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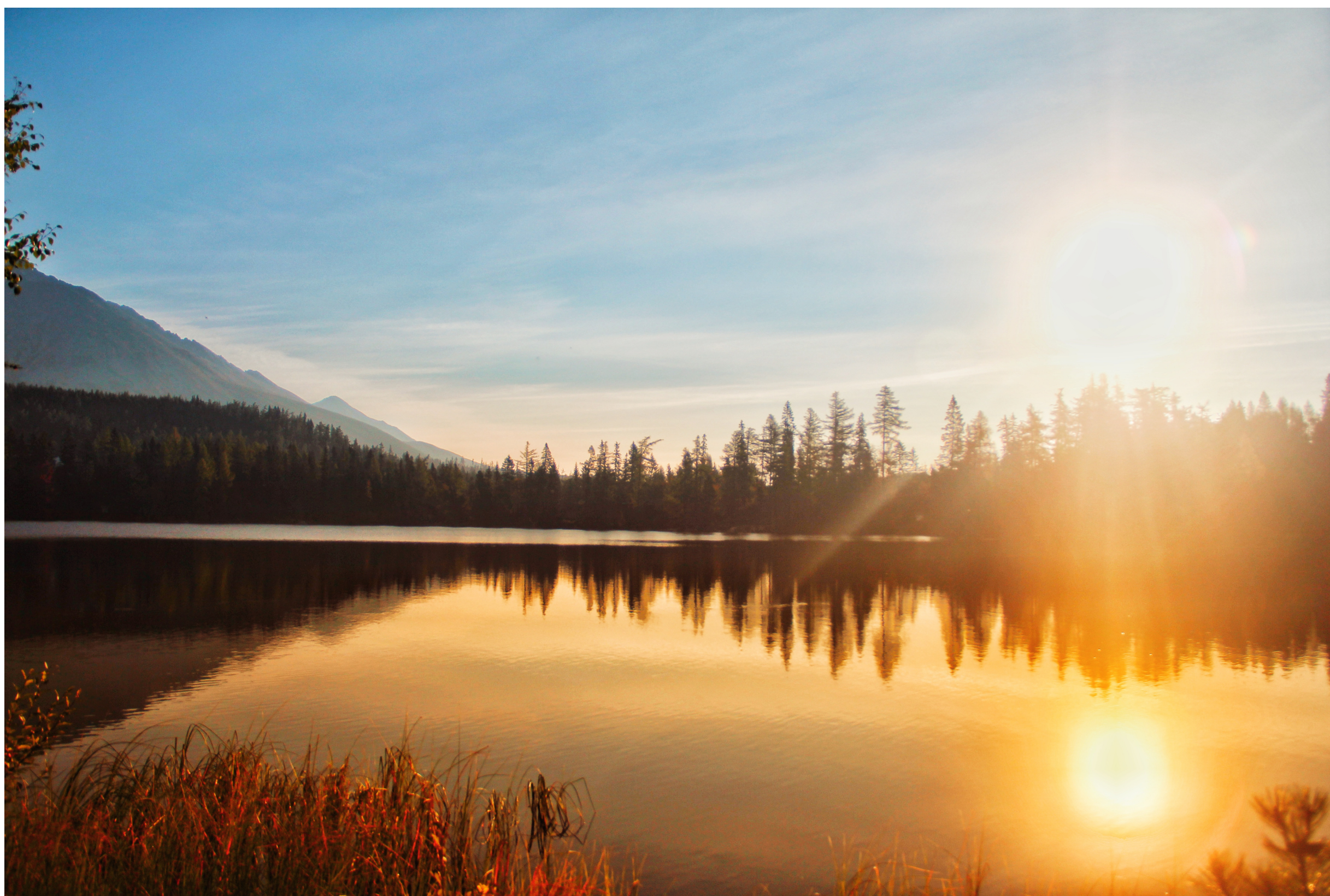
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# INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking the time to read this eBook, ***Mindset 7*** which focuses on seven simple steps to develop a positive, can-do mindset and improve motivation.

This eBook is for anyone that is dealing with a lack of motivation in relation to work, study, better lifestyle choices, or just life in general.

