

## Silence

Here it rests, not a sound,  
Nor breath of wind to move us.  
Distant farmhouse smoke,  
Ascends slowly, then stops.

With no force to push or pull it,  
The blue smoke lingers in the still air.  
Its energy and heat are defused,  
Colour merged with the unseeable.

There are always sounds and distractions.  
Being captured by silence is unnerving,  
Emphasising our internal noise,  
As we attempt to drown the stillness.

Embrace the silence,  
Flow within its peace.  
Empty your commotion and,  
Merge into the gentle hush.

J Pearson Feb 25



# DOES IT MAKE YOU FEEL GOOD?

## Wellbeing in Action

Begin to take control of your life and all it contains.

Esk Valley Medical Practice  
WELLBEING TEAM

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Read this booklet/eBook cover-to-cover or dip in and out as you please. Participate and reflect on what you discover. Consider working through it with a trusted friend - things often become clearer when we understand how they work.

It may seem selfish to focus on yourself, but that couldn't be further from the truth. We must start with ourselves if we want to make a difference in this world. Think of it like keeping your phone charged and recognise that you always need sufficient fuel in the tank to get where you're going.

Are you ready to step into your greatness and to accept yourself fully, despite painful conditioning from your past. There is work for you to do here, that only you can do. However, the benefits can be life changing.



ESK VALLEY MEDICAL PRACTICE

## Life's a dance.

How about learning some moves

Your **Mind** is like a powerful computer, processing everything you see, hear, and feel. But don't be fooled - it can also be a total liar. Your mind will twist the truth, show you things that aren't there, and jumble up your memories and emotions in ways that are unhelpful.

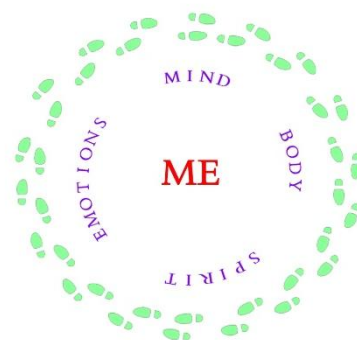
That's why it's so important to keep your mind in check. Question what it's telling you instead of just blindly accepting it. That way, you can steer your thoughts and feelings in a more positive direction.

The mind may seem all-powerful, but remember, you're the one in charge. Stay alert, and don't let your mind lead you astray.

Your **Body** isn't just a machine to get you from A to B. It's a complex, living thing that will tell you when it needs rest, food, water, and sleep. Taking good care of your body is crucial - it has to last your whole life, no more and no less. The better you look after it, the better it will perform, and the more alive you'll feel.

The **Spirit** is this mysterious force that feels connected to everything around us - from the smallest speck to the vast cosmos, including ourselves. It has a mystical, almost magical quality, and we start to notice its influence in our daily lives. The Spirit can manifest as either light or darkness, so it's important to nurture and care for it.

**Emotions** often get pushed aside, leaving us feeling misunderstood. They can mess with our minds and drive us to act in ways we don't want to. We've all been there, right? But the truth is, emotions aren't good or bad - they just are. They're actually trying to tell us something important about what's happening. The best thing is to let those feelings be, without getting all worked up. They'll pass, like they always do.



## Who am I?

You are so much more than just your mind, body, spirit, or emotions. You are the complete package - the totality of all these parts. In a way, you're both a part of the greater universe and a universe unto yourself. It's up to you, the true essence of who you are, to take responsibility for guiding and directing your mind, body, spirit, and emotions.

You are a vast, complex being - so much more than you can even fathom. Like a TARDIS, your true depths and dimensions stretch far beyond what's visible on the surface.

*You are a TARDIS,  
You're much bigger on the inside.*



## Do I feel good?

Let's be real - how many of us can honestly say we feel totally great all the time? Probably not many. We get so caught up in pointing fingers that we forget to focus on what we can do to improve our own situation. Instead of dwelling on what's wrong, we should spend more time thinking about how we can make things better for ourselves.



Wellbeing is about finding the best ways for each of us to manage our emotions, stress, decision-making, overthinking, and worries. It's a personal journey, as what works for one person may not work for another. We are all unique, shaped by our life experiences, and see the world differently. The key is learning to use what works for you as an individual.

Think of your mind like a computer running various programs throughout the day. If one of those programs is producing poor results, you have the power to go in and rewrite the code to get a better outcome. This is something anyone can do - it's not difficult, you just have to take control of your life and make the most of it. Don't feel stuck with the way things are. You have the ability to improve your wellbeing and create the best from what you have.

Programs are usually created to keep us safe, which is good. But they're often rushed, just to get us out of a jam. That's okay too. However, programs need regular reviews, like a computer - as they can slow down or even crash.

Our conscious mind is where all our day-to-day processing happens. Imagine a huge sheet of paper where all our thoughts, actions, relationships, disagreements, and creative ideas are scribbled down. We're constantly running through the "what ifs" of life's interactions and choices. No wonder we get tired!

Our unconscious mind is like a powerful computer processor, running the programs that keep us safe without us even thinking about it. Its main job is to manage the "meta-programs" - the automatic functions we don't need to consciously control. Regularly accessing this unconscious part of the mind can be beneficial. But it's not always easy, as our overly active conscious thoughts and stress can drown out the quieter voice of the unconscious.

Great news, folks! We can totally take control of our thoughts and choose to be our true selves. You know, when we were born, we came preloaded with everything we need to live an awesome, happy life - kind of like a brand-new phone, right? But then life happens, and all that good stuff gets buried away in some pending folder. Well, no more! We're going to show you how to unlock that folder, reactivate the good stuff, and get that smile back on your face for good.

You Can Do This. We can do it together.

## I am Unique

We rarely take the time to really look at ourselves. But if you pause and think about it, being you is pretty incredible. Out of all the billions of people who have ever existed, there's no one else quite like you. Your unique blend of talents, relationships, experiences - both good and bad - makes you one of a kind. There has never been, and will never be, another person exactly like you.



*Image: Pip Wilson*

No one who has ever lived or is to come has had your combination of abilities, talents, friends, acquaintances, burdens, sorrows and opportunities.

