

# REWRITING THE MIND

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# CONTENTS

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<b>CHAPTER ONE: In which chain of reasons are we trapped?</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER TWO: Introduction to Mantra Therapy</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>CHAPTER THREE: Situations</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: The Subconscious</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: Thought</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>CHAPTER SIX: Emotions</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN: Behavior</b>	<b>151</b>
<b>CHAPTER EIGHT: The Body</b>	<b>176</b>
<b>CHAPTER NINE: Summary of the Mantras</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>CHAPTER TEN: Will Power</b>	<b>188</b>
<b>CHAPTER ELEVEN: Author's Experiences</b>	<b>206</b>

## PREFACE

Perhaps the term mantra<sup>1</sup> therapy reminds you of those who hold a rosary and constantly recite God's name to have their problems resolved. But mantra therapy is in fact related to a type of psychology. This method of therapy by reviewing the process of the human mind's performance teaches us how to reprogram the brain that has been wrongly programmed by our beliefs, habits or behavioral discipline which lead to depression, anxiety, over sensitivity and anger, and thus decrease our psychological and physical suffering. Wrong programs if not wiped out of our minds will make us suffer forever. This type of therapeutic treatment can also be called **Rewriting the Mind**.

Introduction to this type of therapy by reading this book will only take a few hours of your time but you will succeed in changing your thoughts, emotions and behavior, if you spend some minutes every day (at least for three months), on practicing mantra therapy. At first, you may reject the idea of mantra therapy for its general implication but after a

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1. Mantra, originally used in Hinduism and Buddhism, is a word or sound repeated to aid concentration in meditation.

while you will realise that the most appropriate name for this kind of treatment is indeed mantra therapy. Why? Because this method is based on repeating the correct thoughts that must be established in our middle brain.

## **What part of the brain does mantra therapy affect?**

Man's complex brain consists of countless segments but from a general perspective the brain because of the functions of each part, is divided into three sections.

### **Fully Autonomous Brain**

This part of the brain is responsible for controlling our life. For example, our respiratory system in sleep and wakefulness is controlled by this part. If we become unconscious this part of our brain will still control our respiration. It also regulates many of our vital chemical interactions. In fact, we have no control or influence over this part of the brain. It is also called the lower brain.

### **Completely Voluntary Brain**

This part of the brain completely operates at

our discretion. The small and big decisions that we make in life, is controlled by us and through this part of our brain. The details of our daily actions including where to go, what to say or eat, are controlled by this part especially when we encounter new things. For example, when we are learning how to drive and pay full attention to learning it, we are using this completely voluntary part of our brain. Driving using whatever we learn is by help of this part. It is also called the upper brain or the cerebrum. The intelligent capacity is located in this section of the brain. Scientific configurations and probing are undertaken by this part of the brain.

## **The Semi-Automatic Brain**

This part of our brain is programmed by our upbringing discipline but once programmed, it will work automatically even when we are inattentive. For example, our parents teach us to brush our teeth before sleeping at night and insist on it for a while. After a while their demand is registered in our semi-autonomic mind as a program and every night without even thinking twice, we brush our teeth and then go to bed. Another example involves when we start to learn how to drive. At first,



we know nothing and the brain voluntarily becomes responsible to learn every detail about driving but once the course of learning how to drive is finished and we master the techniques of driving, the voluntary part of our brain's function is over and from now on the semi autonomic part takes charge and we almost without complete primary consciousness, continue driving. In this condition unlike at the time of learning how to drive where we paid full attention to avoid mistakes, now we can sit behind the wheel and even forget that we are driving. Our semi-automatic part of the brain controls the act of driving. The same applies to learning a new language. We have no prior knowledge of the language and our brain did not even know one word. We learn it with our voluntary part of the brain for a while until it becomes registered in our middle brain. From then on whenever we need to use that language, our semi-automatic brain lets us use it. Without consciously remembering the words or grammatical order we start using the language. Children who have angry parents learn from childhood to discharge their anger by screaming in times of crisis. In other words, these children by repeat witnessing of this behavior, register

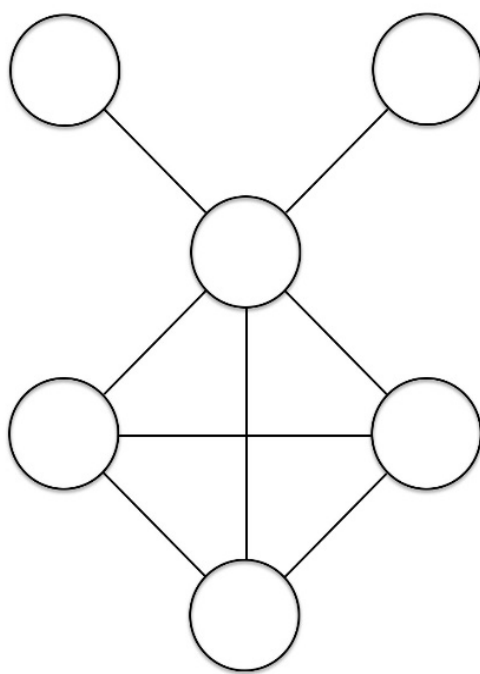
that as a program in their subconscious and from then on every time they are faced with a mental crisis, without making a new decision, they automatically start to behave as such. These children repeat this behavior all their life unless they start doubting and reprogram their subconscious anew. This part of the brain is also called the middle brain. The current book focuses on this part of the mind.

The mantra therapy method by deleting the previous programs of our subconscious and reprogramming it, affects our disposition and changes our mindset, manner of expressing our emotions and behavior, to the advantage of our happiness and peace of mind.

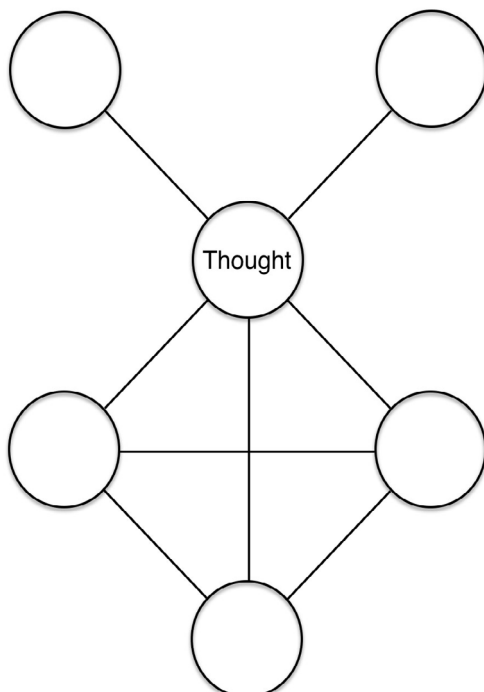
## CHAPTER ONE

### In which chain of reasons are we trapped?

Look at the picture below. What does this diagram remind you of?



This diagram portrays the chain in which we are constantly trapped. Getting familiar with this picture sheds light on how we become depressed, anxious, angry, over sensitive and even fat or skinny or come down with low or high blood pressure. Let us determine one of the links of this chain:

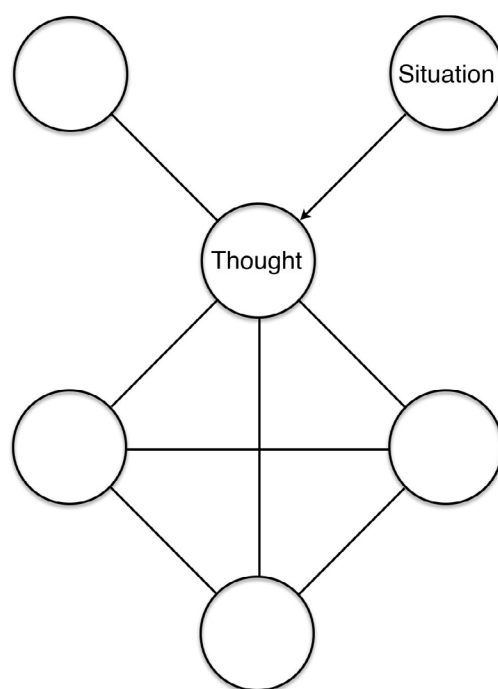


The name of this link is **THOUGHT**. Have you ever asked yourself where our thoughts come from? Where do they go after they appear? How do they dissolve after roaming around in our brain? Do they go back to their origin? What happens to our thoughts on this course and how do they affect the other links in the chain?

Think of one of your recent thoughts. A thought that either made you happy or saddened you. Ask yourself where that thought came from? Where did it go? Let me give you an example: You have left the house for an errand. On the way back you run into your neighbor. You greet her warmly but contrary to your expectations, she does not respond. Your neighbor passes by you indifferently and even with a surly expression. You become ponderous and ask yourself ‘why didn’t she greet me back? Is she disappointed in me? Have I hurt her unknowingly? Has anyone badmouthed me to her? Or maybe she wasn’t feeling well and didn’t notice me at all.’

You walk home with these thoughts in mind. On the staircase or the elevator you try to distract yourself. If you are lucky another neighbor’s greetings to you would for a mo-

ment take your mind off the grumpy neighbor. You enter the house and again the face of the grumpy neighbor appears before your eyes. You cannot get her out of your mind. Minutes pass and instead of forgetting about that neighbor's behavior you become even more obsessed with it. Ask yourself that if you had not left the house and encountered that neighbor would these annoying thoughts still have invaded your mind and disturbed you? The answer is clear: NO. The reason for your thinking is the situation you are caught in. With that answer we can now determine another link of the chain in which we are most often trapped: **SITUATION**.



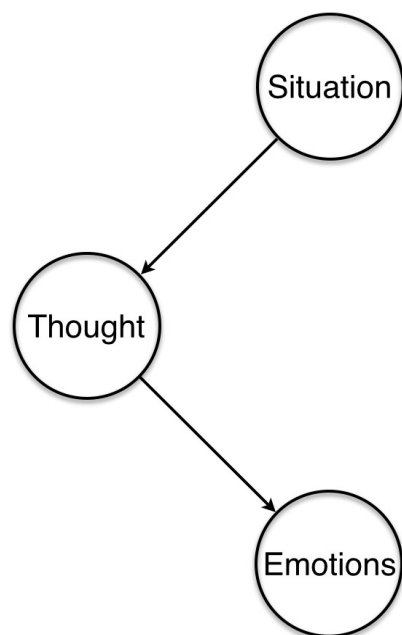
Situations cause us to become reflective. In other words, they provoke our minds to create thoughts. Since we are in various situations in every moment, our mind therefore, similar to a thought production factory keeps

sending products to the market of our brain. But have you ever asked yourself what happens to the abundance of thoughts? Do these thoughts remain on the surface of the mind or spread out towards the centre of our senses and affect our emotions? Truth is that as the ocean water turns to clouds and clouds to rain, situations turn to thoughts and thoughts to emotions.

Let us go back to the grumpy neighbor example. The thought of the grumpy neighbor is not just a thought. Not only did the neighbor's behavior offset your mind but you also do not feel good inside. Most likely you feel sad and emotional. You can even come down with anxiety and angst. You may even fear that it will be yet another worst encounter the next time you see her.

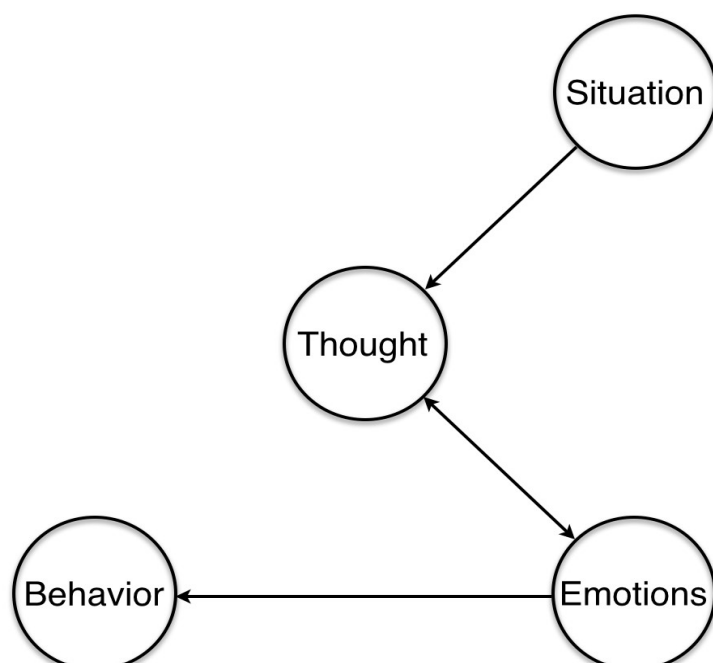
For example, she may snap at you and you may not be able to control your anger against her behavior. Or you may assume someone has talked to her badly behind your back creating animosity between you two. In this case you would even become fearful and insecure. It's not unlikely that you may even become enraged. Your thoughts will ask you what you had done to deserve such humili-

ating treatment by your neighbor. You'll see that each of these thoughts will provoke different emotions in you; sorrow, anxiety, anger, fear. Now we can easily determine another link to this chain: **EMOTIONS**.



All our personal experiences show that situations lead to thoughts and thoughts in turn become emotions in our minds but unfortunately our emotions do not remain the same or are limited to themselves. Our emotions also start to move in two directions. They go back to thoughts and result in other thoughts. Thoughts that in turn project as other emotions. In the grumpy neighbor example, you are placed in an anxiety situation. Your thoughts may turn on the siren of danger increasing your anxiety or severe sense of sorrow may lead you to stronger apprehension. It is then that you'll start to review the issue from different angles with oversensitivity. Each of these deliberations creates

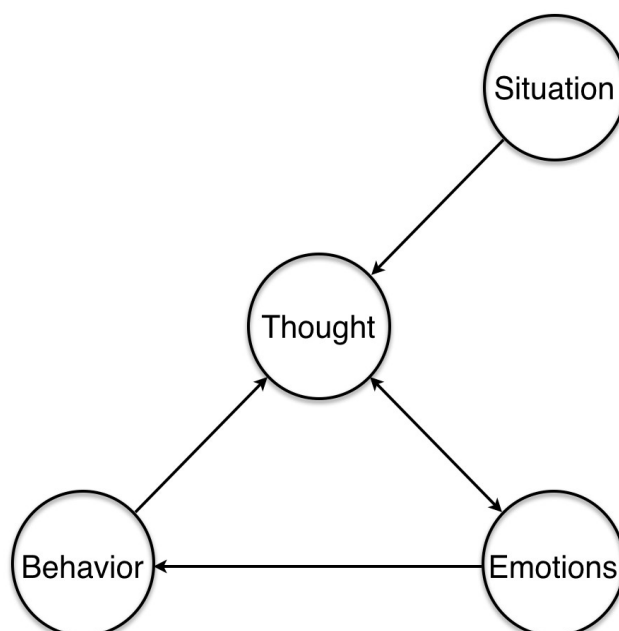
more intense emotions in you. On the other hand, your feelings force you to behave in the same direction as your thoughts. If you have become too sad you may start to cry in solitude. If you have become too anxious you may call a close friend and ask their advice on future probabilities. Maybe, if you feel humiliated you will pick up the phone to respond to your neighbor in a humiliating manner. Or you may tell her that you are hurt by her behavior. You may ask her why she did not greet you back or you may abruptly snap at her: ‘Who do you think you are to not greet me back?’ Or you may decide not to greet that neighbor or ignore or give her the dirty looks. Any one of these reactions is a certain **BEHAVIOR** with your emotions as the reason. An emotion with your thoughts as the reason. Thoughts with your situation as the reason. In this phase the diagram of the chain that captures us in every moment of our life will look like this:



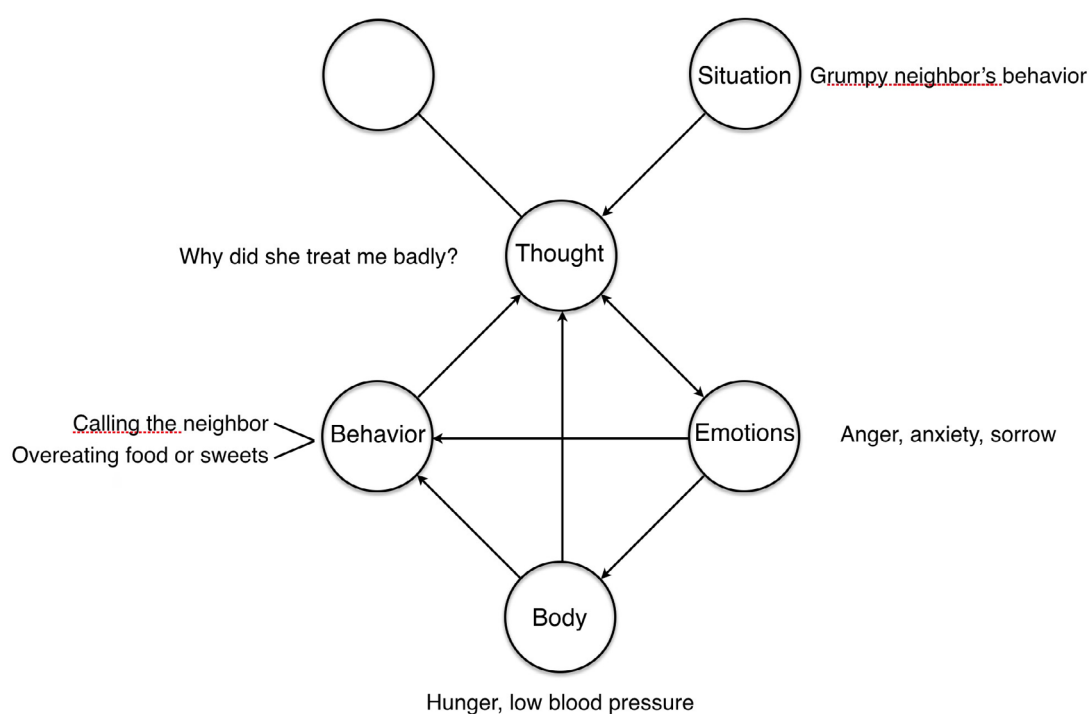


I wish behavior was the last link of this chain, but behaviors lead to new thoughts in us. For example, you call your grumpy neighbor. Her explanations may convince you that she did not mean it and she was wrapped up in her own thoughts and did not see you. She may tell you that she has recently lost a loved one and she is bereaved over the loss. In this case you will feel ashamed of your thoughts and will feel guilty and blame yourself but if that neighbor hangs up on you or leads you on, then you will hang up the phone, start walking around in your apartment and become preoccupied again. You will tell yourself you wish you had been forthright with her. Every one of these thoughts will lead to newer emotions and those emotions will produce other behaviors. In this case the diagram of the chains will turn to a vicious circle.

Notice the direction of the arrows in the diagram below:



Your emotions are not the only reasons for your behavior, which at times directly affect your body. You may come down with low or high blood pressure. You may feel a feigned hunger and immediately go to the refrigerator and indulge in eating food or sweets. In this condition the chain becomes more extensive. When you get low blood pressure by your thoughts and emotions you may think that you are not feeling well or that you are dying<sup>1</sup>. This thought will create a new wave of anxiety and dread in you. Your blood pressure may go down or up. You may get heart palpitations. Some feel pain in their muscles and bones. The diagram below well demonstrates psycho-physiological illnesses:



1. Panic attack with emotional/ reflective reasons manifests as low blood pressure, severe heartbeat and a sense of imminent death. In correct reading of the blood pressure, doctors recommend that the patient must be in a state of stress free for a few minutes or the result will be different. That shows how thoughts and emotions immediately affect our body.

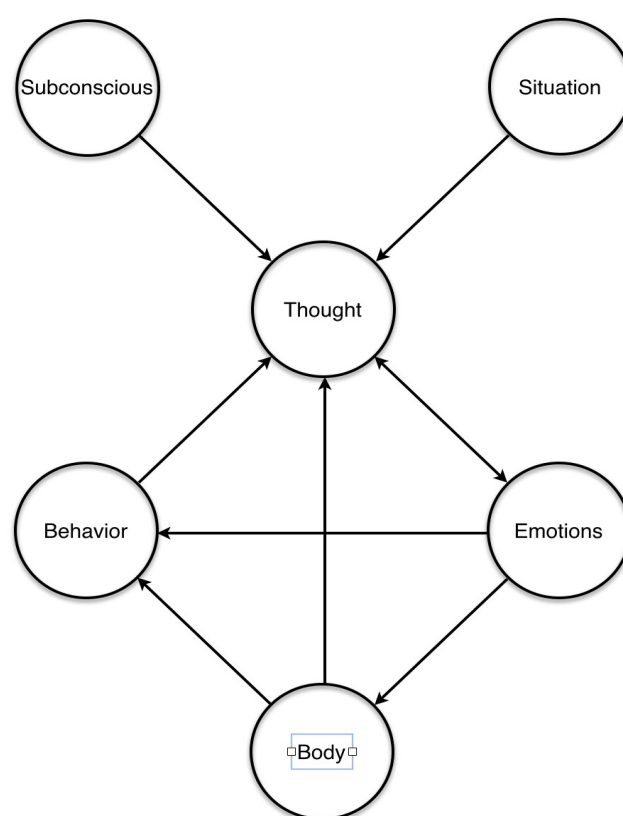
Some people by overeating try to calm down. Since tasting and swallowing is a pleasant experience, in times of upset overeating is a behavior that a poorly programmed subconscious suggests as a solution. For this reason, the sadder and more anxious the fatter we become. Doctors' claim that overweight and many other diseases and physical pains have psychological roots, points to this matter.

We became familiar with the relation between situation and formation of thoughts. Thoughts though do not always start from situations. Sometimes you are at home alone and may have not seen anyone in days but suddenly, a passage of a memory in the sky of your mind overwhelms you with the bitter taste of sorrow and anxiety or anger. Not only memories but even your future predictions may turn to negative thoughts. For example, you have gone on vacation and are resting under the shadow of a tree in a garden or under the sun at the beach. Your mind in a recreational state finds a chance to look at your future days and years or reflect upon the possibilities of your life and your loved ones.

As you plunge into your thoughts reviewing all possibilities, suddenly, you become anxious

over an unpleasant probable event in the future and soon vacation and rest become hell. These thoughts have not appeared from an external situation but from your memories and the depths of your mind, from your subconscious. Your mind's prowling in the past and the future become thoughts.

With that said we can easily get a more complete perception of the chain in which we are trapped day and night.



Are we going to be trapped in this chain to the end of our life or is there a way out? Mantra therapy is a solution to get out of this chain. But what is mantra therapy? The question will be answered in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Introduction to Mantra Therapy

There are many examples that prove the importance of the subconscious mind. When learning to drive, the beginner has no driving skill so he is completely focused not to make mistakes but still apprehensive. One year later when he masters the skill, he puts the keys in and turns the car on and drives. An hour later he reaches his destination but does not remember what route he took during that hour or how he drove. This was because he was driving with his middle brain. The only moment he remembers is when he turned the key on, yet he drove all that way without any problems. Yes, that is how our subconscious mind operates. What it learns, it takes within and in the absence of our consciousness and attention, performs it well. Now if the city hall announces that some of the two-way streets have become one-way, the driver of our example stops his conditional driving and carefully observes street signs one by one to figure out which way to take. In two to three months later when the

direction of the streets have been completely registered in his brain, again he turns the key on and drives the routes without seeing or thinking.

Mantra therapy works as such. You change your learning and conditioning through repeat mantras for a while and pay attention to your thoughts, emotions and behavior and after a while, you will only behave in a way that has been programmed in your subconscious by the mantras.

Park rangers create wide routes in between the trees so not all trees would burn in the event of a forest fire. Is there a similar way for humans to free themselves from the chain of constraints? When we are faced with a certain situation, is there a technique to prevent that situation from becoming a negative thought? In the event of a negative thought is there a way to stop it from becoming a negative emotion? And if we are inundated by negative thoughts, are we able to prevent psycho-physiological problems not to be forced to practice a wrong behavior?

