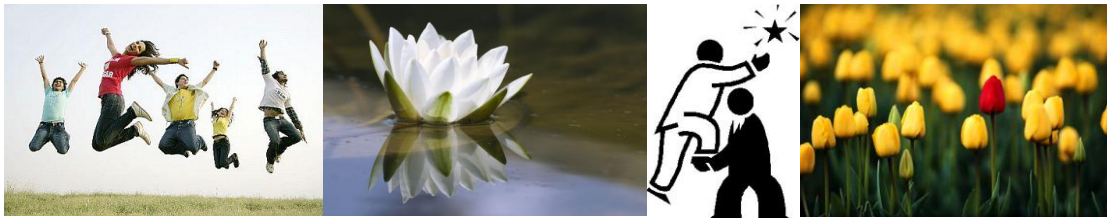


Think, Feel & Be for life

Super-charge Our Selves



The Golden Rules for Getting Started

1. Recognise that human beings are made up of four equal parts. Physical, Emotional, Mental and Spiritual – each being just as important as the other.
2. Choose to believe that you are responsible for your life and that you always have choice. Responsibility = Response Ability.
3. Practise The Five A's. “Love is not so much a feeling as a way of being present” – David Richo. Love consists of the Five A's: Attention, Acceptance, Appreciation, Affection, Allowing.
4. Make time to practice regular meditation or mind quieting. This is one of the greatest ways to bring you back to yourself
5. Start a success &/or a gratitude journal. At the end of each day/week write down 5 successes you had or 5 things you are grateful for that day/week
6. Always look forward to your next day as an opportunity to improve your thinking and communication patterns.

The Five A's

(Taken from; "How to be an Adult in Relationships", by David Richo.)

We know deep down, and have always known, that need fulfilment and good parenting mean the five A's: attention, acceptance, appreciation, affection and allowing.

The five A's begin as needs to be fulfilled by our parents, then become needs to be fulfilled by our partners, and someday become gifts we give to others and to the world (i.e. we access our resources within and discover the five A's in ourselves too).

The five A's are not extras. They are the components of the healthy individuated ego: **Attention** from others leads to self respect. **Acceptance** engenders a sense of being inherently a good person. **Appreciation** generates a sense of self-worth. **Affection** makes us feel lovable. **Allowing** gives us the freedom to pursue our own deepest needs, values, and wishes.

Nature never intended us to find all we needed from two individuals, our biological parents... It is necessary and healthy to receive need fulfilment from other sources all through life. An archetypal longing encourages us to keep an eye out for those who offer it. An adult sensibility releases us from expecting any person to fulfil it totally.

In healthy intimate relationships we do not seek more than 25% of our nurturance from a partner; we learn to find the rest within ourselves.

ATTENTION

Every mammal feels instinctively that it needs and deserves full parental attentiveness. When a parent is only halfway attentive, the child notices and feels uneasy.

Attention to you means engaged focus on you. It means sensitivity to your needs and feelings.

In truly loving attention you are noticed, not scrutinized (watching your every move, even if it comes from a desire to protect you, is not attention but intrusion or surveillance).

Authentic attention comes to you any time, not just when you present a problem. "My father turned to me as if he had been waiting all his life to hear my question," says a character in one of J.D. Salinger's novels.

In moments of authentic attention, we feel that we are deeply and truly understood in what we say or do and in who we are, with nothing left out.

Attention means bringing something or someone into focus so it is no longer blurred by the projections of your own hopes, desires, judgements, etc.; thus it requires genuine interest and curiosity about the mysterious and surprising truth that is you.

The desire for attention is not a desire for an audience but for a listener.

When others give you attention, they also confront you directly when they are displeased, harbouring no secret anger or grudges. But they always do this with respect and a sincere desire to keep the lines of communication open.

ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance means we are received respectfully with all our feelings, choices, and personal traits and supported through them. This makes us feel safe about knowing and giving ourselves to others. Our ability to be intimate grows in accordance with how safe we feel.

If we can become accepting of ourselves, we become less dependant on others' approval, so now we are swayed by neither criticism nor flattery. This not only builds our self-esteem but also makes it easier for us to accept others. Since we are not trying to get something from them, we can appreciate them as they are.

To accept their children, parents must be free of preconceived plans or agendas for them. Parents can accept us only after they succeed in dismantling their original representation of us in favour of the person we are turning out to be. This means not being disappointed in us for breaking a bargain we never made.