No one's hair grows exactly the way yours does. No one's finger prints are like yours. No one has the same

combination of secret inside jokes and family expressions that you know.

The few people who laugh at all the same things you do; don't sneeze the way you do. No one prays about exactly the same concerns as you do. No one is loved by the same combination of people that love you – NO ONE!

No one before – no one yet to come. YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY UNIQUE! Enjoy that uniqueness. You do not have to pretend in order to seem more like someone else. You weren't meant to be like someone else.

You do not have to lie to conceal the parts of you that are not like what you see in anyone else.

You were meant to be different. Nowhere ever in all of history will the same things be going on in anyone's mind, soul and spirit as are going on in yours right now. If you did not exist, there would be a hole in creation, a gap in history, something missing from the plan for humankind.

Treasure your uniqueness. It is a gift given only to you. Enjoy it and share it!

No one can reach out to others in the same way that you can. No one can speak your words. No one can convey your meanings. No one can comfort with your kind of comfort. No one can bring your kind of understanding to another person.

No one can be cheerful and light-hearted and joyous in your way. No one can smile your smile. No one else can bring the whole unique impact of you to another human being.

Share your uniqueness. Let it be free to flow out among your family and friends and people you meet in the rush and clutter of living wherever you are. That gift of yourself was given you to enjoy and share. Give yourself away!

See it! Receive it! Let it tickle you! Let it inform you and nudge you and inspire you!

## How your mind works.

Let's keep this simple without getting caught up in the complex wiring of nerves and neurons. Head over to YouTube for an explanation that takes less than six-minutes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKQs3HoEEks>

## Reticular Activation System (RAS)

(RAS) is that thing you don't really notice until you start paying attention. It's like when you learn a new word or discover something online – suddenly, you start seeing that word or topic everywhere. Maybe you're thinking of buying a new coat, and then BAM, you can't stop noticing that coat all over the place, both online and in the real world. It's like your brain has zoomed in on this new thing, even though it was there all along. The RAS is responsible for this phenomenon - it filters the endless stream of information our senses take in and brings certain things to our conscious awareness. Your brain is constantly flooded with millions of sights, sounds, and smells every single second. But you only notice a tiny bit of all that information. Your RAS focuses on what you care about most. If you tell your brain something's important, it'll start pointing out more of it around you.

When faced with a potential threat, your brain automatically focuses on the danger, leaving no time to notice your surroundings. This is an example of the Reticular Activating System (RAS) in action - it directs your attention to what it deems most important for your immediate survival.

RAS directs our behaviour. So, how we use our RAS can have a big impact on our mental wellbeing. If our inner voice is full of self-doubt, fear of failure, or negativity, the RAS will reinforce those beliefs by making us notice all the mistakes, rejections, and times we feel like we don't fit in. But if we train our RAS to focus on our strengths, possibilities, and positive outcomes, we'll start seeing opportunities, supportive people, and signs of progress. This isn't about ignoring problems or pretending everything is perfect - it's about choosing what to focus on so we can build resilience and optimism.

*The people who make the most out of life,  
Make the most out of what they have.  
Become aware of what you have.*



# Self-talk

## How Your Words Shape Your World

### What Is Self-Talk?

Do you ever catch yourself having a conversation with the voice in your head? That's self-talk - the constant inner dialogue we all have. Sometimes it's encouraging, but other times it can be harsh and critical. This can be your own personal coach, or an unsupportive friend. The way you talk to yourself really matters. It can affect your mood, confidence, and how you handle challenges.



*Image: Alysha Rosly*

### Why Does Self-Talk Matter?

Imagine your inner voice as the soundtrack to your life. If the tune is upbeat and positive, you'll feel motivated and happy. But if the music is gloomy and negative, it can bring you down. Positive self-talk is like a superhero cape - it boosts your confidence and resilience, making you believe you can conquer the world - well, almost.

### Types of Self-Talk: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Not all self-talk is created equal. Here are three types:

#### 1. Positive Self-Talk

The cheerleader in your head boosts your confidence. It cheers you on, applauds your achievements, and lifts your spirits. Telling yourself "I can do this" or "I am enough" are empowering mantras that can shift your mindset. It's like giving yourself an enthusiastic high-five!

#### 2. Negative Self-Talk

That critical inner voice drags you down, whispering doubts like "You'll never be good at this" or "Why bother trying?" It's a dark cloud blocking your view of the bright side. We can easily psych ourselves out - or pump ourselves up. That's why it helps to have someone you trust as a sounding board, who can give you the honest feedback you need.

#### 3. Neutral Self-Talk

"I bombed that test, but I'll hit the books harder next time." This realistic self-talk keeps you level-headed, avoiding the emotional rollercoaster.

### How to Change Your Self-Talk

Improving your self-talk is like training a puppy - it takes time, patience, and sticking with it. Start by listening to the voice in your head. Do you notice any patterns, like being overly critical? Once you spot those, challenge the negative thoughts and replace them with more positive, encouraging phrases. For example, instead of saying "I'm terrible at this," try telling yourself "I'm still learning, and I'm getting better."

## **The Benefits of Positive Self-Talk**

Positive self-talk does more than just make you feel good - it comes with real benefits that can improve your life in key ways.

**Boosts Confidence:** Believing in yourself makes you more likely to take on challenges and push your limits.

**Reduces Stress:** A positive mindset helps you handle stress better, approaching problems with solutions instead of panic.

**Improves Relationships:** When you're kinder to yourself, it shows in how you treat others. You communicate better and build stronger connections.

## **Self-Talk in Real Life**

Imagine this: You've got a big work presentation. Your heart's pounding, and doubts start to creep in. But instead of letting negative thoughts take over, you remind yourself, "I'm ready for this. I've done it before." Feeling more confident, you strut into that room, ready to shine.

## **Embracing Your Inner Dialogue**

Self-talk is a constant companion. It can lift you up or drag you down. By mastering your inner voice, you command your thoughts, emotions, and life. So next time that nagging voice pipes up, ask: is it a helping hand or a hindering foe? Choose carefully - your response shapes everything around you.

## **Final Thoughts**

Self-talk holds immense power. It shapes your perspective and guides how you navigate the world. Stay attentive, take the time to listen, and be intentional with the words you say to yourself. After all, you're the one who decides whether your inner voice lifts you up or brings you down. The choice is yours!

