

# BRAIN HACKING

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS IS PAVED IN  
BITE-SIZED QUESTIONS

BY ONNA YOUNG



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**Bite-Sized Questions**

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Dedicated to my mom who was the first person to teach  
me problem-solving and perspective shifting,  
my sister as the second person, and  
SH who was my first teacher of communication strategies.

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## **Introduction:**

Creating success is easier than you think. Using your own thought processes and the process that forms and un-forms habits of thought can create simple changes very simply and in a sustainable way that will naturally lead you toward your goals, new perspectives, and better achievements.

Before we get started. The fact that you have found your way to this book should tell you something important about what's to come, as a result of reading through, even if you don't finish it.

The book was designed to offer an ala carte experience where you can choose different sections for what resonates for you.

Brain Hacking can become your simple solution to this problem. Indeed it is so simple, that this book's intention is to teach and make popular the simple solution that helps you maintain control, regain your sense of calm and control, and re-ignite the frontal lobe's natural ability to help problem-solve to your greatest success.

What creates momentum and success and what creates overwhelm can often feel uncontrollable or outside of our control.

By understanding how to shift perspectives easily and simply, anyone (yes, even you, dear reader) can create new trajectories, new paths, and even greater successes. What is shared here is how I began to implement the work of Dr. Robert Maurer in his book *The Kaizen Way*, which forever changed the way I saw my opportunities to end negative self-talk and mind-chatter, as well as, a formula to begin creating new "habits of thought." These new thought habits become the thoughts that you control and want to have versus the ones your brain has been playing in the background for you on auto-pilot.

## **Chapter 1: Success and the Brain**

Success we could say comes from staying in a relaxed, creative state whereby we can be inspired by our own great ideas, or at least receive them / hear them, when they come our way either in the form of an idea (our inner-selves at work) or are inspired by something that came our way (the mind's way of noticing what was always there to begin with).

One major and common roadblock experienced by people on the road of life is overwhelm and self-doubt. Overwhelm creates stress and stress creates stress hormones, which shut down the

use of the frontal lobe (where logic, creativity, and some studies<sup>1</sup> show, happiness) and triggers the amygdala fight, flight, or freeze (overwhelm and stuck-ness) to kick in. The stress response releases cortisol (a.k.a. “the stress hormone”) and initiates a severe lack of creativity and access to logic, because it restricts access to the frontal lobe of the brain. This area is comprised of two lobes.

Sprinkle overwhelm with a dose of natural self-doubt and it becomes super easy to experience the downward spiral journey into a stimulated amygdala. Additionally, people who experience PTSD show decreased brain size and increased amygdala size, which causes them to process “normal” information as more fear based than the average person. Suffice to say, in a world with significant stress, where expectations are high, where we have societal pressures, economic pressures and influences that create rich opportunities for stress, falling into the stress trap is easy and often feels unavoidable and even inevitable.

## **Overcoming Overwhelm, Inner-critics, and Even Depression:**

For anyone dealing with overwhelm, a harsh inner-critic, depression, or more, it is possible to hack the process that creates the existent and /or resulting stress and pressure perpetuated by the emotional and physical experience of overwhelm.

As a result of reading this book, you will be able to make the following changes, easily.

### **Stop the Inner Critic from Stealing All Of Your Brain’s / Thought’s Air Time:**

For those with a harsh inner-critic, learning the techniques here will gradually cause a small shift in perspective that will have huge returns and positive outcomes with very small efforts.

You can easily quell the loud voice of self-criticism that runs on automatic autopilot for some and which overrides all rational thought and good self-perspective for others, even if you believe it is impossible to do so, or feel overwhelmed by the very notion of tackling the large beast known as your brain.

### **Have Better Relationships and Gain Back Connection to Your Confidence:**

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<sup>1</sup> Matthieu Ricard, the world's happiest man, according to a meditation study where his brain was monitored during meditations on compassion. (Source: <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-to-be-happier-according-to-matthieu-ricard-the-worlds-happiest-man-2016-1>)

These techniques will help you have better relationships with yourself and others, even if you're someone who believes they are "unworthy", knows or has been told you should "love yourself more," but don't know to move toward greater self love or confidence.

Lastly, if you're anyone who has thought, "but I'm just this way and there's no changing who I am," then this guide will illuminate for you just how easy it can be, even if you're someone who doesn't believe that it's possible to change who you are.

Regardless of what your reasons are that guided you to the book, this book will also provide a secret side door by which to exit the darkness of any negative thoughts and negative self-perspectives that exist *and* release them. Now, as I like to say, let's let them step out into the bright light, breathe some fresh sun-filled air, and float away on an imaginary breeze, in a health balanced way and watch it disappear into the horizon.

### **Take a Small Steps Approach:**

By using a small steps approach that will be shared in small, sustainable, and simple easy to adopt way, it is possible to achieve more than you thought possible. And, as a result of reading this e-book, can make that shift occur without even much effort, big changes, or even a grand gesture!

Dr. Robert Maurer, in whose debt, I will continue to remain, wrote a tiny book called *The Kaizen Way: One Small Step Can Change Your Life*. As a UCLA brain researcher, he spent decades quantifying our experiences around decision-making and progress and wrote a book that would open up a world of possibility for people and businesses, in the form of asking small questions.

At the time I "found" his book, while watching a PBS author interview show, I was physically run down, had hypothyroidism, was very stressed and exceptionally unhappy, working in a caustic job as an account executive, experiencing a depression I didn't know I had. My friends often remarked that I would fare better if I just "loved myself more" and "learned to be more confident." While this was their love and concern for me speaking, it didn't exactly help me with a "how" and it was a "how" that I was searching for.

It is one thing to tell a person they have an issue, it's another to actually provide a tangible means to fix it. I learned that from Oprah Winfrey, in her last wrap up of her career, she shared that one show featuring an anorexic woman pleading to be shared with an answer for how to save her life. "How?" She begs, Oprah and the camera and the millions of viewers whose hearts went out to the anorexic guest who was pleading with the world's most influential talk-show host to show her a pathway out of her experience. Oprah featured this out of all of the hundreds of her shows for her career re-cap countdown, because it the one show that changed the way she approached all the rest of her shows. I'm paraphrasing, but she said something

along the lines of, “Never again, after that show would she not include the resources for how to fix an issue.” It struck a chord with me. I could certainly understand the valid reasoning. And she’s right. It’s one thing to identify a problem. It’s entirely another to give someone a tool to fix it. This is your tool to use to move from one end of any spectrum you are on into another side, again in a healthy balanced way that leaves you, your loved ones, and your hopes and dreams for the future intact, and working toward everyone’s highest and greatest good. (More on why I bracket in these thoughts inside of “in a healthy balanced way” in a future chapter.)

While I could see the validity of their comments and could even agree that change needed to occur, I like the woman in Oprah’s show wondered, “How?” If self-loathing and self-love were on a 180 degree spectrum, getting from one side to the other side seemed impossible, at the time. I wanted a change and wished for a change and often asked myself, “How can I be more positive? How can I make this negative self-talk stop?” Luckily, I was already implementing the Kaizen Way’s process of asking questions to yield the answer. I asked question like, “How can I get from self-doubt to self-love or from less confidence to more confidence?” and “How can I stop this negative self-talk?”

What I didn’t know then is my quest(ion) for answers was heading me in the right direction all along, as they are what preceded the “discovery” of Dr. Robert Maurer’s book. I say “discovery” because as it turns out it is the asking of questions that becomes a beacon or beam pulling toward you the answers.

After reading Dr. Maurer’s book, which exemplifies the brilliance and effectiveness of asking small questions, I implemented my very own asking small questions technique to great effect. This book is entirely inspired by his book and research and I suggest to anyone reading this to also read Dr. Maurer’s book, *The Kaizen Way*. The studies he references and participated in are nothing short of fascinating. And it is, of course, an easy, short read! Thank you Dr. Robert Maurer!

In the book, he describes many case studies, but here’s a look a feedback loop looking at large goals and small goals and their ultimate

“Large goal → fear → access to  
cortex restricted → failure →

Small goal → fear bypassed →  
cortex engaged → success →”

*The Kaizen Way*, Dr. Robert  
Maurer

## Chapter 2: Your Puzzling Brain: Some Basics

### The brain has different parts responsible for different functions:

The brain is literally a puzzle of different pieces that formed at different times, in our evolution, and latched together over time. Though the brain functions as a whole entity; it also provides compartmentalization and specialization of tasks.

Brain Stem – responsible for physical Responses like heart beat

Midbrain - regulates the body's internal temperature, houses our emotions, and governs the fight-or-flight response that keeps us alive in the face of danger.

Cortex – Rational thoughts, creative, and happiness

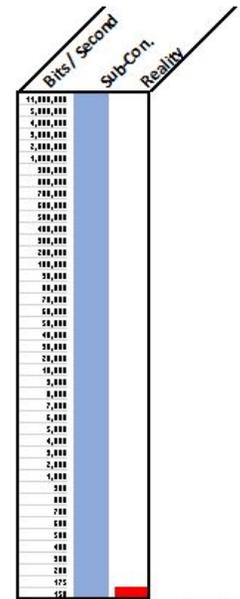
*“The brain is designed so that any new challenge or opportunity or desire triggers some degree of fear.”*



First, let's look at how we process information into reality:

- Human body sends 11 million bits per second to the subconscious for processing. This information comes in different forms and the brain chemicals turn it all into electro-chemical information. As it turns out, even what we “see” is a constructed image that is designed to focus a fuzzy image and fill in the blanks for the blindspot created by where our optical nerve hits the brain, leaving our brains fill in the blindspot for us, according to Leonard Mlodinow's book *Subliminal*.

