



Project Uplift

MANAGING STRESS THROUGH **MIND,**
BODY, HEART AND SPIRIT



Native Women's
Association of Canada

PREPARED BY:

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC)
Labour Market Development – Strategic Partnership Agreement



The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) is founded on the collective goal to enhance, promote, and foster the social, economic, cultural and political well-being of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women within First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Canadian societies. As a national organization representing Aboriginal women since 1974, NWAC's mandate is to achieve equality for all Aboriginal women in Canada.

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Canada

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INTRODUCTION

Spirit pervades all creation and that every creature possesses a soul in some degree though not necessary conscious of itself. – *Ohiyesa (Charles Eastman)*

As Indigenous people, we have always known that we live in a vibrational universe. All of our teachings talk about the interconnectedness of everything; and the foundation of many nations or tribes' beliefs is rooted in the concept that everything and everyone is related. When they prayed they gave thanks to the Great Spirit, Grandfather Sun, Grandmother Moon, Father Sky, Mother Earth, the winged, the four-legged, the four elements, the tree spirits, the water spirits and the two-legged. Everyone and everything was seen as a part of the whole family of the Great Spirit, and everything and everyone was contained within the whole. Today, through quantum physics, science is demonstrating what Indigenous people have already known. It is showing us that at the sub-atomic level everything is pure energy. All energy is continually moving and it emits frequency. It is that frequency which creates form. We are not just this physical body. Our presence doesn't end at our skin line. We have an energy field around us. This energetic aura connects us to other living beings and the universe around us. We are all interconnected. Essentially, you are more than the physical body that is sitting on that chair.

This toolkit has been designed to assist you with managing your stress through understanding how energy and vibration works. For your use, we have broken this toolkit into four sections.

- * Mind;
- * Body;
- * Heart; and
- * Spirit.

The reader should understand that each of these sections is not mutually exclusive, and the reader can begin with whatever subject interests them. Throughout this booklet, you will find a number of exercises which can be used to shift your thinking, improve your energy and well-being.

The beating of the drum symbolized the heartbeat of Mother Earth, and these rhythmic vibrations have been used to assist in healing by releasing tensions.





WHAT ARE VIBRATIONAL FREQUENCIES?

**If you wish to understand the universe,
think of energy, frequency and vibration.**

- Nikola Tesla

Everything is energy and vibrates within a certain range of frequency in order for us to perceive it. What limits us from perceiving something is the vibrational match in our frequency to something else.

Ever lost your keys and then found them in the first place you looked? What happened was that your belief in the loss of the keys matched your vibrational frequency. There were no fairies of the universe that mysteriously hid them. Instead your perception that you lost your keys created the experience of not seeing your keys. You could not perceive that which you believed. You believed your keys were lost.

A simpler example which all of us has experienced is when we are trying to explain something to someone else. No matter how many ways we try to explain something the person just doesn't get it. Many times we will say, 'they are on a different wavelength'. What we are actually saying is the person is not a vibrational match to us.

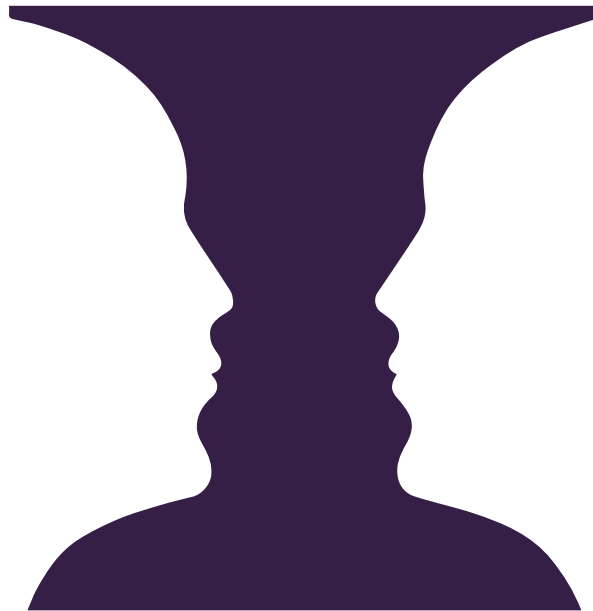
Part of the reason for this is we have been conditioned to only accept information taken in through our five senses. We have been led to believe that if we can't see, touch, hear, smell or taste it then it does not exist. Yet all of these senses are just interpreters of vibration, and when we attune ourselves to the inner senses we are in a position to make choices and decisions from a more empowered perspective.



