

THIS IS YOUR MIND MANUAL
THE ONLY SELF-EMPOWERMENT BOOK YOU'LL EVER NEED!

THINK

FEEL

DO

Everything Humanly Possible

EVELYN MANLEY

SYLVIA GUEST

**Welcome to your free chapters
of
Think Feel Do: Everything Humanly Possible.**

We've given you one chapter from each of the four main sections of the book (click on title to jump to chapter)

EHP Matrix:

[Sensing - Our doorways to perception](#)

The Structure of Thinking:

[Presuppositions – Attitudes for peace of mind](#)

Skills:

[Mindfulness the EHP Way – How to bring peace and joy to your life by being now](#)

Empower Yourself:

[Resilience – Bouncing back better](#)

Your preview also includes:

[Contents](#)

[Introduction](#)

[How to Use This Book](#)

Do you want your days to be filled with more of the good stuff of life and less of the hassles?

We bring you the knowledge and skills to enjoy life to the full by taking charge of how and what you think, feel and do. You'll also get practical, effective tools for dealing with over 30 common issues, including how to:

- Clear feeling stressed, depressed, anxious, and just about anything else that's been limiting your enjoyment of life
- Resourcefully handle anger, criticism and conflict
- Improve communication with your partner, kids, workmates, boss, friends, parents, siblings...
- Clear clutter from your life and your mind, change unwanted habits and get motivated
- Effectively set and get goals, problem-solve and make decisions
- Become more confident, assertive and creative
- Develop resilience, boost your energy and learn the art of happiness

Read on to *Think Feel Do* - Everything Humanly Possible...

THINK FEEL DO

Everything Humanly Possible

Also available from www.ehpmatrix.com: Companion Audio Guide and e-book editions.

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Introduction

WHO AND WHAT THIS BOOK IS FOR

Welcome to what is potentially the most worthwhile journey you could choose to take!

You have in your hands the manual you were never given, on how to get the very best from your most remarkable assets - your mind and your brain.

Think Feel Do was created for you to get to know you; it is a self-help book and a journey of personal development, and so much more than that. It's about how people function - or don't.

If you want a full course on psychology you won't find it here. You *will* find the structure of human experience without the psychological jargon.

Prepare to be amazed at what you can achieve when you know how to design the life you want.

The How

This book is based on The Everything Humanly Possible (EHP) Matrix, a complete yet stunningly simple model of human experience. The authors developed the EHP Matrix from their combined decades of experience and knowledge in the life-changing application of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP).

So what is NLP?

NLP is practical 'mind technology'. Rather than the typical psychology method of studying dysfunction, NLP is modelled on how people function well. It was created by Richard Bandler and John Grinder in the 1970s, and developed further by them and countless others ever since - to all of whom we offer our heartfelt thanks.

Put simply, NLP is about how our thinking is structured, and how to change our thinking to get the results we want.

Neuro = Brain and Nervous System

Linguistic = The language we use to communicate with ourselves and others

Programming = How our patterns of thinking and behaving are shaped - and how we can reprogram ourselves

NLP works at the neurological level, making it easier to quickly achieve lasting changes to how we think and feel and therefore what we do. Such change becomes possible because of neuroplasticity - the brain's amazing ability to change itself. Gone is the long-held belief that adult brains are fixed and unchangeable; the latest discoveries in neuroscience confirm that our brains constantly change in response to everything we do, everything we experience. Now you can become an active participant in the way your brain changes, to match the life you want.

Minds and brains, while interconnected and interdependent, each capable of change, are two different things. A brain is a tangible, physical thing, the mind is not. The mind is not confined to the brain, is invisible and has no universally agreed definition. It has wider, deeper and more profound activities than our brain can ever have.

How To Use This Book

Q: IT'S A BIG BOOK - WILL I NEED TO READ IT ALL?

A: IT'S YOUR CHOICE!

We've designed and organised *Think Feel Do* for you to easily understand how to run your mind in order to live your best and happiest life. You can choose the shortest route to get from A to B, go on a guided tour, or take a meandering journey that will lead you who-knows-where along the way.

The shortest route - get results now

Start with the introductory chapter to the *Empower Yourself* (EY) section, then go to the topic in EY that's most important to you. Use some of the effective techniques and exercises offered to clear unwanted feelings and find more peace and happiness *now*. Sometimes it will work best to utilise information and skills from other chapters, and you'll find the necessary references included with your topic.

When you're ready to empower yourself even more, we encourage you to go back to the beginning and take the guided tour.

The guided tour - to gain the most flexibility and choice, long term

First absorb the material in *The EHP Matrix* and *The Structure of Thinking* in the order in which it's written. Next, play with the techniques and tools in *Skills* and find your favourites. Finally, pick and choose topics from *Empower Yourself* to gain the specific outcomes you're beginning to realise are easier and simpler to achieve than you ever imagined...

The meandering journey - do it your way

This book is about how we all think, feel and do differently, so you might want to experiment and find what works best for you.

However you choose to enjoy the book, we suggest you'll get the best value for your money by reading, thinking, feeling and doing!

How the book is set out

We start out with concepts and overviews for deepening your understanding of what you already know about you. As the

book progresses, we get into more specifics about how human minds actually work - and how to start making yours work even better for you.