Mantra therapy teaches us to contain the fire from spreading like park rangers as well as controlling or decreasing the chain of prob-

lems if it becomes active in us.

The following examples will first familiarize you with mantra therapy from a general perspective:

### **Mantra one:**

#### **Do not enter a bad situation.**

Masoumeh is a middle-aged woman and has been retired for years. She always reminds herself that she has to visit her relatives in any way she can and offer help. She always returns home satisfied though exhausted. Visiting close and distant relatives makes her happy especially sometimes she takes presents to the poor in the family as a way of helping them. She takes elders to the doctor and gets their medicines if needed. There is one relative however, in whom she becomes disappointed every time she visits. According to her she feels heavy when she returns from visiting that relative. She has repeatedly told herself that she would never visit her again but she becomes sentimental and keeps visiting her again. She says: 'What can I do? How can I not visit my sister? I visit strangers and help them so how can I not see my own sister who is also mentally

not well? I know my sister has been jealous of me since childhood and keeps comparing herself with me, which disturbs her but if I stop visiting her, she would complain that I ignore her, and if I do visit her, she'll come up with some nit-picking and when I go back home, my mind will be disturbed by her remarks for some days after. Sometimes I pity her and get guilt trips that I may not have been a good sister to her and sometimes I get so furious with her that I want to pick up the phone and snap at her. Yet, I stop myself. Instead, I see that I have vented my anger from her on my husband and children.' If you ask Masoumeh how long she has been dealing with this problem, she will say at least 30 years, since she and her sister were young girls. If you ask her why she keeps visiting her sister, she will say: 'Well she is my sister and visiting family is a must at any cost. Besides, my sister is sick.' If you ask her whether her visits will make her sister feel better, she will surely say no.

Mantra therapy advises Masoumeh that she needs to conquer her subconscious that has been wrongly programmed and every time that part of her brain suggests to her that 'visiting family is a must', she should automatical-



ly remember, 'Do not enter a bad situation.'

This sentence has to be recited as a mantra so often against the sentence, 'Visiting family is a must', that they become dependent on each other in the sense that every time Masoumeh thinks of 'Visiting family is a must', she'll immediately remember 'Do not enter a bad situation.' Gradually, the voice within the brain uttering 'Visiting family is a must' becomes weaker and weaker and 'Do not enter a bad situation' becomes louder and even replaces it. Just as stapling two sheets of paper, we staple these two sentences in our mind by repeat reciting. We must be careful to only change each wrong sentence with only one correct phrase not several and not with beautiful poetic sentences that are more deceiving than effective. Sentences that are abundantly found on social networks these days.

To better understand the method of mantra therapy, pay attention to the example below:

Two children are sitting across each other to play. The first child with a loud voice utters: 'Visiting family is a must.' The second child with a barely audible voice says: 'Do not enter a bad situation.' In this game the first child with every repetition brings his voice down

a little lower and the second child raises his voice louder. At the beginning of the game we do not hear the second child's voice and at the end of the game, we do not hear the first child's voice. This example resembles our mind's two children in the subconscious. The first child's voice is the product of our wrong upbringing which becomes louder and louder over time but now with mantra therapy we bring the second child in that part of the brain and gradually the first child's voice fades away replaced by the second child's voice.

Situations however are not merely external for us to stay away from and stop negative thoughts. Sometimes these disturbing negative thoughts rise up from the depths of our mind right when we do not expect them. What indeed are we supposed to do with them? How can we stay safe from their annoyance? Psychological experiments show that idle people are more exposed to the assault of these internal disturbing negative thoughts. Below is what mantra therapy recommends for such cases.

**Mantra Two:**

**Occupy yourself with so much good work that there is no time for negative thoughts.**

Our brain just like radar turns every direction to cite threats. Basically, our brain is designed as such that it is never void of thoughts. If we do not suggest positive thoughts to our brain beforehand or do not keep it busy by some kind of work, it is likely that with every association it will end up with negative thoughts and the vicious circle of bad feelings, behavior and ill body will become activated. No wonder working women who juggle work and home duties as compared to housewives who may have more time on their hands, are less likely to be exposed to negative thoughts; men who love their occupation have less negative thoughts than those who hate their jobs.

Many of us despite knowing that going to some gatherings or parties is not good for our morale, we cannot resist the temptation of going. Most likely we hear from our subconscious: 'Go, this time will be different.' Or we hear a friend's voice: 'Let us go, we will have fun together.'

We have all experienced that when staying at home idle for a long time, depression gradually prevails in us but since we have not programmed our mind correctly, we keep escaping from one bad external situation to another bad internal one.

### **First Situation:**

Having unhealthy relationships and presence in bad situations, disappointments and resort to loneliness.

### **Second Situation:**

Staying home alone for some time, exposure to negative thoughts, running away from loneliness and going towards unhealthy relationships and presence in bad external situations.

And for some, this vicious circle gets repeated for life. What are we to do with this circle? The mantra therapy's answer is: Finding healthy relationships, good situations and avoid staying idle or alone.

If for any reason we fail at resolving these two problems, what's the solution? Mantra therapy recommends the following:

## Mantra Three:

### **Push away negative thoughts.**

I met Alex by accident. A man whose job involved transporting the dead from the cold storage of hospitals to the cemetery. Alex said: 'Usually from early morning until the afternoon I receive three corpses from the hospital's cold storage, put them in coffins and take to the cemetery. I deliver the coffins to the grave digger and I am done. At first, I used to get depressed by my job but I got used to it over time. The more coffins I take to the cemetery the higher I get paid but frankly, the dead were not my problem but the living people. I refer to the relatives of the deceased who have to see their dead beloved ones. They get so shocked and weep from the bottom of their hearts, which is a painful sight. At the beginning, I took the wailing voices home with me and heard them in my head while eating dinner. It even echoed in my mind when I went to bed. To overcome this problem, I started playing tennis in the afternoons but even then the voices would not leave me alone but I tried to push them away with my tennis racket strokes. These thoughts indeed would go away and not return. There were days that I had no

time to play tennis but in order to prevent those thoughts I played tennis in my mind and pushed away sad disturbing thoughts. Tennis taught me how to keep disturbing thoughts at bay.'

The mantra of tennis is a good example to clear the mind of negative thoughts. As soon as a negative thought nests in your mind instead of analyzing or wondering how and why it came from, stroke it with the tennis racket of your mind and throw it out. With that stroke, stop that negative thought from staying in your mind and affecting your emotions.

### **Mantra Four:**

#### **Do not fall in the trap of emotions**

I have many friends who live abroad. Most of them when speaking of their families become sad. One of them is Masoud. He abruptly starts talking and says: 'I call my family every day and send a part of my income to my parents. I am relieved that I can solve some of their financial problems but from the minute we start a phone conversation my parents whine about physical ailments related to their old age and talk about the problems of my siblings who live in Iran.

I have to add that some of the money I send to my parents can be spent for the expenses of my siblings. If we spend an hour on the phone every day I listen to their problems for about fifty eight minutes of it, however in the last two minutes all I hear is: ‘Son do not worry about us and keep up with your own life, we have a great God to rely on too.’

How can I go on with my life with this one hour of daily communication? From the moment I wake up I think of them. When I go to work, I am preoccupied with them. Every night I decide to only call them once on the weekends but every day I automatically pick up the phone and call them”. I ask him if there is anything that he could have done for his parents but didn’t and his answer is always negative. ‘I have always put their comfort first over my own life’s affairs.’

Masoud is in fact caught in an emotional trap but unaware of it. Some of our loved ones in order to draw our attention and affection create emotional pits for us, unintentionally. In their mind they are asking for our compassion. Mantra therapy suggests do whatever you can for them but do not get guilt trips afterwards.

You cross a street and suddenly run into a person who has just been in an accident. You immediately call the ambulance and help the injured to be taken in the ambulance quickly. The ambulance drives away with sirens on. Now it's time to gather your attention on another issue. If you're reminded of that accident every time you pass that street or re-tell the incident to anyone you run into, what will happen to you? If you were a paramedic who had to help the injured every day but carried all the painful sights with you home, would you have had any energy to go back to work the next day? If all psychologists had to take home the problems of their patients wouldn't they gradually become sick themselves? Psychologists learn to keep their emotional distance with their patients not to fall in emotional traps. You too should try to learn this lesson with regards to your loved ones and teach them to act the same towards you.

By repeat reciting of 'Do not fall in an emotional trap' we will be able not to painstakingly internalize the suffering of others.



**Mantra Five:****Postpone your anger**

While passing a street you see a young man peeing at the wall. You perceive him as rude and offensive. You become raged at this thought and start blaming him. He also insults you and runs away. You furiously run after him and throw a piece of stone at him. Fortunately, the stone misses the target, or your anger may have put both of you in trouble. To analyze the rise of this anger it's better to review the incident leading to your anger phase by phase:

**Situation:** A young boy peeing at the wall.

**Your thought:** He is so rude and offensive.

**Your emotion:** Mild anger.

**Your behavior:** Blaming the kid (your behavior creates a situation for the boy)

**Boy's thought:** You are a mean person.

**Boy's emotion:** Mild anger towards you.

**Boy's behavior:** Insulting to you. (Boy's behavior is a worse situation for you)

**Your thought:** He is completely a rogue, an offensive kid.

**Your emotion:** Extreme anger.

**Your behavior:** Running in fury after the boy and throwing a stone at him.

Review of the phases above clarifies how the behavior of every one of us creates a situation for the other, leading to outbreak of his and our subsequent thoughts, emotions and behavior. In brief, others call it action and reaction. This action and reaction however, quickly pass through various thinking, emotional, behavioral and situational phases. Let us ask you a question to clarify the issue. Of the following instances which one led to your anger:

**Situation:** The boy peeing at the wall.

**Your thought:** He is so rude and offensive.

Do not you think that if instead of thinking 'He is so rude and offensive' you could have thought 'This poor boy may provoke people's anger by his ignorant behavior'. In that case not only you would not have become infuriated but also felt pity for him.

Some time ago in a hotel lobby I was talking

to a seventy seven year old woman named Deli. One of the hotel guests turned to Deli and spoke of a recent piece of news that he had heard: 'Mrs. Deli, did you hear that yesterday they killed a Bahai in Iran at his home?' Deli kept silent for a moment and said: 'The poor murderer got himself in so much trouble.' I said: 'Why did you not say the poor victim?' Deli said: 'The victim did not commit a bad act. It is the murderer whose conscience and soul will be suffering forever for killing another person'. Right then I thought to myself Mrs. Deli's mindset did not leave any room for her anger. In other words, our interpretation of a situation meaning our perception and explanation of the problem will lead to our negative or positive feelings and behavior.

Now if we fail at changing our criticism of others to feeling pity for them what can we do to prevent our expression of anger? The only way out is to postpone our expression of anger. When we get angry no external advice or internal recommendation works to solve the problem. Anger is an emotion that overcomes us. If there is a feeling of sorrow perhaps it would only drive us to seclusion, but anger throws us out of ourselves and raises the frequency of our brain from

normal measures, which is between 14 to 21 hertz all the way to 28 hertz.

Human experiences tell us that the only resolution to anger is delaying it. Someone sends you an insulting email. By reading it you become infuriated. You want to immediately write back whatever comes to your mind and send it. The more you try to ignore the email, the less you are able to overcome your anger. The only solution is to write the answer completely in a note but postpone sending it for 24 hours. In all likelihood after 24 hours sending that email will seem unnecessary. If in our subconscious, instead of sentences like 'I will give him the answer he deserves: or 'If I do not reply he would think I had been intimidated' or 'An insult should be answered with an insult.', we should repeat the sentence, 'Postpone your anger' as a mantra, then it will replace the previous sentences in our mind.

I heard a simple, touching and an interesting story from Osho. A profound story, which he passionately recited. Osho said: 'One day an old man was dying. His only nine year old son was at his bed. The old man tried to use the last bit of energy in his body to tell something to his son; a piece of advice to help him in

hardships. The old man said to his son: ‘Son, I will be dying in a few minutes and you will have to work to earn a living. I will not be by your side any longer to help you when needed. In this cruel world you have to be able to deal with your problems. The last thing I can do for you is to teach you something, so that in my absence, it would help you. Whenever you feel lonely remember this sentence and you will always feel me by your side. You may not well understand what I am going to teach you now. Lack of understanding is not important. Just remember my sentence well and everyday repeat it to yourself like a mantra. When you grow up you will understand the meaning, but you have to repeat it over and over every day not to forget it. The nine year old was all ears to hear that sentence from his father. The old man instead of uttering the sentence kept talking about it’s importance and that the father through this sentence would always be at his child’s side to help him. When the child was certain about the importance of the sentence, the old man a moment before taking his last breath and dying said: ‘Son, whenever you get angry postpone your anger for 24 hours. If you get angry in the morning postpone your an-

ger until the next morning. If you get angry at noon, postpone it to the next noon and do the same if you get angry at night. By remembering this sentence I will always be by your side and will solve your problems. With this sentence you will be able to overcome your problems alone. If you do not get angry you will never lose your friends and you will not make enemies for yourself. In that case you will never be alone.'

### **Mantra Six:**

**Do it, the feeling to do it will follow.**

Sometimes this chain acts the opposite. You have certainly heard some people justify their laziness as such: 'I do not feel like doing that.'

This statement means that I am thinking about it but the feeling or will to do it has not yet come for me to actualize it. The suitable answer to them is: 'Do it, the feeling to do it will follow.' That means not only feeling can turn to behavior but also behavior can provoke the feeling. That means do it and the feeling to do it will follow. That leads to a change in thought. You who had to wait for the feeling to do something will realize that by action you can change your feelings and thoughts.

Philosophically, this is a certain kind of liberation. It means that not only situations lead to thoughts, feelings and behavior but also humans by action can create thoughts, emotions and even situations. Although in this case as well, a chain of cause and effect exists but it no longer starts from situation but from human action.

If situation, thought, emotion and action mean force, then action, emotion, thought, situation mean liberation.

The current book is not a philosophical probe to further expand our discussion in this regard. Our only purpose is to present a model for the reciprocal function of this chain and the relation of its links to each other.

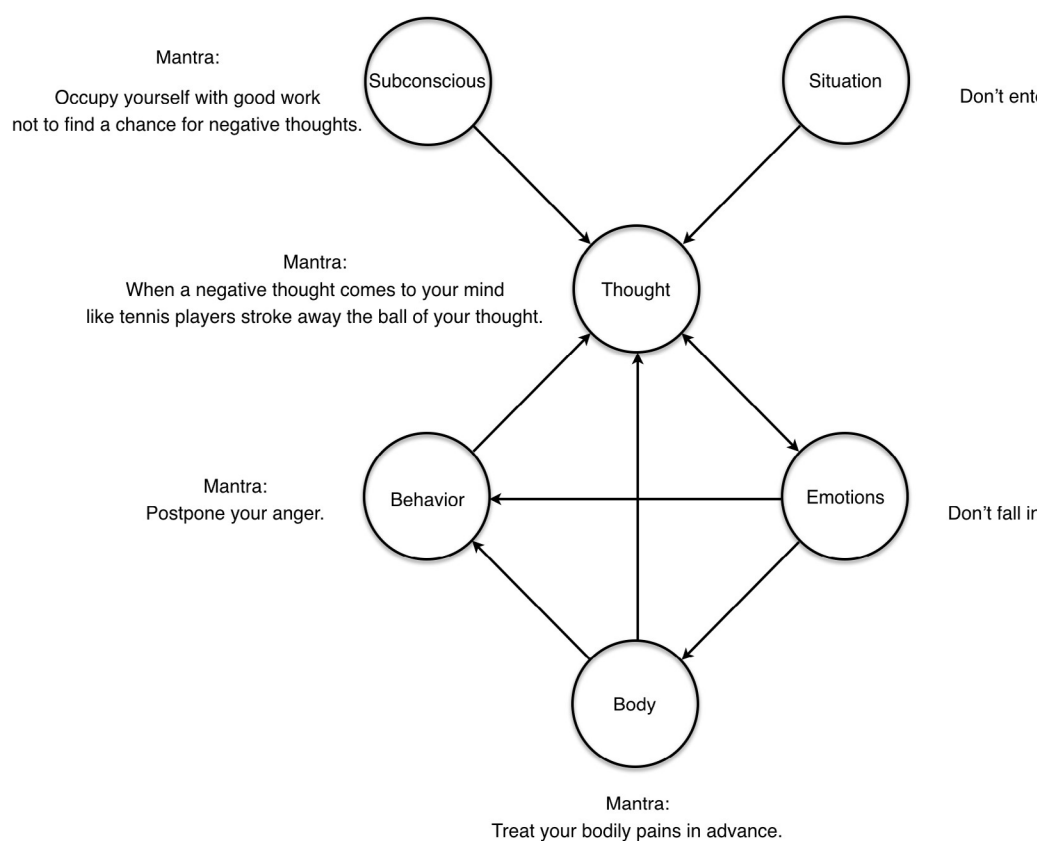
### **Mantra Seven:**

#### **Alleviate your pain**

Dariush has achieved two doctorate degrees and is currently studying for his third. His academic knowledge though does not stop his anxiety. His blood pressure comes down while taking a test or giving lectures because he is a perfectionist. He is afraid to utter a wrong word or stutter in his speeches or fail to give

a proper answer to a question. That is why, right before every lecture his blood pressure falls extremely low to the point that he cancels some of his exams and lectures. Eventually, he learned from doctors that a couple of hours before an exam or a lecture, drinking a few glasses of water to increase his blood volume helped to prevent low blood pressure due to stage fright or fear of exams.

Mrs. Mehri when going to her daughter’s school to check on her educational status comes down with pain in her legs and back. The pain makes her more anxious while visiting her daughter’s school. The doctor taught her to take painkillers shortly before the pain started. She finally learned to prevent her pains doing that.





Summary of chapter two is displayed in the mantra therapy diagram above.

Before concluding this chapter, it must be noted that unknown physical pains may lead to other negative thoughts. The patient may feel that he has cancer or another unknown terminal disease. In this case, his pain worsens. He may become oversensitive and continuously read the information on medical websites or go to the doctor, undergo tests, take medications and eventually lose his morale and actually become sick and bedridden. However, if he becomes familiar with this chain of problems, he will know that his bodily pains are psycho-physiological and his only remedy would be overcoming his thoughts. Naturally, with wisdom we can avoid bad situations and busy ourselves with such good positive works not to give way for negative thoughts to invade our mind. Ultimately though, we must have ability to control our thoughts. The crucial point though is our brain's thought center that sits in the middle of this chain and it all starts and goes back to and from there. In the next chapters we will discuss the details of every link of this chain further.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Situations

#### Bad Situation

Let us go back to the grumpy neighbor example. If that neighbor instead of sulking had greeted us back as usual, our mind would not have produced so many thoughts, emotions and behavior. Had she greeted us back, nicely positive thoughts, emotions and proper behavior would have appeared in us. This example expresses the role of situation in producing thoughts, emotions and behavior. In fact, situation is the first link of this forced chain in which we are trapped. Situations however are not always negative. If we review the positive and negative situations we had to face in the past week and decided to stay away from negative situations the next week and engaged in positive ones, then surely negative thoughts would be diminished in our mind giving rise to positive thoughts.

The question is, if situations are our life's forces then where is our freedom? Some of our freedom rests with choosing the situations we encounter. In my opinion 'freedom

is emancipation from the forces of bad situations to the forces of good situations.’ In other words, we are free to choose our forces. For example, you choose to eat poison. You are not then free to stay safe from the effects of the poison you have chosen to eat. In this case you have chosen the bad situation. Situations surround you like causes for you to become the effects. My definition of freedom is that ‘freedom is liberation from forces of smaller circles to forces of larger circles.’ We do not live in vacuums. Every situation is a forced system into which we enter and captivate ourselves in, and that system produces our thoughts, emotions and behaviors. Psychologists recommend to parents that if they want to raise good children they should find them good friends. Good friends are the situation and your child is placed within the force of their goodness. Let us leave the philosophical aspects and return to the practical aspects of the issue of situations. Situations are two kinds in life. Unpredictable and predictable situations.

### **Unpredictable situations:**

These situations emerge before we predict

them and so cannot stop them from happening. The example is the neighbor who greeted us daily but suddenly stopped. Had we had known about her behavior, we would have prevented seeing her by leaving the house a few minutes earlier or later. Another example is the sudden encounter of a car accident while crossing the street and seeing people get wounded or die in front of us. These are unpredictable situations that can rise for any of us and immediately lead to negative thoughts, emotional traps and misbehaviors. Not all situations are unpredictable and based on experience, some can be predicted. For example, knowing that if you criticize a certain friend, he would get agitated and fight.

## **Predictable Situations**

We are familiar with some situations and know that if we expose ourselves to them our temperament will change but for reasons such as habit, others' insistence or our own ignorance we put ourselves in those situations and subject our mind to vulnerability and stimulation. In this chapter a number of these bad and predictable situations will be discussed.

## 1. Do not listen to bad news

If you are involved with a political movement and follow its activities, listening to the news is a part of your political activity but if you have no role in changing the world's news, what's the point of listening to all this bad news? What is all this bad news supposed to do with your soul? News in our times means bad news. If thousands of airplanes fly and land safely every day they do not become news but if one of them crashes it becomes headlines. If all the cities and villages of the world do not tremble they do not become pieces of news but if a village in a corner of the earth shakes by earthquake it becomes news of an earthquake.

Vincent is a one hundred year old French man. When you look at his face he hardly seems over 60. Vincent appeared on a TV interview to explain the secret to his youth. He said: 'In my 100 year life I kept myself unaware of the world's news and tried not to hear them.' The interviewer asked him then what about his human responsibility or if he had any compassion for other human beings? Vincent answered: 'I cannot do anything about an earthquake in another con-

continent so why should I create an emotional trap for myself and a false responsibility and become anxious? Instead, when I cross the street I pay all my attention to my surroundings and become sensitive. If I see a passerby in need I will definitely help him. If I see a lonely neighbor I will try to accompany him. If one of my friends gets sick I will spend days taking care of him which makes me feel good but I do not want to become informed of a plane crash which I am unable to help. Listening to the news, which are usually bad creates a false fear and anxiety in me and destroys my happy moments.' The interviewer asked him then what should the reporters do? If all the people of the world do not listen to the news for whom are they supposed to report? Vincent said: 'Not all the people in the world are news reporters. If you do not like your job change it. We are born to live not to produce news or consume them.' The interviewer asked him what they could they do to make him listen to the news? Vincent said: 'It is unlikely that you could convince me but in order to appeal to others, change your approach. You sell anxiety to people. Sensitive and worried people buy into that but if you really want to do something for the

people of the world, change your occupation and instead of posing problems, let people know how earthquake victims were able to deal with their post disaster problems or how the families of an airplane crash victims continued their lives after grieving for their loved ones. Better yet, let people know how they can help the refugees and the misplaced on whom you report. Your manner of reporting is so bad that the people think the world is on the verge of destruction whereas the world's situation in many areas is greatly improving. In the one hundred years of my life the literacy level has gone up worldwide, hygiene is much better and people's welfare has relatively improved. Longevity is higher, personal and social freedoms have increased. Besides, the mere listening to the news does not necessarily raise the responsibility of your audience but only makes them oversensitive and anxious. People have become addicted to listening to the news every day and some cannot even fall asleep without it.'

Hearing a piece of news is a predictable bad situation. One can refrain from hearing bad news and stop their mind from entering an unpleasant situation. The news we hear we take to bed at night and review it unwillingly

before falling asleep. Our sleep time, which is at least a third of our daily time becomes full of nightmares.

**Test:** If you are in the habit of listening to the news, just engage in a news fasting period of one month and then review the effects on your calmness. Again, after a month, start listening to the news and check the effects on your restlessness. Then decide at last whether to listen or not.

Journalists believe that by reporting news to the people of the world they have raised their level of sensitivity towards the earth and human lives. They are right to some extent but that is not all the truth. On the other hand, addiction to listen to countless number of news has desensitized people towards human catastrophes. The reports of news do not necessarily provoke people's sense of aiding the needy or the damaged but have definitely produced a more anxious audience. Do people listen to the news to find out where on earth they can go to help the people? They listen to the news to protect themselves from the dangers of the contemporary world or they are just addicted to it.