Here are a few perception games for you to try:

Look closely. Do you see an old or young woman? They are both in the picture. Shift the way you look and you will see both.

Do you see the faces, the vase or both?



Here is another exercise for you to try.

Look at the chart and read the COLOUR not the word.

PURPLE **ORANGE** **YELLOW**
RED **BLUE** **RED** **GREEN**
PINK **RED** **GREEN** **BLACK**
YELLOW **ORANGE** **WHITE**

Left - Right Conflict

Your right brain tries to say the colour but your left brain insists on reading the word.

A SIMPLE SHIFT BRINGS A NEW STATE OF BEING

We all do it. We allow the circumstances of life to influence our state of being or mindset. Something happens at work or in our home life, and our mind launches into a diatribe of monstrous proportions. It doesn't matter if it was yesterday or last week or ten years ago. That one little bugaboo becomes our focus and colours everything in our life. We never realize that our ranting keeps us locked into a state of being that is not and will never serve us.

All states of mind/being exist. There are states of being such as: health, sickness, anger, happiness, wealth, poverty, etc. They are like radio stations in the ethers and just as you can change stations

on your stereo, you can move out of one state of being and into another. Through our thinking and emotions, we attune to a particular frequency, and it becomes the dominant vibration in our life. It is the vibration which attracts circumstances, situations and people into our life.

Tuning into a particular state of being requires you to tame the mind. You have to become conscious of what is going on in your mental dialogues. If you don't like how you are feeling then you have to change these internal conversations in order to move into a new state of being. It is all a choice and it takes work. You can't just become conscious of

your thinking for five minutes and expect change. The mind is really an unruly beast and it likes to revert back to the old patterns. We are all creatures of habit and the mind only feels useful when it is whining and complaining.

If you want lasting change then it is a 24/7 endeavour in which you have to prune the thoughts that are not serving you. You also have to recognize that some things take time to change. It is like going on a diet and expecting that when you step on the scale tomorrow morning those ten pounds you put on will be miraculously gone. They won't but it does not mean that you give up on the process.

Whoever told you that the bamboo is more beautiful than the oak, or the oak more valuable than the bamboo? Do you think the oak wishes it had a hollow trunk like this bamboo? Does the bamboo feel jealous of the oak because it is bigger and its leaves change color in the fall? The very idea of the two trees comparing themselves to each other seems ridiculous, but we humans seem to find this habit very hard to break. Let's face it, there is always going to be somebody who is more beautiful, more talented, stronger, more intelligent, or apparently happier than you are. And conversely, there will always be those who are less than you in all these ways. The way to find out who you are is not by comparing yourself with others, but by looking to see whether you are fulfilling your own potential in the best way you know how. -OSHO



THE MIND



What Story Are You Telling?

The thoughts you are thinking, the words you are using and the stories you are telling others all matter. They matter because they are all energy and are the building blocks in creating your reality. Just as a pebble dropped into a pond creates waves that ripple outward; our thoughts fueled by our emotions go out into the world where they connect with like-minded thoughts bringing us synchronistic experiences.

Most of us have been conditioned to think and speak in terms of what we don't want. We don't want this illness, this job, this type of relationship, this government, this economy...we don't want crime in our communities. We have become very good at identifying what it is we don't want in our lives.

It is not only the stories we are telling. The words we use and how we use them are also important. For example, if you are telling yourself that you want to be

free. What exactly do you mean? There is freedom for something and there is freedom from something. When someone asks, 'how you are'? Do you say 'alright'? 'Not bad'? All words carrying a vibration.

Beating the drum of what we don't want in our lives will always guarantee we get more of it because the universe is about matching frequencies. You get what you focus upon and until you change your thought process, you will keep attracting the same type of relationships, the same type of jobs, the same employees, the same old, same old.

Did you know that trees talk? Well they do. They talk to each other; and they'll talk to you if you listen.

– *Walking Buffalo (Stony) 1850*

When the Indigenous hunters were preparing to depart on the hunt, they never started with any of the following statements:

- * "Last year was a really bad year. I sure hope we don't repeat it."
- * "I got a bad feeling this is going to be a lousy hunt."

Instead they began with a dance and were always grateful in advance for a successful hunt.