## **Self-Worth**

When it comes to your self-worth, only one opinion truly matters — Your own. And even that one should be carefully evaluated; we tend to be our own harshest critics.

Glenn R. Schiraldi, Ph.D. author of *The Self-Esteem Workbook*, describes healthy self-esteem as a realistic, appreciative opinion of oneself. He writes, "Unconditional human worth assumes that each of us is born with all the capacities needed to live fruitfully, although everyone has a different mix of skills, which are at different levels of development." He emphasises that core worth is independent of externals that the marketplace values, such as wealth, education, health, status — or the way one has been treated.



Some navigate the world — and relationships — searching for any bit of evidence to validate their self-limiting beliefs. Much like judge and jury, they constantly put themselves on trial and sometimes sentence themselves to a lifetime of self-criticism.

The following are eight steps you can take to increase your feelings of self-worth.

### **1. Be mindful.**

To change something, we first have to notice it. Once we become aware of our inner self-talk, we can start to step back from those feelings. This helps us not get so caught up in our self-limiting thoughts. As meditation teacher Allan Lokos says, "Don't believe everything you think. Thoughts are just that — thoughts."

When you find yourself being self-critical, pause and observe what's happening. Stay curious about it, and remind yourself, "These are just thoughts, not facts."

### **2. Change the story.**

We all have a personal narrative that defines how we see ourselves. This self-image is shaped by the messages we've internalised over time. If we want to change this story, we need to understand where those messages came from and whose voices we've been listening to.

"Sometimes automatic negative thoughts like 'you're fat' or 'you're lazy' can be repeated in your mind so often that you start to believe they are true," says Jessica Koblenz, Psy.D. "These thoughts are learned, which means they can be unlearned. You can start with affirmations. What do you wish you believed about yourself? Repeat these phrases to yourself every day."

Thomas Boyce, Ph.D., supports the use of affirmations. Research conducted by Boyce and his colleagues has demonstrated that "fluency training" in positive affirmations (for example, writing down as many different positive things you can about yourself in a minute) can lessen symptoms of depression as measured by self-report using the Beck Depression Inventory. Larger numbers of written positive statements are correlated with greater improvement. "While they have a bad reputation because of late-night TV," Boyce says, "positive affirmations can help."

### **3. Avoid falling into the compare-and-despair rabbit hole.**

"Two key things I emphasise are to practice acceptance and stop comparing yourself to others," says psychotherapist Kimberly Hershenson, LMSW. "I emphasise that just because someone else appears happy on social media or even in person doesn't mean they are happy. Comparisons only lead to negative self-talk, which leads to anxiety and stress." Feelings of low self-worth can negatively affect your mental health as well as other areas in your life, such as work, relationships, and physical health.

#### **4. Channel your inner rock star.**

Albert Einstein said, “Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.” We all have our strengths and weaknesses. Someone may be a brilliant musician, but a dreadful cook. Neither quality defines their core worth. Recognise what your strengths are and the feelings of confidence they engender, especially in times of doubt. It’s easy to make generalisations when you “mess up” or “fail” at something, but reminding yourself of the ways you rock offers a more realistic perspective of yourself.

Psychotherapist Kristie Overstreet, LPCC, suggests asking yourself, “Was there a time in your life where you had better self-esteem? What were you doing at that stage of your life?” If it’s difficult for you to identify your unique gifts, ask a friend to point them out to you. Sometimes it’s easier for others to see the best in us than it is for us to see it in ourselves.

#### **5. Exercise.**

Many studies have shown a correlation between exercise and higher self-esteem, as well as improved mental health. “Exercising creates empowerment both physical and mental,” says Debbie Mandel, author of *Addicted to Stress*, “especially weight lifting where you can calibrate the accomplishments. Exercise organises your day around self-care.” She suggests dropping a task daily from your endless to-do list for the sole purpose of relaxation or doing something fun and seeing how that feels. Other forms of self-care, such as proper nutrition and sufficient sleep, have also been shown to have positive effects on one’s self-perception.

#### **6. Do unto others.**

Hershenson suggests volunteering to help those who may be less fortunate. “Being of service to others helps take you out of your head. When you can help someone else, it makes you less focused on your own issues.”

David Simonsen, Ph.D., agrees:

“What I find is that the more someone does something in their life that they can be proud of, the easier it is for them to recognise their worth. Doing things that one can respect about themselves is the one key that I have found that works to raise one’s worth. It is something tangible. Helping at a homeless shelter, animal shelter, giving of time at a big brother or sister organisation. These are things that mean something and give value to not only oneself, but to someone else as well.”

There is much truth to the fact that what we put out there into the world tends to boomerang back to us. To test this out, spend a day intentionally putting out positive thoughts and behaviours toward those with whom you come into contact. As you go about your day, be mindful of what comes back to you, and notice if your mood improves.

## **7. Forgiveness.**

If there's someone in your life you haven't forgiven - an ex, a family member, or even yourself - holding onto bitterness or resentment will only keep you stuck in a cycle of negativity. Unforgiveness towards others or ourselves traps us in a loop of shame.

But the good news is that forgiving self and others has been shown to boost self-esteem. As Schiraldi explains, it connects us to our naturally loving nature and helps us accept people, flaws and all.

He recommends trying a Buddhist meditation on forgiveness that you can do anytime: "If I've hurt anyone, knowingly or not, I ask for forgiveness. If anyone has hurt me, knowingly or not, I forgive them. And for the ways I've hurt myself, I offer myself forgiveness."

Practicing this can free you from the heavy weight of bitterness and resentment and open you up to more self-compassion and healing.