- Only 50 bits per second can be processed by the conscious mind. (Brittanica, 2021) That is the equivalent of the red bar, on the graph to the right, which is not to scale.
- Only .00005% of incoming information is registering as “reality”. The rest is filtered, compressed, compartmentalized, and stored for later use.
- Those 50 bits / second are filtered through space, time, language, beliefs, and more and come out as our version of ourselves or the “us” that we know to be our daily experience of ourselves. This is actually a version of us that is the result of learned and taught things like our beliefs (right or wrong), using a fork vs. chopsticks vs. eating with our hands, or speaking English.
- The brain's 100 trillion or so interconnections provide the physical basis for its speed and sophistication. (Ackerman, 1992)
- A typical healthy human brain contains about 200 billion nerve cells, or neurons, linked to one another via hundreds of trillions of tiny contacts called synapses.



### How We Receive and Process Information:

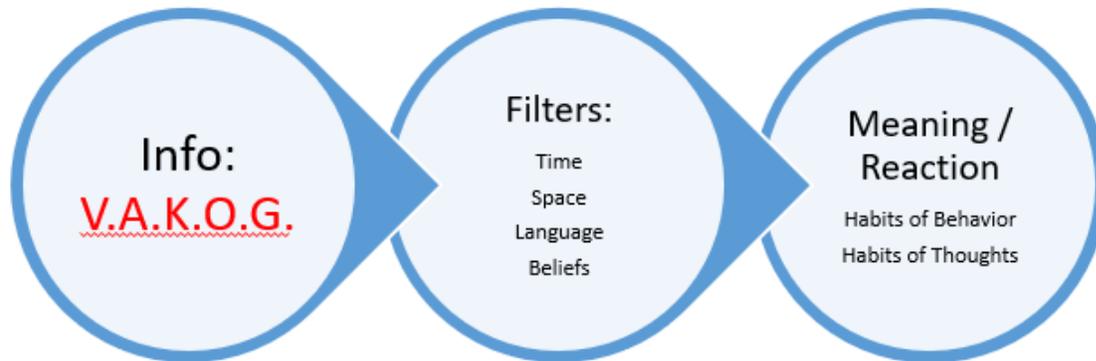
We’re all very familiar with our five senses and some of us are willing to admit to our 6<sup>th</sup> sense – that intuitive quality that allows to receive information through some other source.

- Visual
- Auditory
- Kinesthetic
- Olfactory
- Gustatory
- Intuition\* 6<sup>th</sup> sense

And as that information comes into the brain for processing it gets pushed through several filters, which when done, show up as “reality.” Reality is in quotes there, because what that final version is just your version of your reality, which is where this journey toward creating success in life or business begins.

If the brain had to re-learn how to conduct behavior / actions each day, it would take years. Re-learning is inefficient. The brain utilizes efficiency to a fault; it doesn’t necessarily question itself or decide to have better thoughts. It learns through repetition and “failure” as feedback. For anyone reading who is concerned about failing, its how the brain is trained.

Neither does it question what it stores. It just stores everything as information for later use. (Hint: This is why your past is always changing, as you get older. As you change so does how you look at your experiences.)



Healthy babies are born with the ability to learn any language and virtually anything currently known to humankind. While this book won't delve into cultural beliefs, politics, or religion, this does begin to explain how cultural ills that end with ism (racism, sexism, agism, and more) can be ended, because they are not something a baby is born with; they are beliefs a baby is taught to believe that eventually form their model of their world. This is the case with walking, eating, driving and other less divisive issues.

Generally, our brains won't question the validity of our thoughts and we believe all our thoughts are inherent, because we have had them for so long. What this points at is there exists the ability to unlearn anything that has been learned. We can unlearn racism and relearn acceptance of others, for example.

### **The Brain As An Electro-Chemical Transportation System:**

Think of your brain as a transportation system with different types of roadways. What gets fired gets wired, so certain repetitive thoughts will create deep road ruts and strong connections. This is why, we think to ourselves or defend our behavior to others we say things like, "Oh, I've always been this way." While it's true, you have "always been this way," what is also true is you can create new connections and new habits of thought.

Studies show we use only 10% of our brains. Modern research is showing that the brain is regenerative well into old age through the use of ingesting specific species of mushrooms, which have shown in studies to re-grow the dendrites in your brain.

What this points to is that the brain is more complex and yet more simple than we give it credit for.

Perception is reality? Or is it?



### **Your Brain as a database / source of reactions:**

The brain has many uses, but one main function is as a storage unit. And just like a storage unit at a storage facility, it doesn't have an opinion about what is stored in it. The storage unit gets placed into it whatever the owner wants to store there. The brain is the same way. We cannot close our ears, rarely do we close our eyes, and never does our brain stop processing what it takes in.

The brain stores a significant amount of data, we also have access to anything we have ever heard, read, or seen. (As a side note, this is the reason I heavily curate what I read, watch, and listen to, because I want my brain's database to be clean and unencumbered by the thoughts of the media's writers influence. For more on this, read my upcoming book, *Influence the Psychology of NLP* to understand just how much influence our media has on our opinions). The brain cannot question if what it is seeing is real and has no opinion on what it stored in it; it merely filters through its beliefs and memories, in order to make meaning of the information as it starts to construct meaning and imagery for vision. That process of filtering and what comes

out as “reality” is where we derive our reactions and the way to undo reactions that no longer serve us.

Indeed some studies show that the brain is unable to distinguish between real and fake, which means that even a horror film shows up as “real” to the brain, with all the associated stresses, stress responses, and bad memories.

So two things are important to remember here about the brain as a database and filtration system. Our memories are raw data that only gets meaning after getting processed through our filters. These memories aren’t static, although we often assume they are. Memories and “storage” or stored memories are simply filtered through the filter that currently exists and filters can be switched out for new filters.

For example, for folks who see the world as being one with no opportunities; they can begin to see a world with nothing but opportunities around every new moment. For folks with painful memories or pasts, they can begin to see the villainous players in that movie-like memory as people doing their best in that moment with the limited tools they had at that time.

#### Un-Freezing Old Memories:

To add to this, knowing that memories are dynamic, we can also begin to unfreeze old memories and advance the film into what happened next. I once had a painful memory of the last time I saw my “real” father in a lawyers office. For decades, the memory ended when the doors closed on him and picked back up when the doors opened and my mother and step-father arrived. Once I started to understand how perspectives worked, I examined this memory and imagined what else happened after the elevator doors closed on my “real” father. First, the elevator went down to the lobby and the doors opened. He would have walked out. He would have got in his car experiencing some emotion: regret, pain, anger, disillusionment, shame, or relief? I don’t know the true answer, but I do know that elevators don’t freeze on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor for forever with a person inside.

That’s exactly what we do with old memories. They can get stuck and frozen and so too do the beliefs we had in that memory. Knowing that you can revisit old memories with your new filters can help immediately alleviate pain over old experiences, even without the benefit of an apology or discussion with the participants in the memory. Some therapists use this technique to provide support for the wounded child, by asking the patient to go back and sit in that memory with the child and express to it with the love and kindness of an adult, to support that inner-child, to love that inner-child and / or accept that inner-child. It’s valuable work and very easy to do as you find it safe to release old emotions and old, negative experience.

Beyond the brain as a storage unit with flexible filters and the ability to create meaning and to reprocess old-memories making them new and more resourceful, it's important to understand where overwhelm and fear live in the brain.

#### Reticular Activating System:

- RAS is where all your senses come in, except smell. (<https://extension.umn.edu/two-you-video-series/ras>)
- Serves to help us respond to the world around us. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/neuroscience/reticular-activating-system>)
- It's the gatekeeper of information that is let into the conscious mind. (source: <https://study.com/academy/lesson/reticular-activating-system-definition-function.html>)

#### The Amygdala:

The amygdala is the most primitive part and the part associated with survival at several significant levels. When we are in fear, the amygdala is activated for protection. It best known for managing survival and is referred to as the “fight, flight, or freeze” part of the brain. Anyone who has felt overwhelmed also feels a sense of stuck-ness (freeze) that occurs concurrently and most-often stops a person mid-motion, just like a deer in the headlights.

One way it accomplishes this is to slow down or stop other functions such as rational and creative thinking that could interfere with the physical ability to run or fight.

This is important to note, because the process of shut down occurs so naturally and quickly, we don't always notice we've switched into fear mode, attack mode, and irrationality. This occurs in part, because we lost access to our frontal lobe where logic and reason live.

For example, let's say you are someone with a great ideas, but you feel overwhelmed by how to get them to fruition. It may feel too big all that amazingness. The only way out is to understand the structure of stuck-ness and learn how to leapfrog over your sense of overwhelm.

#### **Here are a few “I feel stuck” examples:**

Maybe you are healing from a trauma and the thought of building your confidence feels too far away from where find yourself in this moment. That's okay. Let's honor where you are now. You are in a place of self-protection, which is exactly what the amygdala is designed for. So, yay for all the parts that are serving you.