## **2. Wake up early morning**

One of the worst situations involves going to bed early before having had the need to sleep.

Zinat wakes up around noon every day about four hours after all her children leave home for work and she goes to bed at 11 at night because that's the time all in the family sleep at night. Unfortunately, she stays awake for hours in bed and thinks to herself.

Endless thoughts that do not go away. Her thoughts are two groups:

### **Group one:**

Reminiscing the past. Some of her memories involve her past suffering. She becomes sad at recalling these thoughts. Some of her past memories are related to happy events. By remembering those she becomes nostalgic.

### **Group Two:**

Thoughts of worrying about the future. Dangers threatening herself and her children in the future. Prediction of the future scares her and makes her hopeless and hours later when her feeling of despair reaches a peak she falls asleep but with nightmares. Almost

every night she has nightmares and sometimes she screams in her sleep or moans and if the family does not wake her up she struggles with bad moments in sleep.

Going to bed too early is one of the worst acts in producing negative thoughts. When the lights are turned off and we have closed our eyes our mind is set in an inactive mode. The brain in this condition does little calculations and our sense of reality is lower than when our eyes are open in daytime thinking. For that reason our mind in bed is unable to solve our problems. It is no surprise that the decisions we make in bed at night seem invalid the next morning. If you think bed is a good place to make decisions, do know that our mind in bed works like a car with its gear in neutral and although it is on, it cannot move. The brain's frequency in a normal day is between 14 to 21 hertz. The brain is in a complete state of awareness in this condition. We are all at this level of frequency to do our daily chores but in sleep or wakefulness in bed it is reduced to 4 to 7 hertz and our thoughts and decisions are no longer real and rational.

Our physical and mental health depends on

our sleep adjustments. It is better that we do something about our sleep adjustment. Taking pills is a good temporary remedy but not in long term. If we develop tolerance over sleeping pills, we have added yet another problem to our existing ones. Sleep adjustment requires adjustment of the times we are awake. We are ready to sleep sixteen hours after we have been awake. If Zinat wakes up every day one hour earlier and after a few days sleeps concurrently with the rest of her family members she will no longer suffer from mental tortures and nightmares in bed. The following mantras are suitable after going to bed:

- I will not bring the records of my daily issues to bed.
- I will fall asleep quickly and deeply.

### **3. Virtual world according to need.**

Surfing on the Internet, membership on facebook, Telegram, YouTube, Whatsapp, etc. will expose you to bombardments of advertisements, news and unwanted information.

You are busy working and your mobile phone beeps. You realize you have received a text message. You look at your cell phone and

see someone has sent you a message about their personal problems or work success. You will lose concentration and for a moment your mind produces an extra thought about the situation. If you are into comparison and the text is about someone's success, you may become jealous. If it is a piece of bad news, you will become emotional. If the material sent is not what you need, your mind becomes pre-occupied. Today's generation is used to stare at their mobile screens for a long time instead of looking at people and the environment they live in. This generation goes to bed with their phones and comes out with it.

Use of virtual world should be brought down to a minimum and according to need. Just as when we stop eating once we feel full. If we do not need a contact, we have to cut it. An unwanted contact is a kind of disturbance and leads to negative thoughts. Unknown phone calls are among the worst that place us in ambiguous situations. You are asked a question for which you have not prepared an answer. You are asked for a promise, which you will immediately regret. Do not rush it and let the stranger leave you a message.

## 4. Cut unhealthy relationships

Refer to your experiences. Which party did you go to happily but left sad? These parties are bad situations. Do not ever go. Gossiping is a part of these parties. Talking or hearing bad about people poisons your mind. Talking bad or remembering the pains about someone who has hurt you produces more negative thoughts in your mind than actually damaging that person.

Bad parties start from ordinary greetings. Then discussions emerge with supporters or opponents. The result leads to division between the guests and those who had gathered to share their moments together and feel unified realize how different they are from each other or how angry or jealous they are at each other. Ultimately, they say goodbye to each other by superficial smiles and wishes to see again but in their hearts, they repeat to themselves that they would never step foot in there again. Still though, after some time, life's boredom and routine will push them to end up in these parties again. The life of the people who go to these parties always swings between two conditions:

**First Condition:**

Going to the party, getting disappointed and hurt and become remorseful.

**Second Condition:**

Loneliness, boredom, the need to socialize and escape from loneliness to wrong gatherings.

This vicious circle can in fact recur for many of us. We indeed run from one disappointment to another. In none of these conditions are we happy. In our solitude we are overwhelmed with negative thoughts and emotional traps and in gatherings, exposed to sarcasms, competition, debates, arguments and disputes that cause frustration.

Aida is a 17 year old girl who has attempted suicide several times and twice she came close to death. Her family introduced her to a psychologist. What the psychologist asked Aida to do first was this:

‘On the paper draw a vertical line and divide it to two columns. On the right write down the names of places, parties and meetings you like to go and feel happy about. On the left write down those you do not like to go and become sad when you do.’

Aida thought for some moments. She wrote the list many times but doubted and changed it until she reached a list that matched her emotional experiences.

The psychologist asked her if she was sure about the list and Aida agreed. The psychologist asked Aida to stop attending situations that she wrote on the left column for a month. Instead, to go to the places that made her happy more than ever. Aida said that she had a duty to visit her grandmother, aunts and relatives but they were on her bad list. According to the psychologist the only duty she had was to make herself happy so she would not get so tired of life and its disappointments that made her want to commit suicide. He emphasized that when those visits upset her they were no longer her duty but poison to her. Aida after cutting those relations and adding the right relationships stopped attempting suicide.

People hardly change or they never will unless they make a serious decision to try and do so. That requires **Rewriting the Mind**. As a result, if you meet people who have hurt you many times do not assume that they may have changed. Leave your doubt once

and for all and decide not to see them at all. At least, not until they continue to affect your mind negatively. The best mantra for our tempting mind in such cases is this: **Cut unhealthy relationships.**

Do not go to places that upset you. Cutting unhealthy relations with siblings is harder than friends and distant relatives. If you cannot completely sever your relations with first-degree relatives bring it to a minimum or cut one aspect of it. For example, a financial relationship or collaboration. That is of course, if you have problems in that regard. Unhealthy family relations may be cut down to short and rare visits or turned to brief phone calls with less damages to both parties. The short and once in a while visits would be better especially if the parties involved engage in arguments all the time.

Let us not also forget that we are healthier people by having healthy and decent relationships. A person who cuts all of his relationships has to suspect himself as a sick person. A person who by the smallest disappointment regards his relationship as unhealthy does not know the meaning of a healthy relationship. We are all different



from each other. These differences are our human assets and we have to be proud of it but if these differences become means of disputes or if we try to change others to our own preferences then we would be embarking on unhealthy relationships. An unhealthy relationship continuously creates animosity between people. Competition, racing, jealousy, revenge, humiliation and imposition of opinions etc. all create unhealthy relationships. Instead, tolerance, acceptance of differences, respecting others despite differences lead to healthy relationships. A healthy relationship does not mean that both parties must become one. No two persons can be one. A healthy relationship is all about the art of agreement not the art of becoming one. Even blood relations between siblings cannot make them as one. Maliheh is a married middle-aged woman with two kids. She is sometimes tearful and restless. Sometimes like a sunny day she smiles and at times like a stormy day she becomes gloomy and cries and again her mood becomes happy and bright. In the past she was diagnosed with depression and later as bipolar. She and her siblings since long have had a stormy relationship. Maliheh was always expecting too

much from them and always nagging. For years her siblings treated her temperament with consideration but her condition never changed throughout the years. Eventually, Maliheh's siblings one by one either cut down or completely ended their relationship with her. As a result, Maliheh became peaceful and found friends with whom she fought less and her siblings also found peace. When for over two years one does not feel happy and unable to get along with others she must have some kind of a mental disorder and needs to refer to a psychologist. If a relationship does not overtime become peaceful then it must be an unhealthy relationship and has to be severed or reconsidered.

Afshin is a very polite middle-aged man. He always has a light smile on his face. At the beginning he stole everyone's heart for his apparent humbleness and at the end of the meeting drove people away. If you have newly met him he keeps admiring you but makes meaningful smiles at the mention of every one's name. He keeps telling you that he doesn't intend to badmouth anyone but finds faults with them and warns you that they are capable of hurting other people. Afshin is able to ruin relations between people

whereas he himself keeps in contact and socializes with all of them. He always asks for something from every one of them. Whoever meets him and gets involved with him will not be safe from his harms. In these instances Afshin calls every one of his friends and talks badly about the person he is in dispute with and adds that since he is friends with people he has to inform them of indecent people. Many who have met him, fearing that he may conspire against them, have kept a superficial relationship with him supposedly to keep safe from him unaware that they have trapped themselves forever in a prison of relationship with him. In this case, it is better to end such an unhealthy relationship as soon as possible. Prolonging this relationship will produce more damage even if you pay the price in short term. At least, in short term you will pay a lesser price than if you were to keep it for a long time.

## **5. Do not stay alone**

To be alone is a bad situation that afflicts us with negative thoughts. If we rest more than our need our mind will be occupied by futile and often negative thoughts. When we get depressed, we prefer to be alone. Some psycholo-

gists for treatment of depression recommend not to stay alone because loneliness produces thoughts that lead to sorrow. We should not however fill our loneliness with wrong parties and meetings, which may be the cause of our seclusion in the first place. Positive meetings are a way of filling your loneliness; gatherings and visits that awaken positive thinking in us. It is about meeting friends and relatives that make us calm and happy. If we are amongst an unhealthy crowd our negative thoughts become active by the words and behavior of others but when we are alone these thoughts emerge from our subconscious. The process of thinking is fluid in our mind. If we are not engaged in a conversation or doing a chore, our mind like a bird jumps from one branch of imagination to the other.

They say when you are alone, beware of your thoughts and when you are with others watch your language. When we are alone apparently there is no one to disturb us but those who have hurt us start to speak in the solitude of our mind. When we are alone, we start to visualize the angry faces of those who have hurt us. We hear their insult and humiliating voices. It seems that we are captivated in an intolerable and unavoidable sit-

uation. We are neither free from our negative thoughts in our solitude nor are we safe from sarcasms of others in crowds. The weak ones commit suicide in such situations. What can we do to avoid reaching that point?

**The answer is:** Do not stay alone but engage in healthy relationships.

## **6. Do not remain idle.**

When we work all our five senses become mobilized for us to do the job correctly and usually, we employ our brain as much as we need it to stimulate the five senses. Working is a kind of meditation and stops our mind from recreating negative thoughts especially if we enjoy the type of work we are involved with. The old fashioned people were right to say that work is the best amusement. An idle person engages in his problems since he is not busy with anything else.

The sheep go to pasture to graze during the day and at night when they return to the pen they start to ruminate and chew back the grass. People too, go to graze life and when they are alone and idle start to ruminate what they have seen and heard. Voices and images that their mind has swallowed

but not well understood come up and they re-enact them time and again in their minds to supposedly better understand them but they suffer from it many times. To free your mind, concentrate on your work.

The goal is to liberate the thoughts. Stress is reduced on the mind by way of focus on work. Busy your mind on working and see what happens. If your subconscious does not leave you alone do not press yourself. Do not control anything. Various thoughts, programs, memories and imaginations enter the mind. Write them down on a piece of paper to make them go away and concentrate on your work again.

## **7. Do not see it to not want it**

Those on a diet try not to go to the refrigerator and see the food that they crave. If you intend on going on a diet put the fattening foods of your likes away from your eyes because their presence is a bad situation that shakes your will. The mantra of 'Do not see it to not want it' is effective when we are in the process of quitting. When we see something, we think about it and the thought provokes a feeling. If it is edible, we can even

feel the taste on our tongue.

Hamad is a young man of twenty something. His weight had reached 140 kilos and life had become difficult for him. His mind had become conditional that if he felt tired or upset he had to eat something. He had lost his father and sister in a car accident and whenever he thought of them he would start eating to forget his pain by the joy of eating. He eventually referred to a nutritionist. The nutritionist offered him a diet that made him lose 40 kilos in a year. He followed the dieting plan and reached his optimal weight. The nutritionist advised him that to maintain his reduced weight, his conditional eating habits should change and he should gain the will power to resist temptations, to stay away from delicious foods and to avoid places where others would invite him to eat more than what he needed.

Hamad avoided going to such places for the first few months until his conditional habits changed. He was able to see the foods without being controlled by the force of seeing, wanting and eating.

Write down your list of mantras and if you are having these problems repeat them at least

for thirteen weeks. The people in the past fasted for forty days but some psychological tests reveal that changing a wrong habit requires a three-month period. You may in the future too need to repeat some of these mantras. Three months of repeating these mantras is necessary for complete registration in the mind. The best is to check your list of mantras every day and repeat them to yourself to avoid making those wrong moves every day. The following are suitable mantras to avoid bad situations:

- Do not listen to bad news.
- Wake up early morning.
- Use virtual world according to your need.
- Cut unhealthy relationships.
- Do not stay alone.
- Do not stay idle.
- Do not see it to not want it.
- Suitable mantras to overcome insomnia:
  - I will not bring the records of my daily issues to bed.
  - I will fall asleep quickly and deeply.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### The Subconscious

When we sit alone and idle, our mind finds a chance to review the recent incidences that have happened to us. For example, we have had an encounter with someone at work but have not had the time to reflect upon its aspects thoroughly. Now we find a chance in our solitude to recall the incident and carefully review it. Reviewing memories, however, is always deliberate or conscious. We may be leisurely lying down on a sunny beach with no intention of recalling any thought or memory but suddenly become anxious at the thought of a loved one's death. We try hard to figure out why we have become so anxious but fail to find the reason. We brush up our mind. Has that loved one for whom we have become worried had a problem recently? Have we had a bad dream about him? Has someone given us bad news about him? Is it because we have been away from him for too long? Our answer is negative to all the questions. Then why do we feel anxious all over and make the trip that was supposed to

be recreational turn into a hell of fear and worries? Where do these agitating thoughts that have no external source or reason emerge from? Our subconscious.

## **What is the Subconscious?**

According to Jung<sup>2</sup> ‘The conscious mind is a very small island in an ocean of the mind’s subconscious.’ Our thoughts come from that ocean of our subconscious. These unsettled thoughts were once pushed out of our conscious to our subconscious because they disturbed and made us anxious. Our mental immune system has forced disturbing thoughts such as the death of a loved one, childhood abuses, embarrassing thoughts such as sexual desires or violence, out of our mind’s island of consciousness to that deep ocean of the subconscious. When we are alone or idle suddenly a wave rises from the depths of that ocean and pounds on the shores of the island of our conscious mind making us anxious, enraged and lustful. Rejection of thoughts and desires is a defense mechanism that stops admission of what is unacceptable to the conscious mind and

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2. Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) was a Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who founded analytical psychology

which creates anxiety when recalled. At times though this defense system loses control of the flow of thoughts and engages us. These kicked back thoughts are so abundant that we forget we have stored them somewhere in our subconscious; therefore we are unprepared to encounter them.

Sometimes these thoughts are upsetting thoughts that we have deliberately suppressed to stop them from annoying us when remembered. For example, we are supposed to appear in court in a few months or the time arrives for our debts to be paid and we purposely ignore them to reduce our anxiety. These suppressed thoughts, desires or memories though suddenly appear like clouds in the sky of our mind. If we had the wit or practice of not becoming emotional and just watch the passage of these clouds from the skies of our mind we would not run into any problems. The problem is we see ourselves as one with the clouds. If the clouds are black our souls also turn black. If the clouds produce thunder, we become angry. In such instances it is better for us to separate ourselves from our thoughts and only observe the passage of these clouds in our mind. The following is the best mantra to

overcome this situation:

**My mind is a sky and my thoughts, the passing clouds. I am not my thoughts.**

Obsessive patients embark on obsessive behavior by the flow of anxious thoughts in their mind to free themselves from danger whereas if they do not take any actions and just calmly observe the passage of these thoughts replaced by other thoughts and desires, not only their anxiety perishes but their obsession also decreases.

You have heard some say: 'This is my thought. That is how I think. That is my character. That is me.'

Their mistake is that they regard themselves as one with their thoughts whereas another hour they have a different thought and speak differently. The answer to them is: Sit a little and just watch. The sky of your mind will soon become sunny.

The truth is that not only our temperament goes up and down but also our thoughts keep changing all the time. If our thoughts come from situations and the subconscious mind and change at all time, why should we

suppose ourselves as one with them?

Take a look at your past. Your mind has been happy and sunny at times and believed you could do anything and sometimes it has been full of dark thoughts that made you believe you were incapable. Which one indeed have you been? Of course, none of them.

The mantra of **'I am not my thoughts'** helps you watch the different positive and negative flows in your mind. This mantra reduces the effects of your thoughts on your feelings and emotions. If we consider ourselves as one with our thoughts not only will we be extremely influenced by our emotions but also behaviorally we will engage in actions that we will despise later. If the sky of our mind is sometimes overcast, we have to tell ourselves: 'Wait for the rain to stop.' It is said that loneliness and idleness bring pensiveness and that in turn produces melancholy. A pensive person's thoughts constantly oscillate between the past and the future and prevent him from living in the present and the real world, in touch with the five senses. His thoughts always pull him inside himself and engage the small island of his consciousness with the ocean of his unconscious. What is

to be done? How does one prevail upon the tumultuous ocean of the unconscious?

One must remain a spectator of those thoughts, unexcited and yield for the waves of thoughts to pass and dissipate. That skill requires practice and repeat of mantras, otherwise those thoughts enter our emotional apparatus. It seems that what enters the island of the consciousness from the ocean of the unconscious is as vast as the oceans and limitless and we are never armed to combat this endless enormity. Fortunately, for this great ocean to affect our emotional system it has to overflow its waves on the small island of our conscious mind, and it is then that our subconscious reprogrammed by mantra therapy, will gain control of the affairs of this island.

In the next chapter we will see how essential but limited mantras can alleviate our vulnerability against the waves of the ocean of our unconscious mind.

The wrong thoughts and assumptions that nested in our middle brain as a set of fixed laws and make us more vulnerable every second as an erroneous defense mechanism are fortunately not high in numbers to be impossible to change. Even if we fail

to recognize all of them, changing a part of them will improve our current situation.

Our childhood is also a part of our subconscious. Our immature childhood that has remained intact in our past and stems from our wrong training. Our educational authorities have loaded our minds with wrong assumptions. For example, 'If I do not become successful, I am not a good person.' We have sometimes brought these thoughts from our childhood. Our parents have injected us with the unkind assumption, 'If you do not pass your tests, we will not like you.' And now we have turned school exams to all other tests in our life.

Kamal is a middle-aged man, married with kids. He struggles hard to earn a living. He has had a memorable childhood. His parents who had a hard time to raise their many children had sent him to live with his grandparents for a long time. Kamal had to observe strict rules in his grandparents' house. He played in the yard of his grandmother's house and sometimes took to the streets to play with other kids. Every moment of that childhood life was full of wonder and joy for Kamal. He continued every game to the

point of his delight, but the conditions are not the same now. He has to do everything to his dislike for his family now. He has to work long days to afford the rent for his small room that he does not like or pay for the low quality foods that his wife cooks. On his off days he wakes up late and daydreams about his childhood. He imagines playing in his grandmother's yard or in the streets around with the kids. His tired and sad face shows his nostalgia of those days. A major part of Kamal's subconscious mind is his blissful childhood that comes to his conscious mind in his idle times. His children at times hear him sigh and telling them to appreciate their childhood and his wish to still be a child. Try as Kamal may to refer to his childhood in his mind, his real childhood will never return to him and the result is nothing but longing and sadness. For his hard life mantra therapy is a method that teaches him to improve his life by repeating to himself, 'A little better from now on', instead of longing for the past.

## **Stop it**

In psychology a technique is employed that is similar to the tennis technique. A patient is asked to recall a thought that has led to his



anxiety in a way that it would produce that anxiety again. Right at the moment when that anxiety climaxes the patient is asked to stop his thought by repeat uttering the words: 'Stop it'. By repeating this practice psychologists create the ability to control anxiety in the patient. There are two other techniques also in this regard that I will point to.

## **Distract Yourself**

Children learn how to distract themselves or others since childhood. A sick child cries for ice cream but cannot have it. Other children distract him by showing a toy or something alike. We can also use the technique of distraction in controlling our anxiety, anger or obsession. Our mind just like that of children, is deceivable. If we remind it of ice cream it will want it and if we remind it of a toy it will want the toy. The mind does not understand a negative verb. If we tell the child not to think of ice cream because it is bad for him, he will constantly think of ice cream but if we tell him to look or think of a toy he will get distracted from ice cream. It seems that children know this technique better than grownups but parents when raising children constantly tell them not to do certain things. It is better to tell chil-

dren what they can do in order to make them forget a bad or wrong action.

### **Substitute a positive memory with a negative memory**

If you have an upsetting memory that disturbs you, first recall that memory and immediately think of a pleasant memory and try to connect the two together. As soon as remembering the bad memory, the good one will also come to your mind and a thought that is supposed to upset you becomes one that will make you happy or less sad.

Binazir is a Pakistani girl whose father was decapitated in front of her eyes. This awful memory had deprived her from living an ordinary life. She recalled this memory every minute and became sick and disabled. A psychologist asked her to remember that memory with every detail. She did and became extremely disturbed. Then the psychologist asked her to remember her best memory. She did and for a moment she was relieved of the torment of that awful memory. The psychologist asked her to immediately recall her best memory every time she thought of the sad one. Binazir did so from then on and

returned to a peaceful life.

## **Sleep and the Subconscious**

Our subconscious mind controls all our moves and behaviors in sleep. Our dreams are created by our unconscious. People can fall into artificial sleep by hypnotism and by inculcating some orders upon the subconscious mind. They will accept these suggestions. Even the inculcating can affect the functions of the five senses. For example, to make them weaker or stronger to the point that they will be able to ignore pain and hurt to some extent.

All of our behaviors are in some way controlled by our subconscious and if we want to change these behaviors we have to affect it by reprogramming.

An overweight person who cannot stop overeating means that he has a wrong programming in his subconscious. When he becomes helpless about his behavior he leaves it for another to decide what he can eat or not and the nutritionist programs his subconscious anew. The subconscious acts like a computer and it has to be programmed and fed the necessary data to function accordingly.

Mantra therapy involves the programming of the computer of our subconscious mind.

Our subconscious mind with all its power and capabilities lacks the power of reasoning and logic. It accepts all the messages it receives and carefully executes even if they are irrational messages. If our mind finds faith in anything it will consider it as reality, so it is better that we register wise, real and ethical messages in our subconscious to produce realistic, wise and ethical behaviors.

A wise message means a message with more benefit than loss. A real message is one that can be executed and an ethical message means a humane and just message.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Thought

If we could stop our thoughts completely our emotions and behavior would also stop. So far though no one has succeeded at completely stopping his thoughts because our mind is created as such that it cannot remain thoughtless.

Aim at not thinking about something we will think about it more. If we are told not to think of an elephant our mind does not comprehend the word 'do not' and consequently upon hearing the word elephant, it will think of it more. If we are told to not think about our problems our mind will not understand it but will think about problems more than before. What we are able to do by practice is not thinking but reducing the thoughts and changing negative thoughts to positive ones. In this case the goal is not about reaching the heaven of thoughtlessness but diminishing the inferno of negative thoughts.

The wrong proverbs and assumptions that have filled our minds are means for our negative and disturbing thoughts. The following

proverb is one of them: 'A miss by an inch is a miss by a mile.' The rhythmic tone in this proverb convinces us that an inch is the same as a mile and there is no way out either, whereas if we miss by an inch we can quickly compensate but if you miss by a mile it will be harder to get back. Instead of filling our unconscious by such inaccurate assumptions it would be better to feed our mind with realistic and wise principles.