## **8. Remember that you are not your circumstances.**

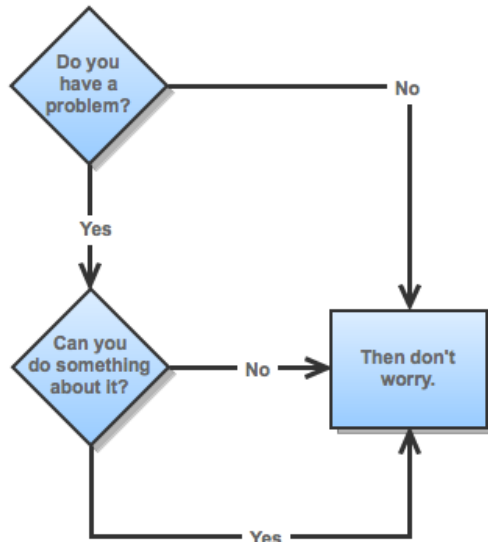
Recognising your true worth is key to self-growth. "Knowing your inner value and accepting your flaws provides a solid foundation to develop," says Schiraldi. "With that security, you can grow freely without fear of failure – because your worth never changes."

We're all born with equal potential, but over time we learn to see ourselves as less. Through hard work and self-compassion, these destructive beliefs can be unlearned. Taking the steps above is a start to reclaiming your innate self-worth, as Schiraldi says, "because it already exists in each person."

*The best way to predict the future,  
Is to create it.*

## Stress/ Anxiety

### Stop worrying.



Encountering Choices/ Experiences/ Stressful situations

Ask yourself these questions:

For what purpose do I choose this?

- What is my learning?
- How can I do things differently?
- What do I want to happen next?

Try to put a different Spin on things, see them differently – feel different about them

Take time: Stop – Breath - Think

Seeing is believing: <https://youtu.be/maM9kvQ-ZKM>

## Overthinking (What ifs)

Anxiety emerges from What if.

Wondering "what if?" is a natural part of life. Our thoughts, actions, and words are constantly sparking new "what if" questions - a built-in safety check that's been with us since birth, like a preloaded app in our brains. These rapid-fire self-reflections keep us cautious and prepared, always considering the potential outcomes of our choices.

The next time you're out walking, notice how you subconsciously navigate the path ahead, avoiding obstacles with ease. It's remarkable how our minds work without conscious thought.

Imagine the mental clutter that arises when we start overthinking the "what-ifs." As we get older, the pressure to achieve the "best" outcome becomes increasingly important. We envision pitfalls everywhere, and they start to feel real. There's also the need to appear successful and be accepted by our social circles. This creates a low self-image, as our expectations don't match reality, leading to a cycle of disappointment that perpetuates negative self-beliefs. This downward mental slope then impacts our overall thinking and behaviour.

*Wouldn't it be nice to just press a button and do a self-reset?*



But when we overthink the "what-ifs," mental clutter builds. As we age, the pressure to achieve the 'best' outcome intensifies. We envision pitfalls everywhere, until they feel real. Plus, the need to appear successful and gain social acceptance creates a self-image crisis - our expectations don't match reality, leading to a cycle of disappointment that fuels negative self-beliefs. This downward mental spiral then impacts our overall thinking and behaviour.

*Relax, take it easy, and Let Go.*

I know it may seem simple for me, but taking those first steps can be tough. Here are some tips to help get you back on course.

- Recognise that "what-if" thoughts are a normal part of life, but don't let them take over.
- Relax unwind with a personal hobby that aligns with your interests and abilities. Engaging in this daily activity will build your inner strength and confidence. When faced with a problem, do you prefer to write it down, draw pictures, or create an imaginary story? Whatever your approach, it's likely served you well in the past. Choose the method that works best for you to tackle challenges effectively.
- Practice this process on easily achievable things. Slowly work up to the more difficult issues. Sometimes some issues are outside of your control – so, leave them be – that will be someone else's issue.
- Embrace the changes happening within you. You're cultivating a better mindset, crafting an enhanced version of yourself. Finally, the true you is breaking free from early influences.
- Confide in someone you trust. Discuss the changes you're comfortable talking about – it's like reprogramming your mindset. You're the author of your own life story, no one else.
- Just let that stuff go. It's weighing you down, and half of it isn't even yours to be holding onto. Learn to park your problems, like you do your car. You know where to find it when you need it, so quit stressing about it until you're ready to deal. Picture it like a parking lot for all your worries – just leave them there until you're ready to come back.
- Take a few moments for simple mindfulness. Just 2-3 minutes of quiet can be a helpful distraction, allowing your subconscious to provide answers. You can do this anytime, even while washing the dishes. Look around - what do you see, hear, feel, taste, or smell? Becoming aware of your surroundings and your place in the moment is what mindfulness is all about. It gives your mind a chance to recharge, reset, and start discovering solutions. Try practicing this 5-6 times a day (less than 30 minutes total) - it's time well spent, and you'll start to see the benefits.

It's reassuring to know we're all perfectly unique individuals. We've each had different life experiences that shape our perspectives. Keeping this in mind helps us better understand and connect with others.

## Regulating

When you're feeling anxious, worried, or even overwhelmed, "regulating" is the word for moving past those intense emotions. Maybe you can't even put a *name* to what you're feeling - you just know you want out of that headspace. Well, here's the good news: there are ways to help yourself feel calmer and see a clearer path forward.

**Finger counting**, 1 to 5. Use either left or right hand whichever you prefer. Try not to do this too quickly, take your time and breath slowly.

Bring the first finger and thumb together so they touch lightly, then open them wide (breathing in, and out as you do).

Bring your second finger and thumb together so they touch lightly, breathing in and out as you close and open your fingers and thumb. Watch what you are doing.

Bring the third finger and thumb together so they touch lightly, then open them wide (breathing in, and out as you do). That's it, you're getting the idea - it's simple.

Bring the last little finger and thumb together so they touch lightly, then open them wide (breathing in, and out as you do).

Now repeat, beginning with your little finger, third finger, and so on. You can repeat these three or four times. You will notice how you are becoming more relaxed. The worries you had seem much further away and you can feel more content, peaceful and safe.

Another version of the Finger counting can be seen here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQQVZgpyVQ78>

**Box Breathing** is another way to do the same thing. Choose what suits you best.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEmt1Znux58#:~:text=In%20moments%20of%20stress%20and,.ca/G...>

Journaling may sound boring, but it doesn't have to involve just writing. You can express yourself through drawing, colouring, or creating a scrapbook to document your day. There are so many creative ways to journal that go beyond traditional writing.

