

YOUR PSYCHOLOGY

...what is it and can you change it?

**HEALTHY
PSYCHOLOGY**

vs. **UNHEALTHY
PSYCHOLOGY**

**YOUR
PSYCHOLOGICAL
HEALTH**

The greatest predictive
factor to holistic success

**IMPROVE
YOUR PSYCHOLOGY**
USING 6 INITIATIVES

**FOOD'S EFFECT
ON YOUR MOOD**

YOUR PSYCHOLOGY

WHAT IS IT AND CAN IT BE CHANGED?

The phrase “getting stuck in a rut” has perhaps lost some of its meaning. We may face the odd pothole but we don’t often contend with ruts on the daily commute.

But if you’ve ever actually been stuck in a rut you probably remember that “trapped” feeling – a lack of control over the direction of your vehicle, with the path ahead feeling hopelessly fixed and set. We may not be stuck in ruts on the road, but we can probably identify other kinds of “ruts” in our life.

You promise yourself you’re going to break away from negative thoughts and emotional patterns that are driving regretful behaviors. You’re finally going to turn the corner - less negative talk and anger, or bouts of depression and anxiety. You realize it’s time to forgive a particular person and release people from unrealistic expectations. Or you may need

to find the necessary courage to step forward in an area of your life that has you paralyzed with fear.

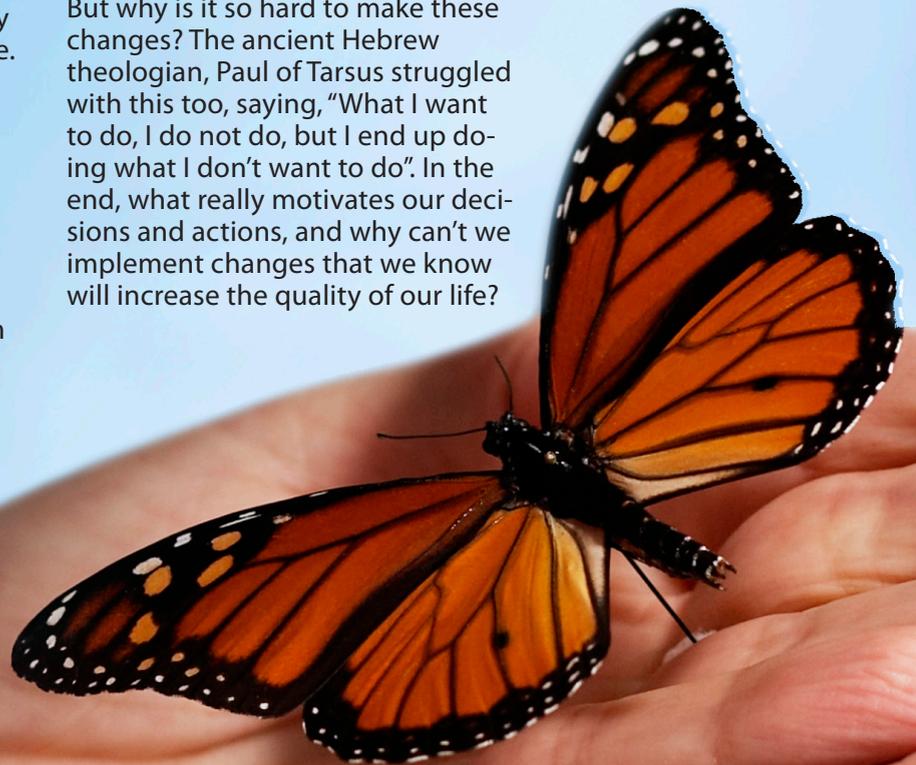
You take a long sober look at your life and you make a determined commitment to break out of your negative ruts. Fast forward a few months... no marked change has taken place and you realize that determination alone has not been enough to change your psychological state.

Most of us know the kind of mental/emotional state we want to have, and the corresponding behaviors and relationships. The struggle comes in executing the changes we want to see happen. Old habits and entrenched patterns seem to erode newfound will and determination...the rut is harder to get out of than we realized!

But why is it so hard to make these changes? The ancient Hebrew theologian, Paul of Tarsus struggled with this too, saying, “What I want to do, I do not do, but I end up doing what I don’t want to do”. In the end, what really motivates our decisions and actions, and why can’t we implement changes that we know will increase the quality of our life?

These are fundamental questions that have confounded many over the years and there is no straightforward, concrete answer. It’s a bit like opening the back of your cell phone expecting a simple explanation of how it all works.

A complex labyrinth of wiring, circuits and connections determines human behavior and psychology. At the core we have thoughts, desires and emotions. Mixed in is our physiology (hormones, innate physical drives and needs). And alongside we have unique, individual circumstances and experiences – environmental surroundings (people, location and daily conditions).



From this “soup” of human factors - decisions and actions spring forth. It’s not random – it could all be tracked back to root causes on a tangled path of network connections, but even if we were able to follow the connected dots, would this diagnosis lead to changed behavior - breaking us out of our ruts? Probably not.

ADVANCED HEALTH SCIENCES:

Thankfully the world of behavioral health (the science of our psychology and sociology) is advancing. The research being carried out is creating a growing understanding of human behavior, but we’re still only scratching the surface. However our “scratching” has led to a profound discovery - we really do have the ability to alter, and reform thoughts and emotions which drive our behaviors.