Acceptance is unconditional since it means validating someone's choices and lifestyle even when we do not agree with them. It is the opposite of moralizing. We see all that is and feel all that we feel about what is, but then focus only on what is as it is.

Acceptance is approval – it is perfectly normal to seek approval in childhood and throughout life. We require approval from those we respect – the kinship it creates lifts us to their level. Approval is a necessary component of self-esteem. It becomes a problem only when we give up our true self to find it; then approval-seeking works against us.

In attention, you are heard and noticed. **In acceptance, you are embraced as worthy, not compared to your siblings or peers but trusted, empowered, understood, and fully approved of as you are in your uniqueness.** You are perfectly you, and that is enough. Rather than expecting you to meet a standard, your parents and peers eagerly await your full emergence as your-self, no matter how different you may be from them or how divergent from their wishes.

APPRECIATION

Appreciation gives depth to acceptance: “I admire you; I delight in you; I prize you; I respect you; I acknowledge you and all your potential. I appreciate you as **unique**”. To acquire the riches of personal worth and self-confidence, we need just such encouragement.

Appreciation also includes gratitude for any kindness or gift we might bestow. Because intimacy is about giving and receiving, appreciation fosters closeness. When we give, we instinctively await a thank you. This is not a middle-class or selfish expectation but a wish that the transaction be completed in the normal way. We know something is missing in a relationship if gratitude is lacking.

Appreciation may be given in many ways; a word of praise, a wink when you did something well, a pat on the shoulder when you excelled, a loving look when you were just yourself, thanks for something you did or gave or simply were.

The ratio of appreciation to complaint in couples that stay together is five to one, according to the research of psychologist John M. Gottman, Ph.D., of the University of Washington State in Seattle. Indeed, *behind every complaint is a wish for one of the five A's*. When we blow up or feel dejected, we may be experiencing the lack of one or more of the five A's. “I see you are feeling unappreciated,” may be an accurate and compassionate response to a partner who is angrily complaining.

AFFECTION

To give and receive love is our primary need. We express love emotionally, spiritually, and physically. An affectionate touch or hug from someone who really loves us can penetrate our bodies and restore our souls. All our fears, no matter how deep, can be erased by a single loving stroke.

Love cannot be defined in a universal way because our experience of love is ours alone. Love in adulthood is a re-experiencing of the love our every cell remembers. The way we were loved in early life is the way we want to be loved all our lives. Most of us know just what it takes for us to feel loved. What we have to learn is how to ask for it. A partner is not a mind-reader, so it is up to us to tell our partner what our brand of love is. And if we have to teach our partner how to love us, we also have to learn how to love him/her. **Knowing this makes it clear that love is not a sentimental feeling but a conscious choice to give and receive in unique and often challenging ways.**

The word *affection* comes from *affect*, feeling. *Affection* refers to closeness both on the physical and on the feeling level. Physically, it includes the spectrum of touch, from holding to sex. Affection is also a quality of feeling. In this respect it includes kindness, considerateness, thoughtfulness, playfulness, and romantic gestures like giving flowers or remembering a special anniversary. Affection flows from a genuine *liking* of someone.

Affection looks different in the romantic phase of a relationship than it does in the conflict stage. In the former it may have more of a sexual dimension; in conflict it may mean patient working through of mutual concerns.

Affection includes nearness, or loving presence. We receive real affection when someone is committed to being beside us often. This does not mean constant cohabitation but reliable availability. It is the opposite of abandoning and distancing.

Finally, as one finger is not the hand, so affection is not love but only part of it. To be held and cuddled but not allowed later to make choices freely and without blame will soon be revealed as inadequate and untrustworthy.

ALLOWING

Yeats wrote of the special person who **“loves the pilgrim soul in you.”** Mirroring freedom means encouraging the liveliness and passion in others rather than squelching it for our own good or safety. The “pilgrim soul” also implies going. True allowing also means letting someone go. To allow is to stand aside when someone needs space from us or even to leave us. This is an “A” in courage.

To be truly “allowed” is to feel a heartfelt permission to be yourself, to have your own thoughts and to express them without punishment, to make your own choices, even to step out of line. The relationship is not at risk no matter what feelings you express. You think: **“I always know I could say or feel anything here.”**

When love is the life force of a relationship or a family, each member becomes fully complete as himself. This is the alternative to control, which generates a false self.

