



"Meditation, Motivation and More"

by Mary Havelock

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About the Author – Mary Havelock

Mary Havelock has two young children.

She and her husband used to work for the same large corporation.

They planned that Mary should stay home when their son was born and they could get along with just the one salary.

Then, their daughter arrived and they had greater pressure on their finances and lifestyle.

Mary and Keith have used motivation techniques through their working lives and found them very useful.

The meditation and other procedures that Mary explains in this book have helped them and people they know to cope with the increasing pressures of modern life.

Mary is not a trained teacher and the material she presents is from experience, not formal training.

She said that they are both now happier and better focused, free of unreasonable worries and enjoying every day more.

She hopes that this material will be equally helpful for you and your family.



Part I: Meditation

Why Meditate?

When a friend suggested to me that I should try meditation, some negative feelings came to the surface in my mind:

- I thought that it was associated with some religion that I knew little about.
- I felt that I did not need it because I had regular sessions at the gym, and my small son and husband kept me very active when I wasn't rushing around at work.
- I just didn't have any time for it!

Then, my friend told me some of the benefits which she had got from meditation.

Like us, she and her partner worked long hours and had a busy social life.

But, she had been looking for some way to reduce the effects of stress on her body and their relationship.

She said that meditation was:

- ✓ Inexpensive
- ✓ Suitable for almost everyone, whatever their physical condition

- ✓ Easy to fit into the busiest schedule (that was a real surprise to me!)
- ✓ Something that I could start without a lot of preparation
- ✓ Something which might produce some benefits in weeks rather than months or years.
- ✓ Not tied to any belief system.



I am very grateful that my friend suggested that I try meditation, although she was concerned that I might start to think she was a bit weird.

My own experience has shown there are other benefits to this as well.

Meditation can help to put you in better control of your own emotions.

It can also help you to get more enjoyment from the positive aspects of your life.

If you do it regularly, it will help you to reduce the effects of stress and other negative influences on your physical well-being.

Many people have reported that meditation helped them deal with the effects of serious illnesses.

Now, let's go, together, through the simple steps needed to bring those benefits into your life.

The Core Benefits

While it will require some minor adjustments to set up even short meditation sessions in your current schedule, I believe that you will soon experience benefits that will show the effort is worthwhile.

One major improvement will be when you see how meditation can help you to better control and influence your internal conversation.

This can give you more control over two major factors that negatively affect our level of happiness and even our health:

- 1)** A negative self-image and
- 2)** accepting high levels of stress as normal in our society.

Most of us have to deal with plenty of negative influences in our professional and personal lives. The next section will help you to overcome current and past negative conditioning.

Polishing Your Image

Many of us have been conditioned to believe that we should never expect to have a better life than we have now. We may have been taught from an early age that whatever bad things happen, it's our fault.

That's why you might hear some of your friends say, "I've always been hopeless at that!" Downplaying their abilities and potential in that way is not modesty, it's just an excuse. Often, they could change their success rate in that activity with a little extra effort and self-confidence.

But, those comments almost ensure that they'll never improve in that area either.

That negativity can increase their internal stress and unhappiness which will affect everyone around them over time.

Even people that have achieved great material success, or were brought up with access to every benefit that wealthy parents could give them, sometimes make themselves and those around them unhappy because of their negative self-image.

You should see, over time, a distinct improvement in how you handle the upsets and disappointments which are part of everyday life.

The degree of happiness in our lives is closely related to how we feel about ourselves.

Reduce Stress



We all have a fight-or-flight response which developed among our earliest ancestors – those that survived long enough to produce our forefathers anyway!

In our urban environment, that response is often triggered by relatively trivial hassles that we have. It might be a reckless driver that cuts us off on our way to work or our boss putting the blame on us for something which was not our doing.

Many of us react strongly to the smallest triggers and there are plenty of them. Our bodies and our mental health can be affected over time by these constant calls on the fight/flight response.

You will probably see some improvement in how you handle small upsets after only a short while, provided you are consistent.

Meditation is not the universal answer to every doubt and upset but it can help.

Connecting to Here and Now

Many people get the impression that meditation is intended to remove them from the stressful situation that they are in to a “higher plane” and a carefree existence.

But, meditation is actually a means of clearing obstructions from your thinking and helping you to focus better on the positive aspects of your life so that you are better able to handle the stresses and disappointments which we all have.

When you use the exercises and suggestions that I provide in this book for a while, you should find that you see your life and relationships in a more positive way.

Where and How to Meditate



The meditation exercises that I explain in this book are simple and short. I am not a professional teacher – I am just sharing what I feel have been the most beneficial for me and people that I know.

They are what I, along with family and friends, use because they fit in with our varied, busy lives.

I recommend that you discuss meditation with your doctor before you do any of the exercises here. It is just common-sense. Your doctor will be able to advise you because they will be aware of your general health and medical history. Never take chances with your health. You won't need any special clothing or equipment. You may want to try them first when you have some space and privacy.

The only other requirement is that you should choose the exercises which you can expect to complete without interruption.

After you have gained a little insight and confidence, you will be doing some of them during your lunch hour, while watching your partner's favorite television show or while listening to someone present a report!

Some teachers suggest that some of the very simple exercises can be used to help keep stress down while you are waiting for a traffic light to change, but I don't recommend that.

I think that driving in many areas requires our full, undivided attention. Many accidents are caused by unexpected circumstances.