Of course, all of us in our lifetime find good thoughts and principles time and again and reach that eureka moment per se. We keep reminding ourselves that we will follow the rules and will not fall into previous problems but soon we forget and revert back to the problems. Finding and forgetting the guiding lights of our life is wasting part of our lifetime. Had we not forgotten the guiding principles or words and repeated them so much that they had become engraved in our minds especially the unconscious, our lives would have been spent happier and more peacefully. In this chapter we will discuss mantras that will positively affect our mind.

## 1. Use your brain

According to Descartes<sup>3</sup>, no one is unthankful to God for having granted him less brain whereas most people have either not fully enjoyed their brain or do not use it enough and therefore always exposed to harm.

Wisdom starts its preliminary functions from the age of seven, but parents forget to tell their children to use their brain in making decisions.

What is wisdom? Simply defined, wisdom is the calculation of benefit, loss and providence. Whoever uses this ability will lead a more successful life. Those who are emotional ignore their wisdom and compromise their future benefits for satisfaction of their immediate momentary excitements. Although they clearly know about their benefits and harms, they still say: 'I know I will lose and regret, but I will do it anyways.' That means despite their mind's providence they set it aside to the benefit of their temporary emotions. They will at last get hurt and regret as well.

Besides parents who represent our wisdom in childhood, our wisdom in adulthood must play

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3. René Descartes was a French-born philosopher, mathematician, and scientist (1596 – 1650).

the role of a parent for us and emotions represent the child within us. There are those who admire the child within and regard wisdom as a prisoner who must be freed from chains to give freedom to the child of emotions. Imagine if everyone in the world does that the world will be a kindergarten fraught with spoiled children.

Correct principles are those that if observed by all humanity, life on earth will turn to heaven for all. If all decide to become Hallaj<sup>4</sup> the world will look like a madhouse. If all decide to change others instead of themselves, not only nothing will change but also friendship will perish in the world. The mantra of '**Use your brain**' will prompt us to configure benefits and losses and if all do as such, we will have an intelligent world.

## 2. Observe Ethics

The simplest universal definition of ethics is that if you do not want it for yourself, do not want it for others. If you do not like to be ripped off do not rip others off. If you do not like to be disrespected do not disrespect oth-

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4. Hallaj was a Persian mystic, writer and teacher of Sufism. He is most famous for his saying: 'I am the Truth', which many saw as a claim to divinity.



ers. If you do not like people to talk behind your back do not talk behind their back. If you do not like to be treated unjustly do not unjustly treat others.

The two principles of wisdom and ethics guarantee heaven on our planet. They will probably say that if we are after benefits so are others and since humanity has limited options there will be a war of interests. The answer is all these wars are not produced because of the conflict of interests among the wise but many wars are created from unintelligence. Wars do not even benefit the warmonger. Rather, if everyone acts wisely, they will also conduct themselves ethically. If ethics are observed, everyone will be safe. In fact, wisdom protects our individual interests, ethics, our collective interests. Observing ethics therefore is intelligent. In other words, these two principles provide our material and spiritual interests. You may ask what happens if the majority do not observe these principles? In that case the situation will remain as it is now. You may ask why should you behave ethically when others do not? The answer is observing ethics even for one person in a completely unethical world has two advantages: First, the peace within

the ethical person and second, becoming a role model for others.

Let us hope that morality will spread in the future and our lives become ethical and wise. If our behavior is not intelligent when we face a loss, negative thoughts will invade us, and the vicious circle revolves again. If we do not behave morally, the ethical values indoctrinated in our subconscious will blame us and we will be stricken with a feeling that is called the guilty conscience.

### **3. Health and happiness not accomplishment**

David wakes up early morning and leaves the house and returns home late at night. Although forty years old, he is not yet married and has no girlfriend. When his friends ask him when he intends to get settled, he says he has divided his life into two parts:

**First:** Preparing for life.

**Second:** Life itself.

‘For now, I am preparing for life and work hard to buy a house and get a savings for the future. Then when everything is ready,

I will start living.’ David is not an exception to this example. Many act as such. Sousan is another. She says: ‘I have determined my goals in life, and I will not stop until I reach each one of them.’ I ask Sousan what if you die before reaching yours goals? Were you born to live or to reach your goals?

Sousan answers: ‘Life without goals is worthless to me.’ Sousan’s goal was to get a doctorate degree and a decent job. If Sousan faces death and death asks her if she is willing to live six months longer but give up everything she has accomplished she will immediately accept. Why then is she wasting her life on something that she would give up for six more months to live? The world we know is made up of billions of galaxies. In one of these galaxies, which we call the Milky Way there are billions of stars and planets. As far as we know in one of these planets there is life and that is the Earth. The most intelligent living creatures on this planet are humans. In other words, of all this existence only our planet is alive. What is above this life that we with our intelligence would want to lose for something else? We have been born to be in this world not to gain a small piece of it. To remain in this world only three issues matter:

**First:** Health. If we are too sick we will die.

**Second:** Happiness. If we are too depressed we will commit suicide.

**Third:** Friendship. If we become enemies we will kill each other.

Consequently, health, happiness and friendship should be the priorities of our lives. If what we seek leads to our health, happiness and tighter friendships it is good. If not, it is useless. Sousan says she does not want the degree and a decent job for herself. She wants it for her parents and she has to make their wish come true.

That means Sousan's parents have brought her to this world so she can get a doctorate degree and a decent job so they will have reached their goal. Is a living human being which is the world's accomplishment supposed to give up this accomplishment to get a degree or fame or wealth so that when she dies she will leave all that and go?

Indeed, what is above life itself that we lose it to gain other stuff?

We are born to live healthy and happy. All

the possibilities that man has provided is for this purpose but many of us lose these two significant assets for other accomplishments and successes. All those who prefer success over health and happiness have preferred a part of life over the principle of life.

Wanting is living in the future. Our life will not start if we do not reach the things we want. That is why Buddha's main mantra is not wanting.

#### **4. Meeting your need not your wish**

To live we need food, clothing, shelter, security and family. Without them we will die of hunger, cold and insecurity. These are our real needs and help us live in the moment. Wishes though are different. Having wealth or fame and more power are not among our needs. They can be false needs or human fantasies and illusions. We recognize Buddha as a symbol of not wanting. He says: 'Our short life compared to the universe's long life is like a shooting star. What are we after in this short life? His answer is nirvana or heaven on earth.' Buddha says: 'This heaven will not be achieved but by not wanting because every desire brings a suffering for us and keeps us away from that heaven.'

You want to achieve wealth, fame, power or a knowledge or specialty. From the moment this wish is formed in your mind your suffering also starts and until you reach that wish you will be suffering in the desire of wanting it. Without those goals life is not complete in your mind. You feel deficient and this thought leads to a feeling of hurt in you. This feeling makes you behave in ways to reach those wishes. If you Do not reach those wishes you will live in suffering and die the same and if you do reach them you will define another wish for yourself and run after it. Wishes are arranged like mountains behind each other. You climb a peak thinking you have reached the summit but another peak sticks out behind it and you realize you still have a way to go. Buddha understood this game and decided to free himself from it, which is the vain product of the thought. He said: 'I do not want it so I can live peacefully in this moment.' Let us look around us. Most people suffer not because of a painful ailment but because of distant wishes. They live in a house but want a better house. They have a job but wish for a better one. They have a wife or a husband but look for another mate. We are born in this world to live healthily, hap-

pily and peacefully. If we are not healthy we will die. If we are not happy we will kill ourselves and if we are not friends we will kill each other, and the world will look as if we had never been born.

List your wishes. See how much of your lifetime will be spent on reaching them. See how much your sorrow today is related to those wishes. Think about every one of them and whisper to yourself :’I was not supposed to be born to reach these things.’

‘I was born on earth only because God the creator or nature chose me to live on this planet. My idle mind has created the rest.’

It is said that mankind is the most intelligent creature on earth. Incidentally, this intelligence renders him trouble. A tree never thinks to be a better tree. No dog or cat or lion and leopard think to be better animals. A tree is only a tree and a lion always a lion. But humans always want to be better or superior whether materially or in spirit. We have all heard this statement by Shakespeare<sup>5</sup>: ‘The question is to be or not to be?’ I think the

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5. William Shakespeare was an English playwright, poet, and actor, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world’s greatest dramatist (1564-1616).

question is to be or to become or to achieve? As soon as a child learns to speak we ask him what he wants to become in the future. There is no future in the mind of a child. In a child's mind everything is about now. He is playing and enjoying the moment but with that question we plant the seeds of two miseries. One, an ambiguous future, another an impossible becoming. And the child does not know what to answer to us. We ask him again: 'Do you want to become a doctor or an engineer?' And the child not knowing which one is proper, chooses the second because it is the last word that stays in his mind. And we continue our preaching: 'The first one is better because you will make more money and people will call you Doctor.' The child decides to become a doctor from that moment just to please us but in the future due to lack of accommodations in universities or living conditions he cannot become a doctor and therefore becomes depressed.

If it is a girl she will get married but always remain remorseful that she should have become a doctor but did not. She is not happy with her life and sees herself as incompetent or the world as unjust. She will not remember at all that her parents or others planted



this dream in her subconscious, greatly ignoring the human brain's functions and she will taste misery for the rest of her life. Our parents did not teach us to be happy, healthy and peaceful with others for as long as we lived. They told us that so and so scientist was so indulged in his work that he forgot to eat. We will not become scientists but will learn to forget eating in order to succeed at work. They teach us that so and so suffered so much but he accomplished his goal. We will not get anywhere but will endure the suffering. Worst yet, is the race with our friends. A game is held in which only one wins. They encourage us to be the winner and we suffer to win that game. We may not win either, but we will lose our friends because our parents wanted to make successful people out of us not happy human beings. As a result, the contemporary world is fraught with successful but unhappy people.

They do not tell us to go, play and enjoy. Play soccer and see how much you will sweat. See how strong your muscles become. See how you will lose the game and it will not matter to you. They say: 'Go play and become number one.' They say a cuckoo lays her eggs in other birds' nests. When those

birds enter their nests thinking that it is their own eggs they sit on them not knowing that the eggs belong to the cuckoo. Many of our thoughts are also similar to that of the cuckoo's eggs but we assume them as our own. Let us ask ourselves, did we have these thoughts when we were born? Then why do we without knowing who planted these thoughts in our mind and with what motive, we regard ourselves as the owner of these thoughts and sometimes see ourselves as one with them? Finding where the thought came from and how it affected our emotions, behavior and body, will change that thought and its consequences in us.

Anna is forty years old. She loved painting since childhood but her parents wanted her to become a doctor. Anna became a doctor but she did not feel happy. She showed her medical degree to her parents and said: 'I got this degree to make you happy but I am not happy myself. Now I will go back to painting to make myself happy.' Anna had lived thirty of her best years in sadness and it still haunts her to date. Her sorrow reflects in her paintings.

## 5. Forego

I am disappointed with him.

I will take revenge on him.

He hurt me financially and mentally.

It was all his fault.

Why did he do this to me? I was not at fault and had not done anything.

Usually, our mind is loaded with internal conversations and suffering of the like. We do not know how to stop these inner voices. Consequently, when we sit idle our mind starts sending messages: 'Remember what so and so told you?'

In this situation the tennis technique is useful. As soon as a thought surfaces from the depths of your mind, 'Remember so and so hurt you?', you can react by saying 'forego'. As if the word 'forego' represents a tennis racket that we bang on the ball of our negative thought to throw it away from us. Our mind is used to internalize hurt and ruminate on it. It likes to ask: 'In what situation did so and so hurt me?' It likes to read the enemy's mind. That is why it asks itself: 'Why did he do this to me? Or it likes to blame itself: 'Why did I

not answer him?’ And all these questions or ruminations of the mind bring the taste of hurt on our tongue and we taste bitterness.

I long practiced Jesus’ mantra of ‘forgive’ but it was effective as long as I kept repeating it but the problem with the word ‘forgive’ is that we register in our mind that a wrongdoing has taken place whereas it is not clear whether it actually has or not.

The supporters of the ‘forgive’ theory are divided into two groups:

**First Group:** Followers of Jesus: Forgive and forget.

**Second Group:** Supporters of Mandela: I can forgive but I cannot forget.

The question remains that as long as we have not forgotten, how can we forgive?

Our thought affects our emotions and forgiving has to do with our feelings. Our feelings and emotions are affected by our thoughts. So, if we cannot thoughtfully forget we cannot emotionally forgive.

‘forego’ is a way of salvation of the mind from getting involved with the issue because our mind can many times in our lifetime remind

us of the hurt. By 'forego' we push away that hurt from our conscious for a moment. Forgive and forget though good, is a reminder of a process indeed. The process of understanding the problem and our analysis of our suffering from it. Then comes the process of wiping the problem from the mind. I imagine in the mantra of 'forego', the mind can act faster. In the words 'forego' Jesus' forgive and forget is also hidden without having attributed a fault to anyone. 'forego' means Do not involve your mind in the problem. There are other mantras in this book as well but by far the mantra of 'forego' is one of the most soothing. Our mind is so much focused on finding the culprit that it forgets other issues. If 'forego' becomes the important mantra of our life we will not look for the culprit any more for our problems. In the mantra of 'forego' there is also a gracious passage. It grants graciousness to one's soul. The soul does not degrade itself by these small issues because in a grand soul everything is grand. Do not only spare others but spare yourself too. I know someone who had been hurt by his mother and could not forego her faults. He also did not want to speak to anyone about his mother's wrongdoings. One day

he wrote down everything he thought of his mother on paper and threw it in the river to bring it out of himself. I know another person who had problems with her father. She also wrote down all her disappointments with her father and since she loved Jesus, she tore it apart under the statue of Jesus. I also know someone who paid fees of one hundred hours to a psychologist and talked against her loved ones to him. The psychologist's pocket became full but her heart did not get empty. Sometimes retelling can remind us of what we have forgotten. In this case the mantra of 'cut your speech short' is good to end internal dwelling and effective to end the mind's endless conversations.

## **6. Virtues call each other**

Change cannot be rushed. A step by step procedure is more effective. It has taken a long time for wrong assumptions and negative thoughts to nest in our subconscious. They cannot be thrown out of the mind overnight. It will suffice for us to succeed at changing one of them. It will be then that a ray of light will enter the dark storage of our mind and strike a positive blow to the chain of our wrong assumptions. If we succeed

at the first one the second one will change more easily. Sometimes the excitement of change tempts us to change overnight but it will also take us one night to revert back to before. If we only focus on changing one of our thoughts or habits and overcome it, our other thoughts and habits will also line up for change. In fact, virtues call each other, given we have heralded the first one.

Where do we start? Which virtue should we choose?

Start from the most important problem right now or one in the past day or week. If you constantly get hurt by people's remarks and you want to know their opinion on you, you are obviously an affection seeker and live for others. It is better to ignore people's eyes on you and live with your heart. The mantra of 'Be good in your own eyes not people's favorite', is the best start for you.

Do not be discouraged if you do not succeed at changing yourself but continue repeating the mantra. These mantras will have their effect in due time. Your behavior stems from your emotions and emotions rise from your thoughts. Mantras will affect your thoughts and change your wrong assumptions. You

may have heard the example of the girl and the cow. A thin figured girl was carrying a large cow on her back going up the stairs of a palace. She was asked how she was able to do that? She said: 'The cow was a small calf at first and grew a little every day and I grew stronger every day to the point that I can carry it now.' This example teaches us that attaining success is possible through small steps.

## **7. Mankind is definitely fallible**

If you have a guilty conscience and constantly blame yourself, the following is the best mantra for you: 'Mankind is definitely fallible.' In fact, all of us have faulted not just in the past and in our childhood but we keep making mistakes now too and will do so in the future and until death. There is not a day in our life that passes without mistakes, so it is better to accept this human condition. No one is exempt from making mistakes. Our physical condition, our needs, our mental capability, our excitements and our beliefs always expose us to small and big mistakes. Only the unborn and the dead make no mistakes.

Self-confidence and believing in yourself takes roots in having faith on the two follow-



ing mantras: Be good in your own eyes not a favorite of people.

Mankind is definitely fallible. The first mantra makes us needless of the approval of others and the second mantra frees us from self-blame and destructive guilt feelings. The reason for the two borderline and histrionic personality disorders is rooted in the lack of self-belief. A person with borderline personality disorder always faces identity crisis. He constantly asks himself: 'Who am I'? And since he cannot accept his real self with all his faults he constantly becomes infatuated with others and regards them as heroes but by their slightest mistake starts to hate them just like he does himself. Such people can transform themselves with these two mantras and free themselves of the torment of this disorder.

The following words echo in many people's minds:

- I wish I had not made that remark.
- I should not have done it.
- I will not make that mistake again.
- Damn me if I do that again.
- I wish I had not opened up that business.

- I wish I had not met him.
- Why did I say that there?
- Why did I do that?

This mentality yields lack of self-confidence, sadness and too much expectations from oneself.

We say to ourselves: 'Had I had my wisdom before I would not have made the past mistakes.' We forget that if we had not made those mistakes we would not have the wisdom today.

There is a sentence that says: 'I forgave whomever I got to know.' It means that whenever I got to know a person's needs, beliefs and anticipations I gave him the right to behave as such. It is the same for us. Many of our mistakes are rooted in our needs of the moment he wrong beliefs and excitement on which we have no control and. If we can forgive anyone we get to know why not forgive ourselves whom we know best? We are more familiar with our needs, excitements and beliefs in the moments of making mistakes more than anyone.

Unfortunately, many religions by coupling our behavior with our soul make us hate our-

selves. The guilt feelings to avoid wrongdoings instead of stopping us from evil, make us hate ourselves and naturally, one who does not like himself cannot love others either.

In our upbringing culture the parents see the child's behavior as one with him. That is why they tell him 'if you do that I will not like you anymore.' This pairing of the child with his behavior and not loving him for his wrong behavior will transfer to the child's mind. From then on after every wrong action he will hear the voice inside that says 'I do not like myself or I hate myself.'

The mantra of 'Mankind is definitely fallible' and 'since I am human I make mistakes' not only will make us realistic and humble but will render us self-confidence.

As children when we went to school our grade point average sometimes came down by fifty percent, but we still advanced to a higher grade. I mean that if we took exams on ten courses and only answered half of the questions on each test, we still passed. Even if we got an 'F' grade on a course we only repeated that one course and had a chance to prepare and take the exam a few months later and advance to a higher grade. But as

soon as we acted wrongly, in our parents' eyes we failed them as their children. By the slightest mistake they would announce that they did not like us and were no longer our parents and we were not their children. Our grade point average did not matter to them, but we had to get 'A' grades in every lesson of life. Their evaluation of our behavior was gradually transferred to our mind and we considered ourselves as failures and our self-belief faded. Not only were they not our parents anymore, but we were not good in our own eyes. We did not see ourselves as likeable but worthless and incapable. That was how our character's central beliefs were shaped and we were gradually trapped in a variety of psychological pitfalls.

To confront these wrong evaluations, we need to accept our real self despite the weaknesses and shortcomings. Let us think of our grade point average not of each one of the grades and by that, work on recreating our self-beliefs. Those who are not good in their own eyes, have a need to be seen as good by others but since others do not share the same opinions they will constantly be exposed to people's disputes and differences of opinions. If they try and please everyone,

they will have multi characters and if they try to please a certain group and not others, they will be placed in between friendships and animosities. Those who are good in their own eyes and do not seek to please others will live happier and healthier lives and be more determined.

The histrionic personality disorder, which is one of the most vulnerable in mental disorders is characterized by constant seeking of attention from others. Extreme jealousy in those with this disorder stems from the fact that such individuals see themselves as good only when others approve them. If other individuals receive attention in front of them they become jealous. If such characters happen to be criticized they consider themselves ruined because they are not good in their own eyes but seek the approval of others. It is said that the jealous will never have peace of mind. But jealousy is a secondary symptom and its treatment is impossible without treating the underlying factor, which is lack of self-confidence. He who is jealous neither loves or believes himself and most likely his brain, unable to produce dopamine. Consequently, he needs the approval of others and since he looks outside himself, he has to gain

his good or bad from external comparisons. Masoumeh had once cited a beautiful sentence on the Internet and repeated it to herself as a mantra: 'Do not hurt and do not get hurt'. Although the sentence was rhythmic and had a positive message, she slept every night having hurt and gotten hurt because the beautiful motto did not have a practical solution. Her self- expectations were going higher whereas if instead of that sentence had she repeated 'Mankind is definitely fallible', not only would she not have been easily hurt by others but by lowering her expectations she would have ~~less~~ hurt other people less. The mantras must be in tune with one's inner and outer realities and believing in them must make a change in us. Pay attention to the mantra 'Mankind is definitely fallible'. Ask yourself: which human being do you know that has not ever faulted? Belief in fallibility of mankind also obliterates our guilt trips. With this mantra we remember our human limitations and stop blaming ourselves. It also lowers our expectations of others. We will accept that they too were created as fallible and we do not cross them off the list of our friends because of the slightest mistake they make. He who accepts his limitations is

psychologically a healthier person.

## **8. Take one job at a time**

Mike has a stressful life. He is always late for his appointments. Although he works hard, he always misses deadlines. He says he is busy and stressed out and delayed. He is used to handling several jobs at once. Each one of his jobs has its own countless details which engages his mind in endless calculations. Mike usually handles the small chores and when he finds the right time he works on his major tasks but before the small chores end, other ones appear.

George is the opposite. Although he is hard-working and busy, he has a peaceful life. He prioritizes his tasks. If he has to handle several jobs at once he chooses to do one to the end and takes on other jobs. George is more focused because of doing one job at a time. He handles his responsibilities with more speed and precision. His friends insist that he should handle more jobs with his capabilities, but George believes that chores are endless in the world and it is best to do the most important first and forget the rest. Among the jobs George handles he only

chooses the one that would change his fate. He either avoids handling unimportant tasks or delays them. When we zoom in on one task our concentration is higher, the quality of our work is better, and we have more peace of mind.

## **9. Do not Compare, do not compete**

A jealous person is not necessarily a bad person. Rather, he has low self-confidence and does not see himself knowledgeable enough to do it.

Dariush is successful in his academic studies and career but always compares himself with those he sees as more successful. He becomes jealous and is never happy and content with his life. On the other hand those who know him are jealous of his status and express their envy by sarcastic remarks. They ignore his talent and thrive and always attribute his success to circumstances, likelihoods and luck and since they are envious of him they are not willing to make friends or socialize with him. His condition has become one of living in jealousy. His own jealousy towards others and vice versa. He has lost his peace of mind and quit his job but still lives in jealousy.



A comparing mind provokes jealousy in humans because instead of indulging in the pleasure of what we possess, we suffer from what we lack, and others have.

In life's situations every person is neither zero nor hundred. We are all in between zero and hundred. In this situation some are lower, some higher and if the mind always stays in a state of comparison it will always suffer from jealousy and lack of self-belief.

What do we do with those jealous of us?

First, we have to determine if anyone is really jealous of us or is it our imagination? Sometimes because we have been repeatedly envied we assume that everyone is always jealous of us. Sometimes we may take a simple joke as someone's act of jealousy but if we find out for certain that some people are jealous of us, we have to first see if their jealousy will harm us or is it just sarcastic remarks, in which case we must ignore it. If, however, we feel that their jealousy threatens our health and happiness then the relationship is unhealthy and must be severed.

Truth is that the jealousy of others would only affect us when our self-confidence is low. If

we believe in our virtues, as soon as we encounter a jealous person instead of becoming angry and pity ourselves, we will pity them. We will clearly realize that they feel deficient and if they make sarcastic remarks it is because they are incapable of recreating their self-confidence and therefore poking at ours. If we feel good about ourselves we will help them raise their self-esteem and live their life without constant comparing it to others. We will remind them of their own virtues and spiritual assets and we will speak less of our own successes and accomplishments, so as not to drag their sick minds to make comparisons. The following three mantras help us free ourselves from the jealousy of others and strengthen our self-confidence: Be good in your own eyes, not a favorite of people.