What is the difference between control and limit setting? Control is meant to make you what others need you to be. Limit-setting makes it safe for you to be yourself. Paradoxically, we can't achieve freedom without limits. They are the holding environment in which we flourish. Limits are at first the arms around us and then the word *no*. Even a sanctuary has gates around it. How else can it provide safety?

Human authority and hierarchy are useful and legitimate when they empower us to take our own initiative but not when they subjugate and belittle us. When authority, civil or religious, mirrors healthy parenting (i.e. providing the five A's), it is honourable and wins our respect.

Success Journaling

Journaling is a great tool to help shed light on *how we feel* about the events and facts of our lives and requires us to look openly and honestly at both the positive and negative. For those of us who need a little help in focusing on the positives (and lets face it, who doesn't need that every once in a while?), **success journaling** is a great tool. The idea is, **at the end of each day (or week if**

you prefer) write down 5 successes you enjoyed that day/week. All successes count as “Wins” and wins should always be celebrated!

Gratitude journaling is another great tool for focusing on the positive. **At the beginning or end of each day/week, write down 5 things for which you are grateful.**

It is very difficult to feel depressed after completing these two exercises!

The 5 Essentials of Successful Meditation or Mind Quieting

1. A Pure Environment.
2. Absence of Internal Dialogue – Thoughtlessness.
3. A Concentration Focus.
4. A Comfortable Position that Requires Wakefulness.
5. Deep, Slow, Diaphragmatic Breathing.

Implementing Meditation or Mind Quieting

Set aside 20 minutes per day for your mind quieting exercise.

Have no expectations. You are “practising”, not “performing”. The more you practise, the more skilled you will become. The benefit comes from engaging in practice, not from how well you have performed.

When going through particularly “stressful” periods, perform your mind quieting exercise twice a day.

Initiating the Relaxation Response

1. Pick a focus word or short phrase that’s firmly rooted in your belief system.
2. Sit quietly in a comfortable position.
3. Close your eyes.
4. Relax your muscles.
5. Breathe slowly and naturally, and as you do, repeat your focus word, phrase, or prayer silently to yourself as you exhale.
6. Assume a passive attitude. Don’t worry about how well you’re doing. When other thoughts come to mind, simply say to yourself, “Oh, well,” and gently return to the repetition.
7. Continue for 10 to 20 minutes.
8. Do not stand immediately. Continue sitting quietly for a minute or so, allowing other thoughts to return. Then open your eyes and sit for another minute before rising.
9. Practice this technique once or twice daily.

Further Suggestions for Mind Quietening (taken from Spiritual Intelligence by Brian Draper)

A Morning Reflection

As we wake up each morning we have a chance to awaken not just from our physical sleep, but as each new day presents itself, to wake up spiritually too! Why not try the following for a few days as you wake up each morning.

Get out of bed and sit in a chair or stand up if it helps

- Breathe in and out, slowly and deeply, and notice your breathing; take a moment to appreciate a new day and the gift of life. Do this for a couple of minutes.
- Become aware of the stillness around you, and notice any sounds that punctuate it; remember that everything you do today will come out of this stillness, and flow back into it again
- Look at your hands: remember that you are not just drifting through today, but helping to shape it from the start. Resolve to be a blessing to everyone you touch, physically, emotionally and spiritually today, and that the work of your hands will be honest caring and good.
- Now look at yourself in the mirror; and despite whether you like what you see or not, spend a few moments remembering that you are very much part of the day's picture- not just a passive onlooker watching the rest of life unfold before you but playing a part as a character of great beauty and great potential.

'Time In'

No time to take time out to meditate or practice mind quietening? Then how about taking time in? Short periods of reflection and stillness within the busyness of your daily schedule:

Some suggestions:

If you drive to work with the radio or music on, then turn it off for some of the journey time

If you always exercise with an MP3 player on, unplug for half of your exercise time. Before switching on your computer, take a couple of minutes in silence, relaxing your shoulders and jaw, stilling your mind and preparing proactively for the day ahead.

Look at your own schedule and look for opportunities to implement these moments of stillness and gradually move to a more contemplative lifestyle. The benefits that are waiting for you are; becoming more fully present, calming down, gaining peace of mind, setting things in perspective, becoming more creative, discovering who you really are and what you really want to do.