



# POSITIVE MIND

A Practical  
Guide for Any Situation

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# General layout



PAGE 12

## Chapter 1: Learning to live

The power of thoughts.....	16	Mind-body connection .....	52
Positive thinking .....	20	Self-improvement: Unlearn .....	56
Whole person development.....	24	Basic rules to be miserable .....	58
Self-esteem.....	28	A healthy emotional intelligence .....	60
Enjoy your senses .....	32	Living with hope .....	64
Healthy sex .....	38	The wish to be happy.....	70
Simple relaxation techniques .....	40	Causes of mental illness .....	74
Good communication .....	44	Prevention of mental illnesses .....	76
Live happily and optimistically .....	48	Barriers to mental health .....	80



PAGE 82

## Chapter 2: Self-centred problems (I)

Insomnia .....	86	Complexes .....	122
Hypochondria .....	92	Bulimia .....	124
Phobia .....	94	Anorexia .....	126
Anxiety .....	96	Panic attack .....	128
Depression.....	102	Addictions .....	130
Psychological traumas.....	110	Pathological gambling .....	138
Stress .....	112	Dyslexia .....	140
Obsessions and compulsions .....	118		



PAGE 142

## Chapter 3: Self-centred problems (II)

Automatic thought control.....	146	Insecurity .....	170
How to face a variety of fears.....	148	Narcissism .....	172
Mood management.....	150	Superstition .....	174
Problems of adolescence .....	152	Problems of retirement age .....	176
Crisis of values and ideologies .....	154	Psychosomatic disorders .....	180
Identity problems.....	156	Consumerism (compulsive shopping) .....	186
Homosexuality and change of sex .....	160	Tiredness and chronic fatigue.....	188
Guilt feelings .....	164	Psychology of greed .....	190
Improving your memory .....	166	Perfectionism.....	192

## Chapter 4: My problems with other people

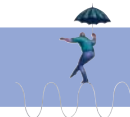
PAGE 194



Anger and aggression .....	198	Stockholm syndrome .....	226
Shyness .....	200	Sexuality disorders .....	228
Jealousy .....	204	Competitiveness .....	230
Hatred .....	208	Kleptomania .....	232
Psychological violence—Mobbing .....	212	Affective loneliness .....	234
Sexual harassment .....	218	Envy .....	236
Marital violence .....	222	Living in multicultural settings .....	238

## Chapter 5: How to face challenges (resilience)

PAGE 240



Illness .....	244	Financial crisis · Unemployment .....	266
Death .....	248	Divorce .....	270
Adversity .....	252	Single-parent families .....	274
Pain and suffering .....	254	Violence at school and in the street .....	276
Accidents .....	260	Natural disasters .....	282
Terrorism .....	262	War .....	284

## Chapter 6: Therapies

PAGE 288



Psychoanalysis .....	292	Group therapy .....	316
Behavioural therapy .....	296	Family therapy .....	318
Cognitive psychotherapy .....	302	Pharmacological treatment .....	320
New schools .....	310	Physical exercise .....	322

Foreword .....	8
Introduction .....	10
Bibliography .....	326
Alphabetical Index .....	328
Illustration Credits .....	331





# POSITIVE MIND

A PRACTICAL GUIDE  
FOR ANY SITUATION

## 1.01 The power of thoughts

Although somewhat exaggerated because of its absolute tone, the maxim 'where there's a will there's a way' holds a great deal of truth. Athletes know that beating a record is not a matter of mere physical training, but to a great extent, the behaviour. Likewise, to a great extent, the behavioural states we adopt, the emotional states we experience, and even the illnesses we suffer from find their root in thoughts and thinking.

The chart on the next page shows the effects of thoughts, how begin, and the results to which they lead. Environment (people, places, circumstances...), personality (optimism, suspiciousness, aggressiveness...), together with memories and past experiences are the stimuli resulting in thoughts. People process them at will, and these thoughts lead them to an eventual reaction that may become of great significance to their lives.

Mental content and its processing can be the origin of quite opposite consequences (see the chart again).

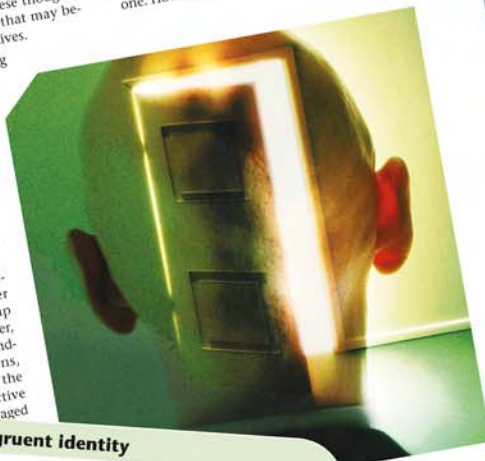
### Thoughts and behaviour

With the exception of automatic reactions or repetitive acts, behaviours find their root in the preceding thoughts. Consider these three cases:

- Before going to the time-share agency, Mark never thought he would end up buying property. However, the environment, the kindness of the salespersons, the beautiful images of the beachfronts, the attractive

ing the property or passing it on to his children and grandchildren. He signed the contract two days later.