Exercises to Awaken to the Mind Game:

1. Listening to Yourself

Your first step is to become aware of what it is that you are telling yourself and other people. Spend the next few days listening to the stories you tell and the words you are using. Since we all carry on mental monologues in our head, listen to your internal dialogues with yourself. You may be surprised to find that you aren't as positive as you thought you were.

What are the common words I use?

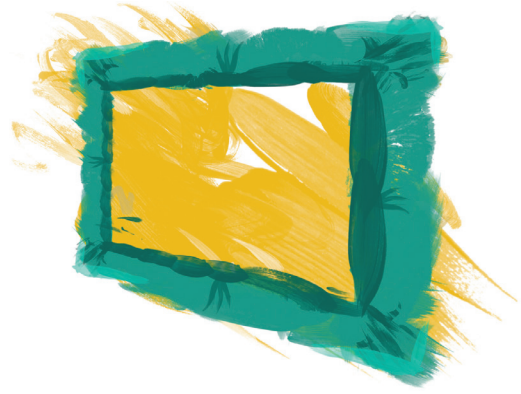
What story am I always telling?

Listening to the words you are using and how you are using them makes you more conscious of how you are creating. Your creation of your reality begins in this moment. Right now is your bouncing off place

2. Reframe your Story

After you have observed yourself for a few days, start making a conscious effort to change your stories and to define the words you are using. Start removing the words no/not/never from your vocabulary and begin thinking and talking about what you want. I don't want to date any more losers becomes I want to date someone who is easy to be with, someone who is emotionally and financially secure. I am sick becomes I am feeling a lot better and every day I am getting stronger. Frame everything in terms of what you want.

Give yourself ten minutes and using the words, 'I want... ', begin writing out all the things you want in your life. There are no restrictions or limits in this exercise.



Did you know...? The words: Hocus Pocus, Abracadabra and Alakazam all mean, 'with my words I create.'

I want	
I want	
I want	
I want	
I want	
I want	
I want	
I want	
I want	
I want	
I want	
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I want	

The Monkey Mind

Many people experience what is commonly referred to as the 'monkey mind'. It's when your mind is continually rehashing a problem over and over again. Usually the subject of these dialogues deals with something in our life that we are not happy with. It could be a disagreement with someone. It could be a work, financial or a health situation. Whatever it is that incessant dialogue in your head won't stop and the more you tell yourself not to think about it, the more you think about it.

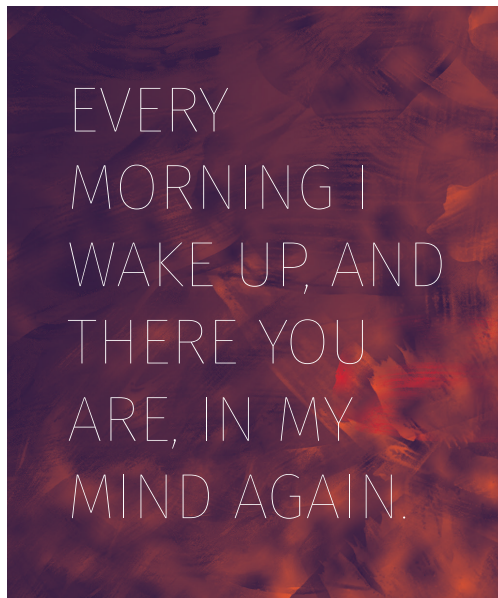
Here is the reason why we find it difficult to shift our thinking process. Our minds like to be kept busy and are continually nattering on about something from the past or projecting something into the future. Our minds have become trained to not operate in the present.



Last thought at night; first thought in the morning

There used to be an old saying: "Never go to bed angry." There was a reason for this and it is very simple. Your last thought at night will be your first thought in the morning. The mind always returns to the vibration you last left it at. So if you fell asleep thinking about an argument you had with a friend, the mind will return to that set point to begin your day. This principle also applies to everyday situations and people. Ever went home to a family reunion and found yourself acting in ways which were contrary to who you are today? What happened is you went back to the old vibration.

Here is a simple experiment for you to try. When you wake up tomorrow morning, lay there in bed for a few moments. Let your mind become aware of your thoughts. What you will discover is your mind will search for the last thought you had before you fell asleep.



Stopping Those Snowballing Thoughts

Here is a mind game for you to play. Let's say it takes 17 seconds for a thought to start to jell and set the direction for the mind conversation. In that 17 seconds there are enough words going through your mind that when you hold that thought for 17 seconds another thought of a similar vibration will join it. If we let this thinking process continue for 68 seconds then that train of thought sets your tone for the day. Often this results in attracting to you persons or situations of similar thought. So if the thoughts you are thinking are positive, change nothing. If they are negative, you have to shift to another train of thoughts and hold that thought stream for at least 68 seconds. Become a conscious connector.