The book is in four sections:

1. **The EHP Matrix** - A complete yet simple model of human experience - how you became you, and what drives you to do the things you do.
2. **The Structure of Thinking** - All you need to know about how human minds work - in everyday terms. Most chapters also include at least one taster (and often a full meal) for you to 'try now'.
3. **Skills** - Smart ways of using what you've learned so far, creating building blocks for achieving the changes and outcomes you're looking for.
4. **Empower Yourself** - specific topics or issues, a bit like a Therapist's or Life Coach's Frequently Asked Questions - 'How do I deal with...?' For each topic in *Empower Yourself* we've referenced specific skills and a selection of exercises our experience has shown will make the biggest difference for you, with the least effort in the shortest time. Empower Yourself is where you go for resolving unhelpful thinking patterns, feelings and habits, resourcefully moving through challenges, and developing or enhancing your hopes and dreams, gifts and abilities.

There are real life stories and examples throughout to illustrate how the knowledge and skills can be useful in your life.

Sensing

OUR DOORWAYS TO PERCEPTION

The world is full of magic things, patiently waiting for our senses to grow sharper.

~W.B. Yeats

Lara's violet

Lara is exactly two years old. Her mother has handed her a violet - the first one Lara's seen. She holds the flower gently because she already knows something this small and delicate could easily crush. Lara discovered roses a little while back, finding out for herself that some flowers with beautiful colour and perfume also have thorns. Quick to see there are no thorns on this tiny flower, she brings it up to her nose, inhaling the scent of violets for the first time.

While Lara explores the softness of the tiny petals, she hears her mother telling her the name of the flower. When her mother says this particular violet is okay to eat, Lara looks up warily, checking she has heard correctly - it doesn't look like any food she knows. She has learned not to put *everything* straight into her mouth as that doesn't always go too well. Reassured by her mother, Lara tastes the violet. There isn't much flavour - and it's a bit chewy - but now Lara wonders what other flowers might be okay to eat.

Lara has had a few moments of using all her physical senses, adding to her knowledge and experience. She now knows more than she did before those moments took place and has filled in some details of how she perceives the world.

Understanding our world

Learning - coming to an understanding of the world we live in, of the people around us and of ourselves - begins with our senses. Our instinct is there as a natural force, inbuilt. Our intuition is an unconscious force, our sixth sense, present at birth. Our five physical senses are the channels through which we discover how the physical world works. Throughout life, right from babyhood, we learn from and through our senses; we learn what colours we like, what music pleases us. We learn to recognise the voices of people we know and love, how good a hug feels, what perfumes and odours appeal

to us - or clearly do not - and what food we enjoy eating.

Our senses are the doorways to perception, our points of contact with the world, from which we construct our own interpretation of reality.

The five traditionally recognised senses are sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. The word 'touch' doesn't begin to do justice to the variety of sensations our bodies are capable of experiencing, so instead of touch, we use the term '**kinaesthetic**'.

Kinaesthetic encompasses:

- Sensations connected with our skin, e.g.
 - o texture
 - o smoothness or roughness
 - o movement
 - o the feel of the clothes we wear, our shoes, glasses resting on our face
 - o itches
 - o the air temperature against our skin
 - o moisture or dryness
 - o the weight of our limbs or eyelids
- Internal sensations e.g.
 - o heat or cold
 - o hunger and thirst
 - o tiredness or energy
 - o aches, pain and comfort
 - o breathing, heartbeat etc.
- Muscle movement
- Proprioception - our sense of body position, and the relationship between sensation and movement
- Bodily sensations experienced with emotions, which we cover in *Feeling 37*

Putting it all together

In the context of understanding the relationship between our sensory systems and how we think, the senses are referred to collectively as our Representational Systems.

The collective name tells us a lot. Our physical senses give us a representation, or impression, of the world around us. How the world looks, sounds and feels is individual to each of us. We can agree on some generalities, but for all of us there will be fine distinctions at odds with the perceptions of others. We discuss these distinctions and why they're important in *Representational Systems 86*.

Our sensory experience is influenced by many things,

including our thoughts at the time, our emotional state, the clarity of our sight and hearing, and even our heat or cold tolerance. Have you ever had the experience of commenting that it's hot (or cold), only to get blank stares, or be challenged that no, it's not? We don't even have the exact same perception of temperature.

Different people witnessing the same event will often give widely diverse accounts of what took place; perhaps you've noticed this and wondered why. It all comes down to perception. Those senses to which we habitually pay the most attention will provide us with the most information, thus shaping how we perceive and recall an event.

Some people will be primarily aware of what they see, others more aware of the sounds they hear and words spoken, while others still will be highly aware of the feelings they have about what's happening, or notice particular smells and tastes.

When we consider the complexity of how our senses work - for instance vision, where the images we see are turned upside down, coded, reassembled and then projected in such a way that they appear outside of ourselves - it's a wonder when two people *can* agree on the same external event. Add to this the variations in how we each process sensory information, and we surely have to marvel that we communicate with each other as well as we do.

Beryl's sense of colour

After her car was backed into, Beryl arranged for some panel and paint work to repair the damage. When she collected her car, she noticed the new paint colour did not match the old. She now had a two-tone car, which did not satisfy her eye for visual detail. The painter expressed surprise - he thought it looked fine; however, he wanted a happy customer and re-did the paint.

While the second attempt brought improvement, to Beryl's eye the colour still didn't match and she politely insisted the painter get it right. After the third repaint, the match, while not perfect, was close enough that Beryl decided she could live with it. She and the painter saw it differently. To Beryl the colours were different tones and the painter saw a fair match. They were each looking through different eyes.

Our unique perception of reality

In the same ways, we can have widely varying perceptions and preferences when it comes to artwork, music, how soft or how hard we like the bed, aromas and the types of food we

enjoy. What we each call reality is actually our very own individual, tailor-made unique representation of what constitutes *our* reality. It is our perception and ours alone. Just like fingerprints, no two representations are identical. (See also 'Our story is our perception of reality' 61 in *Presuppositions*.)