Journaling is way cooler than it seems. It's not just "dear diary" ramblings - it's a chance to explore your thoughts and feelings, work through issues, and get to know yourself better. There are no rules - your journal is 100% yours. You can write about your day, vent about your annoying math teacher, gush about your crush, or just doodle. Plus, journaling is scientifically proven to reduce stress, boost mood and self-esteem, and even improve memory and grades. So, grab a notebook and start writing - you never know what you might discover about yourself.

Your journal is a roadmap of your journey so far - it shows the highs and lows you've experienced. This is super useful, because you can use it to plan your next steps and reach even more highs. Draw a new roadmap to guide your path forward.

See more here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xZXzdfWOD8>



## Cause & Effect

What if you didn't take things others say or do personally? How would that change things for you? Imagine not feeling responsible for others' choices or behaviours. When someone lashes out, that's on them, not you. You're only in charge of your own actions, not others'.

What others think about you doesn't matter - what matters is what you think of yourself. Choose wisely how you think and what you believe, because this shapes who you are. By focusing on yourself instead of others, you can free yourself from unnecessary stress and drama.

What we believe, shapes who we are:

<https://youtu.be/87ujukhlooY?si=q2Omr4123jXVkl2D>

Life is about becoming who you are created to be.

Not always the default position we fall into: Anger/ Sadness/ Fear/ Guilt/ Limiting beliefs

To gain maximum power, take responsibility for everything that happens in your life.

Which side of the cause-effect equation are you on?

Are you the cause in your life, or are you at the effect of things in your life?

# Cause

&

# Effect

*One thing causes another – doesn't it?*

From this position / perspective –  
I am in Control of what I want to  
happen next.

I Choose the outcome

I am Causing the effect, which is  
my choice



Sitting on this side,  
we are causing what  
we want to happen.

If I imagine bad stuff is going to happen  
– it will.

What if I imagine good stuff will happen?

From this position / perspective –  
It seems as if everyone and  
everything is causing this to happen  
to me!  
Not good. ...



Sitting on this side,  
then the other side are  
excuses for what is  
happening here.

I DIDN'T DO IT  
NOBODY SAW ME DO IT  
YOU CAN'T PROVE  
ANYTHING!



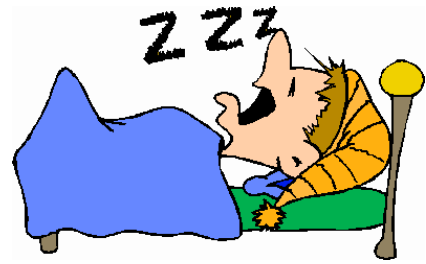
Life can be a balancing act, with us constantly wobbling between extremes as we try to maintain our equilibrium. That's normal. However, we should be aware of how our minds can sometimes distort our perspective on cause and effect.

Our brains crave routines and shape our worldviews based on past experiences. This can lead us to form false beliefs that become unhelpful. For example, if you felt sick when entering a classroom last Monday, you might start to believe you'll feel sick again if you go to that class - even though the original sickness may have been unrelated. We can get fooled into thinking something scary will happen just because a certain set of events occurred before.

The key is recognising when our minds are playing tricks on us and challenging those unhelpful beliefs. With practice, we can learn to keep our balance, even on life's tightrope.

## Sleep does not always come easy.

When you get a good night's sleep, your brain and body can fully recharge. You'll feel more focused and efficient in everything you do - it's like hitting the reset button for your entire system.



Good sleep isn't just about feeling less tired. It helps regulate your mood, making you less grumpy and more ready to take on the day. Think of it as a natural, free, and highly effective mood booster.

Let's get you into a great sleep routine. Improving your sleep is like levelling up in a game - it takes a little practice, but it's totally worth it. Ready to become a sleep expert? Here's your simple, step-by-step guide:

### Step 1: Begin where you are

First, you've got to work out what's going on with your sleep. Think of yourself as a bedtime detective! For a few days, ask yourself these questions *before* you go to bed:

**What time did I wake up today?** Knowing when you woke up helps figure out your natural sleep rhythm.

**What did I do before bed?** Did you play video games? Watch a scary movie? Or maybe have a sugary snack? These things can make it harder to fall asleep!

**How do I feel right now?** Are you quite energetic, kind of sleepy, or very tired. Is your body tired but your mind wide awake. Overthinking about things that have gone on.

Jot down your answers in a notebook. This will help you see if there's a pattern to your sleep problems. Are you a 'late-night video game' offender? A 'sugar-before-bed' bandit? The detective work helps you find out!

### Step 2: The Power of Routine: Your Sleep Schedule

Just like having a regular meal time helps your tummy, having a regular bedtime and wake-up time helps your body feel sleepy at the right time. Think of it as setting a timer for sleep! A routine teaches the mind and the body, the best way to be – it just takes practice.

**Pick a bedtime (and Wake-up Time!)** Try to go to bed around the same time every night, even on weekends. This might feel a little weird at first, but your body likes consistency. For example, if you are getting going to bed at 10:00pm (you choose what's right for you), then try to be in bed by 10:00pm each night and try to wake up the same time each morning even on the weekends.

**Stick to it!** It's like training a small puppy - it takes time and consistency. But after a while, your body will start to say, "Hey, it's time to sleep" and you will feel the benefits.

### Step 3: Create a Cosy Space (Your Bedroom)

Your bedroom should be your sleep sanctuary, a place where you feel safe, comfy, and ready for dreamland. Imagine it's a cosy cave!

**Keep it Dark:** Like really dark. Close the curtains or blinds. If it's still too bright, try a sleep mask, to lull you off to sleep.

**Keep it Quiet:** If there are loud noises, traffic or wind in the trees. You could try earplugs or a white noise machine (which makes a soothing sound, like rain), or quiet background gentle music – choose what works for you. It's your fortress of calm!

**Keep it Cool:** Make sure your room isn't too hot or too cold. A slightly cooler room is usually best for sleep. Think of the perfect temperature for a door mouse – not too hot, not too cold.

**Make it comfy:** Use soft sheets, comfy pillows, and a blanket that feels good on your skin. Your bed should be your favourite place to curl up!