It is easy to get stuck in a rut of negativity and feelings of hopelessness. Lack of motivation can become debilitating. It can make even the most basic tasks feel overwhelming. Procrastination and avoidance become the comfort zone out of which it can be difficult to move. If you are feeling like this, you can lift yourself out of such thought patterns by shifting your mindset.

This eBook offers seven ideas that will improve your motivation and help you get things done and move forward in life.

Understanding and accepting that you are in control of your mindset is one of the most liberating ideas. It is empowering to have the knowledge that you control what you allow to distract and hurt you, make you happy, make you fearful or anxious and stressed.

It is my unwavering belief that once you accept that you control how you feel, you **CAN** harness your thoughts and improve your motivation.

You may lack motivation to get yourself out of your comfort zone to find love, to study or to try a new hobby. You may lack motivation to get out of bed in the morning, give up vices such as alcohol, caffeine and junk food. It doesn't matter what it is. What matters is that **YOU CAN CHANGE IT.**

I hope that you enjoy ***Mindset 7*** and visit my website, ***onlyonelife.co.uk*** for more ideas, free resources and blog posts.

*Hannah*



# COURAGE

Our natural instinct may be to recoil from challenges or anything we are not used to. This can result in us procrastinating in order to avoid facing what we fear. Left long enough, these feelings can develop into anxiety and an inability to move forward. We stagnate.

World-renowned speaker and writer, Brene Brown, writes in her bestselling book, ***Rising Strong***, that we should choose courage over comfort and accountability over blame. We are responsible for our own happiness and we are in control of the thoughts that we have.

Brown talks about the necessity of being vulnerable in order to be courageous. This requires emotional courage, but the benefits that can be reaped can be life-changing.





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***SUCCESS IS  
NOT FINAL,  
FAILURE IS  
NOT FATAL:  
IT IS THE  
COURAGE TO  
CONTINUE  
THAT  
COUNTS.***

“





# COURAGE

Courageous people are not necessarily 'stronger' than anyone else. They just accept that they need to show vulnerability in order to move forward.

Think of something that you fear (I don't mean being chased by a lion, but instead something like trying to make amends with someone that you have fallen out with, applying for a new job, forgiving, ending a relationship or asking someone out for a drink). Now think of how good you will feel if the result is positive. If the result is not what you had hoped for, so what?! You tried. You put yourself out there. You showed vulnerability and you learned.

The great Eleanor Roosevelt wrote,

***Learning and living: they really are the same thing, aren't they? The purpose of life is to live it, to taste experience to the utmost, to reach out eagerly and without fear for newer and richer experience.***

Fast forward your imagination to this time next year and think about how you may feel if your life is at exactly the same point as it is today. Now imagine the same scenario in five and then ten years.