How do we develop our perceptions?

Along the way of our growing up, many of us tend to prefer one or two senses in relating to our world. If perhaps we had our childhood drawings praised, we may turn our attention to the visual sense. If our singing brought us much praise and good feeling, perhaps we became more aware of sounds and voice. These preferences will also affect the ways we find learning easiest - we may learn best by seeing how something is done, reading about it or hearing descriptions and instructions, or physically doing the new learning.

Developing our senses

Many of us have habitually gone through our days without fully switching on our senses. Much of this book involves developing our sensory awareness to receive a wider range of information. We can then enjoy a deeper understanding of our world and each other, better communication, and more joy and pleasure in day to day living. Embracing the fullness of using all our senses can enhance our experience and enrich every aspect of our lives.

Try it now

Take a few moments to look around you, to really see. Notice colours, light and shadow, shapes, distance. Switch on your amazing eyes.

The real voyage of discovery does not consist of new landscapes, but in having new eyes.

~ Marcel Proust

Listen - what do you notice? Even in a quiet room, we can hear sounds, maybe from outside - traffic, trees in a breeze, birds? Or inside sounds from a fridge running, a clock ticking. You are breathing - can you hear that?

The quieter you become, the more you can hear.

~ Ram Dass

What can you feel right now? Is there a sense of temperature, or movement of air on your skin? Is there a spot of tension in

your neck or shoulder? Tingling in a toe? Notice the feeling of the clothing on your skin and the movement of that clothing as you breathe. What scents or perfumes can you smell? Is there any taste or sensation in your mouth?

Face numbed with fragrant morning air

Sea breezes raking through my hair

The taste of salt, the wet of dew

A winter walk when day is new

~ From a poem by Evelyn

Presuppositions

ATTITUDES WE CAN ADOPT FOR PERSONAL PEACE OF MIND

Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.

~ Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland

You know who invented the light bulb, right? Thomas Edison famously invented something we would find difficult to do without. The light bulb was not his only achievement; Edison had 1,093 patents for inventions, including a motion picture camera and the phonograph. His school teachers described him as 'too stupid to learn anything' and his first two employers fired him for being non-productive. Well, what did they know?

It's often stated that Edison failed over a thousand times in his experiments to create the incandescent bulb. In fact, according to Rutgers' School of Arts and Sciences nobody, not even Edison, counted the number of experimental lamps he made before he hit on the one that lit up his life and ours. We do know he and his team conducted thousands of trials designing storage batteries. His friend and associate Walter S. Mallory said to him 'Isn't it a shame that with the tremendous amount of work you've done, you haven't been able to get any results?' Edison turned on him in a flash, and with a smile replied 'Results! Why, man, I have gotten lots of results! I know several thousand things that won't work.'

Edison's attitude to his work and his experiments perfectly demonstrates the presupposition that there is no such thing as failure, and if we are open to it, we can instead gain plenty of feedback from whatever we do, from which we can learn. More about that in a minute...

What exactly are presuppositions, and why do they matter?

The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines a presupposition as 'something taken as being true or factual and used as a starting point for a course of action or reasoning.'

Presuppositions encompass our attitudes and beliefs and our ideas about how the world works - or how we think it

should work. We've unconsciously collected them from family and friends, teachers and workmates, books we've read, movies we've watched and even songs we've listened to. We absorb them from news and social media, and people we admire. Some will serve us well and others less so.

When you take the time to consider some generalisations in the way you have habitually thought and felt about people and behaviour, what do you notice? Might you benefit from giving some of your presuppositions an update?

Considering different attitudes invites us to experiment with fresh generalisations about our world and the people in it, and notice what we discover when we do.

We offer you nine presuppositions we find helpful for creating personal peace of mind through tolerance and acceptance of what it is to be human - and the different ways we all have of making our way in the world. As you read about and consider these ways of thinking, you might try them on and see if they fit for you, or whether you may find them useful.

There is no failure, only feedback

Our story is our perception of reality

Every behaviour has a positive intention (for the person doing the behaviour)

People are doing the best they know how

Mind and body are parts of the same system

The meaning of your communication is the response you get

You cannot not communicate

If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got

The person or element with the most flexibility in a system will have the most influence

There is no failure, only feedback

When things don't work out for us the way we hoped or intended, a common response is to say or feel we have 'failed'. A useful alternative view is that rather than good or bad, right or wrong, our results offer us valuable information. Learning anything involves not doing things perfectly at first. We keep going until we get the feedback of what works and what doesn't, and master the task at hand.

We think Edison's attitude about his many trials served him well, encouraging his pursuit and achievement of a great

number of successes. If, in the old language, you consider you've 'failed', you could consider:

- What is my aim?
- What have I learned so far?
- What next?
- How else can I use what I've learned?

Our story is our perception of reality

This refers to the individual ways in which we each experience the world through our senses and how we store and retrieve this sensory information in our minds using images and sounds. As you might remember from our chapter on sensing, we each do this in our own unique way, and our personal story will never exactly replicate the world as it truly is. It will be our interpretation, influenced by many factors such as our focus, our state of mind at the time, what senses were most activated or any distractions going on around us.

We each take action and respond according to how we think and feel, and our story never - that's right, never - gives a true and accurate account of the world outside our heads.

When we behave as if this is true, we allow ourselves to show more tolerance of views or opinions we may find odd or hard to understand. We may also be less affected by criticism or judgment and more able to realise we simply see things differently from each other.