### Step 4: Wind-Down: Pre-Bedtime Routine

Just before bed, it's time to relax and tell your body that it's time to slow down. Think of it as a gentle wind-down like you would do with your precious things, putting them away safely.

**Switch off the screens:** Stop looking at screens (phones, tablets, TV) at least an hour before bed. The bright light can fool your brain into thinking it's still daytime. Instead, try reading a book, drawing, or doing a quiet puzzle. Again, teaching your mind it is sleep time.

**Be Calm:** Do something relaxing like taking a warm bath or shower, listening to calming music, or doing a little stretching. This isn't a workout, more like slow-motion movements, like a sleepy stretching cat!

**Thoughts Filing:** If you have a lot of thoughts swirling around in your head, write them down in a journal/ notepad. Getting them out on paper can help clear your mind. It's like a brain declutter! Leave them on the bedside table, you can always pick them up in the morning.

### Step 5: Fuel your Body Right (and at the right time!)

What you eat and drink can also affect your sleep.

**Skip the Sugar Rush:** Avoid sugary drinks and snacks close to bedtime. They can give you a burst of energy when you're supposed to be winding down.

**No Big Meals:** Don't eat a big meal right before bed. It can make your tummy feel uncomfortable and keep you awake.

**Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of water during the day, but don't drink too much right before bed, or you might have to wake up to go to the bathroom.

## Step 6: Be Patient!

Improving your sleep takes time. Don't get discouraged if you don't see results right away. Every little change you make will help! Just keep being a sleep detective, follow your routine, and create your cosy cave. You'll be sleeping like a champion in no time!

**Remember:** You've got this! Now go get some Zzz's!



More stuff here: <https://thesleepcharity.org.uk/>

Then go to, Information & Support.

## Boundaries

Stepping stones are safe places to put your feet, whilst crossing a river. It's important for us to keep safe spaces, we are setting boundaries that are safe for us. These change as we grow as we learn to stay safe in different surroundings. These may be physical, digital, social or emotional spaces and it is good for us to become more aware of them.

Staying safe is our priority, and to limit our risk taking. However, we will make mistakes, so remember to Check and Reflect. Reset your boundaries.

## Relationships

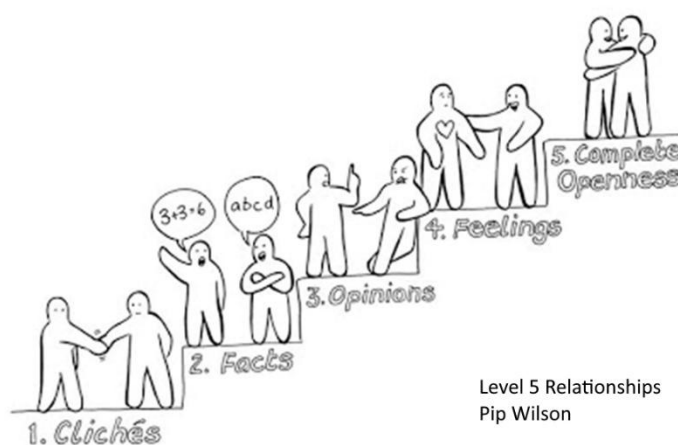
Relationships grow, step by step.

1. Step 1 – a simple Hello – acknowledging the presence of another human being. Exchanging simple cliches.
2. Conversations step up to sharing facts, things of common interest between you. Facts are undeniable and do not generally create disagreements.
3. Now you are getting to know each other, it feels safe to share opinions. Your thoughts and ideals – how the world may be a better place.
4. We have arrived at a step where emotions are expressed. How we feel about our life, about the people around us – about each other
5. Here we are – we made it. Not all relationships end up here. Many remain quite happily at lower levels (even level 1). But there is great joy shared/ experienced at level 5. Complete openness. A genuine sharing of our inner thoughts, emotions, hopes and dreams. Knowing that you are safe.

Close friends should be treasured and nurtured, both of you will benefit greatly. Many friends will remain at level 1 to 3, that's fine.

Respect one another and value each other's differences. We have far more similarities than differences.

It's okay to say sorry, falling out needs only to be brief.



Let's be honest, relationships are the most complex things in the universe, and we often make a hash of it. Step back, think about how we all have a slightly different view of life – through our individual experiences (it's what makes us who we are). Relationships rely on a lot of tolerance, understanding and forgiveness. But without relationships, we have nothing.



## Mindfulness

Life is hectic - there never seem to be enough hours in the day to get everything done. We get bogged down in the busyness, unsure of where we're going wrong. Our minds become cluttered with endless data and distractions, most of which are unnecessary.

We need to be more selective about what we take in. Just like "you are what you eat," the information we consume shapes who we become. Yet so often we're on autopilot, letting irrelevant worries and insignificant details consume our thinking.

It's time to brush away the nonsense. We can choose not to constantly be in front of the onslaught of data. We can decide what's truly important and focus our energy there, instead of getting caught up in useless "noise." With some intentionality, we can regain control and clarity in our cluttered lives.

People often say that mindfulness is about being present in the moment, not worrying about the past or future. The key is to focus on the here and now, and deal with what's happening right in front of you. Forget about things that have already happened or what might come later - just be fully engaged with the current situation.

We all need a safe space - a place to recharge, reflect, and plan. Where's your sanctuary? A walk in the woods? The beach? A cosy chair? Drawing, writing, baking, or puzzles?

Imagine you're there now. Close your eyes and take it all in. Feel the breeze, hear the sounds. Sense the chair supporting you. Listen to the silence or distant traffic. It's all here to help you unwind, not distract.

Embrace the peace. Let it renew and energise you, filling you with what you need for what's ahead. This space is yours to claim.

Find what resonates with you - a cherished memory, a tranquil setting like Granny's house by the river or watching clouds drift by. Let that experience pause you for a few moments, as your breathing slows and peace washes over you, melting away the stress.

Fiddling with small objects like stones or paper scraps can help some people focus. Others may benefit more from gazing at something intently, as if seeing it for the very first time. You may also engage your senses of taste and smell - they're great tools for mindfulness. The key is experimenting to discover what works best for you.

Try to practice this simple mindfulness, three or four times a day. Like many things, the more you practice, the better you become and the more benefits you will see.