Historically, we have viewed people, particularly adults, as pretty much set (in a rut) as to who they are, how they think, and what determines their psychological state and behaviors.

Studies of the brain have revealed that thoughts and emotional patterns forming chemical and electronic pathways through the brain, are much less rigid and fixed than once thought.

In fact, some researchers are now describing the physical make-up of the brain as being “neuroplastic”, or pliable. So when you suggest your friend or neighbor has play-do in their head, you may be closer to the truth than you realize!

The brain and its flurried firings within, have the ability to be changed - molded – adapted and rewired. The **powerful thoughts and emotions that drive positive or negative behavior are not set in stone.** We don’t have to continue in the same old rut. We can make major lasting changes in the way we think, feel and act. Not just surface-level changes, but rather **deeper lasting changes** in the way we perceive our life and respond to stressful challenges around us, and the goals in front of us.

CHANGE IS POSSIBLE:

The starting point is a strong awareness that change is possible, no matter how many times we’ve attempted to make changes in the past and failed. It is critical to realize that significant change is within reach. The question is not, “is it possible to make these changes”, but rather, “how can I make changes”.

Once we come to the understanding that change is possible, the next major step

begins with self-care – with a focus on your psychology. We all know that if we take good care of our vehicles or our physical bodies we’ll generally have fewer breakdowns and experience enhanced performance as a result. Your psychology is no different – and it has an incredible response mechanism to self-care.

THE POWER OF SELF-CARE

Imagine focusing on the self-care of your psychology. It’s much like getting up each morning and going to the gym and increasing your cardio, lifting a few weights and doing yoga once a week.

Self-care of your psychology requires learning how to strengthen and balance your brain chemistry, understanding that stress is not just connected to difficult events, but often your perception of events. It involves understanding that no matter how fragile and tired you feel at times, you can learn skills to transform unhealthy thoughts and emotions into healthy thoughts and emotions. People from all walks of life and circumstances are learning how to change their psychology - and so can you.

Creating healthier psychology has now trumped all human pop enhancement methods that promise lasting change, simply because **psychology** produces your **behavior**, which in turn produces the **results** in your life. So if we want to change the results in our life, we must change our psychology. As we continue mapping and learning more about the brain, the prospects of lasting positive change has never been greater.

The challenge to all comrades is to work with a workmate or make it a department challenge towards implementing the 6 initiatives on page 8.



“Change the way you look at things and the things you look at change.”

– Wayne W. Dyer

HEALTHY PSYCHOLOGY

...Healthy Behaviors
Great Life Results

UNHEALTHY PSYCHOLOGY

...Unhealthy Behaviors
Poor Life Results

In some of your worst moments have you even been a bit shocked at the outer and inner state of your life (circumstances/relationships/mind-set and thoughts)?

I mean it's not like you've completely lost at the great game of life. In fact you've had some major accomplishments along the way. But perhaps you're giving up on some of your deepest heart-felt desires, such as lasting peace, joy contentment, thankfulness, purpose and greater closeness with those that occupy the front row of your life. These are the critical factors that create healthy psychology.

If you're going to embark on positive psychological shifts in your life, you need perspective on where you are now and what major changes you need to make. Without this clarity our desires can be fixated in the wrong direction (needing a bigger car or house, more money or a better partner). We focus on externalities instead of the deeper issues (peace, joy, contentment). We simply place things in the wrong order.

It's similar to being lost in the wilderness. You're standing there in the middle of bear country, surrounded by trees and alpine terrain, with no idea as to how you got there. Any attempt to walk in the right direction is at best a wild guess.



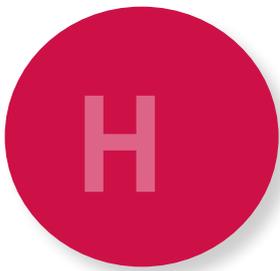
To get out of the actual wilderness, or the psychological wilderness that you've drifted into, you need to get some solid bearings.

In recent years, the psychology community has gained greater understanding as to how our psychology and human behavior works:

- ➔ Environment you grew up in shapes your beliefs.
- ➔ The beliefs that roll around in your brain determine your thoughts and emotions.
- ➔ Thoughts and emotions create perceptions... how you view things.
- ➔ Perceptions create behavior (unhealthy or healthy words and actions and reactions).
- ➔ Behaviors (added up) determine the results produced in your life.

Let's follow this through in the life of Linda to see how it works.

Linda grew up with her sister, and the belief that her sister was "better" than her. Linda had ongoing thought and emotional patterns that constantly reminded her that her parents favored her sister because she was mild-mannered and sensitive to the needs of others.



Change is possible and it starts with self-awareness, and learning how to administer self-care.

Over time this pattern deepened and her unhealthy thoughts and emotions concluded, “Almost everyone likes my sister more than me because she’s sweet and I’m bitchy compared to her – the truth is that I’m just not very lovable”.

These thoughts and emotions brewing in Linda’s mind and heart started to create perceptions, or a filter, through which she began to view the world around her. Linda automatically would perceive that most people saw her in a negative light – schoolteachers, new acquaintances, bosses and colleagues. She always felt a few steps below everyone else right out of the gate in most social situations. Insecurity and a negative self-image dominated Linda’s perception of her relationships and circumstances.