- Elaine went out for some refreshments together with two old girlfriends from high school. They thoroughly enjoyed talking about endless memories from the past as well as present life. Once at home, Elaine contrasted her life with that of her friends, and concluded that she went over the conversation, and concluded that her friends were luckier than herself. Soon she was taken by a strong feeling of sadness, mixed with disappointment about her own accomplishments. This mood stayed with Elaine for several days.
- Victoria enjoyed a good relationship with everyone. However, a few months back, she had had



### Towards a congruent identity



Incongruent self



Congruent self

- Identity includes three components:
- perceived identity (self-image)
  - ideal identity (desirable goal)
  - real identity

The greater the congruence among the three, the more authentic is the personal identity. But if there is a significant incongruence, there will be a high risk of anomalous identity and emotional imbalance. Everyone needs to perceive themselves in a true and balanced manner and set attainable goals to mark their direction.



## WATCH OUT FOR OBSSIVE THOUGHTS!

Have you ever found yourself unable to quit thinking about something? Free yourself from such danger by following these steps (see also pages 146 and 306):

- Identify your anxious or distressing thoughts.
- At the first sign that those undesirable thoughts are approaching, say (or shout, if necessary): STOP!
- Distract yourself, concentrating on more edifying thoughts.

Always practise a **positive attitude** and keep your mind busy with pleasant and elevating thoughts. Remember that only when you make this technique part of your **automatic behaviour**, will you be able to 'wipe' from your mind undesirable thoughts in an instinctive and safe way.

## 2.04 Anxiety

experiences a **general sense** that considerably frequent worries centre on work, finances, etc. This state escapes and tends to dis-

takes place and a **crisis** develops. There are easy preventive **tasks** capable of avoiding and also soothing the symptoms when they appear:

- **Talk about your problems.** Seek the close company of people. Interact with a person or persons to share your experiences widely. Those living alone run a higher risk of anxiety. If this is your case, make sure you keep good relations with a member of your family or with a friend who can meet your companionship needs.



### Signs of anxiety and symptoms

#### Generalised anxiety

- Difficulty with concentration
- Irritability
- Muscular tension
- Sleep disruptions

#### Anxiety with panic attack

- Palpitations
- Rapid breathing
- Cold sweat or hot flash
- Sensation of dizziness



# POSITIVE MIND

THIS UNIQUE WORK GIVES US THE TOOLS TO FACE CHALLENGES THAT WE OFTEN DO NOT KNOW HOW TO FACE.

THIS 331-PAGE VOLUME IS A MANUAL THAT OFFERS AN EXTENSIVE LISTING OF PROBLEMATIC SITUATIONS THAT EVERYONE FACES.

IN ORDER TO FACE THESE SITUATIONS, THE BOOK PROVIDES VALUABLE SELF-HELP TECHNIQUES AND REFERENCES TO PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOTHERAPISTS, AS WELL AS MULTIPLE NATURAL TREATMENTS.



## BEWARE OF JEALOUSY IN MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS

There are a number of adverse effects of jealousy in marriage:

- Jealousy is often linked to **infidelity** ('If she is unfaithful, I will be even more so').
- Marital relationships **deteriorate** significantly.
- Meaningful **communication** disappears.
- Love **vanishes** and all commitments disappear.
- Children receive a **wrong example** of family relationships and develop an attitude that tends to perpetuate this problem into the next generation.

4.02

## Shyness

Shyness is inhibition in the presence of other people. Shy persons avoid and flee from social situations because they feel tension and fatigue. As a result, the person becomes isolated and wastes social learning opportunities.

Shy behaviour includes three basic manifestations:

- **Meeting avoidance.** The shy person tries by all means to find excuses (sometimes incredible stories) to dodge an appointment, party or meeting.
- **Anxiety.** Excessively shy persons manifest physiological signs of anxiety such as: agitation, palpitations, sweating, flushing, stuttering, etc. in the presence of other people. Since these are embarrassing symptoms, this fear feeds itself.

**Embarrassment to speak publicly.** The shy person experiences strong affective trauma when he/she has to address a group or audience. The barrier is such that it may become extremely difficult for a person to address the group. This becomes a serious problem when the person's profession demands public speaking.