Try this one: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQG8Dq8jy1o>

Mindfulness apps:

Combined Minds. <https://combinedminds.co.uk/>

Smiling Mind. <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/>

Stop Breathe Think. <https://www.stopbreathethink.org.uk/>

## Motivation

Google "motivation" and you'll find tons of ads pushing books and programs that promise to unlock this "magical elixir." The illusion is that simply reading a book will solve all your problems. But we all know how quickly an article can go in one ear and out the other - it often just goes right over our heads.

Some people seem to have endless self-motivation, accomplishing most things with ease. Meanwhile, we often feel annoyed by their success, causing our own motivation to plummet even further.

Motivation can be better described as a "magical muscle" that you can build up with the right "exercises." Just like physical muscles, your motivational muscles grow stronger through specific, targeted effort. When you exercise your motivation, it becomes a powerful force that propels you in the right direction and helps you reach your goals.

However, not all motivation is created equal. "I MUST DO IT OR xxx WILL HAPPEN" is an "away from" type of motivation - it's about avoiding a negative outcome rather than working towards a positive one. This kind of motivation may get you started, but it won't sustain you all the way to your target. To really go the distance, you need an "towards" motivation - something that excites and inspires you, not just something that scares you.

In summary, motivation is the key fuel you need to get moving and keep going. But to make the most of it, you must build up your motivational muscles through the right kind of motivational "exercises." With the right approach, motivation can be a magical force that powers you towards your goals.

Remember that time when you felt super motivated? You were crushing your goals, feeling good about yourself, and connecting well with others. Isn't that the dream?

An away from motivation: Taking action to prevent what you don't want from occurring.

A towards motivation: Staying motivated is key - focusing on the big payoff at the end is what keeps you going. Figure out what you want from the start, and make sure it's all about you. That's the secret to success.

### Doing it my way

It's essential that I improve myself. When I become a better version of me, others will benefit too. I'll feel more content and alive. Do you ever feel like you're just going through the motions, not fully engaged with life? These big, meaningful rewards are what keep you motivated - more than any physical treats.

You wouldn't wear someone else's pants, because it wouldn't feel right. Choose things that suit who you are and find the drivers that fit with you. A driver is something that pushes you forward. Take some quiet time to learn what truly motivates you. Reflect on times when things have gone well - what made the difference?

## **The lack of Motivation**

Some days, it takes motivation to get us going - whether that's cleaning the house, exercising, or sticking to a diet. Motivation is what keeps us moving forward and helps us reach our goals. But a lack of motivation can be the biggest obstacle standing in our way.

When you're struggling to get motivated for a task, take a step back and think about why. Then, make a plan to help get yourself fired up, and see if you can get a friend to join you. Having that extra support can make all the difference.

## **Act as If you are Motivated**

Trick yourself into feeling motivated by changing your behaviour. Act as if you're already motivated, and your actions could shift your emotions, driving you forward.

For example, instead of lounging around in your pyjamas waiting for motivation, get dressed and get moving. You may find that boosts your motivation, making it easier to keep going. Start with something simple and encouraging.

Ask yourself, "What would I be doing if I felt motivated right now?" Visualise what you'd be wearing, thinking, and doing. Then, do those things, and see if your motivation level rises.

## **Self-talk**

With low motivation, it's easy to come up with excuses for not taking action. You might think, "It'll be too hard," or, "I'll never get it done anyway." This kind of negative self-talk will keep you stuck where you are.

Instead, try speaking the opposite. When you doubt your ability to succeed, list the reasons why you might actually pull it off. And when you think you can't finish a task, focus on the evidence that shows you can complete it.

Look at both the positive and negative perspectives. You'll likely find that the negative outlook isn't entirely accurate. There's a good chance things will work out better than you expect. Maintaining a more balanced view can help boost your motivation to give it a try.

## **Self-Compassion**

You might think being hard on yourself is the key to getting motivated, but research shows self-compassion is much more effective. Harsh self-criticism doesn't work - it just increases psychological distress and reduces motivation.

In contrast, self-compassion has been found to increase motivation, especially when you're struggling. After failing a test, students who spoke to themselves kindly spent more time studying and reported greater motivation to improve their weaknesses. Self-compassion also reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Rather than beat yourself up, create a kinder inner dialogue. Acknowledge your flaws and mistakes honestly, but don't indulge in a pity party. Speak to yourself like you would a trusted friend - with acceptance and encouragement. Practice using self-talk that helps you recover from setbacks and keeps you moving forward.

The key is to balance self-acceptance with self-improvement. Healthy self-compassion is more motivating than harsh self-criticism, especially for teens working to develop and grow.

### **Self-Care**

If you neglect self-care; you'll have a tough time staying motivated. Skimping on sleep, eating poorly, and having no downtime can make even the simplest tasks feel like a chore.

Create a healthy self-care plan that allows you to take care of your mind, body and spirit:

- Exercise regularly.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Drink water and eat a healthy diet.
- Make time for leisure and fun.
- Use healthy coping skills to deal with stress.
- Avoid unhealthy habits, like binge eating and drinking too much alcohol.

### **Reward yourself**

Treat yourself to a small reward when you accomplish your hard work. Finding the right motivating reward can help you stay focused on reaching your goals.

Whatever the task – you might tackle it in several different ways:

- Do so much and then take a 10-minute break.
- Eat one piece of chocolate after 30 minutes of work.
- Remind yourself that when you're done, you'll have free time to do whatever you want.
- Work for 20 minutes and then spend 5 minutes checking social media.
- After you finish the task, treat yourself by going out with friends. Think about whether you respond better to smaller, more frequent rewards or one big reward for completing the job. Try out a few different strategies until you find an approach that works best for you.
- Make sure your rewards don't sabotage your efforts, however. Rewarding your hard work at the gym with a sugary treat might be counterproductive. And counterproductive bad habits will decrease your motivation in the long term.

### **Use the 10-Minute Rule**

Dreading a task, like a 3-mile treadmill workout, can make it hard to get motivated. But you can overcome that dread by proving to yourself that it's not as bad as you think or that you can handle it better than you imagine. The 10-minute rule can help you get started.