This perception resulted in a range of negative behaviors. Fearing being seen in a bad light she would compensate and try too hard to create the perfect impression - but it came across to others that she was overbearing or narcissistic. As some pulled away from Linda, her fear of rejection was triggered and pain gave way to anger and intensity. This pain / anger resulted in more negative behavior.

Repeated behavior like this led to inevitable results - a series of relationship breakdowns. Her belief that she was “hard to love” led her to the conviction that her husband could not accept her. As she continued to question him and demand more evidence of his love, their marriage suffered

and eventually failed. In the midst of her marital issues, she perceived that her children favored her husband, and they too ended up subject to her scrutiny and began to retreat from her emotionally. This condition affected her relationships at work and with her extended family. Over time, the list of broken relationships grew longer and she eventually sank into depression.

Linda’s predicament (the results in her life) is not that extreme or uncommon. They are not the result of a traumatic intervention, extreme social conditions, or mental illness. They really just started with a false belief that ran its course... toward certain thoughts, perceptions, behaviors and results.

Chain reactions like this are story lines that can often run through our lives. They can be negative or positive – they can be minor themes, or they can be dominating, crippling conditions that dominate our personalities and threaten our emotional health.

It’s important to get some bearing on where we are. It’s a critical first step in getting unstuck, out of the rut, and on the road to improved psychological health. Change is possible and it starts with self-awareness, and learning how to administer self-care.

Your story is likely different than Linda’s but each of us have similar chain reaction patterns that have helped form who we are today. Take time to write out your story using the following exercise. Do the exercise at a time when you

are relaxed and not stressed - a time when you’re in a contemplative and reflective mode.

Think of a specific negative belief you have. Examples could be:

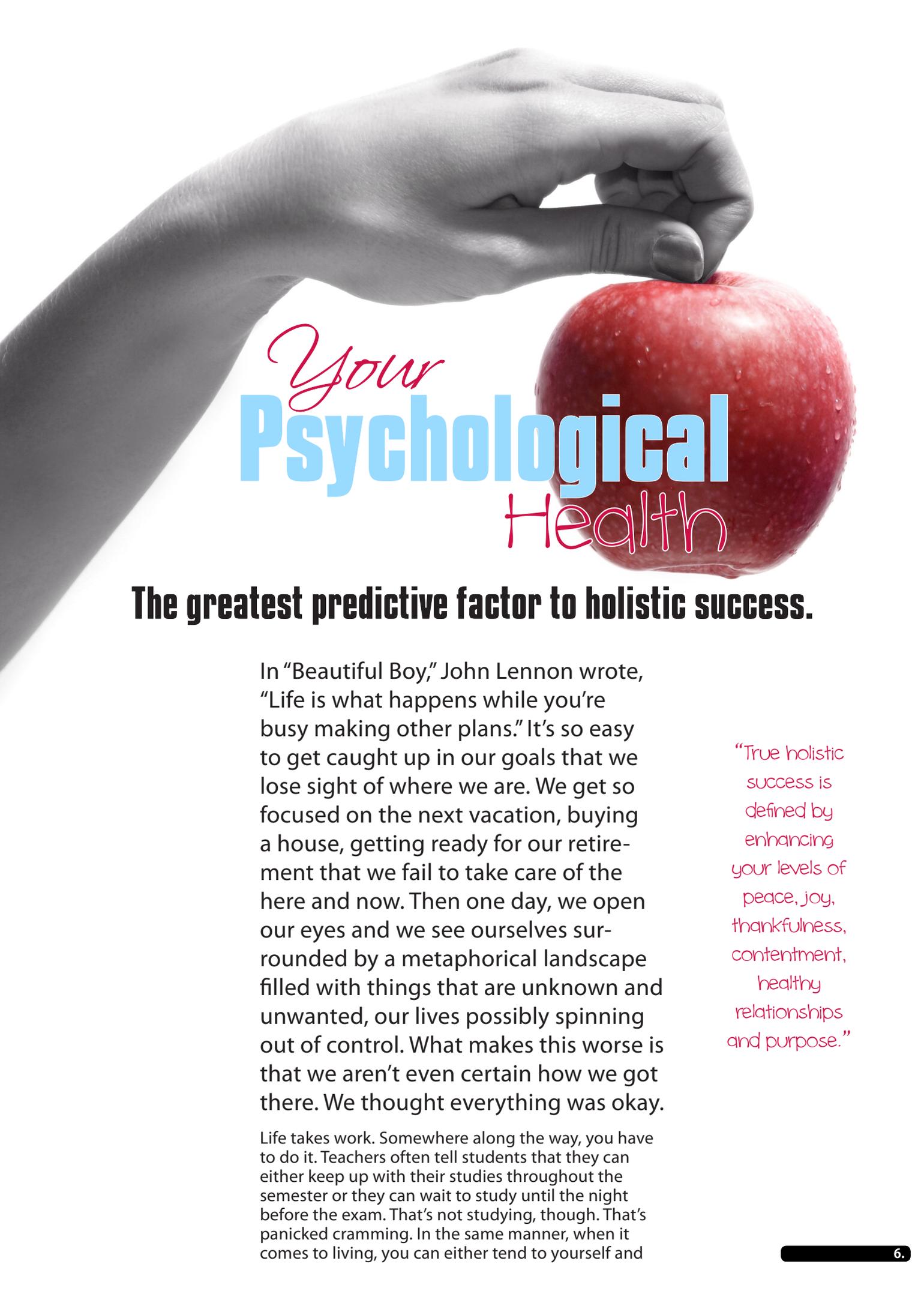
- ➔ I am not respected enough.
- ➔ I am not beautiful enough.
- ➔ No one wants me.
- ➔ There is not enough and I will miss out.
- ➔ I get left out all the time.