The outreach of shyness is vast and it touches a number of important areas, as shown in the following table:

Individual consequences	Interpersonal consequences	Work consequences
Shy people are unhappy with their condition. They observe the talkative persons and long to be like them.	The shy person lacks the regular ability to nourish social relationships and his/her skills become increasingly impoverished.	The shy person is bound to reject many professional opportunities because they require interpersonal skills.

And even the traditionally solitary professions increasingly require team-work and interpersonal interaction.

5.03

## Adversity

Nobody is free from adversity. It touches everyone without exception and all need to face it at some time. These are frequent sources of adversity: (see page 270), family or friends.

- **Relationships:** Serious problems with the spouse.
- **Work:** Losing one's employment (see page 266), decreased income and obstacles to professional development.
- **Health:** Temporary illness that interrupts normal life; diagnosis of a serious disease (page 244).
- **Losses:** Loss of income, a wrong investment, emptiness in family finance (page 266).
- **Accidents:** Work, traffic, home accidents... (page 266).

The degree of adversity varies a great deal. There are even more variations in the way people face adversity. Some face problems and determination, while others experience depression. What enables people to deal with adversity with completeness and balance is **resilience**, or the ability to bounce back fully.

### What is adversity?

Adversity is universal. Everyone experiences difficulties. In fact, there is always something more than ourselves. Unpleasant events may help us bear our burden.

**Demands on self.** We should do as much as we can to solve our problems and not crumble before them.

cause the result is not perfect or quick. Due to the adversity, circumstances may be against us and it is not realistic to expect perfect solutions.

- **Avoid regretting the past.** Gazing at a misfortune and saying: 'I could have prevented it... Why didn't I do it differently?' is an automatic and negative reaction. Regretting past events is a source of irritation that can be avoided by controlling one's thoughts. Past errors may be observed as a way of learning in order to avoid future problems. But they should not be taken as a source of frustration for not having done something differently.

**Consider the finiteness of problems.** As the saying goes, 'Nothing lasts forever'. Experience teaches us that adversities are quite alarming at first but they lose strength little by little. The affected person recovers and, in the end, satisfactory solutions are reached.

- **Do not generalise.** An accident or loss is tied to a specific area of our life and we need to avoid its application to everything else. For example, losing one's job is a serious problem; even so, we can preserve family, friends, values, health and port from them.

**Consider the positive side of adversity.** All adversities are bitter, but from them we can learn lessons of experience and strength. When we remember the difficult experiences of the past, we find that we have learned something. Once difficulties are past, the person realises that his/her character has emerged with a special strength. His/her character has become more resistant to difficulties.

...so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received (1:4). Whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance (1:2-3).



# Learning to live

1.04

## Self-esteem

### How does self-esteem affect behaviour?

An adequate self-esteem brings psychological well-being to the person: personal worth, safety, self-respect and strength to face challenges. Those with the right self-value achieve the highest attainment at work, in the family, with friends and in their communities. On the other hand, those with low self-esteem feel inadequate to face problems and are bound to fail.

An impoverished self-esteem affects people adversely in different ways. It may:

- Cause depression.
- Affect school and work achievement.
- Deteriorate interpersonal relationships.
- Lead to anorexia and bulimia.
- Be related to the use of alcohol and drugs.

Traditionally, it has been said that social recognition and status are primordial sources for the nourishment of self-esteem. Thus having intelligence, wealth, a good house, a luxury car and a prestigious job are sources of self-esteem. However, recent studies point to non self-centred mo-

tivation, more specifically, the worth of others and the possession of ideal values (see the box on the adjacent page) as proven sources of self-esteem.



### self-help

#### HOW TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S SELF-ESTEEM

Children are especially vulnerable to feelings of inferiority because they place too much emphasis on comparison with their friends and schoolmates. Other children are perceived as stronger, more intelligent, more attractive and with more resources than themselves.

The next suggestions are useful to enhance children's self-esteem:

- Use frequent words of appreciation.
- Be positive in your messages.
- Avoid comparisons.
- Do not tease them on their weaknesses.
- Prevent the development of negative self-talk.
- Decide to be in a good mood.