Steps to Changing a Thought

So how do you shift to another train of thoughts? First you have to want to change your thinking. Second you have to accept that it is going to take some work. You can't just do it once and expect your life to change. The mind is extremely stubborn and once it gets hold of something it is like a dog chasing its tail.



Butterflies have always taught us the importance of transformation. From the caterpillar it becomes the butterfly.

Here are a few mind diversion exercises you can try:

1. Give the mind a diversion and go do something else. Go for a walk. Pet your dog. Go to the movies. Take a nap. Search through YouTube and find something that makes you laugh.
2. Practice mediation. If you find that your mind will not shut up while you are trying to meditate focus on a noise in your environment or use a chant.
3. Think a better feeling thought. Think about someone you love and all the things you appreciate about them. Think about a beautiful sunset.
4. Write out the letters of the alphabet and beside each letter think of a good feeling word. For example, **a**=appreciation, **b**=best, **c**=charming, **d**=delicious...

A		J		S	
B		K		T	
C		L		U	
D		M		V	
E		N		W	
F		O		X	
G		P		Y	
H		Q		Z	
I		R			

5. Sing a musical scale or use a non-descript phrase or sound.
6. Practice drumming. Listen to some music that will bring back good memories.
7. Count backwards from 100. Every time your mind wanders start back at 100.
8. When you crawl into bed at night, try to think of your day backwards. Start with the moment you crawled into bed and bring yourself to each moment throughout the day that brought you there.

THE HEART



Your Moods and Energy Attraction

Your mood or emotions attracts the experiences that are a reflection of that mood. Ever had one of those days? You wake up and everything seems to be going wrong from the moment you climb out of bed. You stub your foot as you get out of bed. You spill your coffee. As you brush your teeth you dribble toothpaste down the front of your shirt. You have a closet full of shirts and in your haste to get to work you grab the one shirt that is missing a button. You get out in traffic and you hit every red light. Someone flips you the finger in traffic because you didn't move fast enough through the intersection and now you are blocking

traffic. You stop and get a coffee and manage to get into the line that isn't moving. At this point, most people start thinking, "Can this day get much worse? What else can possibly go wrong?" Well, when you ask a question like that the universe delivers. And why you ask?

It gets worse because the vibrational frequency or energy you are emitting acts like an attractor. In essence, it sends out an energy beam from you and everyone else who is on the same wavelength rendezvous with you. Like attracts like.

Energy in Motion

Our e-motions are actually energy in motion and they are vibrations. The emotions we are feeling send out signals from us that attract to us the situations we encounter in our daily lives.

There are really only two emotions: love and fear. Each is at the opposite end of the vibrational spectrum and between them is a variety of related emotions. In the range of love, we have the feelings of joy, bliss, happiness, worthiness, security, etc. At the spectrum closer to fear we have emotions such as: anger, greed, disappointment, hatred, jealousy, anxiety, frustration, etc.

There are no wrong emotions. All emotions are valid and provide you information about where you are focusing your energy. Like a gas gage on your car, your emotions are indicators telling you where you are on the vibrational spectrum. Many of us never make the connection of how our emotions are actually fueling our thoughts and words. Instead we allow our feelings to run amuck and we end up stuck in both emotions and thinking that are not working in our highest interest.

With regards to our emotional growth, here is an interesting point to ponder. At an emotional level, the majority of adults have not grown up beyond the age of thirteen. Meaning most people are still using the emotional behaviours they learned as a child to cope with adult situations. So next time you are faced with an individual exhibiting bullying tactics in your life, you might want to see them as a frighten child in adult body.

When we do not acknowledge the emotions we are feeling, they don't go away. Instead these repressed feelings surface in other ways in our life. We end up sick. We put on weight to protect ourselves from our outside world. We move through the day with aches and pains or we become lethargic. In some instances, we continually bump into furniture and hurt ourselves.

In order to work with and understand your emotions you need to become aware of them. What does the word love feel like to you? What about the words: easy, secure, fun, happy, confident? What happens to your body when you allow yourself to step into these emotions?

The more you become aware of how you are feeling throughout

the day, the easier it is to shift your emotions. Shift your emotions, you change your thoughts and you change your point of attraction. When your point of attraction shifts, you may find that the people and circumstances that brought you grief no longer show up in your life or you handle them differently.