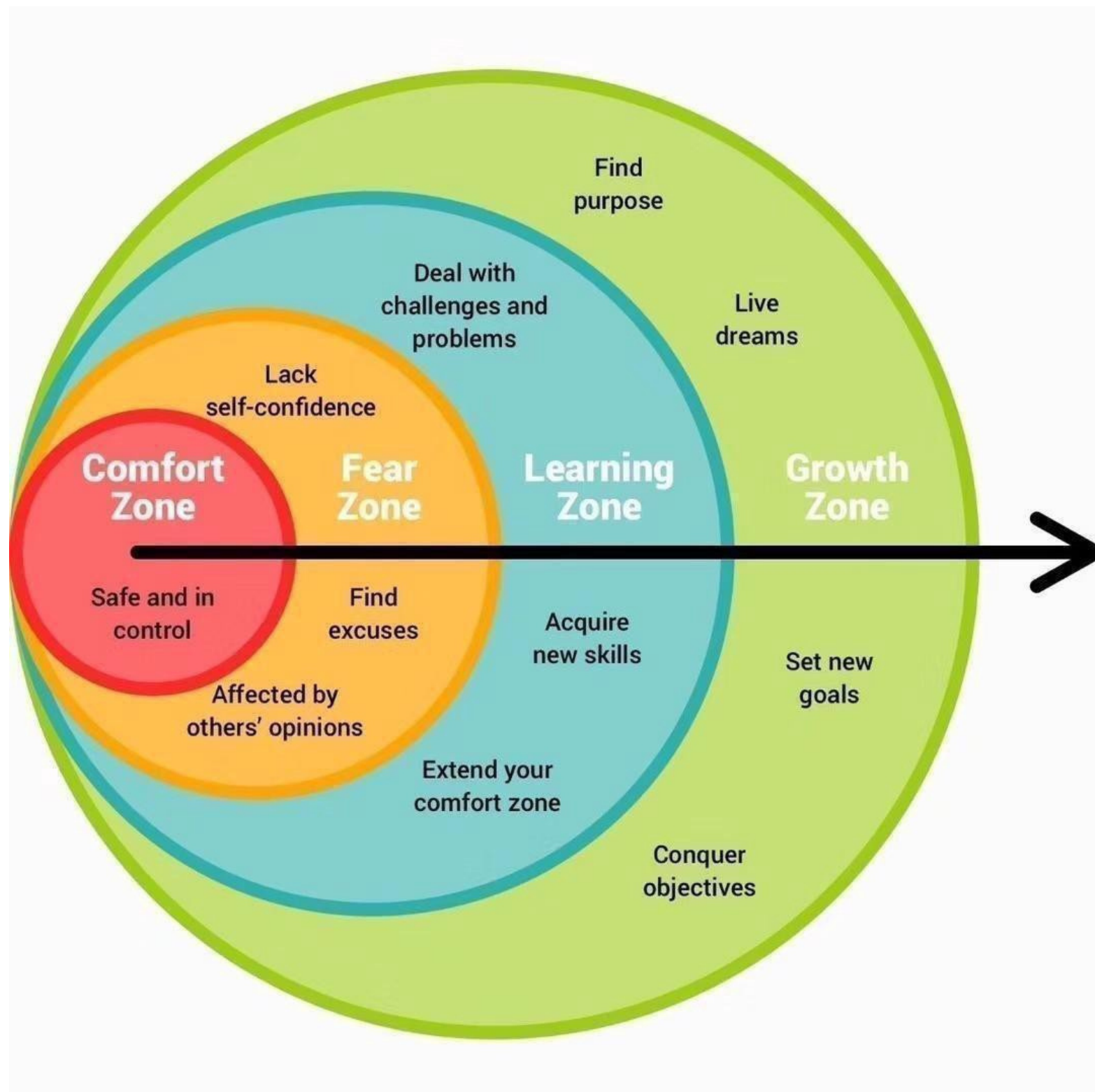
You cannot hope to develop and improve your relationships, career, finances or health if you do not commit to changing something. The first step is to commit to changing your mindset.

## STRATEGIES

Think about how you speak to yourself: would you speak to a friend so harshly? Have you suffered unwarranted criticism in the past that has formed your self-beliefs? Do you make excuses about not having enough money, time or opportunities? The fact is that no one owes you a life. No one is responsible for the development of the aspects of your life. No one else is responsible for your happiness. This is your job and you need to take responsibility and be accountable for that. Buy some second hand trainers, take a free university course on Coursera or EdX, look at how much time you spend scrolling social media when you could be exercising, socialising face-to-face or working on your CV so that it is ready when a suitable job opportunity pops up.

All of these situations will make you vulnerable, but in turn, they will make you courageous and more willing to try new things in the future.





# THE COMFORT ZONE

According to Brandeis International Business School Professor Andy Molinsky, the path out of your comfort zone (shown by the black arrow above) is difficult. In his book, ***Reach: A New Strategy to Help You Step Outside Your Comfort Zone, Rise to the Challenge and Build Confidence***, he writes about psychological stumbling blocks that can derail our journey through and out of our comfort zone.

Through interviewing people about their lives, Molinsky found that some people feel that when they face their fears, it can feel inauthentic and false because the actions do not feel like what they would do naturally. He writes about how you need to push through the discomfort. He advises taking a 'prop' with you as you face your fears. A prop could be a power suit or a symbolic piece of jewellery.