1. What are some thoughts and emotions you regularly have, that are related or linked to this belief?

2. List any perceptions (or filters) that seem to have developed as a result of these thoughts and emotions.

3. What are some recurring negative behaviors that you exhibit stemming from these perceptions?

4. What are some major results in your life that have formed because of these repeated behaviors?

A grayscale hand is shown holding a vibrant red apple. The apple is the focal point, with water droplets on its surface. The text 'Your Psychological Health' is overlaid on the image, with 'Your' in red script, 'Psychological' in large blue block letters, and 'Health' in red outline script.

Your Psychological Health

The greatest predictive factor to holistic success.

In "Beautiful Boy," John Lennon wrote, "Life is what happens while you're busy making other plans." It's so easy to get caught up in our goals that we lose sight of where we are. We get so focused on the next vacation, buying a house, getting ready for our retirement that we fail to take care of the here and now. Then one day, we open our eyes and we see ourselves surrounded by a metaphorical landscape filled with things that are unknown and unwanted, our lives possibly spinning out of control. What makes this worse is that we aren't even certain how we got there. We thought everything was okay.

Life takes work. Somewhere along the way, you have to do it. Teachers often tell students that they can either keep up with their studies throughout the semester or they can wait to study until the night before the exam. That's not studying, though. That's panicked cramming. In the same manner, when it comes to living, you can either tend to yourself and

"True holistic success is defined by enhancing your levels of peace, joy, thankfulness, contentment, healthy relationships and purpose."

Creating a healthy psychology requires it to be high on your values. Values are priorities that determine what you spend your time and money on.

your life as it moves along or wait until a crisis appears... when it might be too late.

Although it isn't always recognized as such, psychological health is a basic necessity of life. Having a healthy psychology is critical to living successfully. If we don't maintain our psychological health the smallest life challenges seem to pile up, rob us of our energy and abilities to ward them off and create solutions.

What we view as mental illness e.g. anxiety, depression, alcoholism are really symptoms of something else. Mental illness is the behavioral manifestation of something far more fundamental. If we don't take the steps necessary to maintain our psychological health, we put ourselves at greater risk for psycho-

logical distress. This distress can take the form of mental illness.

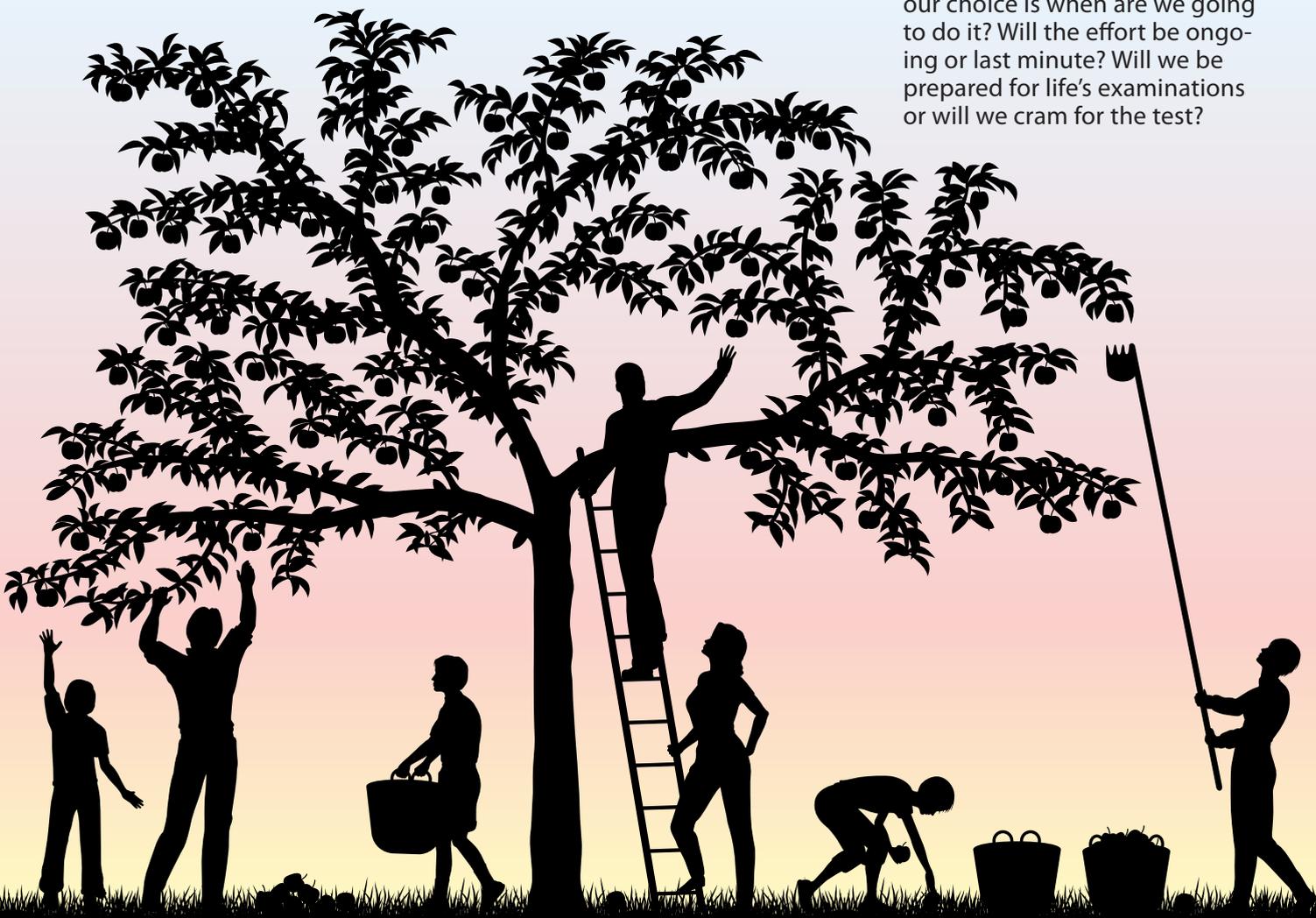
Although we tend to think of the psychological and the physical as being distinctly different and separate, over the last half century it has become increasingly clear how intertwined the two are. Our immune system, which fights off illness, is intimately connected to our brains and vice versa. Our psychological health has a profound effect upon how well our immune systems can keep our bodies healthy.