One further point I want to make regarding the shifting of emotions is this: confronting the person you are angry with when you are in an angry mood will not always improve the situation. Sometimes it is better to do the inner work and wait until you are in a better frame of mind. Anger begets anger and we end up saying things we later regret. Sometimes it is better to move the emotion first. So how do you move those emotions that are not serving you?

TIPS to Change Your State of Being



* Do some physical exercises...go to the gym...do some yoga...go for a walk...

* Chop vegetables.

* Stop ranting to everyone about the situation or person. The more you talk about it the more it gains momentum.

* Cry. Sometimes crying offers us a release.

* Look for a better feeling thought. For example, if you are feeling frustration you could tell yourself I am doing alright. This too shall pass. Everything always works out for me.

* Breathe. All your emotions are connected to your breathing patterns.



The Fear Vibration

Human beings really only have two emotions: Love and Fear. All other emotions branch directly or indirectly from these two. Fear has a long, slow frequency attached to it. Love has a very rapid and high frequency.

We live in a world that is continually selling us fear. Our media is frequently citing statistics about how dangerous life is for us, and we have a corporate world that offers us a variety of contraptions and pills to save us from the boogiemaster of fear. We have become so accustomed to the onslaught of fear in our world that we can no longer distinguish the difference between true fear and manufactured fear. So what exactly is the difference?

True fear causes physical responses in our body. Our vision becomes more focused; lactic acid is pumped into the muscles. A chemical called "cortisol" is released into the bloodstream, which prepares you to either fight or take flight. It is a natural mechanism that lets us know we are in danger. It is also an internal response system in which our intuition provides us with information to keep us safe. For example, you are walking through the woods and a large black bear crosses your path. You don't think about anything you run for your safety. Under true fear survival is your primary mode.

Manufactured fear has no basis in reality and is conjured based upon your perceptions about a situation or person. For instance, the company is downsizing and you are fearful you may lose your job. Manufactured fear is often accompanied with worry and doubt. In the case of worry, we create negative scenarios about what might happen. Whereas doubt is a 100% trust in a belief you don't prefer.

The problem with continually operating from a mode of manufactured fear is our body becomes impervious to its natural responses. We no longer listen to our intuition or gut feelings. Since we are running on adrenaline our immune systems become compromised and we lose our ability to make rational decisions. Since everything is vibration our fears actually become self-fulfilling prophecies.

WHAT FEAR IS:

F - FALSE

E - EVIDENCE

A - APPEARING

R - REAL

Stepping off the Fear Vibration:

1. Change your worry to wonder. For example, if you are in the midst of a downsizing at work. Instead of worrying about losing your job you might want to change your thinking to a positive outcome. 'I wonder what it would be like to two job offers on the same day.'
2. Change your worry to 'wouldn't it be nice if' statements. 'Wouldn't it be nice if I found a better job that paid a higher salary?' 'Wouldn't it be nice I won the lottery?'
3. Get in touch with your intuition (Inner being) by playing games with it. Your intuition can be in feelings, visions, auditory statements or bodily sensations. How does your intuition work for you?
4. Stop listening and reading the news. Try it for one week and you may discover you are not missing anything. You may also discover that your mood is substantially improved.

An old Cherokee is teaching his grandson about life. "A fight is going on inside me," he said to the boy. "It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil – he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego." He continued, "The other is good – he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you – and inside every other person, too." The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf will win?" The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

Changing your Vibrational Frequency

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that."

-Martin Luther King

It is quite easy to change your vibration. You simply stop reacting to situations and experiences and start responding. When you react to situations the internal chatter in your mind usually kicks into high gear and your thoughts start snowballing. Since most of us were never taught to police our thoughts or emotions, we usually end up going down the negative road. One thought connects to another thought and the fuel that intensifies our thinking is our emotions.

HEALING doesn't mean the damage never existed. It means the damage no longer controls our lives.



THE BODY



The Power of your Breath

Your breathing is not only connected to each of your emotions; it also affects every other system in your body and influences your vibrational frequency. Breathing is the most important body function and most people go through life never giving it a second thought. Yet if you learn to control it; it can become one of your greatest allies in the manifestation process. There are two parts to your breathing, and both parts should be done through your nose. There is the inhalation and the exhalation. Both affect your well-being. If you are not taking in enough oxygen, you are not providing your body with the most vital nutrient it needs for its survival. Learn to breathe properly and you can improve your health and well-being.