Think about what your comfort zone is: an unhealthy relationship, a dead-end job, comfort eating, your uninspiring friendship group, spending money that you don't have or sitting on the sofa each evening instead of exercising. These situations may feel safe and comfortable, but they are not your friend. They are your foe. You are on the path to disappointment and ultimately, self-destruction but you have the potential to experience greater fulfillment and boost your resilience. The first step is the risky toe-dip into the 'fear zone'. This is where many movements out of comfort zones come to an abrupt halt, but if you can tolerate the short term discomfort which is actually vulnerability and courage, you can emerge into the learning zone, then the growth zone and emerge as a new version of yourself. This 'new you' will have learned lessons by experiencing successes and failures along the way.

This journey out of your comfort zone may be lonely. Do not let this phase you. People are either with you supporting your growth, or they aren't. When others do not encourage your journey out of your comfort zone it may be because your growth and movement out of the comfort zone highlights their stagnation and willingness to let life happen to them.

Have courage. Unlock your personal growth.

**You haven't come this far only to come this far.**



# LAUGHTER

Bertrand Russell once wrote that,

***Laughter is the most inexpensive and most effective wonder drug. Laughter is a universal medicine.***

Medical studies have demonstrated clearly the significant psychological and physiological benefits. One 2011 Australian study showed a 20% reduction in agitation using what is known as 'humor therapy'. The study involved 35 nursing homes in Sydney and found that there were significant therapeutic benefits of laughter generated by clowns, jokes and simple human interactions.

While laughing alone has clear mental and physical health benefits, laughing with others arguably has a greater impact. This is because it encourages group bonding, strengthens relationships, a sense of belonging and connectedness. It is this social connection that can help us lift our mood, motivate us and generate positive thoughts about ourselves and others.





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***ALWAYS  
LAUGH  
WHEN YOU  
CAN, IT IS  
CHEAP  
MEDICINE.***

“





# LAUGHTER

Other studies have demonstrated that laughter has the ability to relax muscles, protect our hearts and improve our immune system so that our bodies are able to tackle stress. In fact, laughter has the ability to reduce cortisol (our body's main stress hormone) and release endorphins (the chemicals produced by the body to relieve stress and pain).

**Laughter yoga** is becoming increasingly popular among those that recognise the health benefits of laughing. Individuals intentionally and voluntarily laugh without stimulus and then this laughter can quickly turn into real and contagious laughter among the group.

The eye contact and shared experience is said to be uplifting. Some people that attend such classes report a real sense of well-being, increased compassion and gratitude. Others have reported benefits in relation to a drop in blood pressure.

All good news then. Laughter has no negative side effects and is free

It would seem that laughter is something that you can self-medicate without any danger of overdose!

## STRATEGIES

You need to write yourself a prescription to allow yourself greater opportunities to bring laughter into your life. We each find different things funny: jokes, TV shows, comedians, pets, etc. I cannot tell you what you will find funny and result in laughter. For me, watching episodes of ***The Big Bang Theory***, ***The Office (US and UK versions)***, ***Friends***, ***Blackadder***, ***Extras***, ***Glee***, ***Father Ted***, ***Cheers*** and ***The Inbetweeners*** all work for me, even if I have seen them before. You might prefer ***You've Been Framed***—we often watch this together as a family. It is simple, short and fast, which can, if you like this sort of thing, result in multiple opportunities to laugh out loud together.

If you are looking for a different starting point, then smiling would be a first step. Smile at yourself in the mirror; smile at the postman, smile at the barista that makes your coffee. The sense of motivation and zest for life will reveal itself.

**You just have to begin with the intention to be open to joy.**



# GRATITUDE

Genuine gratitude is an important step on the road to improved motivation.

Even if your life has involved significant challenges, there will still be aspects of your life for which you can be thankful. Challenging events and people can also be something for which you can offer thanks as they will have taught you important lessons about your boundaries and knowledge about the types of situations and people that do not bring you joy. These can be avoided in the future.





”

**CULTIVATE THE HABIT  
OF BEING GRATEFUL  
FOR EVERY GOOD  
THING THAT COMES TO  
YOU, AND TO GIVE  
THANKS  
CONTINUOUSLY.**

**AND BECAUSE ALL  
THINGS HAVE  
CONTRIBUTED TO  
YOUR ADVANCEMENT,  
YOU SHOULD INCLUDE  
ALL THINGS IN YOUR  
GRATITUDE.**

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

“





# GRATITUDE

Being thankful for past memories, the roof over your head and food on your table are good places to begin on the road to a life filled with gratitude.