- Do not internalize the jealousy of others.
- Do not compare, do not compete.

Comparison is the simplest model of recognition but it only works when one aspect of something is compared with the same aspect of another. For example, comparing the height of a child with that of another child. Comparing acceleration of a car with the acceleration of another car. When we compare

two systems we have to compare every aspect one by one to gain better knowledge. On the same note when we compare two human beings we have to acknowledge that our information on their genes, physical and mental abilities and environmental-social conditions is incomplete and by comparing one of their aspects without knowledge of their inner and external conditions we take a wrong path in making that comparison. We see a person who quickly and precisely paints a valuable picture or plays music and we become envious because we lack the talent to do it. We may even blame ourselves for this shortcoming. Worst is when our parents provoke jealousy and low self-confidence by dragging us into such comparisons. We Do not know how much an artist's genes played a role in their talent or how far external factors contributed. The opposite is the same. We may have talents and abilities that those we compare with, lack. If we learn to listen to our inner voice we will better recognize the talents that our genes have provided for us but if we aim at succeeding by jealousy and competition we will ignore the inner voice and not only will lose in the competitions but fail at recognizing our own talents.

We live in a capitalist world. A world full of competitions. Competitions with few winners and countless losers. The losers feel hopeless and disenchanted by the competitions and winners fraught with anxiety lest they would lose the next time. And some blow on the fire of temptations that competition motivates people to move, not knowing that it will soon make them unmotivated and stagnant. The proper solution for us is to get out of these unconstructive competitions and find our incentives to move by hearing our inner voice and according to our own experiences. For us to know in which areas we are talented there are two inner and outer approaches. To hear the inner voice, we have to recognize what our inner self is inclined to. From an external perspective we have to see which approach is more satisfying to us. But when we choose the way of competition we are ignoring the inner voice and external experience but measuring ourselves with numbers and figures pertinent to the competition.

The minds used to comparison are not immune to jealousy and lack of peace of mind. They not only become jealous but also internalize the jealousy of others and meas-

ure the world by the meter of competition whereas every phenomenon in this world is unique and comparisons are neither real nor do they work.

Even comparing your present status with the past can render sorrow or illusion. The old get hopeless by comparing their physical and mental conditions with their youth or they get illusions with their childhood.

## **10. A little better**

- I did not get an A grade but got a C.
- My foot pain never vanished.
- I am not happy with myself. I did not become what I wanted.
- I still have a lot of work, wishes and problems.
- If that happens it will be disaster and I will be ruined.
- If he leaves me/If he leaves her/ If I leave him it will be disaster.
- If I do not succeed at this job, this love, this test, this admission it will be disaster. Unless a miracle saves me/her/you.

- If that happens it will be tragic.
- If my problem gets resolved it will be a miracle.

In life, changes are neither miracles nor are they tragedies. Everything always gets a little better or worse. In our lifetime sometimes our relationships turn cold with our relatives and friends and after a while it warms up. Even if these relationships come to a complete end, still no tragedy has taken place. Each one of us will find a more suitable relationship for ourselves. If we lose a job we will eventually find a little better or worse job but our mind is usually good at creating tragedies even from small incidences. That is why it searches for a miracle to stop the tragedy or compensate for a tragedy with a miracle.

In reality though, advancements and successes gradually improve our status. Growth also takes a gradual course but our mind seeks a change of a hundred percent. That is why even if ninety nine percent of change occurs we will not be satisfied.

People make the same mistakes in political events too. They vote for a candidate who would resolve their problems and since no

one is able to do that a hundred percent they stop supporting or turn their back on him or join his rival who utters definite slogans.

Another mistake is determining the goal. Setting up a goal for management is the foremost important principle. In management if you do not determine your goal first, planning would be impossible. Psychologically, determining the goal transfers your life from the present to the future. You will not have peace of mind until you reach your goal. Everything becomes contingent upon the future when that goal has been realized. You feel accomplished by reaching that goal and feel deficient if you fail. This is what our brain does to us when we preoccupy ourselves with objectivity. Mentally, 'a little better' is a more suitable situation for our mind. Suppose you have pain in the leg. If your goal is complete recovery from your pain you will not feel happy unless you do get completely well. However, if you set your objective for reduced pain, with every percentage that your pain gets alleviated you will feel happy. If instead of reaching point one hundred, start from zero and gradually advance, every step you take you will feel happy. If you have bought a house and are waiting to pay off all

your mortgages, you will not feel content unless you have paid it all off but with the technique of 'a little better', with every payment you will feel satisfied. In the model of 'a little better', the criterion is distancing away from point zero. In the 'goal oriented' model the criterion is the distance you have to take to reach your goal of a hundred percent.

You have had a very good relationship with a relative. An incident or misunderstanding has damaged your relations. If your intention is to go back a hundred percent to the previous standing of your relationship you will not feel gratified so soon. If you aim however, at improving the relationship you will feel pleased even by starting to greet each other.

You can ask yourself every day what to do to improve in the following regards:

- Health
- Happiness
- Friendship
- Personal growth

And at night before sleeping briefly ask yourself if there were any improvements on any of the issues. With the mantra of 'a little bet-



ter' we will guarantee our relative happiness. From a psychiatric point of view the secretion of dopamine promotes a reward-motivated behavior in us, which is related to the model of 'a little better'. If your goal is to write a two hundred page book, until you finish the book dopamine will not be secreted in your brain but if you feel a little better with every page you write your brain may secrete dopamine two hundred times leading to your happiness and its continuity. That is why psychologists recommend setting goals at smaller intervals and with every phase, tick it on the paper. This will cause the secretion of dopamine and the feeling of accomplishment in you.

Descartes says if you desire to overcome a difficult task divide it to smaller tasks. In such case you will have several not too difficult tasks ahead of you and you will easily accomplish them. When I was a child my grandmother used to say that God had a thousand and one names but among them only one was His greatest title and whoever knew that name was able to do just about anything. From all the mantras I have applied to my own life I find the mantra of 'a little better' the greatest of all.

## 11. Trying, not the result

‘I tried so hard but did not get the result I wanted so I will not try any more’.

This is the voice of our despairs heard from within after every trial and failure. We attend a university admissions exam and study hard for it but after all our name does not appear in the list of the admitted. We become hopeless and disappointed at our aptitude and capacity. This bitter experience turns into a voice that we constantly hear inside our brain: All trials are vain.

We start up a business and because of a new invention all our planning and calculations go wrong and we become bankrupt. From that time, we do not dare to embark on any new venture. We whisper to ourselves: I fail at anything I do.

We get a doctorate degree in a major but are unable to land a job to afford our basic living costs. We feel our life has been wasted. We tell ourselves: I will not get anywhere.

A research in the US shows that what we whisper to ourselves has to be criticized and discredited seventeen times to lose its effectiveness on us. Just like in court where

words bear legal consequences they also have a psychological weight on our mind. You have to therefore be careful with what you say to yourself.

There are few people who do not have such experiences in their life. A few commit suicide after failures because they think the world has come to an end for them. Many more too get depressed indefinitely and choose seclusion. There are also those who because of life's realistic needs attempt at another trials. Another group too such as scientists regard every failure as just another experience and continue to experiment until they reach success. The same is true in interpersonal relationships. You treat others well to be treated reciprocally but you get mistreated. You ask yourself what the point is of doing good to others and so you stop it.

That is how our brain works. If it is not rewarded for its struggle, it stops repeating the action and if it receives a suitable reward it will repeat it again. A part of this repetition has to do with the secretion of dopamine, which stimulates a sense of happiness, reward and pleasure in us. If we program our mind as such that 'trying is important not the result',

gradually our mind affected by this new assumption even at failed attempts will secrete dopamine. You may go to a stadium to win a soccer game. In that case secretion of dopamine will depend on the days that you will win but if you go to the stadium to run and lose extra weight, by weighing yourself and finding out that you have lost a little weight your body will receive the dose of dopamine.

We can teach our children that trying is for learning not passing the exams. We can tell our children that running and sweating in a game is important not winning it. We can tell ourselves that struggle for freedom and justice is important not necessarily winning in this sphere. In that case, we will be pleased with the struggle and battle not by the result and victory. The heroes are those who do good for the sake of goodness not for the results produced. You may say that secretion of dopamine has nothing to do with our mindset but it is a chemical action that automatically happens. Just like when we eat sweets our mind secretes dopamine. Experience shows that when you go on a diet and avoid sweets and lose weight you will also gradually receive dopamine from your ability to quit eating sweets.

As a child I had learned a poem from my grandmother that said:

‘If you know the pleasure of quitting a pleasure, you will not call it a pleasure anymore.’

Back then I enjoyed quitting a pleasure as much as the pleasure itself.

Variety of addictions stimulate dopamine secretions and as a result by repeating the addiction we get dopamine as the reward. Now you can quit your addiction and bring down the stimulation to a minimum or by a positive addiction such as sports activities receive the dopamine.

As you can avoid stimulation of dopamine secretion in your brain by quitting your addiction, you can change your perspective and still receive the dose of dopamine.

The mantra of ‘trying is important not the result’ will affect the secretion of the dopamine in our brain.

From another perspective we have to know that what we do will render consequences unaccounted for. In childhood we may have played games for years and never won in any of them but our bodies and intellect became

stronger in those games. We have studied subjects that have not rendered us any jobs but those studies have affected our general knowledge or created another aspect in our professions. Steve Jobs used to undertake calligraphy for a while which apparently wasn't useful for him but when he designed the I-phone he used his calligraphy experiences in designing the fonts.

Fruitless trials create qualities in us that we may have never achieved without those struggles. But if we demand the desired result from every trial it will lead to despair and is a case of failure.

Not only our struggles do not lead to optimal results sometimes but the struggles of humanity on the ~~in~~-whole has not resulted in success most of the time. Mankind's scientific achievements do not result from the struggles of scientists but the product of one in several thousand attempts. Whatever that mankind has proudly achieved today is the limited results of those countless trials.

## **12. Not the problem but the solution**

- You know I have many problems.

- Thinking of problems has occupied me day and night.
- I have six problems and if they get resolved I will not have any worries.
- At nights when I sleep I keep thinking of my problems. I want to know the reason for them.

Thinking about problems taints our mind with negative thoughts and hopelessness. When we think of problems we feel debilitated. If thinking of the underlying reasons for problems does not lead to finding solutions, it will make us even more unable to find the solutions; but if instead of mere thinking of problems we look for solutions, our mind becomes positive. After all, problems get resolved through finding solutions. Solutions, however, must be realistic, wise and ethical. Realistic in the sense that they can be executed. Wise in the sense that they produce more benefits than damage and ethical in the sense that by doing it we will not become remorseful because of our unfairness towards others. We do not want to create mental problems for ourselves. If the solution is not realistic, the problem will remain still and if it is not wise it will add to our problems

and if unethical our soul will be displeased. Sometimes a gradual and step-by-step solution is feasible. Do not think about deciding on problems in bed because our mind in the dark with closed eyes makes wrong calculations. To find solutions it is best to do it in the morning after a good night's sleep and while walking. More importantly though, we have to change our habit of thinking about problems to finding solutions. Problems always appear in our life, which must be resolved. Some of them arise because of our real life needs such as problems in the way of our health, happiness or necessary affairs in life. But some problems are due to our fantasies and dreams. Sometimes instead of resolving problems it is better to relinquish a not so important wish. For example, we have a house but we want a bigger one for which we have no money and no one would give us a loan. Instead of thinking about an impossible loan we better forego the desire for a bigger house.

In handling the problems people are divided to two groups:

One group thinks about problems and fails and those who think of solutions and find



them. Those who think of solutions, once found, they feel light but those who only focus on the problem itself, feel suffocated under the weight of unsolvable problems. The mantra of 'Not the problem but the real, wise and ethical solution' is one that solves a part of the problem. Whatever we feed the mind it will give it back to us. If we tell the mind, 'problem, problem', it will also give us problems and if tell it 'solution, solution', it will show us the solution.

### **13. Bury the past**

If we become nostalgic about the past we will become wistful. If we remind ourselves of past sufferings we will become dejected. Truth is that the past has affected us but we Do not influence the past. If we keep thinking about the past, it will continue to have an effect on us. Let us not forget that the past is dead but we are here still alive.

What can be done about the past? Could we really get rid of it? The past in one sense means all of our memories. Every one of our thoughts is connected to a positive or a negative thought from our past. The mistakes we have made in the past are our present

day experiences. Without thinking of them we may repeat the mistakes. Not thinking about the past is similar to wanting to void ourselves from our memories. Our present day knowledge is connected to the times, places and events in the past. The past is connected to every lesson or experience we have learned and acquired. If we were able to forget the past our mind would have become like a newborn without a past. Is it possible to free from the past and if so, is it ideal? The answer is that we do not and cannot remember all the moments of our life in the past. Sometimes, unwillingly based on meaningful inspirations or without knowing the reasons we recall a part of the past that affects our temperament. Experience reminds us that reflecting about the past brings sorrow because if we recall a happy memory that cannot be repeated today, we become wistful of our happy past and if the past reminds us of our sorrows and sufferings we become gloomy. If the past reminds us of the people that have hurt or tormented us we become resentful.

What can be done about the past?

## First condition:

We can think about the past, forget the present and find the reasons for our miseries relating to the past or the bygones. In this case, we lose enjoying the present and will have no chance for future plans. Krishnamurthi<sup>6</sup> suggests that we should utter 'death to the past' and bury it in the cemetery. The image of burying the past in the cemetery gives us the notion that the past is over and done with.

Truth is by the mantra of 'Bury the past' we can push it back to the depths of our memories and stop pausing on it.

After a while, this mantra fades the disturbing past memories and engages your mind with the present and the future. If you do not stop thinking about the past you will become depressed and forced to forget it by taking tranquilizers. The past experiences without a link to memories is apparent in our behavior and we do not need to remember them with their circumstances. It is not like if we use the multiplying table we will also remember the teacher and the classmates who were on our side

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6. Krishnamurti an Indian speaker and writer, is regarded globally as one of the greatest thinkers and religious teachers of all time (1895-1986).

when we were learning it. If the mantra of 'Bury the past' registers in our subconscious like a program, and by remembering the past we also remember this mantra we will set ourselves free from loads of unknown pains and hurts. The heavy load of our past sorrows bear down on the shoulders of our memories. The past must be looked upon as an enemy and we must forego its good and evil.

Zohreh is a middle aged retired woman. She had a diary of her past afflictions. Whenever she felt blue she would refer to the diary book and refresh her mental pains. For Zohreh, her diary was the most precious of her assets. She was afraid to forget the pains she had endured in life lest she would get betrayed again by people. She was unaware that a major part of her suffering involved the self-same diary notebook. She not only could not forget her past but also did not want to. Even in her happy moments she sighed with a sad tone and said: 'Do not look at how I am today. My life is fraught with wounds that eat me up from within.' She had transferred all her sorrows to her children and made her children depressed too. One day I asked Zohreh to burn her diary book to lessen her pains and free herself from so

much sorrow. She resisted for a while and said: 'I'm afraid to forget how many times I've been cheated and deceived and fear to fall to the same scams.' I said: 'If you get new scams it is better than remembering all that past every minute.' Zohreh finally conceded and burned her diary book. I asked her to take a vow of silence to avoid uttering about her past. Two week later, she spoke up and thanked me. She said she was much more calmer and every time in those two weeks she remembered the past, she buried it in her mind's graveyard. She really felt her past was dead and could not harm her anymore. She did not even want to recall her past happy memories because she did not have the patience to miss them.

#### **14. The future will not get that bad**

The thought of the past is sadness. The thought of the future is fear. Living in the present is pleasure.

Our mind is engaged in thinking about the past and the future. The past and the future leave us no present time. We only lived in the present in childhood. That is why we love our childhood; a time when we had no past

and no future. Everything meant the present and enjoying it.

If the past makes us sad, usually the future scares us. Our tragedy making mind calculates all probabilities of threats and failures in the future and submerges us in an excruciating fear. The words we hear from the depths of our anxieties are:

What if something happens to me/her in the future? What if it happens? I will be ruined. She will be ruined.

- I am anxious. What if something bad happens to me/her?

- I have to plan well to avoid such problems in the future.

- I have to consider every detail not to go wrong.

These extreme apprehensions do not suffice to our anxiety but lead to obsessive thinking.

If we refer to the past we will see that what we feared either never happened or if they did they were not as scary as we had initially believed them to be.

Mankind is always afraid of the death of his

loved ones. These deaths have happened and man's life has continued. Lovers always feared that if they did not reach their beloved the world would become meaningless but they found other lovers. People are fearful of losing a job, an opportunity or assets and of never being able to compensate. They have lost but the world never ended. Most of our personal experiences also reveal that the actual future is not as dreadful as we feared it to be. A proverb says: 'Today is the tomorrow which we feared yesterday.'

## **What do we do when we are anxious and fearful of the future?**

### **First: Distraction**

It is better to be distracted towards something pleasant. This technique is effective to control anger, sorrow and fear. For distraction we have to think of something positive. The mind does not understand negative words and cannot turn away from them. If you have a habit of eating sweets you cannot write in your notes: 'Do not eat sweets.' The mind does not comprehend the words 'do not' and by seeing sweets it thinks of sweets and immediately, the thought of sweets turns

to craving for and the act of eating sweets. It is better to write down what to eat. If you are angry instead of telling yourself, 'Do not be angry', you better say: 'Be kind, be calm.'

## **Second: Invalidation**

Let us tell ourselves: 'Suppose that awful incident happens. What will happen?'

You may answer that you will become sad or incur a loss. Ask yourself what happens if you get sad or lose? You may say that you will get miserable in the future. In the same manner invalidate every possibility. The best model is to invalidate the following sentences:

- The future will not get as bad as we think it will.
- Even if it gets bad we will find a solution.
- If we cannot find a solution we will accept the circumstances.

What has mankind done but accept the death of his loved ones where even thinking about it was tragic?

## **Third: List of Acceptance**

Some of our suffering relates to thinking



about irritating realities or problems without solutions that our mind cannot accept but constantly looks for solutions to no avail.

One of these instances involves thinking about justice in the world. Our mind by hearing the news or facing inequalities wonders that if there's a just God in this world then why all the injustices? And although it fails to find a convincing answer it still looks for answers to this question. We must accept that the world is not just. The world is either Godless or if there is a God he is unjust and the creator of diversity. Justice is our demand from the world not God's or the world's promise and commitment to us. If we accept that the world is not just we will not get distressed over animals eating each other. We will not be get disturbed by the inequality between Africa and Europe. We will not become amazed or tormented over inequality between the poor and the rich. Let us accept that we are living in an unfair world. A world in which animals eat each other for survival and some kill other living beings for pleasure and no one stops them.

Reyhaneh's parents both had strokes and have been living in a vegetative state for years.

Reyhaneh and her siblings have suffered for years. They sometimes pray that their parents get better and at times even pray for their passing to be relieved of their current condition but God has not answered their prayers. At last, one day they accepted their parents' condition as an unchangeable reality for the time being and all became relieved.

Reza is a political activist. He was imprisoned in Iran before the revolution and to avoid incarceration again he immigrated to the United States after the revolution. Reza always follows the news on Iran hoping that the situation will someday improve. With every piece of news on the suffering of the Iranian people, Reza also suffers. Ever since he accepted that the situation in Iran will not fundamentally change to his expectations for as long as he lives, he has found peace. He still engages in any activity that would help the situation in Iran but he has stopped to tie his everyday life to this national change.

In the lives of all of us there are instances that we must accept. Our loved ones have died and we have not accepted their passing. There are patients in our families with incurable illnesses and we still have not believed

it. We have a tumultuous economic situation with no imaginable bright future. We have had lost opportunities with no prospect of gaining them back. We have had unrealized dreams but we have not yet accepted it. If we make a list of these instances and once and for all accept it as an unchangeable reality in our life, much of our restlessness will end. The suitable mantra in this case is: **‘Accept the unchangeable.’**

Reza made a list of nine instances in his life that will never change. He accepted and named it the nonuplet acceptance list. His list included the following:

- The world is not just. It is diverse.
- My homeland will not get as good as I wish it to be for as long as I live.
- My old parents will not have better days than what they have had. They will get older and more frayed every day.
- I will not find a better job than what I have.
- My financial situation is unlikely to improve if not worse.
- My children are ignorant of my experiences and advice and have to experience it first-

hand and my wife's and my sympathy for them is useless and will not affect them.

- My dead brother will not be alive again.
- My sister who is fifty and unmarried will never marry.
- I will not have the chance to continue academic studies and scientific growth.

This seemingly simple list was the cause of Reza's endless suffering up until recently but ever since he accepted it, his mind finds a chance to think of instances, which he may still be able to change. Endurance and peace is acquirable. The same is true for peace of mind. Peace of mind means accepting yourself, others and the whole world.

## **15. Choice and Compensation**

In childhood we were taught to either choose God or dates. The expression meant to choose between two essentially different options. In other words, you could not have it all. Among those who have fled their country we come across many who are always suffering. When in their own country they complain about lack of freedom and when they migrate to another country they long for their homeland; as if

they refuse to compensate for their choice. These people will never find peace.

Sepideh is a student in college but she always complains about her financial situation. She likes to work and have a suitable income too. She has been stuck in this limbo for three years now. She neither gives up studying nor wanting to have a high income.

Life is a field of choice and compensation. We cannot avoid paying the price for our choices. We cannot struggle for freedom and not accept the risk of danger. We cannot fight ignorance, superstitions and dictatorship without being accused or imprisoned or exiled.

Sassan is desperate as to what to do. He wants to get his doctorate degree but does not approve of the universities in Iran and prefers to get his degree in Germany. In this case he has to learn German, which is hard. He also wants to get married and in order to do that he has to forego school and start working somewhere but he cannot land his ideal job with his master's degree. He has been thinking for a long time but he cannot make a decision. Sassan's therapist advised him that he needed to learn to compensate for the choices he

made. He must determine his priorities and the price he will have to pay is to relinquish other options. But Sassan too like many, is not clear on his real needs and his fantasies. He wants it all at once without the financial means or the mental ability. Sooner or later, life will force him to choose but if he does not accept the premise that there is a price for every choice, he will be suffering forever for what he has failed to achieve.

## **16. Lower expectations and more happiness**

Research conducted on one thousand and eight hundred participants in Stanford University revealed that the lower we expect of ourselves and others, the higher the level of our happiness and the higher our expectations, the lower our level of happiness.

This research shows that one of the reasons for depression is our level of expectations. I distributed the result of this research among twenty of my friends and explained it in detail and measured their level of happiness for one month. Those who used the findings of this research as mantra and repeated it in their conversations were happier than those

who heard about the research and ignored it. Even if you keep this one mantra from this book for yourself and never forget it, your level of happiness will change in a meaningful way. If you constantly remind your friends of this mantra as a key sentence, the situation of your surroundings will meaningfully change. You can put this case to test.

Far inaccessible dreams that appear like mountains lined up one after another, stop us from tasting the pleasure of life. Wishes always keep us unsatisfied. For example, you have taken an exam intending to pass with a D grade. If you get a C grade you will become happier but if you expect to get an A but receive an A minus you will become disappointed whereas the A minus both gets you to your goal and is a much higher grade than a D. The level of expectation you determine for yourself in life in fact also sets the level of happiness you will reach. It is no surprise that those who are content are also happier.

## **17. Do not Look for the Culprit**

Saba dislikes her family. She blames her parents for her condition in life. She claims

to have been much damaged in childhood because of her parents' ignorance and selfishness. She is forty and not yet married and blames her parents that she cannot get along with any man. She claims that she feels unaccomplished because of the damages in childhood. She is the first child and claims that the siblings born after her took away her peace and made her vulnerable and hurt. She adds that her first husband who had also suffered from damages in childhood took his own disappointments out on her and left her.