Let's bracket in a few things: self-protection is wonderful and something to be cherished and acknowledged. Good job, you, for protecting yourself from your fears whether they are good fear like future fame or a bad fear like imagined physical harm lurking around every corner, even if it doesn't. To be more clear, what you think is real is. And what you want to believe can also become real too, it will just take implementing the Brain Hacking Process of asking questions, in order to get it your resourceful parts to come back together again and begin to work as a whole unit, knowing it is safe to do so in small sustainable steps that will get you there slowly and in a safe way. Remember, because what we believe is real to us, we want to honor what is "real" to us and then begin to negotiate for incremental changes by training the brain to stay in the frontal lobe, so we're more active in that part of the brain for a longer period of time.

**For someone wanting to grow their confidence:**

Like all things there exists a spectrum. Even if drawing upon your confidence used to be easy, but you find it isn't as easy now, because it feels far away from you or is merely situational vs. ever present / there all the time, then that's okay. Those parts of you that have experienced confidence in any way can guide you to reconnecting back to your sense of confidence.

**Everyone has something to feel confident about.**

Something as minor and banal as tying your shoes counts, as does slipping on your flipflops counts, or getting the toothpaste somewhere near the toothbrush on most days also counts.)

We all have at least one memory of confidence or task that we perform with confidence; we just have to find one instance. (For my fellow contrarians who are likely thinking, but I don't have one thing and I know it! The fact that you cannot find one thing to be confident about is its own confidence, because you are confident there is not one thing to be confident about and that's your thing to be confident about – knowing there is not one thing to be confident about!) And as the logic goes, if you can do even one thing confidently, then you have access to doing another thing confidently. Following that process, eventually, you can pull confidence into everything you do, even new things you have never tried before.

**For those of you feeling disconnected from old parts of your self that worked best for you:**

Just know, you can reconnect easily to those parts of you that still exist, by utilizing these techniques. You can do this in a safe healthy way that preserves the parts of you that are keeping you safe in this moment and begin to let the parts of you that have been hidden away out, show them the light of day, so they can do their good work for you too knowing it is safe to do so for 1 second. (I added 1 second, because for some, that was a scary sentence, which

became do-able when I added for one second, to the end of the sentence. That is also one of the techniques. Farther into the book, there are more techniques for you to use.)

### **Un-sticking stuck-ness:**

There's a solution to stuck-ness and overwhelm and we already possess it. The frontal lobe, a more advanced part of the brain, which developed later in the human brain's evolution is where logic, reason, creativity, and some would say happiness "exist". Indeed a study of Tibetan monks, meditation, and happiness as reported in a Wired Magazine article (Zetter, 2003) found that, "Generally people with happy temperaments exhibit a high ratio of activity in the left prefrontal cortex, an area associated with happiness, joy and enthusiasm. Those who are prone to anxiety, fear and depression exhibit a higher ratio of activity in the right prefrontal cortex. The entire region offers us cognitive abilities for communication, creativity and more."

The monks who spend time meditating on happiness were deemed "happier" than most. Which points to evidence that the path to happiness resides in stimulating / accessing the frontal lobe, something the monks already knew and science is catching up to understanding.

Healthline.com describes this area as, The **frontal lobe** is the part of the brain that controls important cognitive skills in humans, such as emotional expression, problem solving, memory, language, judgment, and sexual behaviors. It is, in essence, the "control panel" of our personality and our ability to communicate." (Team, 2018)

But how do we access this part without meditating? According to Dr. Maurer's research in his book *The Kaizen Way*, the method to access other more evolved parts of the brain lies with asking small questions, which causes an immediate shift out of the amygdala into the frontal lobe.

Wait. Whaaaat? Let's back up for a second.

**Asking a small question will halt the hard-wired thoughts**, which I call your "habits of thought" and begins to create new hard-wires for new thoughts and new thought habits. The ultimate effect of asking small questions, *any* small question is a small-term disconnect occurs to your old "habits of thought." To go back to an earlier metaphor, your roadway goes under construction and detour signs go up and the cars (thoughts) have to stop or go a different way at another time.

Once this disconnect occurs for long enough, the hard-wiring becomes soft-wiring and the soft-wiring, so to speak, becomes no-wiring. You can think of it this way, your thoughts are stuck in a

wagon wheel rut and asking small questions allows them to move out of the rut and find a new way down the path.

The internal negative thoughts can and will slow to a crawl or stop altogether and long enough, as a result, to allow a person to move forward more meaningfully toward their goals, dreams, and aspirations one small step at a time. In removing yourself from the grip of the old thought habits and / or the overwhelm created in the brain's amygdala, you're able to reconnect to old thought patterns that serve you better and remove the hard-wired automatic connection that's causing the back-ground noise and negative self-talk incessant chatter. You are also able to stop overwhelm at will.

### **Ask a Small Question – Any Small Question...My Journey to Controlling Thoughts:**

What you'll notice as a result of asking small questions, is that you also begin to become aware of what is running in the background. That's the first step, awareness. Next, apply Dr. Maurer's reasoning and method by asking small questions...any small question.

Initially, after reading the Kaizen Way, I made a game out of asking small questions. The game had one rule: if I could catch myself making negative self-talk, **would I be willing to ask just one small, tiny question for one second?** That was an important question, because I noticed the negative self-talk seemed to have a strong opinion about staying.

I spent the next week asking anything I could in the form of a question...any question. I started with what do I love about the color blue, this shampoo, this apartment? Then I expanded to "of all the loves I have and things I have enjoyed and studied over the years, is there some other thing that I would be willing to think about that's more enjoyable than what I tell myself about a piece of \*\*\*\* I am, what a failure who if only she had done that one thing right that one time would never be in such a bad place now (to imply that nothing was good and it was all bad and it was all my fault because I wasn't a better person!).

Over time, I ended the past's strangle hold on my thoughts and now use questions to help inspire ideas! The majority of my thoughts that were once more negative than positive, became mostly positive.



## **Asking Small Questions Changes Your Negative Thoughts to Positive Thoughts Over Time.**

I'll often have people remark that this sounds so great, but is it really practical? Especially for people who enjoy their own ability to critical thinkers and skeptics. This process does not remove your ability to reason, what it does is takes you out of overwhelm and out of the amygdala, because a question is answered by the frontal lobe.

According to researchers, the brain has over 100 Trillion neural connections. One Trillion is 1000 billions, so 100 Trillions is 100,000 Billions. Without getting too fancy, that means that you have the ability to have over 100,000 Billion thoughts and processes running through your brain, at any time. That's the low number when you consider the full level of all the possibilities for future connections.

What that means is there exists an unlimited supply of neural connectivity and possibility. The brain loves the stimulation and once a new connection is made, it will begin to create its new hardwiring for the new thoughts. This is the method that allows you to never have to relearn to eat, drink, drive, walk, talk, or speak each day.

At one point in your life these processes took years to perfect. I know I'm still learning to perfect English and sometimes walking! For all of you folks who trip walking on flat floor for no reason, you know what I mean!

## **Making the Case for Having Better, More Positive Thoughts:**

Choose your energy reduction:

If it's possible that controlling our thoughts is possible and we only have so much time in our lives, and if ONE thought, whether it's negative or positive, takes up X amount of energy and time, then why not choose the good one?

Having a negative thought vs. a positive one isn't right or wrong thing, to be clear; one just feels better to me. To restate that, we only have so much time and energy to spend each day. Would you rather spend it on the good thought or the bad thought, now that you know you have a choice of which thoughts to have and know that you can change your thinking?

As the saying goes, change your thoughts and you change your world. Another adage I like is from Paul Coelho's *The Alchemist*, "When you change the world around you also changes." These underscore two important considerations, it's mostly perspective that guides our "reality" and there are new "realities" to discover.

This is not to say you should never have a negative thought, this is to share that you can control which thought you have whether they be negative or positive. You can choose.

## Negative Thoughts / Negative Emotions:

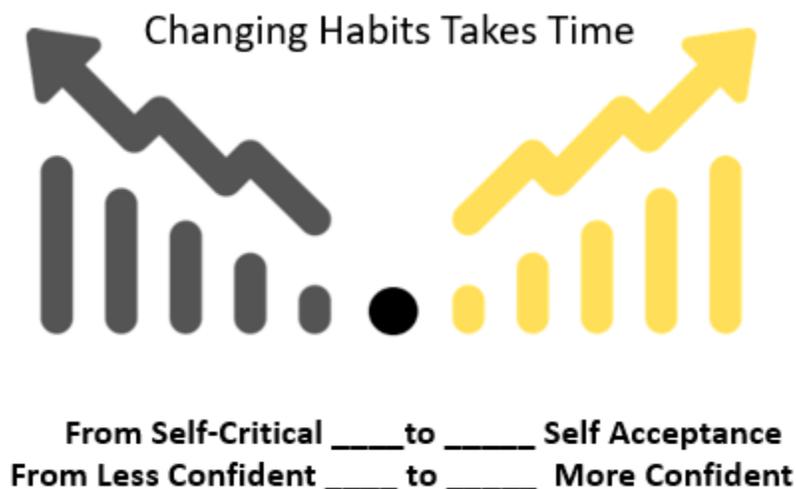
If you experience negative thoughts or emotions, you are not alone. They occur for everyone. The challenge becomes, when they become habitual.