Positive thoughts and the offering up of compliments can create positive feelings in you and the recipient. Compliments can be considered to be expressions of gratitude, praise, congratulation, encouragement, or respect. Many people find it quite pleasurable to receive compliments about simple things such as their appearance, the quality of their work, the amount of effort that they have made, their children, pets and home.

Such compliments are easy to give but can have a huge impact. A study by the University of Melbourne found that people that receive compliments improve their engagement and efforts in tasks and/or relationships. Researchers have also found that compliments and other types of 'paying it forward' activities encourage social connections.

Considering that such actions are free, all they require from you is the confidence and willingness to try to make someone else feel good.

It is incredibly difficult to feel unhappy and demotivated when paying compliments or giving thanks.

## STRATEGIES

Developing gratitude as a daily practice is simple. We just need to open our eyes and ears for opportunities to offer thanks to others. Look someone in the eye when offering thanks, praise or encouragement. If this is something that frightens you; do it anyway. You have absolutely nothing to lose.

If face-to-face gratitude is too much for you at this point, try instead a letter of gratitude or even a text. If this proves difficult as a starting point, then offer internal mental thanks for past memories, experiences, people that are currently in your life or events that have happened to you that have impacted you. These can be both positive and more challenging events as all life experiences provide us with opportunities to learn, and for this we must be grateful.

Listen out for people expressing their gratitude for you and your work. Accept it however hard you may find this. Just say 'Thank you'. Do not be tempted to rebut their gratitude. Next, pay this gratitude forward and allow someone else to feel good. You just never know how much someone else may need a little bit of encouragement.





# THE IMPACT OF GRATITUDE ON THE BRAIN

Paying forward gratitude can also serve to improve well-being and motivation.

A research project by the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley found that expressing gratitude has lasting effects on the brain. Scientists studied a group of individuals who had been involved in a 'pay-it-forward' task. Using an fMRI scanner, researchers found that those who had shown gratitude showed greater activity in the medial prefrontal cortex of the brain (the part of the brain that is responsible for human social behaviours such as planning, willpower, decision-making, problem-solving, self-control and acting with long-term goals in mind). The results showed that this neural activity registered even three months **AFTER** the initial act of gratitude.

When the prefrontal cortex of the brain is low on activity or damaged, a person can find that their lives are ruled by impulsive behaviours, a lack of awareness or care for consequences and apathy. It is interesting to note that the prefrontal cortex region of the brain does not form fully until the age of 25. This goes some way to explain why teenagers often can be impulsive, moody, irrational and indulge in risky behaviours.

This evidence of the Berkeley project would suggest that practising gratitude may help the brain become more sensitive to the experience of gratitude, and, over time, this could contribute to improved mental health. An additional benefit of gratitude could also be that the prefrontal cortex is strengthened and this can, in turn, serve to make you more able to plan and make decisions to strengthen your willpower to move forward.





# TIME

Time is one of the only commodities that you cannot buy. Sure, you can pay others to clean your home, wash your car, look after your kids so you can free up more time, but the fact is that we each have 24 hours to use or waste each day. Many people claim that they do not have enough time in the day to do what they need or want to do with their lives. This serves as an explanation for their lack of personal and professional growth. The fact of the matter is that there ARE enough hours in the day. We just need to think carefully about the things we fill our time with.

Consider for a moment the following breakdown of a 24 hour period:

- 8 hours for sleep
- 1 hour for travel
- 2.5 hours for eating meals
- 30 mins of exercise
- 8 hours of work
- 2 hours socialising/resting

This allocation of time leaves 2 hours. This could be added to travel time, bathing, a longer period of exercise, charity or volunteering work, a longer shift of employed work, meditation, reading, chores or your side hustle.

If supermarket shopping is taking up hours of your weekend time; shop online. The system will save your favourite items making the process much more time efficient. You have time to exercise, to learn a new skill, to see friends and family and to rest. You just have to book it out in your mind and on your calendar.

**You must make your time and space sacred.**

**Time is a luxury that must be protected.**



A person is walking on a rocky beach at sunset. The sky is a deep orange, and the water is calm. The rocks are dark and jagged. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

”

***CHANGE  
YOUR 24  
HOURS AND  
YOU WILL  
CHANGE  
YOUR LIFE.***

“





# TIME

Appreciating the moment that you have right now and grasping the idea that we can only truly live meaningfully in the present moment is the first step in trying to harness the time that we have.

