the best man's speech I deeply and completely accept myself."*

### **Step 4.**

Tap 5-7 times on each of these points starting with the karate chop point, then moving to the eyebrow and finishing at the top of the head...

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**Step 5.**

Take a deep breath and rate the intensity of the emotion you are tapping on.

Then repeat the process...

Tap until the intensity of the emotion is low enough for you to be happy with.

Try it. If it doesn't work – leave it out of your toolbox. I, and many, many others, find tapping to be a great way to take control back from the primal amygdala, switch off the fight or flight response and take the emotional charge off past memories.

**NOTE:** I suggest you find a qualified EFT practitioner if you want to deal with any past trauma using tapping.

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So, like diaphragmatic breathing, meditation and self hypnosis, tapping is designed to help you take control of your emotions and raise your emotional threshold. Use it!

There's one final technique I want to share with you...

## **The Reality Gap**

One of the main causes of stress is resisting reality. We want things to be different from what they are and because they're not we get angry, scared, insecure, etc.

This 'reality gap' is what causes humans so much suffering.

**A human's suffering is in direct correlation to how much they are resisting the fact that things are the way they are.**

This is one of the most remarkable and life changing pieces of wisdom I have ever heard. It isn't easy to put into practise, but it does make one hell of a difference to your life if you can implement it.

Now, remember I talked about unconscious desires earlier...

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>1. To make money</b>                  | <b>14. To gratify curiosity</b>                |
| <b>2. To save money</b>                  | <b>15. To protect family</b>                   |
| <b>3. To save time</b>                   | <b>16. To be in style</b>                      |
| <b>4. To avoid effort</b>                | <b>17. To gain respect through possessions</b> |
| <b>5. To get more comfort</b>            | <b>18. To satisfy appetite</b>                 |
| <b>6. To achieve greater cleanliness</b> | <b>19. To emulate others</b>                   |
| <b>7. To attain better health</b>        | <b>20. To avoid trouble</b>                    |
| <b>8. To escape pain</b>                 | <b>21. To avoid criticism</b>                  |
| <b>9. To gain praise</b>                 | <b>22. To be individual</b>                    |
| <b>10. To be popular</b>                 | <b>23. To protect reputation</b>               |
| <b>11. To attract the opposite sex</b>   | <b>24. To take advantage of opportunities</b>  |
| <b>12. To conserve possessions</b>       | <b>25. To be safe</b>                          |
| <b>13. To increase enjoyment</b>         | <b>26. To make work easier</b>                 |

Any time these desires are not being met we experience stress because what we want to happen is not what is *actually* happening.

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And the more rules we have about the way things *should* be, the more we are going to experience negative emotions.

People with many rules about how things *should* be suffer more because, no matter how much they try to ensure their rules are followed by themselves and others, the rules are often violated.

*I should be slimmer.*

*I should be making more money.*

*I should have got that promotion.*

*I should be driving a Ferrari.*

*I should have six pack abs.*

*I should be more attractive.*

*I should be eating healthily.*

*I should be more confident.*

*I should be telling him what I think of him.*

*I should be happy.*

These “shoulds” lay at the heart of our stress and dissatisfaction with life.

**The more someone is able to accept what happens in life  
the less they suffer. It is as simple as that.**

This doesn't mean a person can't be goal orientated, but the emotionally healthy person *prefers* an outcome rather than being attached to it. That means they work towards what they want but whatever happens they keep that inner peace.

This approach is not about not caring about the outcome, but rather a decision to not let the outcome become a big drama.

Here is a key point to understand...

**It is our REACTION to an event that causes us stress** – not the event itself. This is an important principle in both spiritual practises like Buddhism and in Western psychology such as C.B.T.

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There's a famous Zen story about this...

*A senior monk and a junior monk are travelling together. They come to a river with a strong current. As the monks were preparing to cross they saw a young, beautiful woman also attempting to cross.*

*She asked if they could help her and the senior monk hoisted her onto his shoulder and got her to the other side of the river.*

*Both monks carried on walking.*

*After about ten minutes walking the senior monk noticed the junior was very silent. "Is everything ok?" he asked.*

*The junior monk replied, "As monks, we are not permitted a woman. How could you carry that woman on your shoulder?"*

*The senior monk replied, "I left the woman a long time ago at the river, but you seem to still be carrying her."*

**How many of us do things like that?  
Something happens and we 'carry' it with us  
wishing we had done this or hadn't done that.**

**That's RESISTANCE to reality.**

**Not ACCEPTANCE.**

*"When there is no enemy within, the enemy outside cannot hurt you."*

I LOVE this African Proverb. So often we are our own worst enemies.

Stop trying to change the external. Focus on changing the internal and the external world will change with it. Reality is a perception. Your reality changes when you stop living in the world of 'shoulds' and 'should not's'.

Negative emotions are nearly always because things are not going the way you want them to. You have pictures in your head of the way life should be and when reality does not match the picture you experience stress.

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If you met every situation in life with zero expectation of how things should or should not go – you would be a different person.

So how do you practise the art of acceptance?

Meditation works because you learn to quiet the mind and focus on your breathing rather than getting lost in thoughts which trigger fight or flight.

In day-to-day life watch yourself as you resist things (this is where meditation also helps). Become curious about your reactions in life. Make a note each time you resist something.

Make a note of what it is and what you were resisting. Trust me – this will open your eyes to just how much you are causing yourself to suffer and change will happen naturally.

We do it in our day-to-day lives all the time – we get needlessly frustrated.

Life doesn't have to be perfect. Neither do you. Stop resisting reality and go with the flow – your life will be so much better.

Learn acceptance and your life will never be the same again. I give you my word on that. It's not easy but it does get easier the more you do it.

That's it for the techniques. There's only one thing left to do...

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**Do It!**

This manual contains information that can truly change your life, forever. However, like anything in life, you have to take ACTION. Knowledge without action will not get you results.

The five techniques I have covered can have a profound impact on your emotional health. They'll raise your threshold – which is one of the most transformative changes I believe any human can experience.

**1. Diaphragmatic breathing**

**2. Meditation**

**3. Self Hypnosis**

**4. Tapping**

**5. Acceptance**

Use them.

Daily.

Keep a journal of the changes you notice, the realities you resist and the improvements the techniques make. They may be subtle at first, or clear as day, but you WILL change if you use them, and only for the better.

Good luck!