If there's any self-judgment around being a person who feels negativity or has negative thoughts, then as you read through these questions, later in the book, then you're likely to be inspired with your own small question that is going to help you break the neural pathway / habit of thought and help you build a new ones, so just know it is a simple and quick process.

Again, the fact that you are reading this book should tell you that you are ready to make a safe, subtle small change in perspective. Also, over time, you'll be able to move from negative thoughts over to more positive thoughts, as you find yourself noticing where you are feeling overwhelm, self-critical self talk, and / or stuck perspectives.

## Chapter 3: Now What? What Question Should I ask?

Whether you think you have to have a simple question or a sophisticated question, the answer is the quality and length of the question doesn't actually matter. Any question will work to cause your thoughts to move from the amygdala to the frontal lobe, where happiness, logic, creativity live. (e.g. What color do I like the most?) Eventually you'll start to get creative with your questions and they will be exactly what they need to be to move you along from one end of the negativity spectrum (left) to the positive side of the spectrum (right).



## Working with Sub-Personalities:

We all possess subpersonalities. “A subpersonality is, in [transpersonal psychology](#), a personality mode that kicks in (appears on a temporary basis) to allow a person to cope with certain types of [psychosocial](#) situations.<sup>[1]</sup> Similar to a [complex](#),<sup>[2]</sup> the mode may include thoughts, feelings, actions, physiology, and other elements of human behavior to [self-present](#) a particular mode that works to negate particular psychosocial situations.<sup>[1]</sup> The average person has about a dozen subpersonalities.<sup>[1]</sup>”

Again, like all things there are ranges to how often a person is expressing from their various sub-personalities and to what degree they are having an influence of the tasks at hand. These show up as the version of you that loves to go out and have fun with friends and the same version that likes to stay home and enjoy your alone time. We also have these for developmental traumas, as defined by authors Heller and LaPierre in their book *Healing Developmental Trauma*. These traumas may cause the sub-personality to pause in its development, however that can be remedied.

As part of this, imagine that you’re being protected by some hidden or even known part of yourself. If its job is to protect you, then the part of you that’s “holding you back” “keeping you down” is doing it for a reason, even if we don’t remember the reason, or when it was taught to us by someone else.

This self-protective nature is its own help and concurrently a hindrance, which means it’s paradoxical. It helps to protect you and often can do it without perspective or understanding or logic even and it can show up as getting in the way of your progress. It’s a little like a guard dog, that guard dogs everything like the house from the helpful mail delivery person. Meaning guard dogs can over do it and tend to bark at everything and stay in protective mode, even when they don’t have to, even when there is no threat / only peaceful people. A guard dog will push friend situation and foe situation away until it learns to distinguish between true threat and not threat.

The way to overcome this guardian nature is to ask a small question of it: Hey, parts of me that are protecting me, would you be willing to let your guard down for two seconds, so I can \_\_\_\_\_, for one second? Remember, there are lots of parts of your personality called sub-personalities and they all have an opinion and a purpose. The goal here is not to dismiss or disregard them. They have all been serving you well and protecting you. They will keep that job. The trick here is to strike a balance with them and create an open dialog with them.

If you want to have fun with this process and get them all on board, then do a thought experiment and call a meeting or a tea party, or a fun party and ask, “Hey sub-personalities, I know you all like to have your opinions and I thank you for them. Would you be willing to use the most resourceful parts of you and have them work in cohesion with each other and agree that we’re okay to move forward, for one second, so we can all have a better life for one minute?”

If they say no, then ask them what do they need from you and what would cause them to agree with you?

While this might sound hokey to some, it starts to become less so, when we consider the average person has, you'd be surprised at how many sub-personalities we possess. Here's a sample of the average person and some sample needs and value.

**Sub-Pesonalities: their needs, values, shadow side and how to create agreement:**

Here are some samples of sub-personalities, their strengths, the value the can provide, their shadow side and how to create agreement with its need in order to move your life forward incrementally toward your bigger goal(s). This list is very much inspired by the work of Carolyn Myss in her book Archetypes and is certainly not an exhaustive list. While she talks about the archetype and its shadow this is a look at the needs of the personality and the value it provides, in addition to the shadow side. It's certainly not a comprehensive list and you may find where you identify with the sub-personality and find some additional needs that aren't listed. Write down what works for you. What this list is here to do is to help reveal that even inside of ourselves different parts have different needs.

Sub-Personality	Needs / Strengths	Values it Brings you	Shadow side	Create Agreement
The inner critic	To criticize	Discernment	Overly harsh	Honor its discernment
The inner friend	To lovingly support you	You always have yourself as an ally	Back-stabber	Honor its ability to create consensus
The inner comedian / pleasure seeker	To enjoy	Brings humor	Use humor to deflect and distract	Honor its ability to find opportunities to shrug off the bad stuff
The self-saboteur / self-sabotage -	To sabotage	Never have to risk, because the saboteur has removed the way forward	Will compel making tough situations worse	Honor its ability to for accuracy
The sleepy one – who conveniently falls asleep even when not sleepy	To feel protected	Allows for a way to check out easily.	Refusing to let you participate in your life	Honor its ability to create safety

The bossy one – who tells you to get out of bed.	To be in charge	Gets you moving!	Overbearing / Overly controlling	It's leadership qualities / need for control
<b>Sub-Personality</b>	<b>Needs / Strengths</b>	<b>Values it Brings you</b>	<b>Shadow side</b>	<b>Create Agreement</b>
The scared one – the one who doesn't like doing certain things out of fear	To feel safe	Offers caution	Runs and hides	Honor its ability to know its limits
The brave one	To protect	Offers you the opportunity to do things you might not normally do	Doesn't know when to stop being brave. Resists vulnerability	Honor its willingness to move forward in the face of fear
The adventurer	To seek out new things	Allows you to venture out	Always seeking adventure. Cannot sit still.	Honor its willingness to try new things and be okay with ambiguity / inconsistencies (constant change)
The dreamer	To dream	Allows for inspiration	Ungrounded in reality like bill paying or 9-5 jobs	Honor its ability to provide fresh perspectives
The silent one / observer	To watch	To see things more clearly and then act	Not one to speak up	Honor its ability to be a keen observer noting the details and important things
The inner infant (Time before words)	Comfort and care	A place to feel vulnerable, yet safe	Cries and cries to convey its emotion(s) and needs	Honor its strength to persist and influence the world around it, even though it's fragile
The inner wounded child	Wants love, patience and a hug.	Exists for the moment. Doesn't know how to soothe itself.	The future is an abstract concept and so is being an adult with adult perspective. Can be inconsolable.	Honor its ability to learn new things and its natural ability to mature knowing it was always okay.

Sub-Personality	Needs / Strengths	Values it Brings you	Shadow side	Create Agreement
The rebel (Teenage years)	Will act out and be contrary	Learning how to test boundaries safely	If this was not fostered during your younger years, you may experience always rebelling.	Honor its ability to mature into a the adult it will become
Protector	To protect	Overly protective	Assassin	Honor its willingness to keep you safe
Anger	To control	Cannot see its way beyond its fired up reaction. Is the crust layer masking over sadness.	Stonewalls or creates issues where none exists. Cannot	Honor its ability to speak up, in a healthy balanced way
Love	Connection	May not choose to be realistic	Smothering	Honor its great power is to throw cold water on negative emotions, shine light in the darkness
Me today:				

The list could go on. Most of my clients each have a list of about 100 unresourceful states that they have identified as parts of themselves that they would like to balance out and to have their resourceful and unresourceful parts come together to work as a cohesive unit. I discuss in more detail in my book, *Happiness is the Balance of Opposites*.

As you begin to understand yourself, you'll naturally begin to understand what the different parts of you need in order to overcome overwhelm and to start moving toward accomplishing your goals in a healthy, balanced way

Before we begin with samples, keep reading in order to inspire your own versions of questions that will serve you best. Put them down and then pick them back up again. Scan and see what jumps out. It might be just the perfect questions.

### **QUESTION SAMPLES:**

Most all of these questions are self-inspired ones that I used when I got started with this Brain Hacking Technique. A common source for many self-development course teachings have ancient origins and modern twists like biblical teachings, ancient Sanskrit and Ralph Waldo Emerson, “whose fingerprints can be found in most modern self-development work and theory,” said as my English professor Derrick Fernando. Where I have borrowed from a legend like Emerson or just a great question, I pay homage to those teachers who have inspired the foundation that created these questions.

#### **Step 1: Asking Questions: Start with easy questions:**

What’s my favorite \_\_\_\_\_? (example: color, friend, loved one, memory)

What’s one small thing I like about (the above)?

What do I like about that and would I be willing to consider it, for one second?

Rinse and repeat on the small question.

#### **Step 2: Advance to more sophisticated questions, for 1 second.**

If I was going to ask a small question that will take my attention off the automatic thoughts, what small, simple, non-triggering question would I ask?

If I was going to ask a small question that will help me complete my tasks, would I be willing to break down large tasks into smaller chunks, in order to create momentum and if so, how small of a step can I break it into?

#### **Step 3: Add More Sophistication to Your Questions**

Begin to ask more sophisticated questions designed to reveal larger solutions to larger things. For example, even if I don’t have all the answers what’s one question I should be asking, that I haven’t thought through to ask yet that is going to lead me in the right direction?