The great Stoic philosopher and Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, wrote in his collection of thoughts entitled, *Meditations*,

***Do not act as if you were going to live ten thousand years. Death hangs over you. While you live, while it is in your power, be good.***

While this advice feels morbid, it is a fact of life that we are all going to die at some point. Marcus Aurelius is advising us to live life to its fullest and adopt values that are good for ourselves and others. All other action, Marcus Aurelius believes, is a meaningless waste of the gift of time.

Consider what you would regret not doing in the next 6-12 months. How can you adjust the way that you spend your time to avoid such regretful feelings?

It is always a good idea to do something today that your future self would thank you for. Making effective use of your time will only bring you closer to your goals and desires.

# STRATEGIES

The first step is to take a look at the things that are holding you back. Some of these barriers are self-made while others will be unhealthy relationships, life style choices or a job that makes you unhappy. Spend your time after work hours looking for a more fulfilling role and shadow people with jobs that you are interested in. Spend time reading about the people that you admire: what path did they take? Could you do something similar?

Make a list of priorities. Say no to the things and people that drive you further away from your goals and values. Select only the actions that bring you closer to your goals and values.

Wake up earlier and quit alcohol and any other drugs. It is amazing how much more you can achieve by doing these very simple things. Instead of a 'to do' list, write a 'to don't' list. Watch how your time appears to multiply.



# LEARNING

Lifelong learning is the key to motivation as it helps you to step outside of your comfort zone.

Learning is about investing in yourself. It is about making yourself relevant in the workplace and in life. By acquiring new skills and knowledge, not only may you be able to perform better at work or begin a new career, you will have new and exciting things to talk about. You may even inspire others to do the same.

The truth is that in the next 5 years many jobs that exist today will be redundant. This should be motivation enough to keep moving and developing yourself.

You need to stay curious in order to stay motivated in life. As philosopher and writer, Susan Sontag wrote,

***Attention is vitality. It connects you with others. It makes you eager. Stay eager.***



”

**ANYONE WHO  
STOPS  
LEARNING IS  
OLD,  
WHETHER AT  
TWENTY OR  
EIGHTY.  
ANYONE WHO  
KEEPS  
LEARNING  
STAYS YOUNG**

“





# LEARNING

The science behind the benefits of lifelong learning is convincing. Learning has been found to stave off cognitive decline and improve our memory.

The white matter in our brains is called myelin. It allows electrical impulses to transmit quickly and efficiently along the nerve cells. The more we practise learning something, the denser our myelin becomes and this creates more neural pathways, helping us learn better and faster. So, the more we repeat and practise learning, the better we become at learning.

Learning requires effort and so you need to get out of your own way and avoid taking the path of least resistance and remain in our comfort zone. We know that nothing new happens there. There is no growth. In the learning zone, change happens and this can feel uplifting and incredibly motivating because the action of learning is the action of positive change.

Any type of new learning can help develop your brain and push you out of your comfort zone and give you confidence.

For the greatest impact, the new learning needs to be challenging and interesting. It must force you to focus. It must not be passive or familiar.

# STRATEGIES

Books and podcasts can be a great place to begin. Search on line for a topic that you are interested in. It does not matter what it is; there is likely to be a book and/or a podcast about it.

There is very little that you cannot learn on line today. Try Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on edX, Coursera or Udemy. Many of the online courses on offer on these platforms are free. You can learn anything from flower arranging to astrophysics. This type of learning can often be completed at a time to suit you. Some courses are video based and are self-paced, whereas others will have assignments to complete within a set time frame. You can commit 30 minutes while travelling to work or while on your lunch break. You have the time.

There is really no reason that you cannot begin to learn a new skill or acquire deeper or new subject knowledge.

**You just need the will.**



# VALUES

What are your values? We all have things that drive us, that we hold dear and that we admire in others. These are our values. Values guide or motivate us to act in a certain way. Your values are what is important to you. When your values match your behaviours, you are aligned and will likely feel content. This is the key to living an authentic and fulfilling life.