I believe that regular meditation will improve your ability to cope with the stress and effort required to drive safely.

And, if you are driving a reasonable distance, a short stop, a little exercise and a few minutes meditation would definitely help you to get to your destination in better shape.

How to Meditate

The first couple of times you do an exercise, I suggest that you sit in a comfortable chair with a firm back and seat. Make sure that your feet are flat on the floor and that your knees are bent at right angles.

Do not cross your legs as this can interfere with blood circulation and, over time, may lead to serious problems.

Keep your arms loose, either hanging down or resting lightly on your knees. Don't cross them over your chest because you want your breathing to be regular and unrestricted.

I don't recommend that you do any meditation while lying down unless you have to for medical reasons. This makes it harder for you to complete your exercise without drifting off to sleep.

This will probably reduce the benefits of the meditation, unless your goal was to use it to help you sleep better.

Don't over-do your meditation. I seem to get the best results from consistency rather than making the sessions longer.

Keep your sessions short and focused. This helps to keep you connected with your current surroundings so that you can answer the phone or soothe a crying child.

Hit the Habit, not Yourself

If you want to use meditation to help break a bad habit, it's important to focus on positive aspects.

I know people that have, for instance, tried to re-enforce their efforts to diet within their meditation sessions. But, what seems to happen is that by filling their mind with negative thoughts and images of flab, decayed teeth etc, they downgrade their own self-image. It's like they start blaming themselves for being weak and unable to reduce their eating or giving up sugary snacks.

I'm sure that they could get better results if they focused on the benefits of feeling healthier, having sweeter breath and more cash after giving up their snacks rather than the negative images.

Going Further

If you want to develop your knowledge and your usage of meditation techniques, seek out a qualified, reputable teacher that will guide you and be on hand when you try longer sessions.

Simple as Breathing

You're almost ready for your first meditation exercise.

I want you to focus on your breathing. This exercise can help us to improve how we breathe so that we get more benefit from each breath.



Sighs

Have you ever sighed deeply and immediately felt a little better? It works for many people and is so simple.

Try it – three or four deep sighs is plenty. The effect is not long-lasting but it's a good way to use a spare moment. And, when you notice the benefit you get, you can do it again straight away if you have the time.



You can get the same effect with a deep yawn. That was recommended to me some years ago as a quick way to increase the amount of air, especially oxygen, I was taking in.

This is not something you should do in company because the other people may think your sigh or yawn is a negative reaction to their presence or conversation.

Although we've been doing it all our lives, many people don't breathe well.

We take short, shallow breaths and we hold our bodies in positions which constrict the flow of air to and from our lungs.

Many of us also smoke, which doesn't help.

Good breathing means taking in enough air with each breath to really fill our lungs. You can feel the effect by lightly placing your hand on your belly. If you don't notice any increase in pressure there, then you are only taking shallow breaths which don't get below the top part of your lungs.

It's not essential for your breaths to be all of the same length. Try to make the exhale longer than the inhale.

The most important factor is that you remain as relaxed as possible.

Count to Ten

This is your first real meditation. It is simple to do, but not many people find it all that easy when they first try it.

For your first few sessions, do the exercise when you have a bit of privacy and can expect not to be interrupted for the few minutes it will take.

Sit yourself in a comfortable chair with a firm back.

Now, you just focus on your breathing.

Count each breath as you inhale and then, slowly, exhale.

Concentrating on those breaths will help our mind to switch away from the troubles of the day for a short while.

But, it probably won't happen straight away because your mind is following the pattern you've set up over a period of years. So, thoughts about your lunch appointment or your shopping list will probably intrude during the first sessions.

That's normal. Just start your count again ... and again, however many times it takes.

We are not used to concentrating on something as simple as our breathing for any length of time. We want to be doing and experiencing more important or interesting things all the time.

But, this simple exercise will deliver noticeable benefits if you just stick with it as you progress from being only able to focus for, say, five breaths until you can do it for up to five minutes at a time.

With experience, you'll find that you can do this exercise almost any time when your active participation is not required – while waiting for a plane or during a boring presentation.

Don't Think too Much



With the constant bombardment of images and sounds during almost every waking moment, plus the relentless increase in the demands of the workplace, it's little wonder that most of us find it harder than ever to switch off and let our mind rest.

One effect of this is when people start talking to themselves.

Many other people have a constant flow of mostly useless thoughts rushing through their minds almost every waking moment.

Meditation can help us to break out of that pattern, which is growing more powerful every year as media and advertising experts find new ways to push their messages into our heads.

Just pausing long enough for a sigh or a yawn before you start your next task (starting the car or answering the phone) can give your mind a chance to change gear rather than just overlaying demands of the new task over those of what you were doing previously.

If you always rush to answer the phone on the first ring, give yourself, and the caller, a couple of rings to collect your thoughts before answering.



Focus

In your first exercise, you concentrated on the movement of your breath.

Each exercise calls for you to focus on something. That might be a word, object or action.

You've probably heard or seen someone in real life or a movie, chanting a word, such as, "Om" or even "Aah" while they are meditating.

At other times, people will focus their attention on an object such as a candle or a flower.

Instead of focusing on your breath, you could focus on the separate actions as you walk steadily to the shop or a friend's house.