If you ask her the question why then both her parents who had also been hurt in childhood, still live together and working, she has no answer and makes another excuse. If you ask why she still lives with her parents despite being disappointed in them, she brings another excuse. Ask her why she doesn't rent a room and still a burden on her parents, she blames her friends for not helping her find a suitable job. Almost the whole world but herself is to blame for what she has turned out to be. Philosophically, without being educated in philosophy, she believes that everything originates from mere destiny and there is no escape. Ask her, if it is destiny then why all



the complaining instead of accepting it, she will answer that her rights were violated and she is demanding them back.

Considering others as blameworthy for one's physical and mental distress, seeing others as responsible for one's financial insecurity, joblessness, singlehood or one's anger, depression and anxiety is somewhat a misinterpretation of psychological issues, good for nagging, but not for scientific analysis and problem solving. To escape from this wrong mindset and its consequences, first we must resist and invalidate this mentality. Yes, others just like the past have affected us but we too could have affected them. If we were hurt by them we were not totally victimized and could have pulled ourselves together in adulthood and healed in a secure corner and come out of that influence. We could have even helped our parents not to hurt themselves. In many instances we can by correct choices change our fate. People are two types. Some regard themselves as complete victims and blame others for their fate. Others regard themselves as responsible and say that belief in being victims and blaming others will actually make us victims and passive but belief in being responsible will mobilize us.

## 18. Close the File

In everyday life we face new issues that require decision-making. If we procrastinate in making decisions, our mind like a fragmented computer will remain with many open files. These files wander around and occupy our mind until we make a decision about them. If we have an obsessive character, when making a decision we stare at the details and become helpless and procrastinate. Since many of our decisions are interrelated, we gradually lose the ability to make decisions yet at the same time our mind keeps thinking about issues that must be handled. Although we remain passive or do not make any decisions we become tired of this game. The best solution is to write down the pros and cons of an issue on paper and choose the best option. Choosing the best option does not mean that our decision will be harmless and everything will proceed in perfect manner. Rather, it means that the positive aspects of the decision are heavier than the negative ones. Sometimes making several decisions will put an end to our problems but as long as the decisions remain hanging, our problems will appear heavier.

Once we make a decision, we must insist on it. For example, you decide not to take a job. As soon as the thought occurs to you, by saying that 'I have made a decision not to take that job' you close that file in your mind. An anxious mind likes to control the issues time and again lest it runs to problems. If we stand firm on our decisions to control anxiety, it will quiet down after a while. It is said that anxiety is the underlying reason for obsession. It must be noted that obsession also intensifies anxiety. Anxiety and obsession are a two way vicious circle. Ignoring doubt and obsessive behavior will neutralize anxiety. Remaining in doubt however is paralyzing and the longer our doubts take the more desperate we will become.

Morteza was in doubt for some time. His mind was preoccupied and he couldn't sleep at nights. He said: 'I am confused and do not know what to do. I have a zillion thoughts and apprehensions.' He was unemployed but the job of his desire would not meet his needs. He had also fallen in love with a girl and had proposed to her but was rejected. He could not however forget his love for that girl and propose to another one. He was offered a second job that would earn him a good living but he

didn't like it. One day Morteza sat down with a piece of paper and realized that he didn't have a thousand problems and only had to make decisions on two instances. First, about the girl that had rejected his proposal. He couldn't help it unless he insisted again and if rejected, he would have to forget her for good.

Secondly, it was about the job that he liked but would not pay enough to meet his demands. He decided to let go of the job and look for another that would satisfy his financial needs.

After these two decisions Morteza's mind would go back to the thought of his favorite girl and job but he answered to himself that he made a decision and did not want to be doubtful again. He was able to overcome his doubts and start a job that he disliked but earned him a good income. He decided to embark on the job until he found a better one. If he had stayed in doubt and indecisiveness still that girl wouldn't have given him a positive answer and the favorite job wouldn't meet his needs. With those decisions he put himself on the path to move forward until he would find his ideal girl as well as a job in the future.

## **19. This Will Also Pass.**

In the pre-revolution years, I was a political prisoner for four and a half years. The first six months that I had gone to prison was the hardest because I was taken to interrogation every day and was under torture and pressure. Pressures built up so high that I was almost on the verge of death. SAVAK had to send me to the army clinic to treat my torture wounds. I went under surgery three times to stay alive. In those times death was my wish. One day they threw me in a small solitary cell the size of a grave. When my eyes got used to the light I saw a sentence that a previous prisoner had engraved on the wall. It suddenly calmed me down. It read: 'This will also pass.' Those difficult days eventually passed.

Later on too, whenever I encountered despair in life I would whisper to myself, 'This will also pass.' In the lives of all of us there are moments where our level of hope reaches the bottom. At that time, we feel we have reached the end of our life with no way out of the problems. In times like this the best mantra is reminding ourselves of the passage of time. Experiences show that we have

always had such times in our lives but they have eventually passed.

My friend's wife had lost her mother and was depressed for months and constantly wept. My friend was worried about her. I said: 'Depression due to losing a loved one takes a couple of seasons but it will pass, otherwise mankind could not have continued living.' Is it not so that contemporary man is the survivor of humans in the past centuries and billions of parents in the past one hundred years have died and we still keep on living on Earth?

## **20. Positive Thought and Speech**

From the day Hamid decided to think and speak positively the level of his happiness and tolerance for others was raised. Hamid who previously began his words with the word 'no' started to utter the word 'yes' even when he opposed something. He decided to look at every issue from a positive aspect and this very decision changed his morale, compared to the time when he used tranquilizers for his depression. On his mobile screen he wrote the mantra of **'Positive thought and speech.'**

## 21. Recognize Your Beliefs

Illogical thoughts parade in our mind. Some are repetitious and routine and have formed our brain's constitutional laws. Every decision is subconsciously checked by them first. If you tell an addict a thousand times that addiction is bad for the health and your family's reputation, he would first think of this sentence: 'I cannot tolerate anxiety.' But if you convince him that he can tolerate anxiety, that anxiety comes and goes like a wave, you have touched him on his main belief. If he knows that all of us have anxiety but we calm it through other ways and sometimes fail and let it fade on its own, then we have gotten closer to our goal. Some psychologists state that irrational thoughts and beliefs are involved in one's manner of evaluation of reality and the resulting behaviors play a role in perpetuating his problems.

Ismail is a 35 year old man. He has been addicted to drugs for years and thinks that he cannot tolerate anxiety. This thought creates a secondary incorrect thought that he has to therefore use drugs to calm himself down.

This perception pushes Ismail and his likes towards consumption of drugs. These

thoughts by autosuggestion have been ingrained in the unconscious and confirmed by every anxiety and every calming down by use of drugs.

Experiences tell us that quitting an addiction is possible in seventy two hours but quitting the thoughts that support addiction require more time. Not only time but also mantra therapy and replacement by a new thought. If Ismail can ingrain in his unconscious that he can tolerate anxiety, his second thought will be, 'I do not need drugs to calm myself down.'

Tooraj is an Iranian physician and a specialist in drug rehabilitation in the United States. He says they help their patients in the clinic by medical substances but if the medicines are changed a little they fall back on their addiction. Many of them do not even quit their addiction by use of medicines and that relates to their mindset.

Tooraj speaks about his experience with his father's drug rehabilitation. 'My father was addicted to alcohol and opium. When I was accepted in medical school one day he came home and said that he felt ashamed that his son was going to become a doctor but he was still addicted. He said he wanted to stop



his addiction. 'Dad, it is a good idea to quit your addiction but it is better that you gradually reduce your dose of opium to quit it more easily.' I said. Dad said: 'No, I have to quit it starting from now.' My dad sat in his room and started his rehabilitation process. He was twisting around himself like a snake and sweated and sometimes cried. I was sitting next to him and suffering as well. I eventually said to him: 'Dad, this is not the way. You have to take some pills and gradually quit opium.' He said: 'No son, I Do not need this filth anymore.' I said: 'You are an alcoholic let me at least bring you some alcohol to calm you down.' He said: ' I quit alcohol in the same way a few days ago.' Three days later, my dad got up and he never touched alcohol or opium for the rest of his life.'

Tooraj compares his father's approach with those who do not change their mindset and choose a medical treatment for their drug rehabilitation. Many of them succeed at quitting too but after a while when they think of the drugs they go back to addiction.

## **Central Beliefs**

Central Beliefs are lies that the society,

friends and more often teachers and parents have entrenched in our minds. Imagine a tree where its roots are our wrong beliefs and its fruits, our self-emerging negative thoughts. To confront the fruits or the negative thoughts it is better to first recognize the tree's root, which is our wrong central beliefs and then change them.

What is a central negative thought? It is an absolute negative decree about the self. It is he who has believed that he is unlikeable, unworthy and incompetent. The mind of such a person produces a variety of self-emerging negative thoughts around these three wrong beliefs.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Emotions

It is hard not to pair our thoughts with ourselves. Even harder not to do it with our emotions. When we get angry or sad, we see ourselves as one with those sentiments, but we are not our thoughts or our emotions. Thoughts and emotions are things that pass from us. They come and go but we remain; sad for one moment and happy for another. If our emotions were one with us we would have had to live in one state all the time.

In every human there are three major negative sentiments: fear, sorrow, anger and three positive ones: peace, happiness and pleasure.

In the absence of sorrow, we are happy. When fear and anger are lacking we are peaceful. Many other feelings are also the combination of these major sentiments:

**Fear + Sorrow = Despair**

**Fear + Anger = Jealousy**

When a person witnesses that a relative has

advanced much and surpassed him he may first feel anger then overcome by fear and consequently become jealous of that person.

In fact, the sense of fear is a means of our security. We take caution in crossing the street to protect ourselves from accidents. This protection stems from our experience of fears. We have seen people run over by cars and died. We do not want that to happen to us. If a car in the street speeds towards us, we suddenly gain an extraordinary energy and run away. In that moment because of fear our brain commands for more blood to flow in our feet for us to run away from the predicament. Our face becomes pale because less blood flows in those areas. The experience of fear is genetic and we have acquired it from the times we lived in the jungles; the times when we had to protect ourselves from the threats of animals. But what is anxiety? Anxiety is an unreal fear. You sit down to rest and suddenly your mind thinks of a probable danger. Suddenly, your blood pressure goes down and your face becomes pale or your hands start shaking. In this situation you are not threatened by a real danger but your body commanded by your brain shows a reaction appropriate with fear, which means blood

flows to your feet from your brain. You may even get a high heartbeat. As if you have attended a running race. You become dreadful and think that your death is imminent. You are not in danger of death but are facing a panic attack. Let's give an example. In order to prevent fires at home a smoke detector is installed and in case too much smoke is emitted the sirens go off but if the fire detector becomes too sensitive and goes off for no reason then it will become disturbing.

In our brain too a sensor goes off in case of danger to prepare the body to escape. If this sensor however goes off not by a real horrific danger but by thinking about a frightening matter, then we come down with anxiety. Anxiety, therefore, is an unreal and disturbing fear whereas fear from a danger is real and a means of our protection.

## **What is anger?**

It is a feeling of power and energy to fight with an enemy that is threatening us. In the past if mankind encountered dangerous animals his brain commanded him to become enraged to defeat the enemy with utmost power. In that case blood flowed more in

the hands and the jaws to grab the enemy and tear it apart with the teeth. That's why when we get angry we feel a lot of pressure in our jaws and teeth and start grinding our teeth. In childhood, angry children may bite each other or use their hands for beating or throwing or breaking something. In the past though when man felt weak to overcome his enemy he would fear so blood would flow to his feet and he could run away. We do not live in the jungle now but are still captivated by the same cerebral commands on fear and rage of the jungle eras.

### **What is sorrow?**

Sorrow is the experience of failures and their assessment. Man in the jungle assumed that he could defeat his enemy but he was struck by it and delayed escape and therefore got harmed. He either became frightened or escaped while witnessing that another man overcame the enemy but he lost the chance. If his fear and anger were his immediate reactions, sorrow was his reckoning response. Sorrow after the incident made him contemplate not to get hurt in the future like he did in the past. Indeed, it was a part of his process of evolution and intellectuality. In the past

man became sad to instinctively internalize the experiences of failure and defeat to avoid repeating them. Just as anxiety rises from unreal fear, too much sorrow from assessment of the mistakes is depression and depression is no longer sorrow but an illness.

Anger and fear grant us a temporary feeling of power (all the armies in the world are instruments that serve the nations' anger and fear). Sorrow though, takes away our power and energy. Happiness instead, gives us a mild but constant energy. Happiness is not obtained but by the absence of sorrow, fear and anger. Happiness is usually paired with calmness. In other words, a healthy person is happy and poised unless he becomes fearful, angry and sad.

## **1. Gradually Confront Your Fears**

I lived in Tajikistan for two years. Our neighbor had a five year old girl. Her mother and aunt would bring her out at midnight to play. Their game involved the mother and aunt imitating children. They made their voices like children to make the little girl feel that her playmates were children and she would not feel deprived of having kids around to play

with. One night I left the house and asked the mother and the aunt the reason for this. The girl's aunt said that the child had a certain disease and should not see the sun. That's why they brought her out at nights. I asked about vitamin D deficiency and that she may come down with other diseases as a result of lack of sunlight. The girl's aunt came to our house the next day and said: 'Frankly, her problem is not the sun but she gets bullied by other children in the street. We bring her out at midnight so she wouldn't have to face other children and get mocked.

The next night I went out in the street and looked at the little girl's face. She had a peculiar look but not ugly or strange. She even had a certain kind of beauty that would have probably rendered her a die-hard lover in the future too. The girl's face looked like a sunflower but for the mother and the aunt, her different look from other children had become frightening so they had withdrawn. I told the girl's mother and aunt that their girl was pretty and they had no reason to fear. I also added that she had to eventually blend in the society. I told them that if they kept treating her like that they would end up with a socially retarded kid. They excused them-



selves that it wasn't their fault but the girl was afraid of other children. That's why she stayed up at nights and slept during the day. I convinced them to wake the girl up an hour earlier each day until she would wake up in the mornings like other children did and bring her to the street to play with other kids. The mother and aunt became terrified that other kids would throw stones at her. I said they could stay with and protect her and offered to join them.

The next morning they brought the kid to the street to watch other kids from a distance for a few minutes. That day they rushed her back to the house. The following days the girl's stay in the street became longer and she played with other kids with her mother and aunt close by. At first, the girl would go a little forward, touch other kids and retreat back. Her mother and aunt too surrounded her like bodyguards lest she would get hurt. The next days I asked them to stand a little away from the girl so she would experience play with kids on her own. The first day they stayed a meter away from the girl, the second day two meters and on the tenth day the mother and the aunt left to do their own chores and the girl kept playing with other kids in the street. In this expe-

rience they gradually confronted their fear and crossed it.

When we fear we escape and we may likely become reclusive. If we wait to become brave and then embark on an action our fear may never perish. In facing fear there is only one way; fear but do it. Get frightened and gradually confront our fear. Fear has no remedy but to confront it. He who fears, escapes and doesn't face his fear will internalize fear and forever remain conservative and fearful and will never reach courage.

One of the techniques of confronting fear involves reverse action. By doing the opposite of what you want you can correct the sense of fear. If you dread to hear the word 'no', propose so much and get rejected until hearing the word 'no' becomes ordinary.

Sometimes fear is a kind of sensitivity. In this case to overcome fear you have to desensitize yourself. Sensitivity is thinking about a non-frightening instance with an inappropriate fearful reaction such as fear of heights or fear of speaking in front of others. Desensitizing cuts this connection and replaces your fear with calmness.

Desensitization must be done gradually. The sensitive person when peaceful has to imagine himself in the dreadful situation and then repeat the mantra of 'I am calm' many times over to decrease his sensitivity.

## **2. Release Your Anger in an Appropriate Manner**

From the three essential sentiments, sorrow and anger are most contradictory to happiness. They must be kept at the lowest level as much as possible.

We have had a small dog at home for fifteen years. Her name is Twiggie. Twiggie does not like to stay alone so we do not leave her by herself. Even when we leave her for a few minutes she becomes extremely sad and upset and we return home she wiggles her tail so happily and then to release her anger she takes a piece of cloth and bites it. I have a psychologist friend who beats a pillow to vent his anger. I know another psychologist who leaves the room when he gets angry and if that is not possible he goes to the restroom for a few minutes.

In such instances the best mantras are the following:

- Release your anger in an appropriate manner.
- Leave the area.
- Postpone your anger.

In the opinion of some psychologists anger results from inability to control stress and lack of proficiency in resolving problems with others.

## **Problem Solving**

Instead of becoming angry, learn to solve the problem, which bears its own set of rules.

### **Accepting the problem**

Let's acknowledge the problem, which means accepting that there is really a problem and we should not negate or deny it.

### **Problem Solving Negotiation**

If there is a problem between two or more people it must be resolved by negotiations between them. Refusal to talk delays solving the problem. Anger intensifies it. Resolving human problems has only one solution and that is a healthy and principled negotiation.

## **Negotiation Method**

When we converse about solving a problem the language must be one of details not general because the language of details is all about solving problems and speaking in general perpetuates the problem. If you express your desire in a respectful, fair and clear manner a solution will definitely prevail. If instead of expressing the desire, we show an attitude the negotiation will run into more problems.

## **A Win-Win Solution**

First all possible solutions must be purported. Then all solutions need be compared as far as pros and cons. Then among all possible solutions, the one with the least damage and most benefit must be opted. The solution must be a win-win solution to the advantage of both parties at stake not to the benefit of one side and the loss of the other.

## **3. Do not Get a Guilty Conscience**

Those who seek affection know how to give us a guilty conscience in order to draw attention. If you do not visit them when they

see you they will say: 'I was dying of illness and needed you but could not find you.' If you call them they will say: 'What brings you to me?' If you are a psychologist and have treated your clients enough but also suffer because of their pains and cannot enjoy your moments with your family, that means you have trapped yourself in an emotional trap.

In our brain there is a center called empathy. A center that stimulates empathy for others. According to research this part of our brain does not function the same for everyone. For many mental patients or those with personality disorders, this center works differently. That is why some people recklessly act in irritating ways. If this center in the brain (empathy) though gets stimulated to the point that makes you constantly suffer for other people's suffering, it will be another disorder that must be stopped.

Abdullah referred to a psychiatric clinic due to a panic attack. The psychiatrist found out that Abdullah is a journalist and writes about people's suffering. Now the sentiments of suffering have accumulated in him and emerge as panic attacks. The psychiatrist told him that he visits people like him day and night

and does everything he can to treat them but as soon as he leaves his office he stops thinking about them and attends his personal life. He said that if he didn't do that instead of being a psychiatrist he would soon become a disabled patient and could not do anything for other people.

Sometimes with extra sensitivity we come down with a guilty conscious and at times we make others feel guilty with our words. We usually use this tactic in seeking affection.

#### **4. Do not Choose to get Depressed**

In the modern world one out of five people is always extremely sad which means depressed. Why?

**First reason:** The race and competition filled life that the capitalist world has imposed on mankind.

**Second reason:** Staying away from nature and sunlight deficiency.

**Third reason:** Man's loneliness in the modern world.

**Fourth reason:** Most important of all is that man is not after happiness but success.

So if we Do not seek happiness we will not gain it either.

A person who is depressed becomes passive and distances himself from society. In order to treat one with depression he needs to mingle with people and start working instead of thinking. But what precedes socializing and work though is the mantra of 'Do not choose to get depressed.' William Glasser the American psychologist says: 'We do not get depressed but we choose to get depressed. It means that our mental disorders are also our choices. The mantra of 'You are responsible not a victim' is another suitable motto on this issue.

On the same note the following mantras can be added:

- 'Do not busy yourself with anxiety.'
- 'Do not busy yourself with obsession.'



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Behavior

Those who look for the culprit find a change in situation important for their mood to change whereas all changes require a three-sided change:

- Change of situation
- Change of thoughts
- Change of behavior

Think about a depressed person. The pill prescribed by the doctor changes the chemical condition of his brain. Family affection and care change his emotional situation. Talking to a psychologist changes his thoughts. Sleeping and waking up on time, leaving home, walking and sports change his behavior. All of the mentioned change his temperament and mood. Sometimes a change in situation is beyond our control. Change of thoughts needs a good counselor or a friend but change in behavior rests with us but we laze and justify that we Do not feel like doing it.

## **1. Do It, the Feeling to Do It Will Follow:**

- I want to go but my feet will not go along.
- I want to do it but I do not feel like it.
- I have no motivation to do it.

These phrases are excuses that our brain produces in times of laziness or despair. Many of us look for a great incentive to embark on anything and if we fail to find it we will not initiate any action. This is while experience proves that after doing any task the feeling to do it and incentive will follow. It is a little cold and you do not feel like leaving the house but you force yourself to go. After a few minutes the feeling to want to go will also appear. You have committed yourself to one hour of exercise every day but you do not feel like it. You start it and gradually you feel like engaging in the sports activity. You are supposed to write something and feel like you have no motivation or anything to say. You choose a corner and take paper and pen. After a few moments you will feel like writing and realize you know what it is you want to write too.

Previously, it was mentioned that thoughts lead to feelings and sentiments and those in

turn lead to behavior. Now you will see that behavior also leads to feelings and thoughts. If our thoughts are usually beyond our control and they emerge from situations and the unconscious, experiences show that we can reverse this vicious circle and by action, take control of our feelings and thoughts. In the first condition we are somewhat forced but in the second condition we have control because the wheel of the car of our existence rests in our hands when we are action oriented whereas in thought oriented state the wheel is turned by the situation and our subconscious. The mantra of 'Do it and the feeling to do it will follow' is quite effective to fight with laziness, passivity and despair and it strengthens our will. That is why when we work, the subconscious and its forces will leave us alone.

The active phase is where man's will is formed. He who acts reverses the chain of situation, thought, emotions and behavior.

The mantra of 'Do it, the feeling to do it will follow' is one of the most important to reconstruct willpower. By action we change our fate. Those who act and in the course of action remove problems are more successful than those who want to predict everything

from the start, find the motivation and then get into action.

## **2. Do the Fateful Task**

*'I have so much work to do I Do not know where to start. Let me do the*

*little tasks first then I'll get to my major work.'*

Mohammad is twenty years old. He is a kind person. Everyone likes him more than his sister because he has a habit of offering help to others in every little task. He too likes to get to his minor tasks first although he never gets to do his major affairs.

Mahsa, Mohammad's sister is twenty two years old. She is not a kind person but is very successful in her work. She usually does not get to do her minor chores or delays them. Instead, in the morning as soon as she opens her eyes she does her major job. Which one of these two characters looks more like you?

Except for kindness why do people like Mohammad? Because he eliminates their laziness. He even unwillingly serves them. They admire Mohammad so they can have him do their minor tasks. Despite disliking Mahsa

they feel jealous of her success and admire her deep down because they regard her as a successful person.

From this perspective people are of two kinds:

The first kind are those who do unimportant tasks to later find a chance to do major works and they are not successful people.

The second are those who do their major tasks first even if they never find a chance to do the miscellaneous stuff on time. They are more successful people. If you are seeking professional success repeat these mantras to yourself:

*'Do the fateful job, leave the minor tasks.'*

*'Major job not marginal affairs.'*

### **3. The Miracle of Apologizing**

Ava is very sensitive. She takes everything so personally, becomes upset and expresses her anger and hurts the people around her. She then resorts to her loneliness in rage and resentment. An hour later, when her anger subsides she becomes sad and decides not to see the people around her. After a while, she feels lonely and realizes

that she unreasonably hurt others and making peace with them is not imminent. She remains lonely and reclusive for a while until things settle down. In her solitude though she becomes desperate and overwhelmed by negative thoughts. After all when she comes out of seclusion she feels so hurt that makes her even more sensitive. She therefore takes every remark personally again, becomes angry, yells and goes back to her own reclusive state. Others too, lose hope for her behavior to improve and try to keep their distance with her to avoid tension. One day Ava heard that there was no magic or tragedy involved and everything would gradually change except in one instance and that was the **'Magic of apologizing'**.