In addition of the proper way to breathe, one must also be aware that all of your emotions are tied to your breathing patterns. For instance, get angry your breathing becomes faster. Become relaxed and your breathing slows down. Get depressed, your breathing

gets heavy. Become anxious and your breathing is in short quick breaths. Through altering your breathing patterns you can increase or diminish your vibrational frequency.

If you are not exhaling all the carbon dioxide, you are leaving stale air in your body and not allowing room for new nutrients to come into your being. The impacts from improper breathing are abundant and can range from: tense and tighten muscles, constricted blood flow, lower, and a stimulation of stress hormones within your body and an accumulation of lactic acid in your muscles. You become a walking toxin; and you deplete your energy. All of this affects your health.

Here is an exercise you can try:

The One-Minute Meditation

Throughout the day, stop and tell yourself to breath. On the inhale, count to three as you take a long, slow deep breath in and pretend you are filling a balloon located just below your bellybutton. On the exhale, pretend you are deflating the balloon and use a count of five. Do this for one minute or more before you react to something. Or you can practice it anywhere and at anytime. You can do it in a meeting, the classroom, on the bus, while sitting at a red light in your car...no one needs to know what you are doing. Just watch what happens when do it. You might be pleasantly surprised!



“People may not tell you how they feel about you, but they always show you. Pay attention”.

The Body Inventory

Unless we are into body building or we come down with an illness; most people take their physical body for granted. We bathe it, feed it, clothe it and off to work we go. We never really listen to the subtle clues that it provides us. It is important to become aware of the person you are projecting to the outside world. To do this start taking a daily personal inventory of your physical body. Mentally do a roll-call. Listen and feel what your body is telling you. Here are a few questions to get you started.

Is my body relaxed or tense?

If it is tense, where am I holding the tension?

Are my shoulders up around my ears?

Are my fists clenched?

Am I clenching my jaw?

Am I squinting?

Am I frowning or smiling?

How am I breathing?

Body Language

We form our opinions of someone we meet for the first time in just a few seconds, and this initial instinctual assessment is based far more on what we see and feel about the other person than on the words they speak. On many occasions we form a strong view about a new person before they even speak a single word. It is said that between 50-80% of all human communications are non-verbal. These non-verbal indicators are:

- * Facial expressions
- * Voice, tone and tempo
- * Posture
- * Gestures



On the following chart, label the areas of your body that you feel are tense.



Body Awareness Exercise

For each of the following states of being, what does it feel like?

What does my body feel like when I am confident?

What does my body feel like when I am happy?

What does my body feel like when I am tense?

What does my body feel like when I am relaxed?

What does my body feel like when I am sad?

What does my body feel like when I am in love?

Tension Release Exercise

Becoming aware of the tension in your body is the first step in lightening up. Begin by breathing in a relaxed state. Take a long slow deep breathe in through your nose. Breathe into the bottom of your spine, and then slowly exhale. Now mentally focus on an area of your body that is tense. As you mentally identify the tenseness in your body begin focusing in your breathing. With each inhale mentally bring the air to the various parts of the body. On the exhale, feel the tension releasing. On the final breath of this exercise mentally tell the part of the body that you appreciate all it does for you and it is alright to relax and let go.

THE SPIRIT

What you think, you
become. What you
feel, you attract.
What you imagine,
you create.

- Buddha



Where is Spirit?

It is very simple. Spirit is within. It is that quiet voice that can be found within the silence.

The Power in Your Imagination

Everything and all experiences have their starting point in imagination. The computer you are staring at was at one point an image in someone's mind. The building you are sitting in was first created in someone's imagination. The contract you just wrote for your client began in your imagination. The fight you had with your boss or partner, you created it in your imagination. The activities of the imagination are what drive our world.

Also called the faculty of imagining, imagination is our ability to form new pictures and sensations that are not perceived through the physical senses of: sight, hearing, taste, feeling or touch.

Here are few exercises you might want to try to sharpen your imagining skills:

Hold out your hand and imagine you are holding:

- * A Lemon
- * A Softball
- * A Basketball

Even though these items were not physically in your hand, could you not sense them?

Here are a few more exercises:

- * Think about biting into a lemon – did your mouth go sour?
- * In your mind's eye, picture a pink polka doted elephant.
- * Think about your favourite song – can you hear it?