Dealing with pushback:

Believe it or not, you engage in conversations and have more internal dialog than you might be aware. So if you get push back from your own internal dialog, just ask another small question of it. What might be for someone is you ask your question:

**You asking:** Would I be willing to think of something that serves me better for 1 second.

**The inner-voice replies:** No.

The “No” is pushback and it’s also protection, so just ask again, but maybe add a little “honey” to it by acknowledging those parts that are giving the pushback. Remember we have lots of facets to our personality and some are new, some are old and some are downright petulant and unreasonably bratty like a young child worried they are being left alone unnecessarily, and there are even some parts that are infantile without voice yet having opinions and emotion. Yes infants have opinions and your infant self had opinions and needs. 😊

**You asking:** Even though there are parts of me that are really good at protecting me, would they be willing to let the more resourceful parts of me begin to reconnect to new thoughts that serve me better for, 1 second?

**The inner-voice replies:** (silence).

If I would be willing to give up my negative self-talk for one second, would I be willing to do that? (If you find some part of arguing for its limitation, then keep asking, “How about now? How about now? Would you (give it a name or call it by name like Nervous Nelly or Debbie Downer, or as my friend and inspiration for this concept of naming these parts of ourselves, Wendi Knox says, “Mine is named Edna”) “Negativity aka Edna” would you be willing to remember one of the things that’s great about us?”

Ask, until you get the answer yes.

If you get major pushback, then ask, “What else would I be willing to think about for one second then? What about the color blue? Keep asking a small question and another and another, until your mind becomes far removed from the original stuck-ness.

## **Different Kinds of Questions You Can Use To Begin to Break Your Old Habits of Thought and Make New Ones:**

### **Questions for self-love:**

Now, before you start this section, I have a small question to ask: If you had a friend who told you horrible things everyday, all day, would you continue to spend time with them? Would it make sense to accept anything less than respect, care, and love from someone who should be kind to you? The answer should be no.

I ask this, because if you're someone who experiences a tough-inner critic, you're dealing with several dynamics:

- It is possible you are behaving toward yourself with negative thoughts and self-talk, in a way that you would NEVER let a stranger, a loved one or a friend treat you...and you know it...even if you just realized it, as a result of reading this long sentence. (It's okay, we're going to change that!)
- The negative self-talk has been going on for so long, you don't even hear it and have stopped noticing its occurrence, but feel its negative effects anyway.

So how do you stop the automatic thoughts? How do end the negative self-talk from happening automatically? How do you get new thoughts happening that serve you better? Ask a small question and then ask another and another, until you get what you seek.

### Sample Questions:

If I was going to admit that there are things about me that are great, for 1 second, what would those things be? (If there's no answer, then you can ask the silence. Hey no answer / silence, if I had to know the answer, what would it be?)

SIDE NOTE: There have been times when I had to re-ask the same small question over and over, before my brain found the answer hiding in the back reaches of its data catalog. Keep asking and the brain will answer.)

Is it possible to consider, for one second, that my negative thoughts about myself might not be truly true, in reality, and are just something that I have been telling myself for so long that I believe it is true? And, as a result, would I be willing to allow myself to feel more confident about my issues whether they be my appearance, my ability to be loved well by others, my ability to be successful, my ability to trust, and / or my ability to choose well, for one second?

Could consider that I am beautiful and worthy, for one second? How would I be willing to do that?

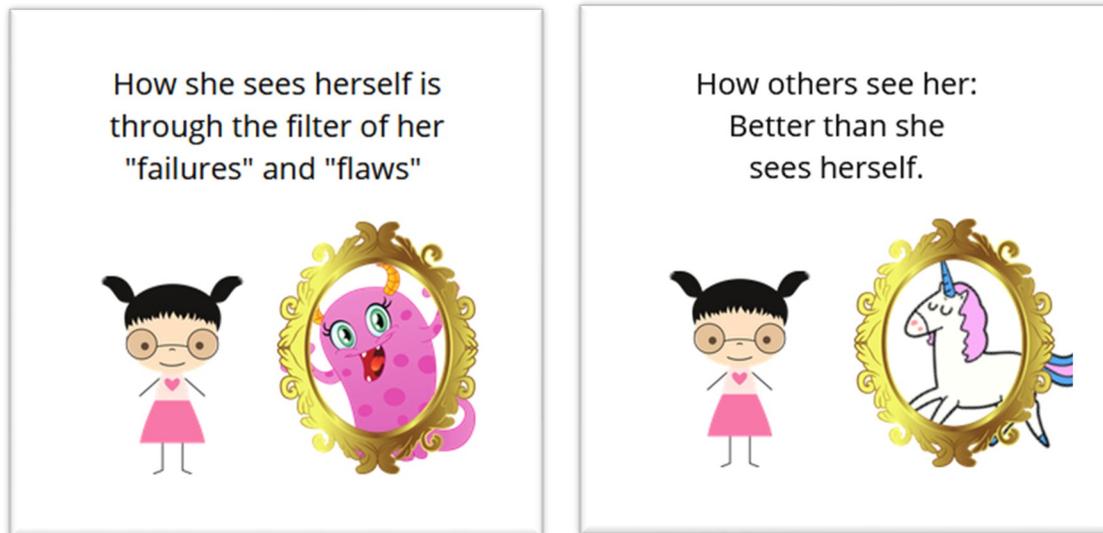
Would I be willing to trust the kind words of others more than my negative self-talk, even if I don't 100% believe their kind words?

If I remove my self-doubt, what is one small thing I know is worthy about me? (Hint: Might be some thing you do great, like bake pies, or be a good friend.) What did I used to know that could know now that is worthy about me?

SIDE NOTE: Even if your answer is I wake up each day. it's a perfectly acceptable answer. The goal isn't to determine EVERY worthy thing, the goal is to get the brain to begin re-

connecting to the parts of you that are worthy, even if you forgot or it's been too long and / or you can no longer consciously remember. The brain remembers everything and you just have to pull it out of the sub-conscious.

Is it possible that the way I see myself is not the way other people see me? And by virtue of that, if they don't see me through the same filters I have, would I be willing to believe their good opinion more, because they don't judge me the way I judge myself through the lens of all my "failures."



(Images from *A Girlfriend's Guide to Finding Your Soul Mate*, by Onna Young)

Would I be willing to acknowledge that in a world of 7 Billion people there is some-one out there, maybe even some-two out there who will love me despite my flaws and maybe even because of them?

### **Goal Setting / Making Progress on Big Projects:**

Would I be willing to (examples: move one small piece of paper instead of worrying about the whole pile, open the box and leave it, write just one title and stop,) or do one small thing, in order to create some momentum for this task I keep procrastinating on?

If I had to ask a question that was going to lead me closer to my goals, what would they be?

If I had to know what my ultimate goals were, even if I don't know what they are now, what would they be?

If I feel un-certain, what would "Certainty" if certainty was a person tell me about where to do, if it could speak to me now?

Where am I experiencing blocks, if I had to know? What's one small thing you would be willing to let yourself do in order to STOP it from being a limitation?

If I could work on this for just 1 minutes and leave it, would I be willing to make the 1 minutes, even if I know the overall project / task is much longer and more involved?

If I wanted to move more meaningfully toward my goals, for one second, then how would I do that? Who would I call? What would small question would I ask them?

What's hidden and unknown that's coming to me from my future soon? (This is a favorite of mine from my friend M.T.)

What's one small thing I have been unwilling to do, that's actually simple and quick that could make a small difference and help propel me forward in a healthy balanced way?

### **Getting Resources, Jobs, & Clients:**

Is there someone I could be in contact with that I'm just not thinking of who would be of assistance here? Even if all they do is lead me to another person or don't have all the answers?

Who are my top three people that I know I can count on and who trust me. (For those feeling super alone, Mother Teresa and Muhammad Ali are a good start! Imagination is just as important as is "reality" so go ahead and add some heavy hitters. Mother Teresa loved everyone and Muhammad Ali was great in the ring!)

What resources do I have already that are my assets that will provide the confidence to move ahead, even if I believe I don't have them or I'm embarrassed to admit them or shy about considering them.

Side Note: Everyone has something to be confident about, even if you're confident there's nothing to be confident about, there's something you're confident in. So even confidence in a lack of confidence is evidence that there's access to confidence living inside of you already! This is true for all the positive things about you, too: tenacity, drive, success, ability to love and / or be loved, for example.)

### **When "Quick Brain" is an Issue:**

If my brain was willing to let me slow down, for one second, how would my brain help me to slow down for one second?

### **Managing Stress:**

If I could compartmentalize my stress into a large soft, happy soap bubble that contains all my stresses, for one second, would I be willing to put them there momentarily, so I can receive the answer to my other small questions and get started?

What small thing can I do to take a time out, put things on perspective and give myself a break?

**Fear of Failure:**

If I was going to fail for one second, would I be okay with it knowing that that “failure” will provide a valuable, small lesson that could set me on a 1 degree changed, new path, and will in essence be a best friend, guiding me toward something better, for one second? (This one is good for people whose inner-self is stuck by a fear of failure.)

Would I be willing to move forward knowing failure is success in motion and that I have to fail in order to learn by doing? Would I be willing to start small knowing my vision will change, as I learn more and learn by doing?

**Forgiveness:**

If I could place myself in the shoes of my “enemy” for one second and see them through compassionate eyes, what would I see of their pain that would cause me to understand them better and feel less negatively toward them, for one second?