Here's how it works: Give yourself permission to quit after just 10 minutes. When the timer goes off, ask if you want to keep going or stop. Chances are, you'll find you have the motivation to keep going.

Whether you're struggling to start a boring task or can't seem to get off the couch, use the 10-minute rule to take that first step. Getting started is usually the hardest part - once you do, it gets much easier to keep going.

### **Go for a walk-in nature**

Getting outside for some fresh air, a new setting, and a bit of activity can really boost your motivation. Strolling through nature instead of crowded city streets is especially rejuvenating.

A 2013 study published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* found that walking half a mile through a park reduces brain fatigue. Being in nature offers a calming effect that rejuvenates the brain—which can help motivate you to tackle a tough task.

Instead of battling through a busy city street, head to the park, wander through the woods, or stroll along the beach. Immersing yourself in nature can give you the mental break you need to return to your project feeling reinvigorated.

### **Pair a dreaded task with something you enjoy**

Your feelings have a big impact on how motivated you feel. When you're down, bored, lonely, or worried, it's hard to tackle tough tasks or boring chores.

Boost your mood by adding a little fun to something you're not motivated to do. You'll feel happier and you might even look forward to doing the task when it's regularly paired with something fun.

Here are some examples:

- Listen to music while you run.
- Call a friend and talk while you're cleaning the house.
- Light a scented candle while you're working on your computer.
- Invite a friend to run errands with you.
- Turn on your favourite show while you're folding laundry.

Be careful that your leisure time doesn't interfere with getting your work done. For instance, binge-watching shows can distract you and slow you down on your tasks. Or chatting with a friend while cleaning your room might be so distracting that you can't focus on what you're doing.

### **Manage your To-Do list**

Facing an endless to-do list can quickly sap your motivation. If you feel overwhelmed and doubt, you'll never finish everything, you may be tempted to give up before even starting.

It's common to underestimate how much time a task will require. When you inevitably fall behind, you may label yourself as lazy or incompetent. This only worsens the problem, as losing motivation makes it even harder to get things done.

Evaluate your to-do list objectively. Is it simply too lengthy? If so, ruthlessly eliminate any non-essential tasks. Reschedule less urgent items for another day. Then, prioritise your most important tasks and tackle those first.

Making even minor adjustments to your to-do list, or simply shifting your mindset, can help make your tasks feel more manageable. This, in turn, may reignite your motivation to tackle your work.

### **Causes of low Motivation**

Sometimes, a lack of motivation isn't the real issue - it's just a symptom of a bigger problem. For example, if you're a perfectionist, your motivation may suffer because you're afraid of not completing a task flawlessly. Until you address this need to be perfect, your motivation is unlikely to improve.

At other times, a lack of motivation can become a vicious cycle - the less you do, the less motivated you feel. In this case, boosting your motivation to get work done can actually help you feel and perform better.

So before you try to "get motivated," take a step back and consider what's really behind your motivation struggles. Here are some common reasons people have trouble staying motivated:

**Avoidance of discomfort.** We often avoid discomfort. Maybe you get bored doing a boring chore and want to stop. Or you don't want to feel frustrated, so you skip a hard task. This lack of motivation can come from trying to steer clear of unpleasant feelings.

**Self-doubt.** Struggling with self-doubt? If you think you can't handle a task or the stress it might cause, you'll probably have a hard time even getting started.

**Being over-extended.** When you have a lot going on in life, you'll likely feel overwhelmed. And this feeling can zap your motivation.

**Lack of commitment to a goal.** Agreeing to something just because you feel obligated or making a resolution due to peer pressure often means you aren't truly committed. And without real commitment, you're unlikely to follow through on your goal.

**Mental health issues.** Feeling unmotivated is a common sign of depression. It can also be linked to other mental health issues, like anxiety. So it's important to consider whether your mental wellbeing might be impacting your motivation levels.

We all struggle with motivation at times. A few common reasons include fear of judgment and the desire to please others. Take a closer look at the thoughts and feelings behind your lack of drive.

The key is how you respond. Be patient with yourself. Experiment to find strategies that boost your motivation. And don't hesitate to ask for help when you need it.



## To Sum Up

Five Ways to Wellbeing at your fingertips.

**Learn** – Try something new / Rediscover an old interest. Take on a different responsibility at work or home. Sign up for that course you have always wanted to do. Learn how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to draw. It does not need to be a big project – something small is just as good. You have heard the saying; “We learn something new every day.” Learning new things will make you feel more confident opening your mind to new ideas as well as having fun!



**Give** - Do something nice for a friend or a stranger. Thank someone and give a smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Remember to look out as well as in, seeing yourself and your happiness linked to a wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with other people around you

**Connect** – with people, around you, with family and friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home or at work or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Being with others, can be a little scary at first. Then, soon we realise that there are more things the same about us, than there are differences. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day!

**Be Active** – Go for a walk or a run. Walk to the shops instead of taking the car. Go for a swim / Ride a bike. Dance – Exercising makes you feel good. Photography gets you out and about, and It’s more fun with a friend. Discover a physical exercise that you enjoy, and that suits your level of mobility and fitness. It really doesn’t have to cost a lot – your gym can be your front room, or out in the countryside.

**Take Notice** – be curious. Notice the changing seasons and look for the beautiful, and remark on the unusual. Savour the moment whether walking, eating or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Use all your senses: Sight, Sound, Taste and Smell. Take time to stop and smell the flowers. Thinking about your experiences will help you recognise and appreciate what is important to you. Noticing things around us, helps us recognise things about ourselves, and how we interact with the world.

## **Seek Professional Help**

If your motivation/ mood stays low for 2+ weeks, get help from a professional. Seek support if your lack of motivation impacts your daily life - like missing work, doing poorly at your job, or struggling to even leave home. These could be signs of a bigger issue that needs attention.

## **FINALLY**

How you engage and participate in your wellbeing will be directly proportional to the outcome you achieve. What you put in – you will get out.

Your wellbeing and mental health is central to what you will achieve in your life – it will bring you Joy, Peace and Contentment. Why would you not want to grab this with both hands.

The NHS provides a range of support services, which begins with a simple call to the surgery.

Change Your Mind

Weblink: <https://innershell01.wixsite.com/change-your-mind>