Our psychological fitness also impacts our ability to cope with stress and physical illness. When we aren't psychologically healthy, we're less capable of taking steps necessary to reduce our stress. We are less able and less likely to engage

in the behaviors needed to keep us on the road to recovery when we get sick.

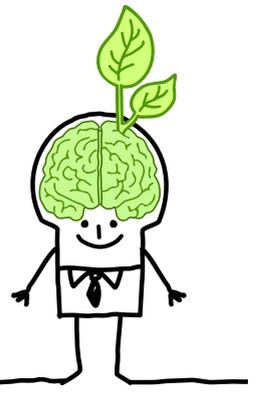
Being social animals, our relationships are critical to our psychological and physical health. On the other hand, psychological health is critical to our relationships. If our psychology is unhealthy, we risk driving people away and experiencing loneliness. It can negatively impact our relationships with our coworkers and reduce our chances of developing a healthy relationship with a life partner. If we don't maintain our psychological health, we may find ourselves incapable of repairing fractures in our relationships.

A healthy psychology is the key to all we desire. It takes work, though. We have to manage our experiences: past, present and future. Our choice isn't whether we want to do the work. Instead, our choice is when are we going to do it? Will the effort be ongoing or last minute? Will we be prepared for life's examinations or will we cram for the test?





Improve YOUR PSYCHOLOGY USING 6 INITIATIVES



- 1** Determine what areas you want to change. Decide on one or two goals and develop a laser focus on these goals alone. Once you succeed on these, then add new ones.
- 2** Evaluate your readiness to change.
- 3** Determine if you can do it on your own or will you require support.
- 4** Learn to increase the practice of personal self-care.
- 5** Enhance the health of your beliefs, thoughts, emotions, and desires.
- 6** Learn to regulate yourself - bring your psychological state back to a regulated state (healthy) when it becomes escalated (unhealthy).

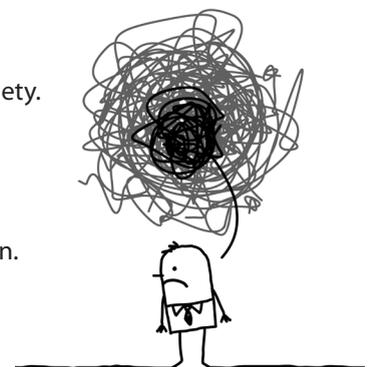
1 DETERMINE WHAT AREAS YOU WANT TO CHANGE

The science of human progress indicates achievements occur incrementally not exponentially. Athletes did not master their skills overnight - broken legs take many months to heal and career skills do not develop in an instant.

Review the list below and determine the areas you want to change first, based on your priorities and potential benefit to your life. Once you've had some success in selected areas add some new goals. The objective is to experience some incremental success, even in small measures and then move on. The most common mistake people make is setting their goals too high at the outset. They tend to fall short of their lofty target, get discouraged and give up altogether.

Number each item in order of priority:

- learn how to increase self esteem.
- learn how to reduce sadness and episodes of depression-anxiety.
- learn how to have healthier more fulfilling relationships.
- learn how to become more stress resilient.
- learn how to find more overall purpose – increased motivation.
- other _____
- other _____



2 PRE-EVALUATE YOUR READINESS TO CHANGE

Rank your willingness to begin the process of changing your psychology from 1-10 (10 highest).

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

Examples of readiness to change is being willing to work on some or all of these areas:

- ➔ Allow 2-4 hours a week of reading, journalling and practicing new skills (these six initiatives).
- ➔ Increasing your cardio vascular exercise to 40 minutes 4 times a week. This increases your dopamine and serotonin levels which help give you inner strength and make you feel better. Fast walking is a good way to start.
- ➔ Eat healthier.
- ➔ Establishing a healthy work-life balance.
- ➔ Increasing the health of your relationships.
- ➔ Be more open about what is going well/not well in your psychology, and be receptive to help from trusted friends or professionals.