Would I be willing to, for one second, consider the good inside of the bad of this situation, the awareness of which will help me instantaneously feel more neutral, but leave in place all the positive resources I need to stay vigilant, in a healthy balanced way.

Would I be willing to see those who have done me wrong, in terms of the gift that experience ultimately provided, even if I feel that I should’ve been someone who never should have had that experience and even if it was truly a painful experience.

Would I be willing to forgive once so I do not have to hate everyday, which will leave me open to fill that space with new things that serve me better?

**Questions for Your Business:**

If I was going to approach one target / prospect who would they be?

If I was going to price this product accordingly how would that work, so that I don’t undercut and I don’t overprice either?

Would I be willing to raise my prices by a small percentage to increase my revenue? If yes, what would that percentage be?

Would I be willing to believe that someone wants what I have to offer?

[Side Note: If the answer is no, then ask, is that even true that NO ONE would want this in a world filled with over 7B people?

If the answer is still no, then ask that part of you that keeps answering no: “Hey, part of me that keeps answering no, I appreciate your protection of me; it’s been

keeping me safe for a long time and even though you don't believe that even one person would say yes to this product, service, or idea, would you be willing to participate in letting us find out if that's even true that not one person will say yes, for one second, knowing that it is safe to do so, in a balance healthy way that is only going to lead us to new awarenesses and, perhaps, even a success, upon which you can learn to rely?

If you get more pushback, then ask that No: Hey No, then what else would you be willing to think about for 1 minute that's going to help move forward? Rinse and repeat the question as you get new answers.

### **Questions to End a Bad Relationship Faster and Easier:**

If I did deserve better, for what purpose would I continue to stay, knowing I have all the resources to leave and start again?

In a world filled with 7B people, is it possible that there's someone else out there who might also think I'm awesome and who *will* treat me well?

Would I be willing to trust that even though leaving will be painful that I will make it through?

Even if it's just imagining, am I willing to imagine a time in the future, when this is behind me, even if that seems impossible and even if I cannot imagine it, now?

What is the underlying premise of my decision-making and how can I undo that decision making in order to take new and different steps toward my destined goal?

If my future self were looking back at me, in this moment, what would say to myself that I need to hear about this all works out?

If my current self could go back to my past self what kind words of support or comfort would I give myself?

For religious folks, what would God say to me? (This is a very powerful question!)

### **Questions to Reveal Awesomeness:**

If I was willing to accept the nice things people tell me about myself, would I be willing to act as if, even if I don't believe them and think they are just being "nice".

If I was going to consider my awesomeness, what's one thing I'm 100% sure of that I know I'm great at? (Hint: Everyone is great at something. Even a non-committal person is 100% committed to being non-committal and are actually even more committed than the truly committed people.)

If I only had one thing to rely upon that I knew I could always trust in what would that one thing be? (This could literally be the sun rising tomorrow. There is no need to put judgment on the

answer either. Whatever answer comes up, just keep asking until you get the better answer you are looking for.

If I could list 5 things kind that people say about me, what would they be?

**Question to Help Change Perspectives:**

What is one small way I could see this differently, for one second? And would I be willing to implement that new way of seeing things for one second? And another second? And another second?

At what point do I STOP \_\_\_\_\_ and START \_\_\_\_\_; the awareness of this will cause me to move meaningfully and safely toward my desired outcome.

If this was (Pick a favorite person even a big figure like Jesus, God, Mary, Buddha, Muhammad Ali or a trusted relative (alive or passed on)), what would they tell me?

Is what I think is true even true? And even if I'm sure it's true, is there another way to consider this that will feel better offering up a kinder perspective for myself and others?

What is the underlying premise of my decision-making and how can I undo that decision making in order to take new and different steps toward my destined goal?

If my future self were looking back at me, in this moment, what would he/she tell me?

If my current self could go back to my past self what kind words of support or comfort would I give myself?

If my past self could share an unexpressed need that could be fulfilled by my older version of myself, today, even if it's just imagination and a weird thing to consider. (Hint: this is usually listening, a hug, and some comfort that it'll all work out, in the future. Let me break that down:

If you were to visit in your imagination a younger version of yourself and sit next that little person what would you tell him or her knowing that they don't understand adulthood, dynamics, and that you're going to grow up and be more amazing, develop new experiences, mature and more.)

**Question to overcome painful circumstances:**

When I get emotionally lost what can I do to soothe myself and bring myself back?

Is it possible for one moment, to suspend the hurt and pain of that moment, for one moment? (If the answer is no, then ask, really? Not for one second? How about half a second?)

Now that I've suspended this for one second, what do I know will help me heal quickly from this so that I can move on?

Is it possible for me to consider other moments in time, I find more enjoyable, for one second, one minute.

As I catch myself dwelling on the past, would I instead, be willing to dream and fantasize about my future, even if it's just made up and it seems far away, for one minute?

Would I be willing to offer forgiveness to that person in my own mind, even if I never talk to them again.

Am I willing to remember it is easier to forgive once than to hate everyday.

**Resentments:**

Would I be willing to move beyond my resentments for one second?

Would I be willing to see how my resentments can stop being barriers to achieving what I want?

**Questions to Un-Stick a Painful Memory:**

If knowing what I know now about love and hate and how I feel toward people and how they do the best they can in that moment, not the best I know how to do, then how does that change the way I see their behavior and even my pain of that moment.

Would I be willing to accept that even though their behavior was not appropriate that they are learning how to do things better and are also a work in progress?

If I were to visit that painful moment, one minute after, what happened for that person next? Did they cry? Were they remorseful?

If that person were to write an apology letter to me, what would it say based on what I may never actually hear from them, but that I need to hear.

Would you be willing to consider that they have changed: If indeed you remember the people inside your pain moments, isn't it possible they, too, remember it, and now have new regretful and remorseful feelings about how they treated you?

As I feel safe from these painful memories, would I be willing to go back and visit myself in my memory and sit with myself and tell myself all things that I know now, that if I had known then would have made that negative experience less difficult and give myself that support, even thought it's just a thought experiment?

Would I be willing to forgive myself and others who are contained inside my memories, knowing this does not absolve them of their guilt or get them off the hook for behaving badly?

What is it that I am unwilling to do that is causing my current situation – the acknowledge of which will allow me to unstuck this situation?

**Other Questions:**

What is it that I don't know that I don't know that if I became aware of would lead me out of this situation?

Even though I don't know what I don't know, if I had to know what I don't know what would that thing be?

Even though I don't know what I don't know, if I had to know what to ask that would reveal what I do need to know, what would that question be?

What is that I expected to receive from this situation and where has the deficit occurred?

If I could be doing more small things what more small things could I be doing?

What is one small thing that I am willing to give up in order to move 1% close to my goal? As I look into my future, what is it that I expect to achieve? As I look into my future, what is it that other expected me to achieve? Where do the two balance out?

If there was a place where I "went 'wrong'" where was that and how can I make small course corrections to get back to just one moment before that moment?

As I am willing to acknowledge what no longer serves me, then where do I need to become more (example: forgiving, humble, accepting, patient, and loving)? How can I maintain that for one second at a time over time?

Would it be possible to do one of my tasks for 1 minute?

If I needed to be able to solve my problems, what resources would I need to have and from where would they come?

If there's something else that might serve me better and help move me toward my goals, or that I could be thinking of or doing for one second, what would that thing be?

Of all the things I've learned, loved, and enjoyed, is there any of those things that I would be willing to think about for 1 minute?

If I can achieve my goals, for 1 second, then how would I do it, and what limitations and solutions would I need to overcome either personally or professionally that would allow me to move forward in a healthy balanced way to that end.

What underlying decision did I make that led me here and what new ones can I make that will help to serve my goals, purpose and the future I am creating for myself?

If I had to know what small, tiny question to ask myself that will lead me simply and easily toward my bigger goals, what would that small question be?

How can I overcome the solution to the problem?

What don't I know that I don't know that if it was willing to reveal itself would help me take the next small step forward, in a healthy balanced way.

What do my sub-personalities need that they didn't get that I can give to them that would make a difference in my past, present, and future?

How do I overcome the problem to my solution?

Of all the things I've learned, loved, and enjoyed, is there any of those things that I would be willing to think about for 1 minute?

Would it be possible to do one of my tasks for 1 minute?

If I needed to be able to solve my problems, what resources would I need to have and from where would they come?

If there's something else that might serve me better and help move me toward my goals, or that I could be thinking of or doing for one second, what would that thing be?

Even if my idea seems too big right now, if I could achieve my goals and could imagine it, for 1 second, then how would I do it, and what limitations and solutions would I need to overcome either personally or professionally that would allow me to move forward in a healthy balanced way to that end?

What underlying decision did I make that led me here and what new ones can I make that will help to serve my goals, purpose, and the future I am creating for myself?

If I had to know what small, tiny question to ask myself that will lead me simply and easily toward my bigger goals, what would that small question be?

What don't I know that I don't know that if it was willing to reveal itself would help me take the next small step forward, in a healthy balanced way.

If I can achieve my goals, for 1 second, then how would I do it, and what limitations and solutions would I need to overcome either personally or professionally that would allow me to move forward in a healthy balanced way to that end.

What underlying decision did I make that led me here and what new ones can I make that will help to serve my goals, purpose and the future I am creating for myself?