Every behaviour has a positive intention

We touched on this on page 42 in *Behaviour* and include it again here because we see it as one of the most important drivers of our actions - the desire or need to relieve a feeling we don't want, or achieve one we do want (and sometimes both).

It's easy to see how beneficial behaviour has a positive intention. When people are helpful, thoughtful, working productively, or playful, the intention behind their actions is generally clear. What is not so easily recognised is that *for the person doing it*, even non-productive, hurtful or destructive behaviour is driven by a (often unconscious) positive intention.

James's temper

James was in the habit of losing his temper at the least provocation. His behaviour cost him several relationships and threatened his job. Nobody enjoyed this, not even James. What he couldn't see at first was that he felt frustrated with

his life in general and because that was too big a topic to face he stirred up little storms, feeling justified in doing so, in an effort to release his inner turmoil. This didn't achieve the aim, but his behaviour resulted from an unconscious attempt to do so.

Acting as if it is true that every behaviour has a positive intention allows us to understand that other people's behaviour is about them, not about us. (And of course, our own behaviour *is* about us!) We might even be curious, in a detached way, about what is going on for someone who is behaving in ways we consider odd, and feel compassion instead of judgment.

We want to be clear - the existence of a positive intention does not make antisocial behaviour acceptable. However when we adopt this perspective, it is much easier to assert our boundaries respectfully rather than get caught up in what the other person is doing.

James's boss, Eva, called James in for a meeting with a view to resolving the problems created by his behaviour at work. Being aware of some (unknown) positive intention driving his actions, Eva was able to offer James some compassion, respectfully pointing out that whatever was going on for him, his behaviour was neither fair to his workmates nor productive for his work.

When we become aware of the positive intention behind our own not-so-useful behaviours we can employ our flexibility to find better ways of getting whatever it is we need. In James's case, after his meeting with Eva he acted on a suggestion she made that he take a step back and consider what might be underlying his anger. He read the copy of *Think Feel Do* she'd given him; as a result he recognised his frustration and was able to identify the changes he needed to make, to design the life he really wanted. With his new-found sense of control, James's angry outbursts became a thing of the past.

People are doing the best they know how

What if we were to accept that at any given time, in any given situation, people make the best choices and take the best actions they know how?

Most of us have said or done something we have immediately, or in the fullness of time, wished we had done differently, something that in some way didn't match our own standards or even make sense to us. Most of us will also have observed actions and behaviours of others that do not make sense to us nor appear smart or useful.

It is part of human experience that we act from our story, our beliefs, values and circumstances and how or what we are thinking and feeling. Even though we may, at an intellectual level, 'know better', our actions can be driven by unconscious emotions - for example unresolved anger, resentment or fears, or unrecognised wants and needs (our *positive intention*). We do the best we can with the resources available to us at the time.

Bringing unconscious emotions to the surface and resolving them enables us to do better.

What do we mean by 'better'?

By 'better' we mean acting more congruently - where there is integrity between what we think, feel, and do, and our actions are respectful of ourselves and others.

Back to James

When James was losing his temper and alienating the people around him, he was doing the best he knew how. Although aware his behaviour was destructive, James just didn't know any other way of dealing with the way he felt. When he recognised what was really going on for him and took charge of his thinking, James turned his frustration into determination and found it easy to do much better.

Something else to consider - whose story are we using?

Sometimes the reason we can't make sense of our own or someone else's behaviour is the assessment criteria we're using.

We may think someone could or should do better based on our own values, standards or beliefs, when what they're doing may fit perfectly with theirs.

On the other side of the coin, sometimes we think *we* should be doing better ourselves, only to find we are judging ourselves according to someone else's opinion. In both cases it can be helpful to examine our values and beliefs to see if we need an update.

Freeing up our judgments

Presupposing that people are doing the best they know how invites us to free up our judgments of ourselves and others and accept that the behaviour is not the person, it's simply something a person is doing. We are all capable of change and until or unless we add to our resources, learn how to change our thinking and therefore the feelings that influence our actions, we simply and very humanly do the best we know how at any given time.

Mind and body are parts of the same system

How did we ever think otherwise? In the EHP Matrix we see the connections running through everything that makes up human experience. Neuroscience now confirms that our mind, what we think and how we think, affects the brain. The brain has plasticity, meaning it changes with every thought we have and everything we do.

It changes both its neurological form and its function. The transmitters in the brain then communicate with every cell in the body and in so doing, have an influence on these cells.

A simple example of our minds affecting our bodies is the 'butterflies' in our stomachs (and increased heart rate) most of us have experienced when thinking of something we are mildly anxious about doing, or the inability to sit still when anticipating something we are excited about doing. Similarly our bodies affect our minds - consider the feelings of emotional wellbeing created by the physical acts of dancing, singing, or experiencing a loving hug.

When we embrace the mind-body presupposition we create many more options to care for ourselves in holistic ways. As you continue your journey through this book, you'll learn many cool ways to utilise your mind-body system for enhanced harmony in your life.

Words to remember



Our big-time message:

Everything we do affects the form and function of our brain!

The meaning of your communication is the response you get

Most of us, most of the time, will be doing our best to communicate in positive ways. Most of us will also have had the experience of being misunderstood, or 'taken the wrong way'.

If our communication misses the mark, this presupposition encourages us to take full responsibility, telling us we need to adjust our message in order to be understood.

What's Phillip's problem?

Phillip undertook some personal development training which promised to make life easier and richer. In any training

situation, it's a challenge for the trainer to present material in a way that will make sense to everyone. At one point Phillip did not understand the trainer's message and asked 'What does that mean?' Instead of clarifying, the trainer repeated the exact words she had just said. Still not understanding, Phillip asked again. The trainer flew into a rage, said she'd told him already and implied he was less than bright.