It's important that you keep your focus through the exercise. If you let yourself be distracted, then you should repeat the session at a convenient time. Only completed sessions should be counted because you will get little benefit from stop-start sessions.

But, don't worry about having some sessions broken by other events or people. That's almost unavoidable from time to time.

Don't focus too intensely on the object, sound or actions. You are trying to achieve a closer, more relaxed connection with your mind and body.

Don't strain or push yourself to the point where you start to become almost hypnotized. That's something to avoid unless you have experienced professional help ready to support you.

Seeing More Clearly

An exercise that has been reported to have significant benefits for many people in varied situations is called **creative visualization**.

Some people use this to give themselves a break from a particularly stressful day by filling their mind with the sights and feelings of being in more pleasant surroundings, such as on a warm, tropical beach or some peaceful, natural woodland for just a few minutes.

To get the full benefit from this type of exercise, you need to “feel” the experience and “hear” the sounds that you would if you were really there, not just see the scene like it was a piece of colorful wallpaper in your mind.

This technique has also been used very successfully by high profile athletes when they are preparing for major events.

They mentally see themselves actually doing every part of the upcoming event, which helps them to reinforce for their subconscious their ability to succeed when they actually take part in the game.

You cannot only use this method to help yourself prepare for sporting events, but also for interviews, presentations, exams or important social occasions.

This is, of course, not actually meditation but I mention it here for two reasons:

- 1)** It shows that the technique works in the real world.
- 2)** This extra use for the technique, when you have some experience and are comfortable with it, may be something that you will try and find very useful.

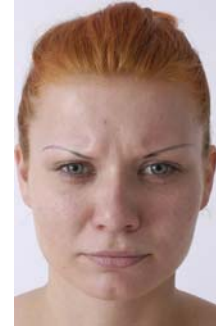
I have used it myself when preparing presentations to people that I work with and important new clients.

Easing Tension in Your Body

This exercise can help you to reduce the tension which has built up in various parts of your body.

Until you try this, you may not even be aware of the level of tension that is affecting various areas. That's because we become used to having a tight scalp or tension in our chest which may be restricting our breathing.

While sitting comfortably, close your eyes and focus for a few seconds on each area of your whole body, one after the other.



Start with your scalp and forehead. You may be surprised to feel an itch or tightness there that you weren't consciously aware of.

Mentally loosen the tight area.

Then, only when you are ready move your focus to the lower part of your head.

Many of us go through the day with our jaw clenched or tension in the top of our neck.

Encourage your jaw and neck to relax, and then focus on your shoulders and arms.

Then, it's the turn of your chest and the area around your shoulder blades.

When you feel they are relaxed, focus on the soft tissue area of your belly and also your lower back.

The areas which have the most built-up tension will vary from person to person.

Now, concentrate on your hips and the upper part of your legs.

Then, you can move your focus to the lower part of your legs and your feet, one of the most important, hard-working and under-valued parts of our bodies.

Some people who are comfortable with using mental images, find that the process which I’ve just described can be more effective if they mentally massage each area that is under stress while they focus on it. Some people mentally blow the tension away.

**** Take Your Time ****

When you start doing these exercises, they will probably feel strange.

Take your time and don't rush any of the stages.

You have to train your body to these new habits.

Rushing through them will mean that you take longer to become comfortable doing the exercises.

It may also reduce or eliminate the benefits that you can get from doing the exercises properly.

After you have absorbed the new techniques, you will take less time doing them, just as that happens when you learn anything new.

But, please remember that it's not a race – it's a reward you give yourself, so take enough time to enjoy it!

Your body will thank you.

How Much Do You Need to Do?

Everyone's personal situation is different.

Some of you may find it difficult to fit even short sessions into your schedule and, of course, most of us have that sort of day from time to time.

Each of the exercises that I describe has its own benefits and demands on your time. So, try each of them when you can and don't avoid the longer ones because the benefits they offer might be very valuable to you.

Some people use their busy schedule as an excuse for delaying or avoiding their first attempts at meditation. That's really counter-productive because the negative effects of their current lifestyle continue to impact even more on them.

When you start to see the improvements that you get, you'll probably find the time you need to continue doing the exercises which you find most effective for your situation.

Walking and Meditation

There's no problem for most people to combine meditation with a walk.

This won't work as well if you have to cross several busy roads or dodge cyclists or skate-boarders every few steps – those things would be too distracting.

When the circumstances are favorable, you can add to the obvious health benefits of your walk with a variation of the previous exercise.

Instead of squeezing tension from the various parts of your body in turn, you can focus on the different actions and effects your body goes through during your walk.

You might do your Sigh exercise at the start of your walk to help relax you and help your mind to move its focus from what has been happening during that day to your walk.

You probably know that you need to maintain a reasonable walking pace, consistent with your state of health, to get the most benefit from your exercise.

Mentally scanning each action and its effects during your walk should also improve the overall results you get from your exercise. But, this may require you to walk a little slower than you usually do the first few times you add meditation to your walk.

Some people try to coordinate their breathing cycle with the actions of their legs but this is not necessary.

As you walk, focus on your shoulders, then try to ease any tightness in your stomach, hips and legs in their turn.

Loosen the swing of each leg in turn.

Feel each breath and try to ease its path through your body.



Sound Meditation

This exercise uses the repetition of a sound, like “Om”, as its point of focus.

Begin when you are seated comfortably. You may sit cross-legged on the floor if that feels okay for you.

