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Open Your Mind to the Possibilities

Determination and belief are the starting points for success. They open you to new opportunities to do and be anything you desire, and you only need a subconscious thought to plant the seed. How do you do this?

The first and most important element of success is to ...

open your mind.

Many people do not realized just how closed their minds are. Many do not realize how busy they are defending against pain and fear – avoiding uncomfortable and/or overwhelming feelings that they aren't sure how to cope with. A closed mind seals off creative solutions and eliminates any possibility for new opportunities. A closed mind keeps you where you are in life, where you always have been, and will continue to be. The main reason that a closed mind is this formidable a road-block to change, healing, recovery, and/or growth – enlightenment really – is because you continue to think in the same patterned and likely negative ways that you have always thought in. In order to create change, one must first become aware of his or her thoughts. Secondly, then, one must commit to the process of changing those thoughts.

A closed mind creates:

- A constant struggle to achieve or get ahead that often leaves one feeling like a failure. Perhaps you feel “less than”, too damaged, or flawed?
- Constant conflicts and obstacles, the continue to present resentments that rear their ugly heads for each new situation you encounter.

Everyone has thoughts, but not everyone can meet their own needs, dare to dream or to achieve their dreams. That's because **thoughts may be negative or positive in nature**. Even thoughts you believe are positive may, in truth, be negative and therefore unproductive when it comes to achievement. For example, your dream is to own a new home. The thought you constantly hold is, "I want to buy a new home." This sounds like a positive thought, but it's actually keeping you from getting your new home. How? The phrase "I want" keeps you **wanting** to buy a new home, rather than actually buying it. Wanting something is a feeling based upon what you are thinking. Wanting is not an action. So, you continue to want to buy it — never achieving that goal. For some people this can lead to a shutting down of their actual wants and dreams. This can lead to feelings of shame and thought patterns that leave you feeling as if you are not worthy of having what it is that you may well have wanted for some time now in your own life.

Focus is another problem in how thoughts are formulated in our thoughts. You constantly think about that new home you "want" to buy. You look at different homes and floor plans, comb the "homes for sale" classifieds, pick out the color you'll paint the outside, look at landscaping ideas, and so on. You would believe that this is a positive focus, because it keeps the goal constantly in your mind and your thoughts are the thoughts that someone who is buying a new home would have. The problem, however, is that the focus is on "getting" versus "doing". Rather than moving toward your goal, you are dreaming about it. You are not taking action. You are holding yourself back by the way that you are actually thinking. Something is causing your inaction when it comes to taking action steps that would be the strategy that would help you to accomplish getting to the place in your life where you could really go by that home you so want.

I'll cover both of these negative thought patterns, as well as other elements covered in this chapter, and how to make them positive in the chapter entitled, "Rewriting Your Reality". Here, I want to emphasize the power of your mind, and how thoughts create your reality.

With an open mind, you plant the seed, distance yourself from it, and let the universe do the rest. You must, however, be open to all possibilities without exception. **That means only positive thinking, no attachments, and no labeling and no judging.**

An open and positive mind allows the universe to act upon your inner thought energy and create that which you seek. It's like watching a little miracle take place. It can astound you, when you realize it is happening.

Years ago, after a divorce from a financially irresponsible spouse, Beth wrote down goals for her children and herself — to have enough food on the table, a good roof over their heads, and a decent car to drive in ten years. Many years later, she was preparing to close on a townhouse and had just picked up a new car. Then, it hit her — she remembered those long-ago goals that she hadn't even thought of since. She counted the years and was amazed. The closing on her house would be exactly two months shy of ten years from the divorce date. Beth realized then that she should have written in five years instead of ten!

As you can see, distancing yourself from the goals and just working toward them brings success. Beth was determined; then, she believed, because she could do no less for her children. She just kept working to do better. The process took care of itself. Yet, Beth never saw it coming, until it already had arrived. However, Beth probably missed a lot of opportunities along the way and

self-fulfilling prophecy — you say you are, and so you become what you say you are because it is what you believe!