This time when Ava became angry and expressed her anger to others, she went to her room as always to spend some days in solitude and seclusion. She suddenly remembered the phrase, 'The magic of apologizing' and quickly came out of her room and embraced those she had hurt and said: 'Forgive me what I said wasn't my real opinion and feeling about you but it was the voice of my irrational anger. I know I hurt you and perhaps will do so again but believe me my

real voice and words are what I am saying in this moment right now. I do and have always loved you.' Ava became angry again since then but nothing became as bad as the event in the past.

Anger is the first phase of behavior.

The second phase is refusal to talk and drifting away. If you cannot control your anger replace the second phase with the magic of apologizing. In such instances anger becomes like an earthquake that produces little damage.

After a few times of apology your mind registers it like a photograph and as soon as you are about to get angry, your mind reminds you of apology as the next image. As a result, either you will not get angry or express less fury. Sometimes it is hard to verbally apologize. In that case hugging and kissing is a good remedy.

#### **4. Entrust**

Those who empathize too much and those who are super sensitive and feel responsible to solve all problems do as such:

- 'So and so has problems I have to advise

and help him solve his problem.

- So and so has a problem and I have to resolve it because he cannot on his own.
- My kid, my sister, my friend, my neighbor have problems I am responsible to solve them.
- She does not know I have to teach her.
- She does not have any money I have to pay for her.'

Performing the duties of others stops them from normal growth and wears us down under the loads of others. Germans have a proverb that says: 'Help her so she can help herself.' Changing others by us is not real but more like an illusion. In most cases we are unable to change anyone. Interfering in the affairs of others and performing their duties for them is not only futile but considered nosiness above all. Entrusting them with tasks however makes them grow and takes pressure off of us. Naturally, in certain instances our help is the only solution in which case we must quickly act. For example, when a person has had an accident lying on the street unconscious and cannot help himself.



## 5. Do not Show an Attitude, Express Your Desire

- You are always like this.
- You always do this.
- You never do that.
- This is me but that is you.
- I did this and you did that.
- We make sarcastic remarks.
- We insult.
- We make threats.
- We refuse to talk.
- And...

**Example:** We go shopping. We choose an item and ask the price. The seller gives us the price. We think it is expensive. We prefer to buy that item for a cheaper price but instead of asking if we can get a discount we show an attitude and tell the shop owner that he sells things too expensively. The answer we hear from him is that we want to buy for free!

We want our loved ones to love us but in-

stead of asking them to announce their feelings we tell them: 'You are a cold unkind person.' And they instead of expressing affection say: 'And you are too demanding.'

Showing an attitude instead of asking is a wrong habit that has made us conditional. Sometimes too we make a mistake between our desire and our right. As a result, instead of asking we take the position of restoring our right. But do we reach our desire this way? Most of the time not because the other party has not well understood our desire but disappointed in our attitude and intends to retaliate. The mantra of '**Do not show an attitude, express your desire**' is one of the main mantras that can stop tension between people and improve interpersonal relationships.

## **6. Make Your Speech Brief (Be Specific)**

I have to respond to him.

What he said is boggling my mind.

I have to clarify that he is mistaken. I have to explain to relieve myself.

If I do not respond to him he will think I cannot challenge him.'

Perpetuating the conflict does not shed light on the truth but it is like stirring muddy water. Sometimes we have to wait for the mud to settle down to differentiate between clear water and dark soil.

Not only our ordinary conversations but even the discourse between philosophers of history have not solved the problem of truth. Yet, we have no option but repeat conversations to resolve our problems. We have to be alert however to stay in the healthy path of arguments and in case of fighting we have to quickly get out of it because it produces nothing but waste of time and agitation.

A healthy argument involves presenting the issue with supporting reasons and if there's an opposition it must accompany reasons. Pay attention to the example below:

**A:** I do not eat meat.

**B:** Why?

**A:** For three reasons; first, animals are not born for us to eat them. They are born to live for themselves. Secondly, it's been proved lately that consumption of meat is directly linked to global warming producing many damages to the next generations. Thirdly, re-

search shows consuming meat is unhealthy. In addition, millions of people from birth have never eaten meat and millions have quit eating it at mid-age and lead healthy lives.

**B:** I Do not think I can stop eating meat. First, when I smell meat I crave to eat it. Also, if I Do not eat meat I'll gain weight. I quit eating meat once and replaced it with bread and rice but gained ten kilos and was never able to lose it since.

**A:** Meat can be replaced by other better and healthier food without gaining weight. I have done it for three years and not only have not gained any weight but actually lost a few kilos too. I have a friend who was overweight. He saw a nutritionist and got a diet without meat. He was not hungry and lost twenty kilos in six months. What would you think if animals liked the smell of our bodies and ate us?

This brief conversation which is fraught with reasoning from both sides is an example of a healthy discourse because both parties talked about the subject not about each other. Now look at the same conversation in its inappropriate manner:

**A:** I Do not eat meat.

**B:** Did you make an extreme decision again? Eat it, it's good for your health.

**A:** I'm not selfish like you to eat some poor animals. Why should a chicken die every day? Because I want to eat a delicious meal?

**B:** If you feel so sorry for the animals why Do not you correct your other behaviors?

**A:** What behaviors?

**B:** Well, you know.

**A:** What about yourself? Are your behaviors all proper? Listen to the way you talk.

In the second model both parties instead of presenting reasons accused and labeled each other. Both parties instead of talking about the subject which was not eating meat started to brag about each other. In these instances three mantras will guide us to the correct course of the discussion.

Do not show an attitude, express your desire clearly and respectfully. Present reasons and ask for them, Do not label anyone.

Talk about the subject not about yourself and the other party.

Life's experiences show that ninety nine per-

cent of our discussions deviate from its main course. We are usually unable to convince each other because we have no knowledge of the method of reasoning. We believe what we think is right and negate what the other party thinks or believes. Instead of presenting reasons therefore, we label adjectives to our words. I am speaking of rights and your words are invalid. I am telling the truth but you are talking nonsense.

An Iranian poet once said: 'Truth was a mirror in God's hand which was dropped on earth and broke; everyone took a piece of it and saw himself in it and thought truth rested with him whereas truth was scattered among all.'

## **7. Change Legs**

If both our feet get exhausted and we have no place to sit what do we do? Although both feet are tired but we lean on one to make the other rest. After a few minutes we alternate for the other leg to rest. Sometimes we are worn out due to many problems or have been frustrated by a problem or someone. It is time then to eliminate exhaustion and disappointment and attend another problem or work or person. Changing feet is a

technique we have all experienced and it is always functional and useful. When we are tired but cannot stop working this technique becomes very useful.

## **8. Do not Eat Poison**

Bad eating, sleeping and breathing habits and inactivity all negatively affect our mind but worst of all is eating poison.

Georgy a fifty year old man referred to the psychologist when he was on the verge of suicide due to severe depression. He confessed that he was drinking a bottle of alcohol a day and he had a hard time to sleep. He was breathless and just stuck in the house. The psychologist said to him: 'If you do not want to die do not eat poison.' Georgi said: 'I do not eat poison I drink alcohol.' The psychologist said that what he was drinking was poison and asked if he would still want to drink it? The psychologist prescribed over the counter antihistamine pills that help with sleep and lower anxiety. The psychologist asked Georgy to continue the treatment for another two weeks, firstly to regulate his sleep because enough and deep sleep calms the mind for better thinking. Secondly, he advised Georgy

to walk for an hour after he woke up. Thirdly, he asked him to do something, even vain, just to give his mind less time to think. And lastly he advised him to take less poison.

Two weeks later, Georgi returned to the psychologist. He was not thinking of suicide anymore and was seeking to completely quit taking the poison.

Truth is we become sad, happy and angry in life and in order to calm ourselves we embark on different actions. Some take alcohol and drugs. Some take tranquilizers in extreme amounts and some take peaceful sleeping, walking and balanced pleasing activities. Among all the options the last one is less costly. The following four mantras are good for regulating daily plans and lead to happiness and calmness:

- Wake up early morning
- Walk for an hour after waking up.
- Make yourself busy with some kind of work during the day.
- Do not eat poison.

All those who consciously or by force of life follow plans like this in their daily life are less



afflicted with anxiety, depression and anger and admire life more than those who lack such plans in life.

## **9. Change Yourself, People Around You will Change.**

Our middle brain is responsible for our excitement and their control. Fortunately, the middle brain is able to learn. Since childhood we learn how to control our excitement in this part of our brain but not by lessons that our parents, teachers or friends teach us in words. Rather they become role models by their actions. When a mother gets scared and expresses her fear by screaming she is teaching her child to encounter her fear by screaming. That is why many psychologists refer to their patients' childhoods to remind them of what they have wrongly learned then and convince them to learn another approach to express or control their excitement. If you want to raise good children do not guide them by language but learn methods to manage your own excitement and register them in your middle brain by repeating mantras. Do not forget that your children use your actions as role model not your advice.

This is not just true about children but adults too get affected by another person's approach in control of excitement.

Salman is a polite person. He speaks with everyone in a respectful manner. For him, children and adults make no difference. He calls everyone by addressing them as Mr. or Miss. Even if someone repeatedly insults him he remains polite and insists on it. Others too as a result, have gradually learned to address him as Mr. Salman even in his absence and they act politely in his presence. He never advises or asks anyone to change their behavior but by insisting on his polite manners, invites others to be polite and influences them.

Besides politeness, Salman he is very logical.

Although like everyone else he does become happy, sad or angry, he never expresses any of the sentiments on his face or speech. He always smiles. It seems as though the trees in the forest of his being are lined up as such that if a flame of anger gets ablaze in him, it does not spread to other trees. If others fail to control expression of their agitations to him, he instead of any reaction, first controls his own sentiments and after a few moments of

silence politely asks for a logical answer to the problem. I have seen that others have gradually started to behave reciprocally towards him. Once they see him their speech becomes polite and logical. Even when absent he is recalled with respect. It is not that he is an abnormal person void of the agitations or sentiments that we have but his middle brain has well learned to control those excitement and it has become conditional about it.

Goodness is contagious just as evil is. Both start from you and come back to you. In other words, your environment is the extension of your behavior. If you desire a peaceful environment behave peacefully. If you desire a happy environment be happy. Insist on your good behavior for a while and see the effects on your loved ones. In another definition others are mirror to our own behavior. We cross the street and accidentally stamp on someone's foot but walk away in ignorance. From a distance we hear the person swearing at us. If we immediately apologize, wait and tenderly attend him until his pain decreases; he will wave and smile at us before walking away. There are two presumptions on changing others.

**First:** We cannot change others.

**Two:** We can change others.

I am among the second group and believe that we are changing others in every moment. The second group also splits into two categories:

**First:** We can change others by reminding, advice, criticism, nagging, complaining, ignorance, insult, threat or education.

**Two:** We can push the agitations of others towards rationality by logical and peaceful reactions.

Again, I belong to the second group. I have experienced firsthand that not only do we need to change ourselves but also need others to change. Others are our surrounding situation. Without changing our own situation would we have the necessary peace and happiness? To change the situation though the most important is to change ourselves not others by nagging, criticism or advice. Changing others by changing ourselves. Give what you like to receive the same from others. If you want love from them, give them love. If you want respect, give them respect. Give them respect especially when they ex-

pect you would object to them.

In the 1940's a research was conducted on 95 students at Harvard University. Those with high IQs were under study until their middle age to find out how successful they would become in the future compared to their peers with lesser IQs. The results were disappointing. Those with high IQs were unsuccessful in their professional and personal life compared to those with low IQ levels. Instead those with lower IQ levels who had better control of their sentiments surpassed the smarter students both in jobs, happiness and income. That means that behaving properly which is also controlling excitement and sentiments lead to success and happiness. So behavior not only improves our social life but also our personal lives.

The managers of every company are not necessarily the smartest in their field but they possess skills to control their excitement as well as others. Our middle brain controls excitement. Our middle brain unlike the lower brain has the ability to learn. If it has learned wrongly it can correct and rewrite itself by education. This training does not require long annul times. A few months of mantra therapy

is sufficient to annul the wrong presumptions and replace them with correct thoughts.

## **10. Your circle, my circle, our circle**

A woman likes the medical programs on TV and her husband is interested in sports programs. Each is critical of the other about the programs they like. Each of them likes a certain kind of books and enjoys certain foods but both assume that their marriage will only work if they become one and pursue the same circle of interests and habits. In a two-person relationship let us not forget that each one of us is in one particular circle. By circle we do not mean prison but it distinguishes the border of freedom that one individual has from another. The circle is the set of habits and values that we have been brought up with especially those we have learned in childhood and the behaviors we are used to. This circle defines our individuality. In a marriage it is impossible for one to let go of their circle and enter another one permanently. Marriage is in fact a third empty circle called a shared living to which a man and a woman enter without having abandoned their own circle. They spend hours in the day or night and love and respect each

other but for some other hours they return to their own circle even if they are still in the same house during those hours.

We are not created for each other but beside each other. We are not incomplete to become whole with one another. Those who have learned this wrong assumption from the proverbs, feel incomplete again as soon as their mate goes away or is lost. We are each born as perfect beings. Marriage is the meeting of two complete beings not the union of two incomplete humans.

Children until the age of two need their parents especially their mother to be with them. At eighteen months the child is playing in the house but as soon as her mother leaves the house she starts crying because she feels she has lost her mother. When mother returns home the child stops crying and without needing her mother starts playing again. In order for the child not to feel deprived, her mother has to always be nearby and available. Some spouses who have not passed this phase well in childhood always desire their mates to be within their reach at all times so they do not feel that they are losing the mate and if their spouse goes away they feel aban-

done. For that reason they try to make their spouses become like themselves in interest and behavior; but since they take away their freedom they will actually lose them more. The harder they try to become one with their spouse, ~~but~~ they actually push them away. In these cases the best mantra is: **'I stay in my circle, you in your circle and at times we stay in our circle.'**

Before marriage when we see each other we present our best and after, we display the worst in us, unaware that even after twenty years of marriage we are still meeting each other in life and make agreements for the times we spend together and every day due to work and personal matters we distance away from each other and return to each other again. Just like dancers who step away from and return to each other. They are an assemblage but each dances on his/her own.

Love cannot and must not take away individual freedom. If it does it would be love sacrificed before freedom. Although love and freedom are both mankind's essential needs, the need for freedom is much more important than the need for love. If you do



not wish to take away the love of your mate, do not take away his or her freedom. In marriage, do not look for love first but seek freedom. You will find love. Never forget that no one will fall in love with their jail keeper.

Some couples after a few days past their marriage assume that they have bought their spouse. Marriage is not about owning each other. These are wrong presumptions that have nested in our middle brain and can lead to separation.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### The Body

A person's thoughts and emotions not only lead to his behavior but will also result in reactions of the body. These reactions include migraine headaches, mild or severe shaking of the body, low or high blood pressure, ulcers, intestinal problems, allergy, asthma, cardiac diseases and heart attacks and strokes.

Such illnesses are called psychophysiological disorders influenced by the brain or even created by the mind in worst conditions. These disorders are diagnosed when a known physical problem is evident along with meaningful psychological occurrences.

The mental conditions exist before the physical disorder and either help them to appear or make them worse.

Sepideh struggled with her anger for years but could not overcome it. In order to avoid any confrontations she opted for reclusion and self-development. She was engaged in meditation, yoga and spiritual studies for a

long time but suddenly she felt an extreme weakness to the point that she could not even take one step. For days also she became temporarily paralyzed and bedridden and that really scared her. The doctors after various testing diagnosed her condition as a psycho-physiological disorder and labeled her with chronic fatigue. Sepideh started thought and behavior therapy as follows:

**Change of thoughts:** Positive thinking and speaking.

**Change of behavior:** Sleeping and waking up on time, daily walks, engaging the mind with minor enjoyable tasks.

**Change of situation:** Leaving seclusion and return to family. The changes she went through greatly improved her symptoms at the end of the second week.

Sepideh's disorder is an example of a psycho-physiological disorders rooted in mental problems and must be treated through change in thoughts, behavior and situation.

Hava is a twenty eight year old girl and extremely vulnerable. Every time she becomes excited or anxious she starts crying and in the worst case she becomes hospitalized

and comes down with asthma.

Masoumeh, the middle-aged, retired woman, whom we mentioned earlier, eventually came down with high blood pressure disease.

Zinat the woman who went to bed late, whom we mentioned earlier, has suffered from stomach ulcers all her life.

These diseases that are psychologically rooted can frighten the patients making them think that they are on the verge of death. Their mental disorder can also become more intensified.

Ebrahim suddenly came down with severe heartbeat one day thinking he was dying. He first referred to the general practitioner and then a specialist for treatment. He spent much time and eventually found out that his physical ailment was actually mental. He then thought of referring to a psychologist and a psychiatrist. The psychiatrist prescribed him a pill but also suggested that thought and behavior therapy would be his best remedy.

I know a woman who had lost hope of living due to her severe cardiac condition but through mantra therapy and change of thoughts was able to stop her heart pains.

Sometimes taking a painkiller is the only remedy for pain in an upcoming anxious situation.

Ebrahim, subsequently, due to intense anxiety would come down with low blood pressure. A doctor advised him to drink two glasses of water before entering anxious situations. That would increase his blood volume preventing the blood pressure from coming down. Ebrahim followed suit and his blood pressure went back to normal thereafter. Such preventive measures not only stop physical disorders stemming from negative thoughts but also alleviates those thoughts. The best mantras in these situations is: Reduce your pain in advance. Maria always suffered from menstrual cramps. A doctor taught her to take mefenamic acid<sup>7</sup> pills two days in advance to both lower the pain and extra bleeding during her periods. That way Maria was able to predict the pains and stresses of her periods and alleviated them in advance.

## **1. Refer to a psychologist**

If we suffer from toothache we immediately

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7. Mefenamic acid is known as a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug used for the short-term treatment of mild to moderate pain from various conditions.

go to the dentist but if we have mental pain from childhood to old age we Do not refer to psychologists. Why is that? Because we are too preoccupied with a cultural taboo and Do not accept that some problems cannot be resolved without seeing a psychologist or psychiatrist. That is especially if unknown pains and disorders are involved and medical doctors have not been able to treat you. You must refer to a psychologist or psychiatrist in such instances because your pain may have an underlying psycho-physiological reason.

## **2 . Use your hands**

When the mind becomes heavy the body bends. A balance must be created between the mind and the body. Even thought therapy which is useful requires a complement and that is the use of hands. Jung the renowned psychologist in between patient visits used to go to the yard of his office and played with mud like children to create balance between his mind and his body. If you are low-spirited do some sports activity. More importantly, play like children do. If neither, do some walking. Using the hands is quite effective in treatment of mental problems.

Mona is an eighteen year old girl who had a

habit of attempting suicide due to severe mental problems. A while after her treatment when she felt a little better the psychologist asked her to do house chores for a few hours like washing the dishes, vacuuming and dusting. Mona was resistant at first and found the acts futile but after a few days of doing that she did see the effects on controlling her negative thoughts.

### **3. Enjoy**

Every healthy person has some fixed amount of mental energy reserved. This mental energy is lost daily with every anxiety, stress, sorrow and anger. If days pass and we do not restore our mental energy we will hit the bottom and loose. But how can we add to our mental energy? Through enjoying play and recreation. Through works that are not aimed at a special goal or have a special meaning but are for pure enjoyment. For example, visiting and conversing with a friend or a relative which is enjoyable for us. We see them every day or week just because we become happy seeing each other and socializing. When we leave them we feel an increase in our mental energy level. Sometimes we play without the goal of win or lose

but only to take our minds off the serious issues. Sometimes we read a book for only the purpose of pleasure rather than educational objectives. Sometimes we say a joke and laugh our heart out. Sometimes we do sports without exhausting ourselves. At times we extend our feet and sunbathe or take a warm bath in the tub. These are all acts that add to our mental energy level.



## CHAPTER NINE

### Summary of the Mantras

Effat was a 65 year old woman who came down with cancer. She went through chemotherapy for a while and eventually survived the disease. Doctors recommended her to stay away from stress but she couldn't overcome her negative thoughts. I suggested to her to write the following sentence on paper: 'I am more important than my problems' and stick it on the mirror. I asked her whenever she checked herself in the mirror to also remember this mantra to avoid going back to her previous condition by her thoughts. She has been living with this mantra for years. I have offered her other mantras too but she claims that she can calm herself down with only that mantra. There are those who have chosen other mantras and have put them on their phone screens and as soon as they turn their phones on they remember that mantra. Some also have put up mantras on their walls to see them. One of them who suffered bouts of feeling void put up a mantra on his bedroom wall that read: 'The world was short of something otherwise it would not have creat-

ed you.’ Another one who suffered sadness put up a mantra on his mirror that read: ‘Cry with reason but laugh for no reason.’ Another one who suffered humiliation in childhood and felt ugly and abject put a mantra on her phone screen that read: ‘I am pretty, worthy and able enough.’ She did that to invalidate the voices she heard in her mind that she was ugly, worthless and incapable.

Just as a four way screw has to be opened with a four way screwdriver wrong presumptions that have become faith also need to be opened with special tools. Mantras are some of these tools but before practicing them one has to believe in their exigency and functionality.

Look at the following mantras and repeat whisper them to yourself. Ask yourself which one you like the most.

- Do not attend bad situations
- Fill your time with good work not to have a chance for negative thoughts. Push away bad thoughts (Tennis technique)
- Do not get a guilty conscience
- Postpone your anger.

- Do it, the feeling to do it will follow.
- Do not listen to bad news.
- Wake up early morning.
- Use virtual world according to your need.
- Cut unhealthy relationships.
- Do not stay alone.
- Do not stay idle.
- Do not see it to not want it.
- Do not bring the dossier of your issues to bed.
- I will fall asleep quickly and deeply.
- My mind is the sky, my thoughts, the passing clouds. I am not my thoughts.
- Stop it.
- Distract yourself.
- Place positive memory for a negative one.
- Use your mind.
- Observe ethics.
- Health, happiness and friendship not accomplishments.

- Meet your need not your wish.
- Forbear.
- Virtues call each other.
- Mankind is fallible.
- Focus on one job.
- Do the fateful job.
- Main job not marginal tasks.
- Do not compare, do not compete.
- Be good in your own eyes not a favorite of people.
- Do not internalize other people's jealousy.
- A little better not a hundred percent.
- Trying is important not the result.
- Bury the past.
- The future will not be that bad and if it is, there will be a way. If not, we will accept it.
- Invalidate your worries.
- Acceptance list (accept the unchangeable)
- Choice and compensation.
- Less expectations, more happiness.

- Do not look for the culprit.
- Close the file.
- This will also pass.
- Positive thought and speech.
- Face your fears. (Fear, but do it)
- Release your anger in a proper manner.
- Do not show an attitude, express your desire clearly and respectfully.
- Make the story short.
- Present reasons, demand reasons, do not label.
- Talk about the subject not about yourself and the other party.
- Change feet in exhaustion.
- Do not eat poison.
- Alleviate your pain in advance.

## CHAPTER TEN

### Will Power

If we accept that we possess a will power we will act willingly but if we admit that we are a victim of the situation we will act unwillingly.

As far as will power goes, five different characters simultaneously line up in my mind and my thoughts about them are:

#### **First:**

A twenty five year old girl called Saloumeh. She is the diving champion of Georgia. She is skinny and small figured. When she sees a friend she calls their name loudly and laughs. She smiles at every question she is asked and boldly expresses joy. I worked with her in the making of the film 'The President<sup>8</sup>'. She was my assistant. Most of the scenes were shot in the desert, mountains and in winter and usually the weather was below zero. Sometimes ten degrees below. Saloumeh though, did not wear many clothes and

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8. The President (2014 film) directed by Mohsen Makhmalbaf had its World Premier at Venice Film Festival in 2014, opening the festival together with Birdman.

did not stand by the fire as the rest of the crew did to warm themselves. By shaking herself she pushed away the cold. We were off once a week. On her off day Saloumeh went to the swimming pool and if there were a soccer game to be held she felt responsible to be the cheerleader. I asked her to bring me a loudspeaker when I had to speak loudly and gave her reasons that if I yelled I would get upset and at times even angry. She would laugh and say that unlike me she felt happy by yelling. She said in the soccer stadium she would make the spectators excited by yelling and cheering and every time she betted with herself that she would bring more cheering to the stadium than the previous time.