Make sure that the blood circulation through your legs is not restricted and that your back is straight so that you can breathe freely.

Rest your hands in your lap with both hands lightly clasped together.

Most people close their eyes which, they say, helps them to focus on the exercise and have less chance of being distracted by other things in the room.

Focus on your voice as you slowly repeat the sound you decided to use for the exercise.

When, inevitably, your mind switches focus to other things such as your appointments later in the day or what you will have for your evening meal, gently bring it back to where you are absorbed in just the sound.

After they have used this sort of meditation for a while, many people say that it's become the one which they feel helps them the most.

That can make the time and number of sessions that you need to learn to do it well very worthwhile.



Music Assisted Meditation

Many people play soothing music or special recordings of waves rolling through an ocean, heavy rain, a bird song or other sounds which they find helpful.

Some recordings have special tones embedded with the recognizable sounds which are claimed to help the process of meditation.

There are some which the producers claim will help you to improve your performance in sports, business or social activities or help you deal with bad habits or attitudes.

I have tried some of the basic relaxation tapes but found the music was more of a distraction to me. I feel that I get better results using the self-directed exercises which I explain in this book.

After trying a couple of different recordings from different sources, each for a few weeks, without much improvement, I had no interest in trying the more intense and, generally, much more expensive programs.

But, you might find it worthwhile to try this approach. I suggest that you discuss this with friends and, especially, your doctor before investing time and money to buy recordings or computer software.

You may be able to borrow some recordings from your local Public Library for long enough to evaluate their possible beneficial effect on you.

The major music stores will probably have some recordings of this type, but you will find a greater range of these recordings in specialist record stores.

If you have a “New Age” shop nearby that caters for people interested in astrology, and similar topics, you will probably find that the staff have some knowledge of the different offerings while the staff at the main-stream outlets usually won’t have any information except what is on the cover of the CD or DVD.

Part II: Motivation

Be More Successful!



I guess that you’ve seen headlines like this one many times?

Most people want to be more successful but their previous experiences make them cautious or downright cynical.

So, you’ll probably want to know:

? How much does it cost?

? Is there a guarantee?

? Have you done it yourself?

? If so, what results did you get?

That will do for now, okay?

How much does it Cost? Apart from a little time every day, there are no extra costs or special requirements.

You might need to invest a couple of hours in the first week to set up your program and prepare for your brighter future.

But, the time requirement will diminish as you blend the new or changed procedures into your regular routine. You will also probably drop or decrease the time and money you have been using for some low-value or negative activities up till now. This will add some positive numbers to your personal balance-sheet in the short term.

You don’t need anything special except stuff that is easy to find in most households; writing paper, pens and a couple of folders to keep your notes and other information in.

Is there a guarantee? No. The results you get depend almost entirely on you. That’s the reality with all those offers that you see with similar headlines like mine.

I believe that anyone who is able to follow the steps in this section and gives them sufficient energy and time will benefit to a level which reflects their commitment.

But, you need to be ready to deal with some unexpected and unforeseeable bumps in the track you follow that will require you to use more energy and time than I or some other readers have to.

Some people will not put in that extra effort but you will.

It's not all going to be easy but it is achievable if you plan first, then take consistent action.

If you fail to plan, then you are planning to fail.

What results can I expect? These principles can help most people to improve their level of achievement in whatever areas they focus on, provided that they have the necessary abilities or training and make a serious effort over a reasonable time.

Many people are becoming very worried about poor job security and shrinking job opportunities in many countries around the world.

Some people I know have found their increased enthusiasm and effort rewarded by increased recognition and, sometimes, higher take-home pay.

Others have used these principles to motivate themselves while they continue in their job and also put extra effort into finding some way to replace their salary with income from their own business or in a better job.

I don't believe that self-employment is suitable for the majority who have become used to a regular wage and other employee benefits.

But, these principles of self-motivation can be applied to improving the satisfaction which you get from your current employment and help you to undertake further study or other responsibilities that can make you a more valuable employee.

You will probably also find that using the meditation techniques in the previous section may help you to relate better with people that you work with and more easily handle any bumps in your road to greater success.

Take Stock

This first step is just boring for many people but the effort you put into this will have a strong effect on the level of success which your whole motivation program gives you.

It is that important.

If you don't plan for your future, you will never enjoy the sort of life or level of success that you were capable of reaching.

If you don't write out, either on paper or in a secure folder on your computer, an honest assessment of your present situation, your goals and how you believe you can reach or exceed them, you will stay in your present comfortable cocoon (rut) until the time comes when they bury you in it. Or you may find that, over time your situation becomes worse but, as you grow older you have less energy and other resources to invest in improving your own future prospects.

The best time to do this is TODAY.

Get a new blank piece of paper or start a new document in your word processor.

If you use pen and paper like I did, you can store the loose sheets in a special folder which you can keep private.

I want you to write down, with as much honesty as possible, all the important aspects of:

- ? Your present situation
- ? Your abilities
- ? Areas where you need to improve or are unable to do so
- ? Your Assets
- ? Your Dreams
- ? Your Goals (Goals are dreams where you have already started toward and have set down specific plans for achieving them).

Give yourself plenty of space between the items which you write under each heading and start a new page for each section heading.

Your present situation: Doing this section properly may give you some mild distress because very few people have a totally honest self-image or even a full understanding of their current personal, financial and professional situation.