Self-fulfilling prophecies, usually from your early programming, causes the doubt and fear whenever you wish to take a leap of faith and risk something. They pull you back to your comfort zone and keep you in your corral. They keep your expectations for yourself, others and events low, including limiting your capabilities, talent, potential and opportunities. They keep you from knowing who you really are. They keep you from learning how to validate and in many cases soothe yourself. They keep you from listening to crazy schemes that just could be your path to success. *Your parents would never have considered such schemes, and you're not about to either!*

Need to Be Right. This is a symptom of attachments and enculturation programming, generally from a very influential person, such as a parent. Whether you believe it or not, you have to be right! The programming is so strong that it's a conditioned reflex. You'll argue your point until you're blue in the face. Ever have a time when you wondered why you argued about the topic at all — it wasn't even important to you afterward, or you could actually see the other person's point? This is a result of programming; and unfortunately, doesn't make you many new friends (unless, they are forced to be around you).

To have an open mind and achieve your goals, you must let go of this need to be right, the limiting negative core beliefs and negative self-talk, the programming, and the resultant patterned negative thoughts. You may really want to achieve a goal, but all of this negativity will keep you from believing that you can achieve it and therefore you actually won't achieve it. You may not even know what your goals are.

Exercises

You cannot develop an open mind without a bit of mental work. I provide exercises at the end of each chapter to help you. The results of the exercises you do here are used in later exercises. Don't worry about your answers — no one else need see them. Be as honest as you can be with and for yourself. It will assist you greatly to take a spiral notepad and use as a journal for this work. You may find it helpful in later months to have your notes to review from time to time. If you find these exercises helpful you may want to visit phoenixrisingpublications.ca and purchase some life coaching sessions with me to reinforce these exercises and to further explore your goals and strategy that we can work on together to help you to achieve those goals.

Exercise #1 — Examine Your Thoughts

Look at your current situation and the success you seek.

- **Write down in your journal your success goal** (if you have several, choose only one for the exercise and use it for all the exercises within this book).
- Make several copies of the table on page 21.
- For the next seven days (do not skip any days), **jot down all negative thoughts, speech and actions** you have in the first column of your table, whether you believe they may affect your goal or not. Use as many pages of tables as needed. At first, you won't always catch yourself. As the week passes, you'll begin catching your negative thoughts, speech and actions more often.

Who Are You?

To develop an open mind, it's essential to take an honest look at who you truly are. Who are you? It's a difficult question to answer. You may believe you know, but seldom do you truly know without outside input. In 1955, Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham developed the Johari Window, named for both their first names of Joseph and Harry. The Johari Window helps you to better understand your personality.

The Window is made up of four panes, representing the four areas of personality.

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|---|--|
| 1. Only You Know That part of yourself that only you know | 2. You Show to Others That part of yourself that you know and share with others |
| 3. Only Others Know That part of yourself that others see, but that you are unaware of its existence | 4. No One Knows That part of yourself that no one knows — not yourself or others |

Quadrant #1 — Only You Know. This is the area of yourself that you do not wish to disclose to anyone else. It's the very private and vulnerable part of your personality that holds your fears and doubts. It holds any embarrassing or hurtful event that you did or that has happened to you. You choose very carefully whom you allow to know this part of you, if anyone at all.

Rewrite Your Reality

In the last chapter, we looked at the Johari Window and three of its quadrants. Now, we will work in Quadrant #4. This is the part of your personality that no one knows. It's that part of you that holds the infinite possibilities for success. We may not know what's in this area, but we do know that it's the area that creates with the universe, processes, and makes the achievement of success and emotional equanimity possible.

To rewrite your reality, you must reinvent yourself. To do this, you need to change your thinking, your speech, and your actions/reactions. **You cannot change the current life your mind created, with the same mind that created it.** You must change the way you think. Change your mind — change your reality so that you can change your life.

I've already touched on the mental elements that you need to address — enculturation programming, your need to be right, core beliefs, negativity and self-talk. Now, I'll show you how to change your mind by changing these obstacles to your success.