### **Listening for the answers:**

Because of the RAS (Reticular Activating System), what starts to happen is our attention gets placed on things that may have been right in front of us the whole time. The obvious things often escape our notice, so it can be helpful to look for what's the obvious thing that's escaping your notice.

Also, sometimes the answer, comes from your brain and in your own voice, so if you were expecting a God-like voice to boom from the heavens with the answers to your questions, that's not likely to happen, so listen for your own answers in your own voice.

Additionally, a friend calls, a Google search reveals a good answer, or even a book suddenly gets recommended by some stranger at a store.

Your instincts are guiding you more than you realize. This was quantified in Malcolm Gladwell's best-selling book, *Blink*.

### **What to do if no answers come back right away:**

Just keep asking daily, until an answer reveals itself. Remember, You have all the answers; your internal librarian is just taking longer to retrieve the data.

Also, you could ask the "silence" a question and even give it a name: For what purpose, Silence, is no answer coming to me at this time?

Silence, if No Answer was a person and could answer this question, what would "no answer" say?

### **Verbal Skills to Create Life Changes:**

Earlier, I promised to explain the purpose for that last phrase: "...in a healthy, balanced way." Because the brain is responding to our thoughts and processing our commands, so to speak, it's important to remember the verbal structures are also informing our reality. So let's look at how language might be holding you back from moving you forward and how to fix it. As well we'll look at how verbal habits that might be blocking your success.

**The Subconscious is always listening, so be careful what you are telling it:**

If we say, I want to lose weight. The sub-conscious pulls out a list for the brain of all the possible ways to lose weight. One way is get in an accident, get a broken jaw and have to eat from a straw for 6 weeks. Adding the phrase, “In a healthy, balanced, and safe way causes the brain to only pull out the shorter list of ways to lose weight that are healthy, balanced, and safe. No accident will occur. No jaw will break.

For example, people who say, “oh, it’s killing me.” Guess what, the brain responds with thoughts of death.

People who say, it’s all bad. The brain goes into the database and pulls out all the instances of everything bad.

People who say, it’s all good. The brain goes into the database and pulls out all the instances of everything bad. I wish doctors were trained in also asking what’s working, when people go for a doctor visit. When we ask the brain, what’s wrong, it goes into the database and pulls out all the What’s Wrongs. When we ask the brain, what’s right, it goes into the database and pulls out all the What’s Rights.

So the trick is, you guessed it, to ask the right question or at least a useful question, so that the brain brings to the forefront things that allow it be useful to your mind and daily life. I say mind here, because you might have been wondering about who’s in charge of this brain anyway? There are lots of definitions. The one I like is imagine a snorkeler in the ocean over some brain coral. The mind is the snorkeler and the brain coral is the brain.

The problem with wanting “it” to all go away. Your subconscious is always listening. It has no opinion, so when you say, all, it starts to get to work making “it” which is undefined and “all” to do just that. Be specific. Is it your pain you want to go away. How do you want it to go away? Do you want it to leave you gracefully, as a result of generous and major healing that you are ready for, in a healthy balanced way? My contention based on absolutely no science is that people who suicide themselves are wanting their pain to stop, but because it feels all encompassing the want to “end it all” when again, what they really want is the pain to stop.

Pain is just a sub-part of the whole. They haven’t yet learned that their pain is just one part of a larger whole and it has many other parts that are in support of it having its anguish alleviated. And it is possible the overcome deep pain and depression.

I feel certain there are psychologists who could offer a more scientific and clinical perspective, since there are people who struggle to gain control over their negative emotions and for those people, feel safe to seek out licensed professionals. I do not have to have a psychology degree and this is a technique that requires no medication and no office visits and can begin to help you shift from one end of the perspective spectrum to the other, should you choose that is what you want.

We are complex and emotional people and our emotions can be very powerful. When it comes to the more negative emotions, what is obvious that anger masks sadness, sadness masks guilt, guilt masks shame and on and on. These are the emotions of pain and pain experienced at any stage of these emotions, is again, just one part. There are still parts inside of each person where confidence, opportunity, joy, laughter and possibility exist.

Remember the use of broad sweeping words like “all” is too much. What’s “all” after all? We don’t know, really. It sounds pretty big, which is leading to overwhelm. Ask a question: “When I say “all” what one smaller thing do I really mean to indicate with my use of the word “all”?” Also, if “all” was your arm, you’d be unlikely to cut off your arm saying I just need you to go away, arm. The point being that all the good and the bad are helping in some way, even if you don’t know how, why, for what purpose or when it will be of use. So keep the arm, but engage in a negotiation with “all” using this technique.

Hey “all” would you be willing to, for one second, let me handle the things that need handling? I appreciate that you’ve been her this whole time and are doing you best.

### **Reduce Cortisol a Will with 3 minutes of physical pose can lower stress hormones:**

Amy Cuddy in her TedTalk shared how she quantified the stress hormone’s ability to be perceived as confident or less confident as the case may be. The book’s research, to be fair, later came under negative scrutiny, but what I love about her TedTalk is that she elevated an old salesperson’s adage I had lived by for decades, which is “fake it until you make it.”

As we’ve seen, the brain just needs time to adopt a new habit, so “faking it” eventually causes you to become it. And that’s her elevation of the old sales adage. She changed it into “Fake it until you become it.”

### **Other ways to shift emotions quickly:**

Lifting the eyes to the ceiling removes access to the emotions. Next time you’re crying, look up. Or if you’re experiencing someone who is upset, then do you best to have them look up.



I once encountered a bored teenager who was feeling resentful and withdrawn, at having to attend his cousin’s 1 year old birthday party. He was pretty unhappy to be the only oldest kid with no one to talk to, so I went up to make small talk. His eyes were looking down and to his right.

I started with obvious, which is a rapport building technique known as meeting people where they are. So I said, “It sucks to be a teenager at a baby’s birthday party.” Shocked an adult would say that, he looked level

at me, drawing his eyes up from where they were just moments before.

“I’m your aunt’s friend. She said you’re in town from Utah. Where are you from in Utah?” I asked. “Moab,” he said. Knowing that if he took his eyes up from where they were looking down and to his right, he’d access other parts of his brain. So, I gestured to a fake map that was high above our heads. Drawing a fake square for us to look up at, I said, “If this was a map of Utah, where do you live?”

Now, I didn’t ask this question, because I wanted to know where his city was located on a map. I asked, because in order for him to shift his mood, he needed to be looking up with his chin level but his eyes at a 45 degree angle. Within seconds, he started talking and asking questions. I started asking him more questions knowing he would be removed from his emotions physically through his new eye position and out of his amygdala by virtue of the questions I was asking. It worked and he bounded off to play with the little kids.

Had I walked up and said, “Hey kid, you look miserable and your emotions are accessed, when you’re looking down to the right, so let’s get you looking up and out at a 45 degree angle to something just about there in space,” would have been weird. The point being, you can very easily help people move out of their emotions without them even being aware that you are helping them to help themselves.

After a few questions, he started smiling and then ran off to do what kids of all ages do, play together. The pouting ended. His mother was so grateful and mouthed “Thank you!” from across the room. He wasn’t a “bad” kid behaving poorly. He was a person locked into his emotions without a way to get out.

Asking small questions and moving his eyes up helped him shift into a different part of his brain.

## Law of Focus:

Where you are focusing is where your energy goes. Choose your focus.

Say, “I’m safe.” And you’ll be happily surprised by your 100% safety record.

How do you trust yourself when there are so many challenges and how can you get back my ability to be inspired with new ideas?

Now I want to point out something, I didn’t say, “If you’ve lost faith in yourself, why are you stuck, and what’s wrong?”

Work hard / work smart? (Be careful what you wish for, be careful what you’re telling your brain to think about.)

Add “simply, easily, and naturally” to your sentences.

Add in a healthy, balanced, way to your wishes and wants

Add “yet” to the end of your “I haven’t” sentences.

Remove the word “but” and “however” wherever possible from your sentences.

The word “but: negates (i.e. almost entirely removes) everything in the sentence before it. Use the word “and” instead of but or however.

### **Example 1:**

What we say:

I want you to like this, but only for selfish reasons for wanting to ease your pain. It makes the world a better place.

What we translate: \_\_\_\_\_, but I only have selfish reasons for wanting to ease your pain. It makes the world a better place.

Better: I want you to like this and notice where it’s a fit for you to implement these strategies in your life.

### **Example 2:**

You did a good job, but you could have done better.  
\_\_\_\_\_ you could have done better. (ouch!)

Better: You did a good job and if you’re willing to hear it, there was one area of improvement I noticed. Would you be willing to hear my opinion and feedback?

NOTE: “Would you be willing” is more gentle and more effective than: can you, would you, if you could, or do me a favor.

### **Example 3:**

“I like you, but...” really means / is translated as “I don’t like you.” OUCH!

Instead consider utilizing Marshall Rosenberg’s techniques he teaches in Non-Violent Communication, a book I wish was required in order to register a car, it’s that foundational and important. In this book he shares how to express honestly and kindly ones own emotions. That I like you, but would be come, I am uncomfortable with this situation and I’m a little out of my league and don’t like how that feels. I’m going to stop participating, because that would give me a sense of comfort something I truly need in this moment.