They feel threatened by what might be revealed when a strong light is shone on their comfort zone.

But, it's essential to know exactly how good, or not-so-good, your current position is because the best map to a better future is useless if you fool yourself into thinking you are better prepared for the task than you really are.

How can you expect to move upward if you don't know where you are really starting from?

My experience is that this effort produces more positives than you might think. As well as helping you to understand what effort and time you will really need to put into the project, you will probably also discover that your situation is markedly better than you thought.

It's common for us to ignore the value of what we have when we are looking at what others have or what we think we need.

From time to time, you may see the stock media filler story which details how the average human body is worth about \$4.95 in total. Although that figure is obviously on the low side with the price of everything rising faster than ever, many people don't value what they already have.

If you have full use of your arms and legs, consider what you would pay someone to fix your left arm or you might lose it forever? Probably a bit more than \$4.95?

And, of course, your ability to improve your financial position will be severely hampered until you sort those shoeboxes of crumpled and coffee-stained papers into reasonable order.

Your abilities: I know many people that have convinced themselves, or been convinced by parents and friends or colleagues, that they are lucky to be where they are and have little, if any, hope of improving their situation unless they win the lottery or have some other equally unlikely stroke of luck.

These judgments (put-downs) are often said by well-meaning parents who have had some set-backs and major disappointments in their own lives and hope these comments will spare their child the anguish and other problems which they went through themselves.

Your colleagues and friends are often intending the comments to be taken in a light-hearted way but sometimes they are said with the intention of puncturing your dreams as a reproof for daring to try to rise above the rest of your group.

It is sad but true that some people will actually try to hold you down at a level where they are comfortable.

But, the experiences of your friends or parents are not a good basis to value your potential or your prospects.

You probably had access to better schooling than your parents were able to get and you may be better at some tasks than any of your friends or just willing to work harder to become better.

You'll never know unless you have a go at achieving your desires.

Areas where you need to improve or are unable to do so: You should also be able to realistically assess your own weaknesses, whether physical, emotional or educational.

There may be some which will affect the chance that you can achieve certain goals.

You may be able to work on those aspects and overcome the deficiency but there could be some which will make some dreams have to remain just that.

Your Assets: You probably can list the total amounts in your bank and other accounts as well as what debts you have.

I'd like to point out that the most valuable assets are our family who share both the good and bad times in our lives. Okay, everybody knows that but some people bottle up their feelings and try to “protect those closest to them” from any bad news.

That just means they forgo the support and understanding which family members can give each other during a crisis.

Bottling up their concerns could affect their own ability to deal with the problem.

That can also lead to serious health complications too.

You love your family but if, like so many people I know, you haven't told them for some time just how much you appreciate them, do it now.

I know two friends who told me after one lost his elderly mother while the other one lost a teenage son in a car accident, that they will always regret not telling them of their love more often before it was too late.

“Flowers for the living” are much better.

When you start to list your other assets, be prepared for a few surprises. You will probably find that you have old stuff that you no longer value but which you can sell or barter for things which are more appropriate for your current lifestyle.

Junk: There are probably also some things which are causing you and your family distress by taking up valuable space or time because they need to be cared for though you no longer get any return from that time and effort.

These items have little value to you or anyone else in the family. Some of these may be keepsakes from long past trips or relationships. Other items may be the remnants of hobbies that you no longer do.

And, most of us also have some items which just need a “couple of screws” or “a lick of paint” that we never seem to get around to doing.

Unless you feel it's worth the effort to fix them this weekend, just add them to the trailer-load you take to the local Goodwill or the dump.

Your mind will be clearer as soon as you clear away the physical junk from your home.

Your Dreams: Your dreams about what you want to do, have and be during the rest of your life should not be shared with other people. Dreams are like scribbles on a sketch-pad.

They aren't locked into your reality or even your potential. That makes them hard to share with other people who only know the 'you' that they see before them.

Some people try, after they wake each morning, to remember the dreams which floated through their mind while they slept.

Other people try to influence the content of their dreams by thinking about some particular situation or even a problem just before they close their eyes each night. They hope that the powerful but little-understood subconscious part of their brain will work on the matter while they get some rest.

I don't know whether this will work for you.

I suggest that, if you try it, please frame your thinking about the subject with some positive expectation that your mind **will** help you and the problem **will** be resolved.

If you merely pass on your worries and stress about the problem to your subconscious, I expect that your sleep will not be very restful and the results of the experiment are likely to be disappointing at best.

Your Goals: Goals are things you write down that you intend to achieve and believe are worth the effort and time needed for you to get them.

Writing each goal on paper is very important. This will give you a chance to study and refine the value of each goal to you.

Some people find that they carry on their shoulders other people's dreams and unfulfilled expectations. Usually, these come from parents that have always regretted that they were unable to reach some of their own goals and so they push them on to their children.

You need to be sure that the targets which you invest much time and effort to reach are ones that have value to you. Otherwise, you're likely to perform the required work at less than your full capacity, take much longer to get to the goal and find little personal satisfaction when you do.

Some people also take on goals that reflect the desires or achievements of people in their social or business group. These targets are also likely to be more difficult to achieve and less satisfying when you get them than goals that genuinely reflect your own interests and desires.