Had the trainer presupposed it was her responsibility to get her message across clearly, she could have interpreted Phillip's lack of understanding as valuable feedback that she needed to adjust her way of presenting the material until he did understand.

By acting as if this is true, teachers, parents, trainers, managers - all of us - can improve our communication dramatically. We need only pay attention to the response we get, verbal or otherwise, and use our flexibility to make any useful adjustments.

You cannot not communicate

Have you ever noticed a person saying one thing with words while their body, facial expression or tone of voice clearly says something else?

Although powerful, words are only part of communicating. When a person's words and tone and/or body language disagree, take notice of the non-verbal parts as they are very likely the honest or *real* communication.

Sue gets the message

Sue felt perplexed that her husband was not communicating with her. As they sat watching TV in the evening, she would speak to him and ask him things which invited conversation. He sat there with his hand covering his view of her, saying nothing. No answers to her questions - not a peep. It took Sue a while to realise this was, in fact, a communication. Even no communication is a communication. There is a message being sent.

With this realisation Sue began to think more about the message her husband was sending. Was she interpreting it correctly? There had to be some strong emotions underlying such antisocial behaviour. She had never seen him do that with the family or even with his workmates, so why with her? Concerned they might be in real trouble in their relationship Sue began to consider the best time and the best way to express her concerns to her husband and ask what was going on for him.

If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got

This can also be termed 'If what you're doing isn't working (not getting the result you want) do something else'.

Seem obvious? Yes, doesn't it! But how many of us have (in the past, of course) continued to do something that didn't work? Did Sue continue to wait for her husband to respond differently while she kept on doing the same old thing? To get a different result she needed to change what she was doing. She might have stood right in his line of vision and started a slow strip, or waved a big fat soufflé under his nose, or...yes, there are endless possibilities for how she might grab his attention. His response to her new behaviour could give her valuable information about what she might need or want to do next, or even be an opening to discuss the state of their relationship or for her husband to share what was going on for him.

Communicating clearly

So, when wanting a response from someone else, are we communicating clearly? Or are we vaguely hinting at what we want while expecting the other person to read our mind? It would be easier on the other person (and by the way, on ourselves) if we came right out and asked for what we want.

If we are stuck doing the same thing and getting the same unwanted result, we might need to wonder why we are stuck. Is there something in our story about how things *must* get done?

The person or element with the most flexibility in a system will have the most influence

Picture this: Mum and toddler are in the supermarket, and toddler decides to throw one of his earth-shattering tantrums, tossing himself around the supermarket aisle, kicking his heels on the floor and generally pulling out all the stops. A moment later, Mum screams, gets down on the floor, yelling and kicking her heels and banging her fists on the floor. Toddler looks up, startled, immediately stopping his tantrum. Mum gets up, indicates with raised eyebrows and a forward nod 'so can we finish the shopping now?' and toddler meekly follows.

The person who has the best opportunity to influence any system - whether their own life, a group or another person - is the person who is flexible, creative and willing to try different behaviours until they get the outcome they want.

The key word here is *flexibility*. More is better. It's about

stretching ourselves to try new ways of doing things, model people we admire or 'make it up' as we go. It applies to personal relationships, business and therapy.

Flexibility and resilience

Flexibility is a key component of emotional resilience - the more ways we have of responding to both the expected and the unexpected, the better we will cope and the easier we will find it to move through adversity.

Each time you put into action something you are learning here, you are increasing your flexibility.

Try it now

We invite you to try out these presuppositions for yourself. Choose one each day and go through your day pretending it's true. What do you notice? What becomes easier for you?

Words to remember



Presuppositions

Mindfulness The EHP Way

HOW TO BRING PEACE AND JOY TO YOUR LIFE BY BEING NOW

If you are depressed, you are living in the past.

If you are anxious, you are living in the future.

If you are at peace, you are living in the present.

~Lao Tzu

The words in our opening quote offer the message of this chapter in a nutshell. There is speculation as to whether there was indeed a man named Lao Tzu, and if there was, did he really write the Taoist wisdom attributed to him? The practice of mindfulness draws on this wisdom of living in the present. The words and the sentiment, whoever wrote them, have survived since the 6th Century BC, so we're not offering a new concept.

The EHP way of mindfulness

We're offering you the EHP way of mindfulness - an enhanced state that we simply call *Being Now*. What may be new to you is our explanation for *what* being now is, *why* the words attributed to Lao Tzu are true, and *why* you might find being now valuable. We also offer practical suggestions as to *how* you can easily achieve the peace of being now.

What is being now?

When we are in the present moment we pay attention to what is happening **now** with all our senses. It's the difference between experiencing life and going through the motions with our attention on the past or the future. If we focus on what has been or is yet to come as we walk along the beach or through the woods, we miss out on consciously experiencing the sounds, smells, sights and sensations of what's happening here and now. Being now means taking in life's journey with all of our senses.

Young children are naturally in the moment. Their attention is here, now. Ask a young child how their day at school was, and they have difficulty telling you, because they have to think back. Most of their experience is being totally present. Watch a child absorbed in something they are

enjoying - there's no thought of what went or what's to come. It's later we learn to be more aware of past events and to plan the future.

We can also learn much from animals in this respect. If you've ever taken a walk with a dog, you have probably noticed they are completely in the moment, sniffing and seeing and hearing and tasting, tail wagging, senses alert and totally focused on their experience of the present place and time. They certainly have the ability to remember and anticipate, but they don't usually let it get in the way of having a good time right now.