You need to set aside time to think deeply about the things that are important to you. These values will drive you and you will be able to make more informed decisions about whether something or someone is right for you based on this understanding.





”

***YOUR BELIEFS BECOME  
YOUR THOUGHTS, YOUR  
THOUGHTS BECOME  
YOUR WORDS, YOUR  
WORDS BECOME YOUR  
ACTIONS, YOUR  
ACTIONS BECOME YOUR  
HABITS, YOUR HABITS  
BECOME YOUR  
VALUES, YOUR VALUES  
BECOME YOUR DESTINY.***

“



Use the framework below to help you think about your values.

IN THIS MOMENT, THE THINGS THAT I VALUE MOST IN MY LIFE ARE:

THE REASONS I VALUE THESE THINGS ARE BECAUSE THEY BRING ME:

I FEEL PASSIONATE AND EXCITED ABOUT:

THE THINGS THAT I FEEL PROUD ABOUT ARE:

THE THINGS THAT MAKE ME FEEL CONTENT ARE:

THE THINGS THAT MAKE ME FEEL UNHAPPY ARE:



THE PEOPLE I ADMIRE ARE:

MY BEST LIFE WOULD INCLUDE:

I FEEL PASSIONATE AND EXCITED ABOUT:



UNDERLINE **THREE** CHARACTER TRAITS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO EMBODY. ADD ANY TO THE LIST THAT YOU FEEL ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU:

- ACCEPTING
- ENERGETIC
- COMPASSIONATE
- GRATEFUL
- MOTIVATED
- PLAYFUL
- LOYAL
- FAIR
- RESPONSIBLE
- COMMITTED
- SECURE
- STABLE
- LOVING
- THOUGHTFUL
- EMPATHETIC
- TRUSTWORTHY
- POSITIVE
- DARING
- GENEROUS
- FLEXIBLE
- RELAXED
- PASSIONATE
- POPULAR
- KIND
- ENTHUSIASTIC

You now have a clearer grasp of the things that are important to you. These are the things that drive you from your core.

These are likely to be the traits that you will find attractive in others.

This knowledge will help you set your goals, which is the next step...



# GOALS

With a shift in mind set that allows you to feel and be more courageous, content, gracious, appreciate your time, learning opportunities and your core values, you are now ready to set your long and short term goals or intentions.

Your goals will serve as your guide or your blueprint for your life. With these intentions you will better navigate your life as you will be able to identify easily what you should and should not commit your time to. Try to think of goals in terms of the aspects of your life: romantic relationships, finances, career, family and home, mental health, physical health, travel, leisure and friends.

You have to **WANT** to achieve your goals. Do not commit to things that you think you should want or what your parents expect you to achieve. There must be a will so that you can plot a way through. When setting out your intentions, you must commit to a realistic time frame within which you will achieve each goal. Your intentions must also be specific and achievable. So instead of committing to an intention of "**losing weight**", you would commit to '**losing 6lbs within 3 months by going to the gym three times a week and cutting out alcohol**'. Each intention must have an action plan associated with it.

By completing this final mind set task, you will begin to see that if you design your life with deliberate intention, you have the opportunity to live the life that you desire.



”

**OUR GOALS CAN  
ONLY BE REACHED  
THROUGH A VEHICLE  
OF A PLAN, IN  
WHICH WE MUST  
FERVENTLY BELIEVE,  
AND UPON WHICH  
WE MUST  
VIGOROUSLY ACT.  
THERE IS NO OTHER  
ROUTE TO SUCCESS.**

“



# 6 MONTH GOALS

**GOAL 1**

*ACTION:*

**GOAL 2**

*ACTION:*

**GOAL 3**

*ACTION:*



# 12 MONTH GOALS

**GOAL 1**

*ACTION:*

**GOAL 2**

*ACTION:*

**GOAL 3**

*ACTION:*



# 5 YEAR GOALS

## GOAL 1

*ACTION:*

## GOAL 2

*ACTION:*

## GOAL 3

*ACTION:*



# 10 YEAR GOALS

## GOAL 1

*ACTION:*

## GOAL 2

*ACTION:*

## GOAL 3

*ACTION:*





”

***THE BEST  
TIME TO  
BEGIN IS  
NOW.***

“