You also need to write:

- 1)** The benefits of achieving each of your goals.
- 2)** How you will achieve each of your goals. It's important to list every small step and contingency that you must deal with to reach your goal.
- 3)** Possible bumps and road-blocks between your present situation and achieving your desire.
- 4)** A time-frame within which you will reach that goal.

The list of benefits **1)** will help to maintain your resolve to reach the goal.

Someone explained this to me in a very graphic way. They said that, “Everyone listens to the same radio station; **W.I.I.F.M.**”! that stands for “**What’s In It For ME?**”

We need to know more than just, “It will be good for you”. We all have, as part of the basic survival instinct, part of our mind that constantly asks that question.

The list helps us to keep going when some obstacle or other distraction rises in our path.

The step-by-step list **2)** will help you to prepare yourself in advance of any part of the journey that might require extra effort or expense.

A friend that achieved a major business goal which many had thought beyond his financial and other abilities told me that this part was very important in his quest.

The way that he tackled it was something I would not have thought of. He researched the whole project and listed everything which he already had which could help him succeed. But, he was unable to put together a list of all the steps he would need to take.

Then, he turned his mental picture around and imagined that he had already achieved his goal. From that perspective, he said it was fairly easy for him to work backwards and list the last step before his final success, then the second last step and so on until he had laid out each move from the top of the mountain back to his original situation.

The list of possible obstacles **3)** is so that you may prepare for possible hazards that you might encounter.

The time-frame **4)** is something which you can only work out after you have done your preliminary research. It helps to keep you focused and let you know whether you are progressing well or may need to review your progress and, perhaps, increase your effort or the time you devote to reaching that goal.

You may sometimes extend the time needed based on your experience up to that point.

There may be goals which you have held close for a long time but you find that achieving them is not worth further investment when you compare them to other possibilities that you have found.

Although some people set for themselves just one very large goal, I suggest that you start with several goals of varying difficulty.

Achieving those first few minor and relatively easy targets will help to keep you motivated as you get closer to your larger goals.

Those smaller successes will also encourage you to add new and larger goals to your list.

When you stop doing that, I think you start giving up.

Sorting Your Goals

You should have goals that reflect the different areas of your life and any special interests that you have.

Your list of goals might include:

- Find a life partner
- Improve the relationship with your current partner or other close relatives
- Find more time to be with your family
- Improve your scores in games you play
- Learn a new skill or improve your current level
- Give time and energy to help less fortunate people in your community
- Improve your work-related skills
- Break an unhealthy habit
- Reduce your weight or add more muscle and tone to your body

List them all so that you can check:

- ? **Which are the most important to YOU?** The demands of these special goals should have precedence over less important goals.
- ? **Which are the least important to YOU?** If you are already very busy, you might remove these from your list. You might put them on another page and maybe add them back to your main list when you have more time or other resources available.
- ? **Do the requirements for you to reach any two goals conflict?** Usually, you would just defer or delete the goal which is less important to you.
- ? **Does each goal help you to get closer to the lifestyle and other desires which are your ultimate target?** Some goals

may be attractive in themselves but you might decide that the time and other requirements would be better invested in goals that were more directly related to your main long-term life goals.

How to Achieve Your Goals

You must take ACTION.

Use your favorite meditation exercises to reinforce your motivation.

Look for people that you can use as positive role models in books and also in your town.

Find an organization where you can meet people with similar backgrounds and interests to you.

If you have no experience of public speaking, consider joining a group like ToastMasters International or Jaycees where you can learn useful skills like this in a supportive and positive atmosphere.

Read your list of goals aloud every day to help keep them in your mind and focus the power of your subconscious on the importance of achieving them.

Put some effort every day into making real progress toward your goals.

However, if you have an occasional day when something important prevents you from doing anything productive, let that just be a spur to making more progress the next day.

If you keep reminding yourself about the occasional slip, you will lessen your core enthusiasm for your project and also start to build a subconscious expectation that you will suffer more setbacks in the future.

Many people say that finding the time for extra meetings or study is one of their biggest problems but it's often just a matter of sorting out and reducing or eliminating activities that have little value (did someone mention television?!)

Use visualization to experience what it will be like when you reach your major goals. This is not just day-dreaming because you are actively moving toward them.

Don't hesitate to add new goals to your list.

When you start to achieve those first goals, your expectations will expand along with your confidence.

Doers and Talkers!

Everyone knows some people that spend their time telling everybody why things won't work and how everything will get even worse soon.

They see the slightest bump in their path to success as a sign that they should not start.

When further setbacks occur because of their lack of action, they claim that proves they were right about more problems looming.

So, they put off any thought of taking action again!

Just be polite and keep moving forward which will put you out of earshot of their negative statements and complaints fairly quickly.

I've tried to help some of these people overcome their gloomy outlook and bring some sunshine and success into their lives but it's hard work and likely to be a waste of effort.

The basic reason for their lack of action is really fear that they will fail to some degree at whatever they try.

While they hold back and expound their unproven theories, they can attract some attention and financial or other support.

But, they think that if they act and don't achieve a roaring success at their first attempt, then they will drop to a lower level of public acceptance and may never achieve anything.

So, they don't even start!

Continuing to mix with negative people can have a depressing effect on your own outlook and rate of progress. Because there are probably more negative whiners than potential winners in our society, you may even start to let them affect your own attitude.

The only way that you can help them is by setting a positive example.

Then, leave it up to them whether they break out of their funk and start their own upward journey or whether they just keep telling everybody why you should not have succeeded either.