### RESEARCH RESULTS

#### The physical benefits of a positive mind

David Sobel and Robert Ornstein (2000) obtained empirical evidence on the benefits of positive thinking, optimism, and the sense of personal control over the following areas of health:

- **Immune system.** Human saliva contains chemicals that protect us from infections. The level of protection offered by these substances becomes most effective on days when persons feel happy and satisfied as compared with sad days.
- **Cancer.** In one study, a sample of patients with cancer of the pancreas was taught to think in a positive and edifying manner. They also received instruction on relaxation techniques. The antibodies of patients under instruction were found to be much more active than those in patients who had not been taught to think positively and to relax.
- **Longevity.** A group of elderly folk living in a retirement home were given the opportunity to make small choices—type of breakfast, the day to watch a certain movie, etc.). Having the ability to choose made them happier and more satisfied. One year later, the mortality index of the participants was 50% less than those who had not been given options to choose from. (See box on page 73).
- **Recovery from surgery.** Data was collected on the personality of patients who had undergone cardiac surgery. According to the results, the group was then divided into optimists and pessimists. Optimists took less time to recover from the intervention, suffered from fewer complications, returned to their posts of work more quickly and retook their hobbies up earlier than the pessimists.
- **General health.** Participants were asked to create a list of positive and negative events that, in their estimation, would be happening in their lives over the next few years. Their general health was assessed two years later. Researchers found that those looking at their future optimistically showed fewer symptoms of illness than the pessimists.





**LEARNING TO LIVE INCLUDES THE BASICS FOR A BETTER LIFE THROUGH THE WHOLE DEVELOPMENT OF A PERSON, SELF-WORTH, POSITIVE THINKING AND HEALTHY EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE.**



### WATCH OUT FOR THE REPLICATION INSTINCT

The replication instinct is one of the most common barriers of listening. It consists of mentally preparing your reply while the other person speaks. This causes a **complete breakdown in communication**, as messages are not received but only sent. Avoid this practice using the following tips:

- Make a firm decision to listen.
- Bear in mind that your reply will only be adequate once you fully understand the other's message.
- Make eye contact.

- Imagine that you are expected to give account of everything you are told.
  - Think that, sooner or later, it will be evident that you have not listened.
  - Instruct yourself with the idea that it is not ethical to drop your attention when you are being talked to.
- 'He who answers before listening—that is his folly and his shame' (Proverbs 18:13).

1.07

## Simple relaxation techniques

These days effective work methods make labour lighter and more dignified. Physical fatigue and repetitive tasks are practically eliminated from all professions. However, people complain of tension and tiredness and wish to free themselves from this load. It is therefore necessary to know simple and practical methods of relaxation.

### Body relaxation

The human organism is impacted from stress, thus producing muscular pain, stomach discomfort, headaches, alteration of the <sup>diac</sup> rhythm, etc. Here are some ways to attain relaxation.

- **Breathing.** This is the fastest and simplest method to free oneself from tension. Practise breathing deeply from the belly (not the chest) and exhale slowly. Repeat this four or five times a day, wherever you are: during your conversation with a friend, in the waiting room, or before going to bed. Forming breathing exercises, putting aside negative thoughts.
- **Physical exercise.** Aerobic exercise, as long as it is not excessive, brings relaxation. Physical activity systematically and to the point where people attain relaxation while others achieve exhaustion.
- **Bathing.** Water is a beneficial effect. A simple bath or shower. Hydrotherapy, and warm water over arterial areas of its high metabolism, relaxes the body and general metabolism.
- **Muscular relaxation.** Methods mentioned in the box on the right.

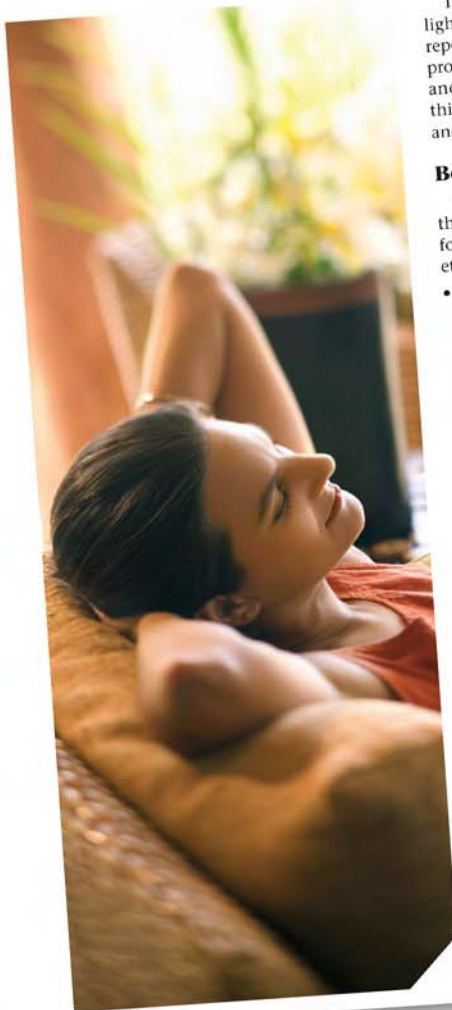
### RESEARCH RESULTS

#### Healthy effects of music

There are many studies showing the positive effect of music upon various areas of health. These are a few examples.