Did you ever get lost in the moment doing something you enjoyed so much you forgot where you were, forgot yesterday and tomorrow? That's the state of *being now*. That's the state of being mindful. (We use the word 'mindful' and its variations in the sense of being consciously aware of our present sensory experience.)

Accepting our emotions

The word *mindfulness* in today's common usage relates to a way of self-management which encompasses noticing emotions and body sensations, including unhelpful feelings - and simply accepting them. From our experience both personally and in our coaching practices, we agree this can be a smart thing to do in the moment; we can find release by recognising what we are feeling, and sometimes that's all we need to do. Other times though, when an unhelpful emotion is experienced longer or stronger than we find useful, we might need something with a bit more oomph to move us on through. If you experience this, we invite you to *Empower Yourself* by choosing from the raft of ways we offer for comfortably releasing emotions that have hung around after their use-by date.

Why is *being now* valuable?

Being now, being mindful of the moment, can be our holiday from planning and fitting with schedules, our time out from the bustle of life. We are not suggesting an all-time focus on the present moment. We all need to plan and to keep appointments and it's smart to visit the past and note what we've learned. Recalling highlights and pleasant times can be wonderful, just as going into the future in anticipation of good times can add spice in our lives. What we are suggesting is taking time out frequently throughout the day, to experience the present, the *now*, as both the antidote for, and a prevention of, stress.

To illustrate our point, a cartoon we've seen of a man waiting to enter the Pearly Gates says it all. He's grumbling about what an awful life he had, only for a sad-faced Saint Peter to tell him, 'You actually had a wonderful life, you were just too busy to notice'.

How our time focus can create depression or anxiety

You may have noticed much of our message relates to perception; how we perceive the past, the future, ourselves and others. We create stress by taking on a negative perception in our minds, oriented in the past or future. A past negative focus can lead to being unhappy, to guilt, regret, resentment and more. Moments of guilt or regret can provide valuable feedback for doing things differently in the future, but ongoing recycling of these feelings serves no positive purpose. As we mentioned in *Time Orientation 95*, lingering too long and too often on negative aspects of the past is the birthplace of depression.

Depression comes in a range of intensities and is covered more fully in our *Empower Yourself* section. For now, we'll do a quick overview and let you know that to feel depressed, we have to spend a considerable amount of time focusing on unhappy or unpleasant events from the past. To create and maintain depressive feelings we need to replay hurts, resentments, bad luck and the like, and do nothing to express our emotions, relieve or change the situation. (It is also possible to create depression if we feel helpless to change present circumstances or to influence our future.)

You might also recall us saying that lingering too long and too often on future negatives - imagining what can go wrong - is how we create worry and anxiety.

Anxiety, like depression, has many shadings - from feeling slightly nervous through to panic - and also has its own chapter in *Empower Yourself*. To feel anxious, we have to focus negatively on the future by making internal movies and soundtracks about what can go wrong, about what we fear. If you think of a time when you felt a bit anxious, notice it wasn't about what was happening at the time, but what might or could happen. (We can also *recreate* anxious feelings by reliving fearful situations from the past.)

Being Now is valuable because with our memories and imaginings temporarily outside our awareness, we are free to see, hear, taste, smell, touch, feel and enjoy the reality of right here and now. When we are fully in the moment we experience all the richness our senses can provide.

Being now can provide a place of happiness, joy, peace

and contentment.

How do we achieve *being now*?

There are many ways to enjoy being in the now. It's highly probable you have already done so today, if only for short spells, and perhaps unconsciously. We are most likely in the moment when doing art or something else creative, swimming, playing sport, making love, having a good laugh with a friend, taking a walk, enjoying good food or playing with a pet. We can be in the moment doing simple things such as gardening, arranging flowers, singing along with the radio or doing some knitting.

Extreme pursuits can also fit the bill for being in the now. Far from the common perception of 'adrenalin junkie', recent studies suggest that people engaging in activities such as sky-diving, white-water rafting, and climbing mountains are actually reaping the benefits of immersing themselves in the present. To perform acts involving such risk, we need to focus on where our body is in space (proprioceptive awareness) or risk death or injury. If a tightrope walker were to start thinking about the class she took last week or what she might have for dinner, she would soon be bouncing in the safety net.

The goal here is to have ways of making being now a conscious choice. When we take a little time to consciously bring our awareness into the moment, we invite wellbeing into our day. This can reduce and release stress and contribute to effective stress-proofing. It can recharge our batteries, give a fresh perspective and achieve mindfulness - being mindful of and grateful for this moment.

If you already know a way or ways which work for you, treat yourself by doing them as often as possible. If you're not sure or would like another choice, here's the formula for the simplest way we know to pause in your day and experience *now*...

Being Now - one of the many ways:

1. Sit comfortably.
2. Tense your whole body, then let go and relax - let your body pretend it's asleep.
3. Take a deep belly breath in and slowly let it go, focusing on how it feels. (Make this a belly breath rather than a chest breath - so your shoulders barely move.)
4. Look around you, taking in s-l-o-w-l-y, the colours, shapes, textures, light and shadows.

5. Listen to what sounds there are, now, including your own breathing.
6. Notice what you feel - your breathing, your heartbeat, your feet on the floor, where your hands are resting - and linger on each sensation...pause and really notice...if you notice a spot of tension in your body...tell it to let go, to relax...keep breathing slowly and deeply.

Spend as long as you like with your feeling sensations. If you only have five minutes, take five minutes. If you have ten, lavish ten minutes on yourself. If your mind wanders, call it back to noticing your breathing again.

In a few words:

Tense, let go. Breathe. See. Hear. Feel. That's it!