Spending time with the gloomy doomsayers is wasted. But, you'll probably never be able to avoid them entirely. Just be polite and pass by.

That also applies to television programs and magazines. Many experts spend much of their time arguing with each other or explaining why everyone but them is wrong. But, nobody is right all the time.

This doesn't help you at all – the blasts of negative energy will slowly break through your resolve and start to affect you.

Watch the Winners

Focus your attention on positive people like yourself. Listen to and watch people who have already taken action and blazed their own paths to success of one kind or another.

You can learn something from the methods and experiences of any successful person, whatever their race, creed or age.

Seek out the most positive people in your own social group. You'll find that just being with them will help to increase your own energy and enthusiasm.

Sound and Vision

Choose music which reinforces your positive attitude.

If you find that you work better with that music playing softly in the background, that's fine as long as you're not disturbing other work in the area.

I, personally, prefer not to have music playing when I am working on something that requires full concentration but I know that others believe that it helps them.

I have replaced some old prints in my home office with pictures of the car I want to buy and the beach on the other side of the country that I'd like my family to spend our next holiday at.

Some people put these sorts of motivators on the door of their refrigerator where they will see it every day.

My last boss used to carry a picture of the motor bike that he wanted to buy in his wallet.

I always have carried a picture of my family there. For me, that's the greatest motivator of all when a little extra effort is needed.

Kick Off Before You get Kicked

You know the benefits of keeping motivated and doing something every day to get closer to your most important goals.

Are you still hesitating? Some people are actually afraid of ailing, so they don't start.

But, you might be thinking that the time is just not right. You might want to:

- Spend more time and effort on perfecting your preparation
- Wait until your children go back to school
- Leave everything until the puppy is housetrained
- Start next winter when your social calendar is less busy.

They're all reasons and I don't know how much real importance you attach to them.

But, my best reason why you should start sooner, even if everything is not quite perfect, is likely to be more compelling than anything like those I just listed for you.

You have listed your reasons that you want to achieve each of your most important goals and also the possible bumps that you might encounter as you progress.

You believe that you can achieve your goals if you start now.

But, we never know what might happen tomorrow. The economy might worsen dramatically – any number of nightmare scenarios could impact on your city, your employer or you as they have on other communities, businesses and individuals with little or no warning.

That could make you take action. Under those sort of circumstances your options and, in fact, your chance of succeeding would be dramatically reduced.

The effect on your health and your family would be much greater than the relatively minor demands that you have listed already.

You might not succeed at your first attempt but you will learn from the experience and there's an equal or greater chance that you will get your goal on the first attempt.

That would give you more time to enjoy the rewards of your success and the motivation to launch yourself toward even bigger and better goals.



Part III: More Tested Tips and Techniques

I've put some information about various topics in this section which we've used with good results.

Topics like “how to prepare and present” may not seem much use for some of you if you're not in business. But, many of us are involved in school, church or other voluntary organizations and you may either volunteer or just be called on to tell another group about the aims and achievements of your organization.

I've even had to answer some questions from a reporter about one organization I belong to that helps people with serious problems to learn how to use computers.

That report in the paper helped to bring in more members and some badly needed donations of money and equipment.

If something doesn't fit your needs just now, tuck the information away in your mind in case it is useful on another occasion.

How to Prepare and Present a Talk

Know the main points that you want people to remember about your subject. Have a maximum of three and repeat each one at least once.

Your listeners will not be interested in what you say unless you show them some link between their interests and yours.

Include a “call to action” in your talk. If there is nothing you want your listeners to do after your talk, then you may as well send it to them in an email and save everybody’s time and effort.

Use simple words and stick to your subject.

Get to the venue early.

Find the person who will introduce you and give them a card with your name, your subject and the introduction which you want them to use before you speak.

That puts them at ease, saves any embarrassment if they don’t remember your name or the reason for your talk.

Always thank the person that introduced you even if they got everything wrong. Never compound the error by drawing attention to any mistake which they made.

Never thank your audience. Show you appreciate them by keeping to the topic and focusing on those parts of your subject which are most likely to interest them.

If your presentation includes Powerpoint® or similar slides:

Don’t read them to your listeners, tell them something extra about the point which the slide explains or just keep quiet.

Put just one topic on each slide and keep the text short. Lots of text and multiple points are likely to be ignored or quickly forgotten.

Don’t use flashy effects, unusual colors or fonts. Keep it simple so that your listeners can easily absorb the important points which you want them to remember.

Check any equipment before you begin your presentation and plan for the possibility that it will not be available or will break down in the middle of your talk.

It's your responsibility to be prepared for almost any contingency.

Remember that you may be able to shift any blame for a problem with the presentation but you will lose that opportunity to get your message out if you don't have some back-up prepared.

A Simple Planning Strategy

There is a neat system which you can use for planning almost anything; a fund-raiser, a new business or how you can best reach your goals.

It's called **S.W.O.T.**

That's **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats.

You should set aside at least a couple of uninterrupted hours for your first SWOT exercise.

Get some large sheets of blank paper. Unused newsprint from your local newspaper or an art store would be ideal.

Tape the sheets to a wall or a large board if you don't want to risk damage to the wall.

Write your four headings on separate sheets and then start to write **everything** that is relevant under each heading which it applies to.