Regrettably many of us have been directed away from consciously using our imagination. We have been told that imagination is nothing more than fantasy and has no place in our real world. We have been taught that imagination is only for those in the creative fields or children. Yet, your imagination is always operating. You are utilizing the faculty of imagination on a continual basis to explore and create situations and experiences. Within your imagination everything is possible, and there are no limits.

If you use your imagination consciously it can become your greatest collaborator. It can allow you to move the mind from 'what is' so that you can create 'what is wanted'. Taking conscious control of your imagination involves shifting your focus from reality, and allowing your mind to live within the creative power of the dream. In other words, you occupy the dream as if it was already fulfilled.

Imagination is not wishful thinking. Wishful thinking is a function of the mind in which you are thinking about something but not in it. Recalling past memories is not imagination; although you can use past memories to embody the imaginative senses in your dream.

Creating the Life You Want

In order for your dream to become reality in your life, it must first be created within in your imagination. To do this, you begin by removing your awareness from your current reality and place yourself in the reality of what you want.

In the mind's eye, you begin to picture the experience as you want it to be. You hear it what you what to hear. You add all the senses to what you are imagining and then you step into the movie. The more you occupy the mind's movie in its totality, the more likely you are to manifest it on the physical plane.



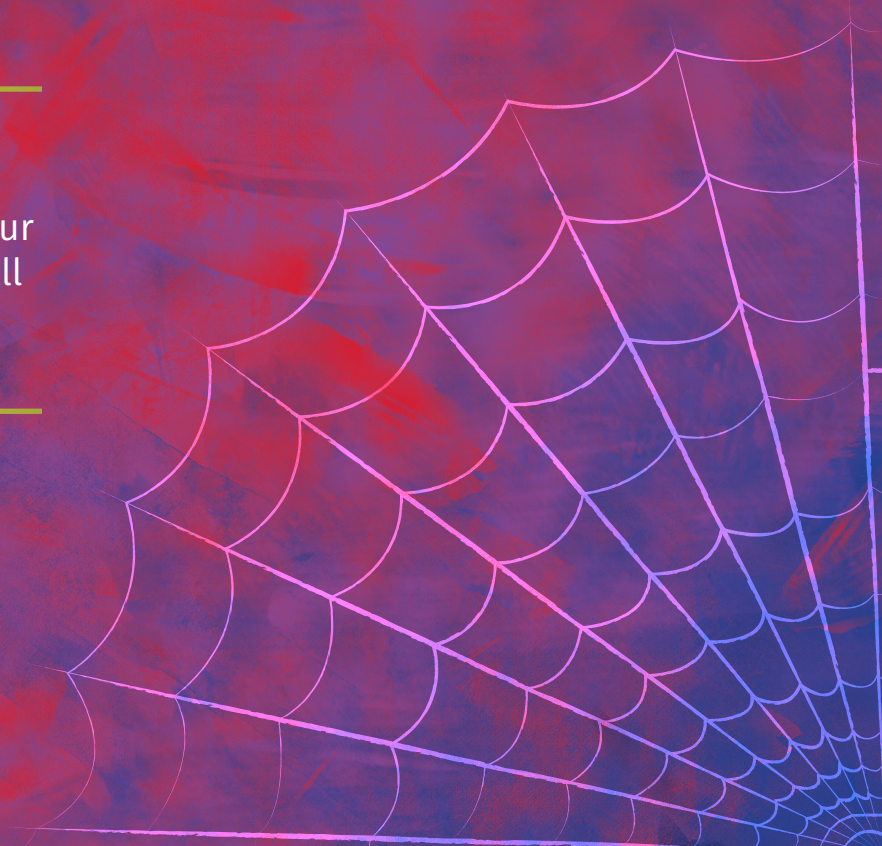
The word imagination comes from the Latin word 'imaginari,' which means 'to picture oneself' and depending on how you use it, your imagination can either empower or hinder you because your imagination creates your reality.

The universe only operates on the affirmative. It does not recognize the words not/no/never. When you say you don't want to date any more losers, the universe only hears 'you want to date losers'.

A FEW ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to our selves. All things are bound together. All things connect.

- Chief Seattle, 1854



Whose Blueprint Are You Following?

If your thoughts are the building materials in creating your reality, your beliefs are the blueprint. When most people hear the word belief, they automatically associate it with religion, culture or politics. Yet, your beliefs are more than that. They are thoughts that you keep thinking about yourself, your community and your world. They are the foundational basis of your life.