The more often you practise being now, the more your body and mind become accustomed to it and the more quickly you will achieve this state. Even a minute or two, several times a day, will make a difference.

You may find this exercise takes some concentration at first, and if you want an even easier start, simply focus on how your breathing feels as you take one, two or three deep, slow, belly breaths.

Practicing these exercises will make it easier for you to master other skills such as meditation, self-hypnosis and relaxation, and being at ease with how to use your multiple brains.

*This breath, this candle on the lake
 this breath ricocheting down
 the silken canyons of my senses
 tether me softly to the heartbeat
 the colours
 of now*

*Resist the scrawny talons of long ago breaths
 picking at my hem
 Run my fingers through the jewels
 of precious moments
 of precious breaths of now*

~ Evelyn

Resilience

BOUNCING BACK BETTER

Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.

-Confucius

If you jumped on a mattress which had no stuffing, it would be a hard fall - you would not bounce.

If you were grass, you would bend with the winds no matter how fierce, and if you were a twiggy tree, you would stand firm and risk breaking in the winds.

If you had a large jug of water, you could draw from it for a time, but unless you replenished the jug, the water supply would, at some point, run dry.

Resilience is having the ability to come back to neutral as soon as possible after setbacks. It's having something in reserve to act as resistance to stress. It's also having a mindset that whatever happens, you can and will deal with it. There may be discomfort, grief, loss, changes which were not in the plan - and you can recover and get on with life.

Life throws us curve balls and we don't often get warnings of their imminence. That's life. We can resist, fight and complain, and risk being the twiggy tree, breaking under the strain, or we can shore up our reserves, knowing that life is unpredictable. We can trust our flexibility and our strength to find our way through, come out the other side and move on.

The basis of resilience is emotional and psychological wellbeing, made up of:

Creating and maintaining balance

Managing our state

Flexibility

Creating and maintaining balance

Balancing our nervous system

Balancing our nervous system on a regular basis can be compared to taking a car, boat or plane for regular maintenance. The human body needs maintenance more

often than a vehicle - and the good news is it's free and only takes a few minutes a day. Making a regular habit of *Balanced Breathing 117* brings us back onto an even keel in the moment and also reinforces the neurology of being calm, which is a large part of stress-proofing.

Social/family interaction

Most of us will be aware of the human need for interaction and companionship. We benefit from relating to, having fun with, and sharing time and energy with other people, from those close to us, to those with whom we come into contact casually. Stop and say a kind word to the checkout person at the supermarket!

Positive touch also adds to our wellbeing and hugs are a top-notch way to give and receive this touch. The caring touch of another person - a squeeze on the shoulder or hand, the comfort of sitting close to someone we care about and who cares for us, are ways to make contact. The giving and receiving of touch contributes to our resilience; most cultures include touch in greetings (such as handshakes). Freely inviting or offering touch appropriate to your culture or sub-culture is a basic human connection. The physical and emotional benefits of stroking or cuddling pets are also well documented.

Make space and time to connect and reconnect with people who are important to you, and with people in general, balancing time with others and time to be alone - to meditate, to create and to ponder.

Pacing time and energy

Be aware of your energy levels and work and play to suit them. Taking time out *before* getting exhausted can make the difference between reaching the end of the day feeling satisfied or feeling worn out and fed up. Chunk work down to a manageable pace, take pauses *before* you need them. Even in an employed situation, where work time is mostly (or totally) structured for you, simply lifting your head and taking three long, slow, breaths can be enough to refresh your mind and body.

Play and entertainment may need pacing too. If we play too hard or too long, not leaving enough time or energy for friends, family or work, is this what we really want? If the device or the TV takes many hours of our attention and we neglect what we really value, it may be time to take stock and make a shift.

It's also important to recognise what drains our energy

unnecessarily, and take whatever steps we can to minimise or remove those factors from our lives. Boost your resilience by implementing what you learn in our chapter on *Energy Conservation 399*.

Restorative sleep

If you've ever been sleep-deprived, you'll know the negative effects of tiredness on mood, thinking ability and how we cope with the ups and downs of day-to-day living. Adequate sleep is essential for resilience; if sleeping well hasn't been typical for you, we highly recommend adopting ideas and strategies from our chapter on *Sleep 392*.

Refuelling our reserves

We need refuelling on all levels - emotional, psychological and spiritual, as well as physical.

Along with a nutritious diet, regular exercise and adequate (filtered) water, we need the stimulation of something different to balance the familiar - we need variety for our senses. One way to do this is to give yourself the gift of a holiday. Are you thinking of some tropical island right now? Yes, that's one way and maybe that's a choice for you, and there are other more immediate ways.

Consider - make space in your diary for a day off. Determine whether you need this once a month, every three months or whatever interval feels right. Take yourself out. Leave the phone at home; if you need to, let people know you are unavailable that day. Leave home with a plan or without one. Go to town and browse the shops, visit art galleries or museums, head for a beach or a bush walk, take lunch or find it somewhere - you are a free agent for the day and can do exactly as you please, gaining fresh sights, sounds and sensations.

Even more often, take a mini time out with *Bliss On Demand 226*, *Meditation 160*, or *Self-Hypnosis 197* from our *Skills* section. These can be achieved in a matter of minutes in a day.

Discover your favourite time out - maybe more than one - and treat yourself to different sized holidays to meet your needs and wants as often as you like.

Managing our state

Maintaining a resourceful state most of the time is optimal for resilience. Nobody can be in a positive mood all day every day, however feeling good most of the time is a worthwhile target. It's a lot about deciding how we want to feel along with having the knowledge of how to change our state when we

want to do so. Choose from the *Skills* section - for instance you might use the *Eye-Finger Pattern 145* or *Clearing Pattern 135* to clear any unhelpful feelings and use *State Anchoring 211* to trigger your desired states on demand.