Yes, some factors will fit more than one section and you need to have them in front of you when you are reviewing each section separately later on.

Don't try to evaluate the importance of any factor at this stage – you are just brainstorming and need to get everything down on the paper even if it's just a minor point.

Don't accept any negative thoughts about your perceived weaknesses or let any possible threats stop you giving a full evaluation of your new project.

Treat this as if you were an impartial but sympathetic colleague who wants to help you prepare for your project.

When you are sure that you have everything listed, review the various points which you have written under each heading.

Take your time. This part is very important because you will use the results of your analysis to guide you through your project.

Now, you must decide the most important objectives that you believe are achievable in light of the factors you have considered.

I think that you will probably find several objectives if you have given yourself enough credit for the skills and potentials that you really have, including those which you may not be currently using.

If you can only find one objective that you are confident about, I suggest that you go over your lists more carefully.

But, for practical reasons, you should set no more than five goals which you will apply yourself to this time.

Make them a mix of smaller goals and one major goal.

If you set a number of major goals first up, you may become a bit overwhelmed when you are unable to progress rapidly toward all of them.

But, achieving your first couple of smaller goals will increase your enthusiasm and confidence to knock over the major target.

Never stop setting and moving toward bigger goals.

This strategy will help you and members of your family with projects of all kinds, both large and small.

Taming the Telephone

The telephone has brought many advantages into our lives and more than a couple of annoyances.

Although they've been around in various forms for all the time we've been alive, many people feel a sense of panic or just inadequate when they have to use the humble telephone.

When you are about to make or receive your next call, please do two things:

- 1)** Take a deep breath (do a few sighs or even a couple of yawns if that is practical).
- 2)** As you start to dial, put a genuine smile on your face. Yes, it does make a difference!

I'm not suggesting that you adopt a fake personality or paste a salesman's false smile across your face – that won't work.

Be yourself and treat the person at the other end as a possible new friend or colleague.

Give them time to speak and your full attention.

If they become irritable or worse, don't try to fight fire with fire. Stay polite but finish the call and get on with more productive activities.

Ask your caller to identify themselves and to give the reason they are calling you. If they are vague or try to apply pressure, remain polite and end the call.

Always write down the important information that someone gives you over the phone.

Ask them politely to repeat the information or even spell anything which you did not hear clearly so it is better fixed in your mind.

They will appreciate your professionalism and that you are giving your conversation the importance it deserves.

If you have to call them back, ask them during the first call for two different times when it will be convenient for you to call back. With the multitude of pressures on our time, it's too easy for someone to not be available for the one particular time that you have arranged.

This way, you increase the chance of completing your conversation without further delay.

If you make international or long distance phone calls, consider using an Internet based service such as Skype.com because calls between people using the same service are free and their rates for calls to regular phones are likely to be cheaper than many land-based options.

Before making international or long distance phone calls, consider the time zone where the other person is living. Otherwise, you may call them at 3 a.m. which is a really bad idea!

For important business calls that may have legal or other ramifications, it's a very good idea to write a letter to the other person as soon as possible after you finish the call. Include everything that you remember was discussed and decided over the phone.

The Verbal Business Card

What do you say when someone asks what business are you in?

Do you try to sell them something?

Do you say, “I sell insurance”? That is likely to end many possibly useful conversations.

Do you say, “I work for Oddbody’s”, as if everyone should just know what they do.

Do you think of a really good answer the next morning?

You need to prepare a short reply in advance. Think about one that will be interesting to the person that kindly gave you the conversational opener and won’t make them regret that.

Give them just enough information, and then ask them what they do.

Someone called this an “elevator speech” – what you might say if you were introducing yourself to someone in an elevator traveling just a couple of levels.

That’s a good maximum length for your response.

But, it might take you a bit more time to write out your own verbal business card.

Using the Internet

You don't need the latest, most expensive equipment to use the Internet for business or leisure.

You do need the most up-to-date antivirus program you can get.

Don't buy a second-hand computer unless you know where it was used and that it was properly maintained by professionals or highly experienced amateurs.

The small cost of joining a local computer users' association, or taking a short after-hours class at a community college, can be a wise investment if you don't have much knowledge of computers.

The other members or students will be able, and usually very willing, to share their knowledge, experience and opinions about the best equipment, programs and providers. Of course, you will need time to work out which people are trustworthy and genuinely helpful.

The best sales people to consult about a new computer usually work for specialist computer stores rather than department or discount stores.

The difference is likely to be that the person at the specialist store wants to sell you something which will fit your needs so that you become a customer and, possibly, an advocate for that store.

Many sales people at the other stores will be happy to sell whatever fits in your car. They are often more influenced by their commission and, sometimes, incentives offered to them by suppliers.

Budget for equipment to do what you need in six months or a year's time, not just the biggest package with the best price tag when you happen to be in the store.

If you buy all your computer bits and pieces at the same store, you're likely to save money and time over the option of traveling around various stores to get the best price for each piece.

Always ask about the terms of your warranty. Saving a small amount on the price may be no bargain if you need repairs, but have to ship the whole unit to another city to have the warranty honored.

Afterword

Stress and worry will not put an extra dollar in your pocket or add an extra day to your life.

The most successful people I know are those who love the work they do.

I hope my book will help you to find more contentment and success on your life's journey.

If you find some of the exercises difficult, please remember that there's no time limit and no test – just do your best.

Mary Havelock 2008

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