3 CAN YOU DO IT ON YOUR OWN OR DO YOU NEED SUPPORT?

Some people learn how to improve the health of their psychology on their own. However if you want to significantly increase your chances of success, support from a qualified person should be considered. When a person has unhealthy psychology the tendency is to conceal or mask it. It takes courage to step up to the plate and ask another person to help you improve your psychological health.

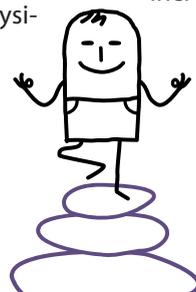
Check which item you relate to best:

- Yes, I feel confident I can make necessary changes.
- I am somewhat confident I can make necessary changes.
- I will require support and will reach out to a qualified professional.



4 LEARN TO INCREASE THE PRACTICE OF PERSONAL SELF-CARE

- ➔ Your psychology requires self-care just like anything else you value. If you value your physical body you exercise and eat healthy. If you value your car you perform regular maintenance and drive it with care. By doing so you get better performance and reduce the chance of breakdowns (in the case of your physical body and your vehicle). Your psychology benefits from self-care in the same way. Like your body and vehicle, learn to value psychology as an asset.
 - ➔ Your psychology has an incredible response mechanism to self-care. Almost immediately small changes can occur. In terms of physical health, you can be non-active and out of shape, and within 4 weeks of exercise be on your way to increased health. As is the case with physical health, your psychology also has a typical response mechanism, and if a comprehensive program is carried out, with proper support, significant changes in how a person thinks and feels can be achieved.
 - ➔ Beginning a self-care program must be deliberate and requires a consistent commitment, but the payoffs are significant.
 - ➔ Self-care starts by creating greater awareness of 4 primary parts of your psychology: beliefs, thoughts, emotions and desires.
- Once you have greater awareness and understanding of these 4 primary parts, you are positioned to increase the health of each.



5 LEARN TO CREATE HEALTHIER THOUGHTS, EMOTIONS AND DESIRES

- ➔ All change begins by establishing awareness. What you are not aware of you can't change. In your journal begin the process of becoming more aware of the areas you want to change.
- ➔ In your journal, record when you have a healthy thought, emotion or desire- and when you have unhealthy ones. When you have unhealthy thoughts, emotions or desires, list how you could replace them with healthier ones.
- ➔ Become aware of your ACE's (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Go to YouTube and search for "bomb in the brain" to learn more. Do any of your ACEs contribute to you getting hurt easily by others, ongoing resentment towards those that have hurt you, or an inability to set boundaries?
- ➔ Begin to create awareness of your thoughts, emotions and desires, and notice the difference between them.

This exercise will help you do this:

THOUGHTS: Close your eyes and start deep breathing in a relaxing environment where you will not be interrupted. As you deep breath begin to monitor your thoughts. Thoughts are random things that pop into your mind – "I have to get more groceries today by 4:00; I need to get a haircut: Why did Sally say what she said last night..."

EMOTIONS: As you continue to deep breath, begin to focus on your emotions only. It is possible to have many emotions occurring at the same time: peace, sadness, contentment, anger, thankfulness, guilt, joy, and fear. As you discover negative emotions give them a rating of 1-10, 10 being the highest – draining you of your energy and creating discomfort.

DESIRES: Now attempt to switch your focus from thoughts and emotions over to desires. What do you desire right now? It could be that you desire to be with a friend, to eat a particular favorite food, maybe you desire to read a book or watch a TV show. Notice the intensity and the unhealthiness of the desire and rank it from 1-10.

After completing this awareness exercise, it is important to evaluate your thoughts, emotions and desires.

How many of your thoughts, emotions and desires were healthy or

unhealthy. An unhealthy thought may be one directed at another person, or even more likely, it could be a negative thought about you.

List unhealthy thoughts / emotions and desires, and identify healthy replacements:

Unhealthy thought: _____

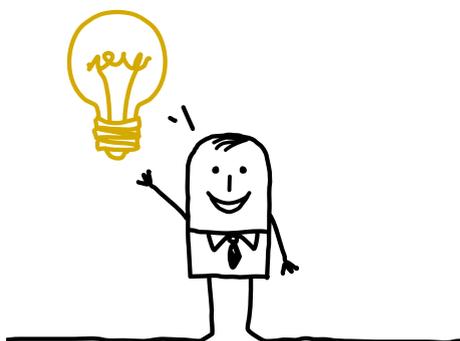
What healthy thought could I replace it with? _____