Programming

You know what programming is and why it's detrimental to achieving a known authentic self, your goals and/or your dreams. In Exercise #2, you should have determined what some of your programming is. We all have a lot of programming by the time we're grown. It's a continual process to rid ourselves of this, as well as new programming that is still being thrust upon us as adults.

traits that may be hindering your success and/or inner emotional peace and self-understanding.

- Be happy and at peace. Too often we believe that if some event (i.e. win the lottery, meet our true love) happens, we'll be happy or at peace. The problem is that as soon as you gain what you seek, you soon become disappointed, disillusioned and dissatisfied again. You probably won't even know why. It's because you have attached conditions to your happiness and peace. You do not bring to you or receive from someone or something else happiness and peacefulness.

No one else and nothing else can make you happy or at peace. You either are happy and at peace, or you're not. You decide to be happy, and you decide to be at peace – or not. Again, it's your determination, your choices and your beliefs that are the energy of thought that create your reality. Once you determine that you are happy and at peace, you act in happiness and peace. When a negative situation presents itself, just remind yourself that you are happy and at peace. It allows you a moment to mentally step back from the situation and find a positive reaction. If you aren't all the way to happiness and peace just yet, perhaps you can frame it as open versus closed, patient versus impatient, frustrated versus full of rage. You can tone down your feelings. Progressing toward positive thoughts and feelings that will create happiness and peace can be a longer journey for some.

- Be open-minded in all situations. Respond to new situations, ideas and knowledge with an open mind. To keep the “need to be right” at bay, say to yourself,

Silence Your Mind

The world of silence. It's a place to explore who you truly are, to create, and to connect to the universe. In the silence, you connect to love. In the silence, you access the power of the universe. It clears your mind and gives you extraordinary ideas, allowing success to flow freely. Silence, in this day and age must be purposefully sought out and created, more often than not.

The silence is within that part of yourself that *No One Knows*, where you may encounter the true purpose of your life and what you need do to achieve it. In the silence, you recharge your batteries, remove tension and anxiety, reduce stress and fatigue, eliminate doubt and depression, and remove enculturation programming. It gives you a sense of belonging. You become one with the universe and all of humanity, and you know peace. You practice just being with you – the you that you know so far.

When you are distracted from and/or separated from the silence, you see doubts, you see problems, and you feel the negative surround you – stress increases. There are no problems, doubts, or negativity in the silence. It moves you away from this outer world and all its perceived troubles, connecting you back to your original source of spirit – your authentic self. The juncture inside where the mind and soul meet. The place from which we truly can connect to the sum of humanity and the universe.

This silence is located in the space between your thoughts. To reach it, you must quiet your thoughts. You must quiet your mind and know stillness. Then, you merge with it. Quieting thoughts can take practice. Meditating is a great way

to practice this. Observe your thoughts without engaging them. Detach from them. Sit in the spaces, be in the spaces between them.

The gateway to silence, this space between your thoughts, is meditation, of which there are many forms. Some people believe that meditation is only a form of worship in Buddhism, but even Christianity has a practiced form of meditation — members of the Roman Catholic Church pray the Rosary, and prayer, itself, is a form of meditation. Many Christians partake of in a soaking prayer, a favorite of mine. In this type of prayer it is all thought and energy merging with the universe and no words are spoken. It is silent prayer and worship. It is a silent sitting with God or the universe, within and that surrounds you.

The important thing is to quiet your mind, be at peace, and connect.

Take a walk in the woods or a quiet park. Listen to the sounds of nature. Breathe deeply of the fresh air. Hear the birds chirping, the leaves rustling under foot, and the sound and smell of the breeze as it brushes past your face. Walk barefoot in the grass. Stretch your arms out wide and slowly turn, feeling the freedom. Feel the different textures of nature — the bark of a tree, the silky feel of a flower petal, the soft fur of a kitten, the bristles from the blades of grass against you palm, and all that nature offers your senses. As you focus on hearing and feeling nature, you will find peace.

While you're alone, speak to the universe — in your mind through your thoughts or out loud, depending upon your comfort level. Speak as if you're speaking to a friend. Tell this friend your problems and desires. Surrender them. Then, let the universe take care of them.