### **Be mindful of “Don’t” sentences – It’s a 2 part process:**

To process a don’t sentence we have to first think of it, in order to un-think of it second. This explains why mothers who shout, “Timmy, don’t throw that ball!” find that Timmy’s next move is to throw the ball. It would be better to say, Timmy, please put that ball down so and come over here with it.” Trust me, it takes practice to learn to state what you want to have happen versus what you don’t want to have happen, but you’ll get the hang of it.

#### **Example:**

We say: Don’t get in an accident or Don’t end up a drunk like your Uncle.

We hear it as: Get in an accident. End up like your drunk uncle.

These are true words from a mother I knew to her son! OUCH! She thought she was pointing out what not be, never realizing she was requiring her own son to imagine being a drunk and ending up a drunk, as if that was the only thing he would or could aspire to. It would have been better to say, “Son, let’s work on getting your grades up, so you can make the choices that you want to make in your life, when you’re older. I support you and love you. Let’s imagine we’re way past these teenage years and you’re going to college, got a car and have your first relationship that going great!”

You can see how the imagery of one is negative and the imagery of the other lends itself toward a very different future.

#### **Example 2: The I don’t wants...**

We say: I don’t want this experience.”

We imagine: I want this (fill in the blank) experience.”

Ask a question to focus on getting what you intend, so if it’s safety, then focus on safety. Rather than saying don’t get in an accident, say I’m safe at all times or, “How can I be safer, in the car?” (The use of the r, pre-supposes you are already safe.)

The same structure can be used in many ways: How can I be a better studier? (Pre-supposes you already are a good studier.) This is more useful than I need to study more. I should study. Or I want to get good grades.

#### **Use “Better” for a better future:**

Create statements that end in “...or better!” (e.g. Safety...or better! That person I am hoping to have a relationship with...or better!) You’ll notice you naturally begin to consider the other options that await you.

**Stop using Why:**

Remove “why” and replace it with “for what purpose” to change the answer. Also it removes the possibility for confrontation.

**The problem of “Freedom”**

Be mindful of declarations that have multiple meanings. Remember the brain will fulfill its orders and will put you RAS to task bringing into your awareness what you want to focus on.

People who declare, “I want to be financially free” are in for some challenges. Be careful. There are lots of definitions of free, so define free means. We could say that a homeless person is financially free. Your brain might inadvertently create homelessness, when it means to create a steady living and a safe home life with a certain level of savings and investments.

Consider using the SMART goals structure of Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-Bound. “I want to improve my work life experience in a healthy, balanced, easy way with gentle transitions that include the revenue I need to succeed, with funds and savings in the bank in the amount of X, and another account with the amount of X.

**Stop Speaking in absolutes**

“Everything is all bad...All the time.

Consider instead: Is it possible that there is one thing working well for me, even if it’s just my ears working, while I listen to this speaker in this moment?

**Hope vs. Want vs. Intend:**

Hopelessness must exist for hope to exist, so we imagine doubt(s).

“I want” causes you to see it happening in the future, but not now

“I intend” creates imagery of you expecting it to happen

**The Power of Yet:**

Add “yet” to the end of your “I haven’t...” sentences. It creates a consideration that it’s foregone conclusion it will occur at some point in the future.

Example of it without: I haven’t started my business.

Example of the same sentence adding yet: I haven’t started my business, yet.

**Try vs. I’ll do my best:**

Remove “try” it means attempt and it also means fail, as in it is not going to happen...ever. (e.g.

“I’ll try to attend your BBQ or you are trying my patience.). Instead, say, I’ll check my schedule and do my best to attend for a short while, since I have several events that day.

**Language tools for your money:**

Find value in what you have, so that you can find value in what is to come. To give credit where credit is due, I know I picked that line up at a Max Simon event long ago. It inspired me to incorporate it into a money class I used to teach. At that event, people would write on a 3x5

card what their thoughts or feelings were about money. The responses ranged from “I love it!” to “I hate it!” and for some the feelings of “It’s never enough! And it’s never good enough.”

Learn to love the \$1.00, so you can love the other “ones” too?

Along those same lines, love this life. Learn to love this life and not the one you don’t have yet, so that when you do have that new life, you can experience loving that new life too and here is why: if you do not learn to love this life, warts and all, as you achieve that million dollar life, in the future, you could hate it just as much as you hate this version / have the same negative poor relationship with your experience, having never learned to find satisfaction in general with whatever you and what it is you have at hand.

Same holds true for money. Love the money you have - - however much it is. Money is just a symbol for energy anyway. We don’t get mad at the sun, which is also energy. No need to get mad at money. I’m not saying don’t strive for more. I’m not saying it’s a perfect life, when it might not feel that way or show up that way for you. What I am saying is that you get to choose your thoughts and your perspective and can also choose the perspective for how to love the life you have today and the money, friends, experiences you have today, warts and all.

Dissatisfaction now leads to dissatisfaction later. Be mindful of your perspectives and thoughts, so that you are able to experience the joy versus not experiencing the joy and only experiencing that tiny slice of reality.

### **Putting it all together:**

This is a time to expect miracles and know that an unexpected good is coming. If you are facing challenges, adopt the perspective of a loose quote of Napoleon Hill in *Think and Grow Rich*, “Inside of every set back is the seed of a new opportunity.” Find your opportunities, there are more than you know and asking small questions will get you there.

The road to success is paved in bite-sized questions and small steps that help you achieve that big vision goal. Remember to break things into small pieces and take the small steps. You’ll get there faster than attempting the giant leaps, which too often are so overwhelming that they cause stuckness instead of forward momentum.

Lastly, you have more control over your thoughts now that you have a “how to” guide showing you how to ask questions, shift your verbal structures to impact your outcomes and how to adopt new perspectives that serve you better.

The End.

P.S. Would you be willing to share how this book resonated with you and one small thing you know you can implement right away? Please email me at [helloresults@predictableresultsnow.com](mailto:helloresults@predictableresultsnow.com) to share your story or kind comments.

## Resources:

Marshall Rosenberg, *Non-Violent Communication*  
Malcolm Gladwell's best-selling book, *Blink*.  
Napoleon Hill, *Think and Grow Rich*  
*The Kaizen Way*, Dr. Robert Maurer  
Subliminal, by Leonard Mlodinow via Google Talks on YouTube  
Brene Brown, Ted Talk on Vulnerability  
Amy Cuddy, TedTalk on Confidence

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Onna Young is a revenue growth consultant. She is a strategist, trainer, and creator of the 'Predictable Results...Now and New Results Now!™' method designed to help businesses and people thrive faster.



She owns her own publishing company called Idea Factory Publishing and is an author of *Life After Debt*, *Brain Hacking*, *25 Rules for Entrepreneurs*, *21 Days to Joy*, *Influence the Power of NLP*, *Easy Guide to Home Buying Basics*, *Happiness is the Balance of Opposites* and many others and has an online training platform to teach business how to grow revenue.

As a marketing strategist and trainer, she has participated in helping thousands of businesses with training and or advising on crafting custom marketing, sales programs / processes, in order to increase their revenue. She is focused on the do-it-yourself learners who want quick life (personal or business) changes and who want to keep the results consistent and predictable, making scalability and / or success inevitable.

She is a former Account Executive, Underwriter / Branch Manager for the automotive / mortgage verticals, marketing strategy / analyst for small businesses.

She is an avid organic gardener who sees growing food is a metaphor for life: Plant the right seeds, give them the right conditions, and there's nothing you cannot grow easily.

### **Books by Onna Young**

Brain Hacking: The Road to Success is Paved in Bite-Sized Questions

Critical Success Factors for Businesses: Mastering the 7 Pillars

Happiness is the Balance of Opposites

Influence the Power of NLP

Easy Guide to Home Buying Basics

Life After Debt

You Are What You Think

The Least You Need to Know About Marketing Your Business

### **Successful Start-Up Guide Series**

*Ultimate Wisdoms for Start-Ups*

*Business Planning Basics*

*So...You Wanna Start a Business?*

*Marketing Matters*

*The Least You Need to Know About Your FICO Score Sales for People Who Hate Sales*

*Once Upon a Start up*

### **Self Perspective Series**

*Brain Hacking* by Onna Young

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*Make Peace with Your Thighs*  
*Secrets Only Girls Tell*  
*Shift Happens – 21 Days to Joy*

**Poetry:**

*Rain in the House*

**Children's Books:**

*A Rest Home For Wishes*  
*Are You My Father*  
*Bullfrog Blues*  
*Bump in the Night*  
*Butterfly Wings*  
*Candy Monster*  
*Chasing Money*  
*Dream Along with Me*  
*Dream Thief*  
*Dysfunction Junction*  
*Getting to Know Your Monster*  
*Glitter Fairy*  
*How Edna Got Her Smile Back*  
*It Was Not Me*  
*It's Good to Be a Lemon*  
*Makena SuperHero*  
*Oh...the Messes You'll Make*  
*Once Upon a Story*  
*Our Friend, Mistakes*  
*Perfectly Imperfect*

*Princess Charming*  
*Princess School for Extraordinary Girls*  
*Running Amuck*  
*Scorpion and the Frog*  
*Susie's Shoes*  
*The Blame Game*  
*The Book of Hearts*  
*The Bored Prince*  
*The Gigglesons*  
*The Late Bird*  
*The Lesson of One Dollar*  
*The World Waits for You*  
*Time to Zoom*  
*Tooville – A Land Where Too Much Is Just Right...Or Is It?*  
*Two Sizes Too Small*  
*Your Future is Coming to Town*