Unhealthy emotion: _____

What healthy emotion could I replace it with? _____

Unhealthy desires: _____

What healthy desires could I replace it with? _____



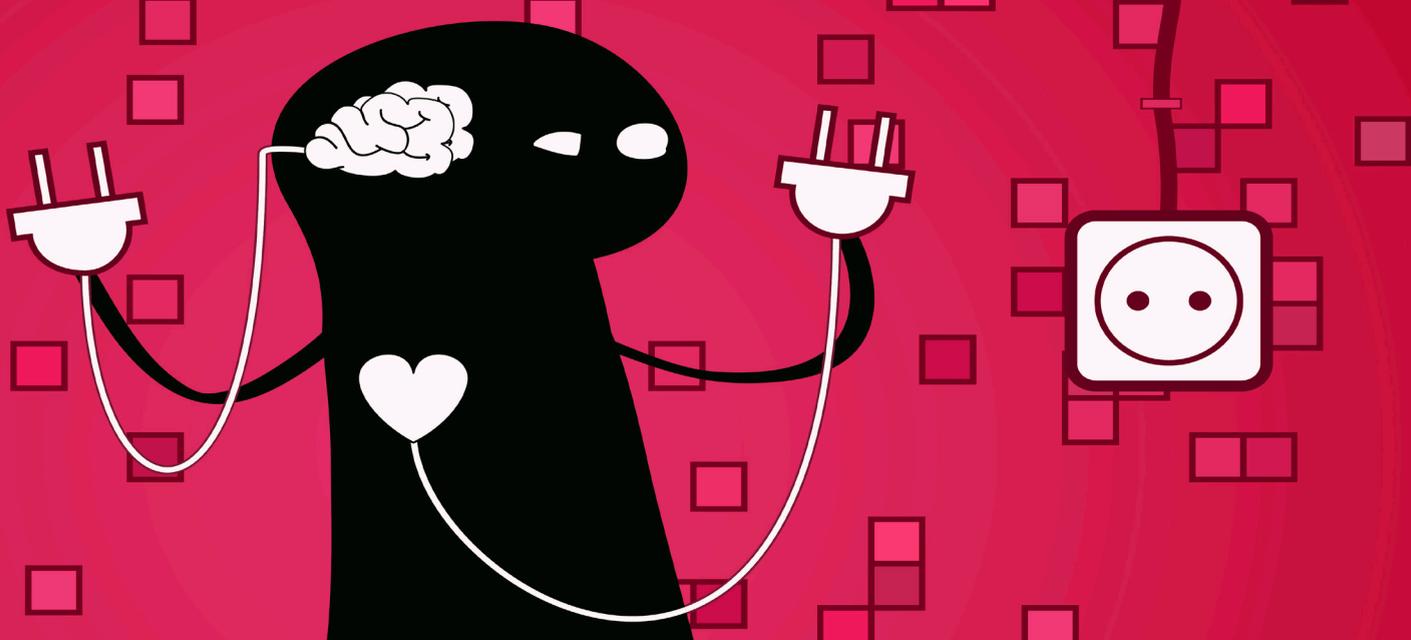
6 LEARN HOW TO REGULATE YOURSELF WHEN YOU GET ESCALATED

Our psychological state is somewhere between one of two states: regulated or escalated. Escalated could be when you are fearful, angry, stressed, lonely, sad or perhaps overly pessimistic. Being escalated is part of life and cannot be avoided, however falling into this mode too often and staying in this mode for prolonged periods of time is painful, unhealthy, and often creates regrettable behavior.

Because life has both hard times and good times, that produce both escalated and regulated states we need to accept both of these states as normal parts of life. However we need to develop the awareness to recognize when we have fallen into an escalated state and to become skilled at the use of regulation exercises that help bring us back to a healthy regulated state. A healthy regulated state helps produce, peace, joy, contentment, thankfulness, empathy, confidence and optimism.

Read through each exercise on the next page, when you find that you have moved from a regulated state to an escalated state rank yourself from 1-10 (10, being highly escalated) as to how escalated you have become, then try practicing two or more of whichever of these regulation exercises best suit you.

Often when people begin learning how to regulate themselves the progress starts slow and builds as you develop the skills. So if you find yourself escalated to an 8 out of 10 and you do one of the exercises and it reduces you to a 5 or 6, congratulate yourself because you are on your way to mastering it. And remember for some people it's also normal to require support from a trained counselor to learn how to become successful at the use of these exercises, so be prepared to reach out for help. Mastering regulation exercises can become one of your greatest assets to improving your psychology.



Regulation Exercises: To help you get out of an unhealthy escalated state.

Connecting with yourself

- ➔ **CRYING:** Crying is a physiological detoxification. Next time you have a good cry pay attention to how well you feel after. Research data collected from the Alive Wellness Resort indicated people who cried when faced with difficult and painful situations reduced their pain and discomfort an average of 64%. In other words people felt 64% less pain after they cried. In as much as crying is a very powerful method to release pain and restore comfort; many people need to give themselves permission to cry.
- ➔ **JOURNALING:** Journaling is a private place where in an unrestrained way, you can express and explore the state of your inner thoughts and feelings by writing about them. Log-on to your health portal and begin journaling in the confidential journal.
- ➔ **ABRAHAM DEEP BREATHING EXERCISE:** This exercise is an excellent method to help regulate yourself and is located on your health portal: On the home page click on reduce stress workshop and the guided breathing exercise is module 4.
- ➔ **GRATITUDE BREATHING:** What takes place when you do gratitude breathing is that you train your mind to focus on things that you are grateful for and enjoy through a process of association with your breathing. The longer you practice this exercise the more control you will feel you have over your thought and emotional processes and how they occur. By exercising control over what you focus on and think

about, the mind is less prone to the obsessive recital of negative thought patterns and behaviors. By exercising this control, you will find that your ability to slow down and even clear your mind of obsessive thought patterns improves and becomes easier the more you practice.