It is said that we come into this world as a blank slate and as we grow up our parents, teachers, friends, and society all tell us who we are; what we should think; and how we should behave. Although these people may have had good intentions, many of the beliefs we have picked up along our life journey are not working for us. Instead they keep us stuck in behaviours in which we live our lives trying to live up to the expectations of others while we move further away from our authentic self.

Few of us ever take the time to think about whether what we have been told is true or bogus. We have accepted these beliefs and allowed them to unconsciously shape our reality. How many of us have been told the following: You are worthless. You can't do anything right. You will never be able to do it. You are too old/too fat/too useless/too stupid. You don't have what it takes. You will never be successful. You aren't qualified. You aren't good enough.

Identifying Beliefs That Are No Longer Serving You

You begin by looking at areas of your life that don't seem to be working for you. Look for areas in your life where you feel fear or where your buttons are easily pushed. Start listening to the habitual words and phrases you are using to describe your life. When you come across something that is not positive, stop and ask yourself: what would I have to believe for this to be true? Is this really who I am?

Peeling the Onion

Examining your beliefs it is somewhat like peeling an onion. The more layers you peel, the more variations of the belief you uncover. We come into this world a clean slate and over time we are conditioned and programmed with other people's beliefs, judgements, superstitions and prejudices. By the time we hit our teenage years; these programs have become firmly entrenched in our mind and influence not only our thinking, but also our behaviours and perceptions. Since they are so deeply embedded in us, most people rarely understand how these false premises are affecting them in adulthood.

One of the most detrimental beliefs prevalent within our world is that of conditional love. Most of us we grew up being told, "I will love you only if..." Words that were uttered by our parents or authority figures which implied if we did what we were told we would be loved. What this belief structure did was initiate us into a state of fear. It is a fear that over time has gathered strength, and as adults, keeps us trapped in a pattern of reactionary living. It is a mode of living where in the background of our minds there is a recording that is continually playing the lyrics: 'you aren't loved' or 'you don't belong' or 'you aren't good enough'.

To further add to the problem, at an early age we were taught that if we do not fit into the prescribed societal model, we are considered failures. It is at this point, we are essentially taught that we cannot rely on our own inner guidance system. In an effort to conform, we gave up our true talents/desires and exchanged them for an approved career. One that will ensure we shall be good contributors to society.

The emphasis on careers is further accentuated with the concept of competition and we were taught early on that life is a power game of manipulating people and situations to get what you want. Love comes with strings. The ends justify the means. Power and ambition are the worthwhile characteristics to cultivate and there is no glory for second place.

Coupled with the belief in competition, we have also been indoctrinated into consumption driven behaviours where everything is either consumed, bought or swallowed in an effort to avoid anxiety, boredom and emptiness. The problem with the formula is one feels only a momentary reprieve and the root cause is never addressed.

Our desire to be consumers of products and commodities has meant that we have learned to tie our value and self worth to our possessions. In addition, the success of our economy is not measured by the quality of the products we produce but by the quantity. We have learned to become enamoured with things and technical gadgets because it is easier to manipulate or control them than to love another. Everything in our life is tied to our own saleability and we have become a collector and user where our central experience of life has become: I have, and I use instead of I am.



Look upon every experience you've ever had, and everyone who's ever played any role in your life, as having been sent to you for your benefit. In this universe, which was created by a divine, organizing intelligence, there are simply no accidents.

—Wayne Dyer

The belief we accepted as a child that love comes with strings has created adults who have built walls around themselves where security lies in conformity, our values come from the marketplace and our leisure time is managed by an amusement industry that creates the desire for pleasure and excitement not joy. The fast ride on the Ducati only brings a momentary high but doesn't fulfill our basic need to be loved for who we really are.

No matter where you are on the age spectrum you have the power to release yourself from childhood or societal programming. You can:

1. Become conscious of the proprietary feelings that you use to describe your life. Your experiences in life are not possessions. I am does not equal what I have and what I consume.
2. Instead of asking yourself: "Am I loved?" Ask yourself: "Can I love?"
3. Move from reacting from your old programs and start responding to the moment. When something happens, stop and count to ten before you speak.
4. Silence gives value to your words. Practice silence.
5. The starting point in all change begins with the self. First radiate unconditional love and acceptance for yourself. It will flow outward and provide you with enormous returns on your investment.

"Silence is the
absolute poise or
balance of body,
mind and spirit"

- Ohiyesa