Engage an attitude of gratitude

It's a funny thing about life, once you begin to take note of the things you are grateful for, you begin to lose sight of the things that you lack.

-Germany Kent

Gratitude is an emotion, an attitude and a mindset; it has the potential to change habitual thought patterns which may not be helpful or supportive. One extensive study (Emmons and McCullough 2003) showed that in a 21 day period, taking just two minutes each morning to express three things they were grateful for resulted in significant mood change for a group of people, shifting from pessimistic to more optimistic.

In *Feeling 37*, Kate turned her life around after major setbacks, primarily by firmly establishing a habit of acknowledging gratitude.

Sometimes, when times are really tough, it becomes necessary to pare right back to basics and be grateful for having breath, for food to eat, for shoes to put on, or for being able to see. There is always something for which we can be grateful, no matter how basic or simple.

Establishing the gratitude habit primes the brain to be on the lookout for positives and lessens the attention paid to what is not perfect. It alters how we view the world. We begin to notice more to appreciate, and fewer obstacles - or the obstacles can become mere pebbles on our path.

To begin, you could follow the example from the research project mentioned above, and every morning either write down or fully acknowledge three things for which you are grateful, in that moment. Or you could follow Oprah Winfrey's example of writing, at the end of each day, five things for which you are grateful, from the day. She has publicly stated that this habit, more than any other single action, changed her life for the positive.

Choose a way to acknowledge gratitude that suits you, try it for 21 days and see what happens. Is your wellbeing, your resilience, worth a few minutes in your day?

The single greatest thing you can do to change your life today would be to start being grateful for what you have right now.

-Oprah Winfrey

Be in the now

In *Mindfulness The EHP Way* 170 we learn the art of being present, being in the now. The present moment is where we find peace and joy. Looking back on what went wrong sets us up for depressive thoughts. Worrying about the future invites anxious thoughts. We cannot stay in the present all of the time, nor should we. We need to plan, anticipate, keep appointments - and it can be very pleasant recalling past events which have been fun or fulfilling. If we spend some time being fully present, five times a day or more - the more the better - it's like putting emotional resilience money in the bank.

Basically, being now is bringing your full attention to your senses right where you are; noticing what you see - the colours, shadings, shapes and textures - noticing any sounds, foreground or background, and any other sensory experience - feelings from your skin out and from your skin in. Bring your full focus to YOU and your senses and enjoy the time to simply *be*. Just a minute or two of clock time can be a long time in mind time - enjoy and refresh!

Go natural

For the ultimate in *being now*, head out into the natural world whenever you can. There is a growing body of evidence confirming that spending time in nature has profound benefits for our wellbeing and resilience. Soak up the sights and sounds of nature in all her glory; notice flowers, raindrops and clouds; listen to a waterfall, birds singing, wind in the trees. Smell grass underfoot or leaf litter in the forest; boost your tactile senses by touching the bark of different trees and noticing the feel of sun or rain on your skin. If you don't have your own garden, hunt out somewhere you can taste fruit fresh from the tree or vine, infused with sunshine. Nurture yourself with nature.

Flexibility

Confidence to navigate challenges

Having the confidence that we can deal with whatever life presents us with is a key element to having resilience. We will all have faced challenges and found our way through to the other side; that we are still here is our living proof - this is

one piece of evidence that we can deal with life's tricky bits. We will all have heard and read stories of people who have overcome incredible odds to live happy and fulfilling lives. If one person can do that, another person can. We are more alike than we are different, to loosely quote Maya Angelou, and we can all find our way when we seem lost.

If your head knows it and your heart or your gut is not so sure, you might refer to the chapters on *Confidence* 351 and *Beliefs* 317. One of our headline messages is this: the brain is an amazing instrument and we can use our mind to train or retrain our brain. Our brain is plastic, malleable and can change - fast - to do what we want it to do, using our skills.

Reframing

Reframing is looking at things in a different way. Do you see the glass half full or half empty - or refillable? Having flexibility in viewpoints is important in order to be resilient. Different perspectives offer more choices, allow us to see another person's view, and can leave the way open for humour. The sooner we can laugh at a situation, the sooner we move on from discomfort or hurt. *Perceptual Positions* 68 reminds us there are different ways to see things and *Reframing* 193 offers us ideas on how to change the emotional effect by changing how we see or describe a situation. For instance muddy footprints on the floor can remind us the family we love is right here with us.

Giving up on perfectionism

We know you're out there - people who find it hard to settle for less than perfect, who strive above and beyond and then some. It comes as a challenge, doesn't it, to let it go, to walk away, to see someone else do something which falls short - in your estimation! Does this add stress to one's life? If taken to extremes, yes it does.

If this is you, you might like to try an exercise in flexibility. Leave something imperfectly done. Walk away and find a distraction. Go into third perceptual position and notice how interesting it can be. Smile to yourself at the diversity of human beings, along with all our similarities, our individual ways of doing things. Try on, just for fun, a 'that'll do' attitude with something that really doesn't matter. Let it go. Look at the clouds or wonder how the newly emerged butterfly knows to fly directly to her source of food. A relaxed attitude is an element of being resilient.

Words to remember



If there is something in your life you don't like, change it.
If you can't change it, change the way you think about it, in
order to feel good.

*If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is
'Thank you', it will be enough.*

-Meister Eckhart

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your feedback at feelgood@ehpmatrix.com.**

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downloadable audio of the exercises) please order
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