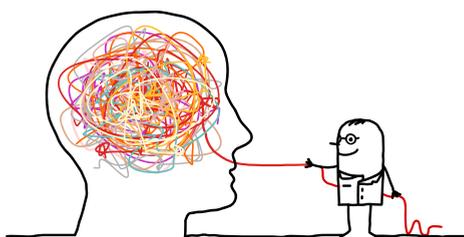
Connecting with others

- ➔ **CHECKING IN** (express yourself to a friend/mentor) In person, phone or email. This exercise is similar to journaling but instead what you write or say will be read or heard by someone you know and trust to be an empathic listener who will not judge you. The procedure involves announcing that you need to do a check-in and then sharing with them what is going on with your thoughts, emotions and desires in an unedited mode of microscopic honesty.
- ➔ **SUPPORT FROM A MENTOR OR FRIEND:** A myth that floats around in some people's belief system is that counseling/coaching is for people who are broken and too weak to help themselves, however for a person to step up to the plate and ask for help is actually a sign of strength and courage. Almost everyone experiences times in their life where things are more

difficult and regulating thoughts and emotions can be more challenging during these times. Seeking support is a powerful initiative that can provide a tremendous foundation in learning how to regulate thoughts and emotions. For support contact your EAP provider at www.warrenshepellservices.com or 1.800.387.4765.

Connecting with healthy activities

- ➔ **CARDIO VASCULAR ACTIVITY** (min 40 minutes 4 times a week).
In 2008 the Harvard medical review published a study that in essence stated that people who have regular cardio vascular exercise ward off the chances of contracting depression by as much as 35% and people who are depressed stand a 40% greater chance of overcoming it. Cardio exercise balances brain-chemistry and enhances your ability to ward-off stress and helps you feel better.
- ➔ **PARTICIPATING IN A GROUP ACTIVITY OR SPORT:** Group activities or experiencing empathy with friends can have an immediately effect on regulating thoughts and emotions. Next time your mood is down be aware of the positive effect walking into a roomful of friends can have on your mood. If meeting people one-on-one is difficult for you join organized groups (book clubs, sports team or self improvement groups listed on line in your community).



FOOD'S EFFECT ON YOUR MOOD

SCENARIO: You're at your friend's birthday party barbecue and you're feeling good. Your energy levels are high, but within 15 minutes after eating you feel a sense of fatigue come over you, your motivation drops and your mood is low.

A British and French study examining the connection between what we eat and our overall mental health found that people who eat more processed foods are at a higher risk for depression, while those who eat whole foods are at a lower risk and generally have more energy. If your mental health is as important to you as your physical health, check out our list of five foods that get you down and five that get you "up" (and we're not only talking energy here).

FOODS TO AVOID

Burgers The average fast-food burger weighs in at between 500-900 calories. That's almost half of the daily-recommended intake. This all-American staple is also filled with saturated fats and trans-fatty acids, which increase the levels of cholesterol, thus putting you at a higher risk for heart disease. All those carbs raise your blood sugar level and leave you feeling lethargic.

Potato Chips & French Fries Not only are fries and potato chips high in calories, they also pack a punch when it comes to saturated fats and sodium, which has been linked to high-blood pressure. Saturated fats are difficult for the body to digest, putting you in an unpleasant food coma.

Soda The average 12oz soda can has about 10 teaspoons of sugar, and on average, about 40 milligrams of caffeine, nearly as much as a cup of coffee. Although the sugar gives you a momentary high, it also raises the insulin levels in your blood. But studies show that consuming too much sugar eventually lowers the body's ability to naturally produce endorphins, which has been linked to depression.



Hot dogs Processed meats are generally an unhealthy choice because of high levels of fat and sodium. They're also full of nitrates (a food preservative) which when combined with the amino acids in our bodies, can produce a cancer-causing chemical called nitrosamine. Nitrates have also been linked to migraines and tension headaches.

Cookies Not only will the sugar in cookies give you the best momentary "high" it's also a fast track to the "crash and burn" effect. Too often a sugar rush leaves us feeling groggy and craving for more. It becomes a vicious cycle.

FOODS TO EAT MORE OF

Almonds Besides giving you energy, almonds can lower cholesterol, they're packed with vitamin E, which is good for skin, hair and reduces the risk of heart disease. The phosphorus in almonds helps build strong bones and teeth. Almonds lower blood sugar and insulin after meals and in spite of being rich in healthy fats are linked to lower weight gain.



Avocado In ancient Mayan culture, avocados were thought to have health benefits. They're said to be one of the healthiest fruits on the planet, containing 25 essential nutrients like Vitamin E, folic acid, copper and iron. Their high fiber content is great for your digestive system.

Bananas High in potassium are a natural diuretic and help maintain normal blood pressure and heart function. They also have an antacid effect and protect against stomach ulcers.

Chocolate The darker the better, supports cardiovascular health and is believed to reduce the risk of cancer, and heart disease.

Garlic Never mind the stink, this all-around healthy food helps the body release allicin, a chemical that reduces cholesterol production. Garlic also contains potassium, iron, calcium, magnesium, manganese, zinc, and selenium, which is a heart healthy mineral.



For online resources to enhance your psychology log in to your health portal.

- ➔ Complete the online assessments located in the Health Tracker (accessible from the home page).
- ➔ Watch the Micro Web Video library.
- ➔ Complete the Reduce Stress Workshop.
- ➔ Psychological health is tied to relationship health so read the 2013 spring edition of this magazine (link to magazine archives is located in the top left-hand corner of home page).