I told her to add forty years to her age and then tell me about her physical and mental condition in the future. She said: 'I will be a smiling grandmother full of energy.' I asked her the reason for her happiness. She briefly said: 'The sudden death of my parents.' Saloumeh's only asset was a small house taken away from her by a relative through a fraudulent action and now she had to work every day to afford her living expenses. I asked her since when all that had happened

to her and she said it had been two years. She added that with all that had happened to her she had realized that all she had was her life that she might have to lose every minute and therefore she had decided to drink her life to the last drop.

In all the four months I was working with her I saw no fluctuations in her spirit except for once when one of the film actors insulted her in front of many other people and she cried loudly, yet while holding the loudspeaker she translated my words for the actors and the extras. When she stopped crying she wiped her eyes and asked with a smile: 'What is the next shot?' Once I asked her what she would do to that relative who swindled her out of her house if she had the power? She said: 'The only lesson I learned from this incident is to never be like him.' Saloumeh had faced the horrible and sad death of her parents yet she had chosen the path of life and happiness. The fraudulent relative had stripped her of all her assets but she chose to lead an ethical life. She created miracle from tragedy.

**Second:**



Unlike the first one who was a young woman, this one is an older man. He is 77 years old now. Three years ago I made a documentary film about him called 'Endless Smile'. His name is Kim and he is Korean. Up until a few years ago he drank alcohol with a hundred people, glass by glass at the same time but one day he chose not to do it and cut. He didn't touch alcohol since. He wakes up at four am every day. He exercises with dumbbells for some time while watching the news on TV. Then when it is still dark he walks in the street for an hour and goes to play tennis with his old friend. When he comes back home it is about seven am. He takes a shower, washes his underwear, answers his emails, eats breakfast with his wife and takes the bus to go to work. He is now the chancellor of a film school in Seoul. Every day, his lunches and dinners are used for work or social meetings. One of these once a month meetings belongs to his friends from the times he served in the army. Some of them have passed away but the remaining ones meet once a month and the passage of fifty years has not affected their will to keep their friendships.

Until the age of sixty Kim was the deputy min-

ister of culture in South Korea and he founded many cultural institutes, museums and cinema theatres. He retired at sixty but instead of staying home he decided to create the biggest Asian film festival. The Busan Film Festival, started in 1996, is the biggest film festival in Asia with an annual audience of about two hundred thousand and two thousand international guests and screening of a few hundred films in ten days. Kim constantly travels. He never turns down an invitation anywhere. He carries a small camera and if he takes a picture with you he will definitely send you a copy and by doing that he has hundreds of friends around the world. He takes pictures of any beautiful museum or a park or a statue anywhere. In his daily meetings he either encourages an architect to use his picture of a structure as an example for a design or incites an investor to provide funds for the building of that structure. In a few years' time, his picture becomes a museum or a statue or a park in South Korea.

He does all that work while traveling or in lunch and dinner meetings. I have known him for almost twenty years. I saw him in Busan Film Festival for the first time and later in other festivals around the world. Once

I was in a film festival in Spain watching the street from my hotel room window. I saw him running in the street in his warm suit. To Kim it does not make a difference where in the world he may be. He still wakes up at four am and jogs in the street before the day is up and wherever he may be, he is at the breakfast table at seven o'clock in the morning. I asked him what words cross his mind most.

**He said:** 'Choice and will'.

From all the models that religions, philosophers, mystics and psychologists offer, Kim has chosen his own style: Daily schedule.

He has chosen a fixed daily schedule and insists on following it everywhere and he achieves his goals with that daily plan.

Kim is not a talkative person and every time he sees his friends he laughs and embraces them. If anyone opposes him he still keeps silent and smiles. Although he is regarded as the father of South Korean cinema and he has set up many foundations, museums and cultural institutes, he is not rich and lives on his monthly salary which he spends on lunch and dinner with people and if it were not for his wife owning a small pharmacy, he

would have had a hard time to make ends meet. I asked him about his future plans and he gave me a list, which looked more like the wish list of a twenty year old.

In the first example which was about Saloumeh, a young girl and the second example, Kim, an old man, I saw some things in common; constant smiles and energy. Not losing opportunities to live and most importantly, choice and will.

Both Saloumeh and Kim see people as living beings with a will and do not place great importance on the role of situations and destiny as we think about them. Naturally, the young girl after the death of her parents could have chosen depression and refer to psychologist and psychiatrists and the old man could have followed his pursuits in his own city not in the whole world. At age 77 he could have stayed home or in a resting home and not be present at every corner of the world every day.

In my observations both these individuals were extroverts and I did not notice even a bit of illusion and imagination in their speech or behavior. Saloumeh was young and talkative and Kim, old and very quiet but both

were able to use their five senses and saw, heard, smelt and felt their surroundings well. Whenever nothing interesting was in sight for Kim he would take a brief nap on his chair and Saloumeh would slide from a depressing issue to a happy one.

### **Third:**

An old Iranian woman. About 85 years old. Her name is Eftekhar. She is well off, has a house and has four children. Two boys and two girls, each married with children and independent. A few years ago it was planned that this woman should spend a few days in one of her children's homes and busy herself with the grandchildren but soon she cancelled her plan and returned to her own house. She is now trapped in a closed circuit. When she is at her children's houses for every excuse she gets hurt and claiming that she hasn't been respected returns to her house. On the other hand when she is alone she is always in tears and feeling lonely despite having four children and several grandchildren. In the peak of her loneliness she resorts back to one of her children's houses but before the second day she returns to her house for the slightest excuses. When you

talk to her she always feels to be a victim of her circumstances. She says she is depressed and sees others as reasons for her depression. She has her own presumptions. 'I am a mother and have to be respected. I am eighty five years old and disabled. I am more comfortable in my own house. I have had many physical and mental damages in the past. My suffering today goes back to the past. Now it is time for my children and relatives to visit me at home and fill my loneliness and respect me the way I define it.'

What differs in the example of Eftekhar with Saloumeh and Kim is belief in her role, her will and her choice. Saloumeh and Kim believe and have employed their will at its highest level but Eftekhar does not believe in her will power and does not use it, blaming everyone else and circumstances for her problems. Since she has no control over other people's behavior, it is clear that she will never feel happy. For Saloumeh the diving champion of Georgia, circumstances are like the diving plateau. She steps on the dive to jump but for Eftekhar it is like a well and she can only go down in it.

**Fourth:**

A young thirty year old man named Ali. He works in an office and has been married for two years. He loves his wife and his work. He has parents and a brother but they are not a burden on him to support. He has been smoking cigarettes for ten years. Many times pressured by the family he has attempted to quit smoking but failed every time and left the challenge without will power. Ali in the unsuccessful experience of not being able to quit smoking had grown stronger in the belief that he was the victim of his addiction to nicotine. This time when no one had asked him to quit he decided to quit smoking from the next day. He sought the advice of a friend who had been able to relinquish the habit. He asked if he should use the gradual method of quitting to smoke or go through 'cold turkey', abruptly stopping the habit. The friend gave him the following advice:

Quit smoking from right now not from tomorrow. Tomorrow will never come.

Make 'quit smoking cigarettes' your first priority in life. Do not break your promise due to work or anger. Tell yourself if you have to choose between work or a bad situation or

quitting smoking choose quitting even if you cannot do the job or hurt your loved ones with your anger.

Be prepared to suffer to the point of death. Tell yourself you will not smoke even if you die. Of course, no one has ever died from quitting smoking cigarettes but he who quits, tries to get rid of the habit without suffering. As a result with the first temptation or pressure he may breach his promise and go back to smoking but he who vows to bear the pain of quitting smoking to the point of death, will more easily overcome the pain of quitting when he faces a pain much less hurting than death.

When you desire to smoke tell yourself this is a wave and it will not last. You will see that each day this wave will approach you less and later and in a month the wave will leave you alone for good.

Ali was finally able to quit smoking. Not only he quit cigarettes but more importantly he found faith in the philosophy of 'I have a will'.

What is different though in Ali's success this time with his failures the previous times?

Ali's will power.



Counsellor's advice to put death on one side and cigarettes on the other.

The counsellor told Ali that he himself had been a smoker for eight years and consumed three packs a day until one day he came down with a severe asthma and faced death for several days. For some days without thinking he could not breathe and the need for conscious breathing for a few days had been his worst experience because whenever he forgot to breathe, he would become breathless. He could not touch any cigarettes all the while he was sick. When he recovered he started smoking again. One day he asked himself what prompted him not to smoke for a few days without even thinking or desiring it? The answer was: Fear of death. He told himself then that in order to use the will power he had to have a weight as heavy as death in front of the problems. He quit smoking with this same perspective. He told himself that from that moment on even if he faced death, he would not smoke. And he succeeded.

### **Fifth:**

An old friend named Nader. He had immigrated to a European country since child-

hood with his family and now at age fifty he was overweight. He had divorced his wife and had a young idle son with whom he constantly argued and he had to support him. He also had an old dog that he had to take out twice daily in between his work time. His job earned him a few thousand Euros a month yet he was always broke and never felt happy. One day his old dog died and Nader saddened by the loss of his dog, aimlessly started to walk in the street and asked himself what the meaning of his life was. The answer was simple:

Life was the extra load he had to carry on his shoulders. The rent he had to pay for his house every month. The objects he had kept for years but never used. The job that never satisfied him yet he continued. The country that had lost its appeal for him but he was still living in it and the son who fought with him and demanded to be supported but they never became independent of each other.

He decided to settle all the matters he disliked. The first load that he lifted off himself was his extra body weight. He stopped working for three months. Every day he walked for several kilometers and drank water but

ate little and thought of the goals he liked to reach. Three months later, he had lost ten kilos and twenty kilos six months later. In the first month he went through his home goods. He stood in front of every one of them and asked himself which one he really did need. The answer was none. The clothes he needed and wore he put in a suitcase. The keepsakes he could not let go at all he put in the second suitcase and gave away the other stuff to friends, acquaintances and even strangers who needed them more than he did and he freed himself. What would he want an empty house for? Cut. He returned the rental house. He gave money to his young son and told him that was enough for a few months of his living until the son could find a job and stand on his own feet.

He bought a ticket and returned to his motherland. He picked a small room to live in his father's office. Except a small refrigerator and a small kettle to boil water in he did not collect anything else in his room. He took the bus for transportation to keep the living costs down and avoided jobs he did not like. He ate simple light foods, only saw people he liked and engaged in works that he enjoyed doing. In the beginning, he worked for free. Cut!

Now four years have passed since the day he became wilful. He is now in a job that he wished for and has become the most diligent nationally. He feels happy now because he lives in a place he likes and is in a job he likes. He is in his ideal weight and his son is also on his own feet and accepted his responsibilities in life.

Psychologists believe that wisdom appears from age seven but if we do not use it right it will stay in the mind as virtually an idle shameless extra item. All the foolishness of people attest to that claim although as Descartes states there are few people who are ungrateful to God for having granted them less intellect than others.

We have the chance to think and act wisely but it has to be chosen. If we see ourselves as a victim of circumstances we have deprived ourselves wilful behavior and have fallen victim to the philosophy that circumstances determine everything. Obviously, if a bomb is dropped on our head we will die unwillingly or if a car accidentally hits us we will unwillingly become injured but not all the instances in our life are as such. A doctrine to becoming victims of circumstances is to find ourselves

victim of all problems, big or small. Despite the circumstances, the philosophy that grants us the opportunity to behave more wilfully is to use our internal and human potential and find ourselves responsible. To live more wilfully and to take responsibility for our fate, we have to get rid of the philosophy that purports we are always the victim of our circumstances and others. We have to accept that many of us in many instances are responsible and to save ourselves we only have to wake up our will from sleep.

I will summarize the circumstances and the five characters I discussed:

Saloumeh's parents have suddenly died and she has been swindled out of her house by a fraudulent relative. Yet, Saloumeh lives happily and has decided to live ethically every day.

Kim is 77 years old and retired but he exercises every day. He meets people for lunch and dinner and produces great charitable works from these meetings.

Eftekhar is an 85 year old Iranian woman. She has children and grandchildren that can fill her loneliness. But she is constantly disappointed and stays alone and sees herself as the victim

of her past and the disrespect of others.

Ali was a smoker for ten years but once and for all he quit smoking and became wilful.

Nader is 50 years old. He has a good income but not enough for his expenses. He is overweight and in bad terms with his son. One day he decides to let go of all the things he dislikes and engages in what he likes. Soon he reaches whatever he has willed to do.

In these five real examples, which I have personally observed, both men and women were involved. Young and old. Iranian and non-Iranian. The element of gender, age and culture can be disregarded but the main essence of their human will in different situation be focused on.

Of these five examples, four have used their will and brought themselves out of crisis but one of them, Eftekhar, by absolute acceptance of the current conditions finds herself unable to come out of the crisis.

We will accept that awareness, beliefs, excitements and the needs of people are not equal to each other and we cannot have the same expectations from people but the expectations of Eftekhar's children are not too

great. They are not asking their mother to become Georgia's diving champion or be the father of Korean cinema or lose 20 kilos of her weight in three months. They have asked her to choose one of the options before her for her old age days:

**A:** Loneliness and imaginary demand of respect.

**B:** Getting along with her children and grandchildren and living with them.

Alas, both these options requires will power but the indecisive woman is caught in a limbo and instead of changing herself, tries to train the people around her to treat her better.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### Author's Experiences

I discovered the significance of mantra therapy under torture. At age 17, I was wounded in a police shooting and arrested. Until I went under anaesthesia for surgery I was repeating mantras and although I felt I was on the verge of death but I felt euphoric. I had pain in those moments but no fear or sorrow. When after hours under surgery I became conscious in SAVAK's hospital I found myself under torture again. I had an IV injection on one hand to keep me alive but they kept me conscious by torturing to get the information they needed as soon as possible to arrest my comrades before they went into hiding. Since the bullet had created a hole in my back and stomach my stitches were ruptured under torture and the hospital bed was flooded with my blood. It was then that I became unconscious again. When I regained consciousness the torturers were absent and I found myself alone on the hospital bed. It was August and the weather in Tehran was extremely hot. My lips were dry from severe thirst and the heat blended



my body's sweat with blood of my wound and burned the scars. They had tied my hands and feet to the four corners of the bed and I could not move. Gradually, I remembered how I was shot and arrested. I was saddened that I had not been martyred and the fact that I had to endure the pain of torture made me extremely dreadful. The fear became so profound in me that I no longer recognized myself; as if it was not I who a few hours earlier was so blissful that I screamed: 'Even if you burn my body like Ayn al-Quzat<sup>9</sup> I will not utter the slightest cry of pain.' Why was I so frightened then? Once the effect of anesthetic injections faded the pain of the bullet wound and surgery increased by a hundred fold. If an ordinary person came out of surgery they injected painkillers for a while for him to endure the post-surgery pains but I was deprived of painkillers so they could use my pain as start of torture. I had a twenty centimeters incision on my stomach to perform surgery on the bullet wound but the pain from that incision was worse than the wound. When I was shot I had run eight streets over and lost a lot of blood. That had made me extreme-

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9. Ayn al-Quzat was a Persian mystic who fell afoul of the Caliph in Baghdad and executed at age 33.

ly weak. The pain, weakness and thirst in the heat of August were torturing me enough and I could not stand even a touch of a finger let alone withstand the tortures, which I well knew about. I suddenly felt feeble. All the self-training before my arrest to endure the probable excruciating torture in prison proved useless in that situation. If I had the ability to tell myself to die I would have said it and died to relieve myself from the pain. I wished for my death time and again but it never happened. I held my breath many times to suffocate from lack of oxygen but I would automatically breathe again. If my hands were free I would have probably found a way to kill myself. They had blocked the only window in the room with iron bars. Later on, I found out the prisoner before me had thrown himself out of this window of the room on the third floor of the Police Hospital on Bahar street in Tehran and killed himself.

I was so sad that my tears ran down my face to my lips. I felt the saltiness of my tears on my lips and my thirst intensified. Blood squirted out of my stitches. I decided to commit suicide again. I shifted my body perhaps to rupture my stitches and die of bleeding. I remained motionless from intense pain. I could hardly even breathe. I was experiencing a human's

extreme debility in that condition. I thought to myself with my condition I would not survive torture much longer and that thought made me happy again. I was ready to die a thousand times but not to give away my friends under torture. I suddenly started to repeat mantras. I started to whisper all the revolutionary songs that I had memorized. I whispered all the mantras I knew. I remembered many times Ayn al-Quzat when he was being burnt by candles but did not even utter a cry of pain once.

Gradually, the spirit of resistance was raised in me. A few hours later, when it was still early morning the interrogators returned. Fortunately, the repeating of mantras despite the pain had brought me back to the euphoric state I was in before the surgery. The interrogators tortured me to the point that one could be tortured but kept alive. I kept repeating mantras with my screams until I became unconscious from torture. When I gained consciousness the interrogators were not present. Moments passed for me to remember my condition but as soon I composed myself I became even more terrified than before. Again, I felt I was not the person I knew of myself. I had become a man who could not

even stand a tapping. I had become like a person on a swing who went up and by every drop felt his heart pour out but raised himself again by mantras. I had become one who plunged in the well of horror but came up by repeating mantras. Although I was ready for death and did not fear it and actually wished it, the thought of torture made me extremely anxious.

This time I started repeating mantras earlier. I feared that when the torturers returned I wouldn't be ready to resist. I kept uttering mantras quickly. If some mantras did not affect me as much or lost their effects I recited other ones. Fortunately, when I had boosted my spirit of resistance with the mantras, the interrogators returned. This went on for two weeks. In those two weeks every morning when I woke up I had a low morale and every night when I slept I was strong and that was only because of the mantras I kept whispering to myself or in my mind. In the two weeks I was in SAVAK's hospital I gained the experience that whatever I thought affected my feelings and consequently my behavior but sleeping lowered my morale. The role of mantras on spirit and the soul and behavior was clearer than daylight to me.

My conditions had become a psychological testing ground with me as the subject of my self-recognition. In those two weeks whether the days I went under torture or the days I was not, my spirit varied with the mantras.

After two weeks they took me to the torture chamber from the SAVAK hospital and tortured me again so much that I came close to death again. I was brought back to the military hospital. I went under surgery for three times and stayed in the hospital for another one hundred days not to die. In those one hundred days I was interrogated but not tortured. I saw by experience though that it was the mantras that kept me strong against the interrogators. When after my conviction in court I was transferred to the general prison, my biggest curiosity involved the human soul. That is why I started to read psychology books. To me psychology was not a major to study for grades. It was an emancipating need. I was a human but did not know man the way I wanted to. Despite not knowing mankind enough yet I had to fight for his rights. At that time psychology had become more important than food to me.

I was a nineteen year old young man and had

spent two years of my life in political prison during the Shah's rule. In those years a political prisoner was deprived of having a regular physician let alone a psychologist or a psychiatrist. There were few prisoners though that had not been physically and mentally damaged under the tortures of SAVAK. Inside the prison the inmates had secretly set up operations to help each other out on different matters. One of those was psychological assistance. In those years a team was secretly set up to help the mental suffering of the inmates by studying existing psychology books. Fortunately, there were some books available on psychology. The inmates in the team and I started to study these books. Since a prisoner is idle and has much free time, our studies continued day and night. In the same periods I became familiar with the ideologies of Freud, Jung, Piaget, Pavlov, Horney and Frankl. All those theories were attractive but the most applicable one was a book by Karen Horney titled 'Our Inner Conflicts on seeking love, seclusion and supremacy'. I read this book tens of times and every time became more drawn to it. Another therapeutic book that we used was 'Man's Search for Meaning' by Viktor Frankl. That book was circulating

around all the time and boosted the prisoners' morale for enduring problems in prison by way of meaning therapy. In political prisons there was no chance to sit together or hold classes. We could only speak on a one on one basis but through the prison's clandestine operations we would collect reports on the inmates' mental problems and by psychological studies we tried to find solutions for them or through education of psychological discussions made them more prepared in dealing with their neurosis. I was in a political prison for four and a half years and was active in a psychology group for a year and a half. Since the conditions in prison were a testing ground I learned a lot by paying attention to inmates' behaviors. Besides psychology I was engaged in studies on mysticism. My mind attempted to find a relation between psychology and mysticism. They were two completely different paths but at times had similar effective qualities and in my opinion could complement each other especially in the realm of meaning and spiritual therapy. We were all infatuated with knowledge but believed that the world and man had mysteries yet unraveled. We acquired this perception especially when my comrades and I became

familiar with the philosophy of knowledge and scientific methodology. In prison though there were inmates who were mentally very sick and we could not help them. I only made notes of their behavioral symptoms and the existing books did not help us to assist them. Some of them would attempt suicide or display strange behaviors. When the revolution occurred and I was released from prison a six months chance prevailed for me to pursue my studies on psychology and quench my thirst in that regard. In those six months I borrowed about one hundred and thirty books and pamphlets on the subject of psychology from the library and started a comparative reading and took notes. The studies became useful for my character creations in my artworks. Later on too, whenever I had books available to read I would first start from psychology books. It is still the same to the point that I can say after cinema, psychology has been my first and foremost personal interest. If it were not for psychological studies I would have never succeeded at making the film 'Hello Cinema<sup>10</sup>'.

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10. Hello Cinema (Persian: Salaam Cinema) is a 1995 Iranian film directed by Mohsen Makhmalbaf. It was screened in the Un Certain Regard section at the 1995 Cannes Film Festival.



After I had become familiar with the philosophy of science in prison I always had one problem with psychology as an exact science such as medicine. In psychology there were diverse contradicting theories, each effective to a certain degree and inefficient in others. That was of course natural. Man's soul is not like his body to be placed in perfect laboratory conditions. Every human being with his different culture and experiences showed different behaviors. Psychology is not biology that for instance in order to test a plant's perspiration you would put two flowers under a glass cover and pick one of the plants' leaves and keep the other to see if the perspiration was from the leaf or something else. You could not study two inmates in solitary confinement like two plants under a glass cover and keep one of them longer than the other in the cells to determine how long they could tolerate solitary confinement. People were different from objects and plants. One prisoner would surrender on day one of the solitary confinement and another stayed for years and did not submit. We prisoners were not alike and could not be compared with each other like plants. Psychology therefore did not possess

the precision qualities of exact sciences. In a two year period since 2005 when I lived in Tajikistan I found a chance to study books on behavioral therapy and my curiosity was stimulated again. This method that had come close to the quantitative expression of exact sciences was the lost answer to my long years of quest. This method had stopped generalization and definition of mankind but spoke of man's thoughts and behaviors and instead of labeling patients with diseases it tried to control their thoughts and behavior through change of situation and thought and behavior therapy. In this method the role of the doctor and the 'mad' patient of the early eras of psychology, and the doctor and patient of the middle years, had changed to referral and counsellor of these years. The referred person with the problem learned from the counsellor how to manage his thoughts and behavior and take control in a certain regard. This method appealed to me so much that I left all my other works and embarked on studying this method unremittingly for a long time. I learned it and taught it to others and with a minor change combined it with mantra therapy that I had experienced under torture in prison. Since then, whenever

I saw anyone around me with psychological problems I tried to help them by teaching that method. My psychological studies together with my personal experiences and studies that I had already undertaken on Islamic, Indian and Buddhist mysticism brought me to the present method which I have named as Mantra therapy. At first, I taught this method along with my filmmaking classes around the world but eventually convinced myself to independently publish it and share the experience with those interested.

Although I have learned a lot from studying psychology, but my life experiences especially the first two weeks I was experiencing mantra therapy under torture, constitutes the main spirit of this book.

**Mohsen Makhmalbaf**  
**January 2017**  
**London**

**Reference:**

- Aaron Beck, *Theory of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT)* in first chapter.