Music has been utilised in clinical settings in the following cases:

- **Pain reduction** in geriatric patients with arthritis (McCaffrey, 2003). Participants in this study were administered a 20-minute musical session every day and they were compared to a control group exposed to environmental silence during the same time. The elderly people who had been under the music condition attained 66% pain reduction according to themselves, and 50% reduction according to the researchers, as compared to the control group that experienced pain at the same level.
- **Stress treatment** of elementary teachers (Cheek *et al.*, 2003). A team of researchers carried out a comparison among teachers undergoing clinical psychological treatment for stress. Half the group received psychotherapy accompanied by music. The other half received the same intervention but without music. The first group achieved stress reduction in a significantly greater extent than the second group.
- **Control of anxious responses to coronary angiography** (Campbell *et al.*, 2003). This study was carried out at the Kingston General Hospital (Ontario, Canada). Music was present before, during, and after the performance of coronary angiography. Music had a soothing effect of music against the anxiety.
- **Treatment of**





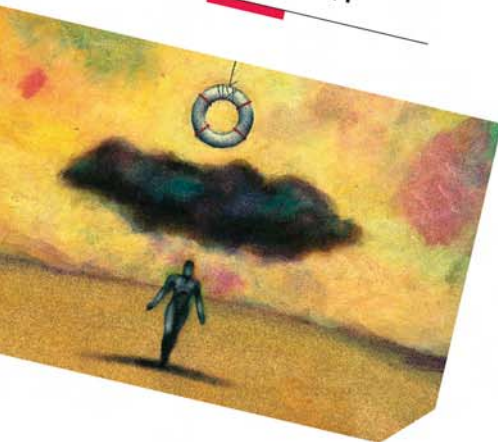
# Self-centred problems (I)

## 2.01 Insomnia

Many people complain that they do not sleep well. Some take a long time to fall asleep, others suffer from intermittent wakefulness or early wakeup. Still others have a combination of these symptoms. Various statistics show that between 30 and 40% of the population complain of insufficient sleep quality, although only 3-4% are clinically diagnosed with insomnia.



## 2.05 Depression



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as a warning to take measures before the solution becomes more difficult.

Depression causes:

- **An intensely sad mood.** Sobbing and a sense of hopelessness are present, many times without knowing why.
- **Absence of pleasure in all activities.** There is no motivation to do anything. Not favourite activities or being with people are welcome.
- **Loss of interest in life.**

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## 2.02 Hypochondria



When there is no apparent underlying cause, the case is not likely to be serious and can be corrected with the **tips** offered below:

- **Go to a trusted doctor** and confide your fears and anxieties. If there is no serious illness, accept it and do not question the medical diagnosis anymore.
- **Do not change doctors** or go to a different clinic as if you were shopping.
- If you are under excessive stress, try and organise your life in a **calmer way**, as stress can be a trigger to the condition.
- If your life is low-paced or boring, keep **busy** and look for an additional activity you enjoy, or a humanitarian cause.
- **Supportive relationships** are for you.

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## 2.10 Bulimia

is an increasing number of girls who learn behaviour as they observe it or listen to it their friends and end up practising it themselves. There may be, in fact, many more cases than detected because the external appearance does not normally show (as happens with anorexia nervosa; see page 126), and the disorder goes without being diagnosed.

Although it is also present in males, the typical profile of a bulimic person is that of an adolescent girl or a young woman that:

- Experiences **uncontrollable desires to eat a lot at once**. During such binges, she tends to ingest highly caloric food: entrées,

deep-fried food, cream, cheese, cake, chocolate... feeling unable to stop until becoming full.

- **Uses inadequate behaviours to impede fattening.** The most common method (80%-90%) is to induce vomiting after eating.

son lives). They can also be useful to those suffering from bulimia.

### Inner action (thoughts)

- **Do not undervalue yourself.** Be careful not to diminish yourself. Recognise your strengths and set moderate goals to improve your weaknesses. Others also have problems (you





# Self-centred problems (II)

## 3.04 Problems of adolescence

The stage of adolescence tends to be the most difficult one throughout the life cycle. Many boys and girls of this age seem to cause problems in the family, school and community. And, above all, they suffer from those problems.

At the same time, adolescents possess highly positive traits which, properly channelled, are of benefit to everyone. Seven common problems are reviewed in this unit. Any of them may appear before or after the age of 11 or 12 and we suggest a number of ways in which adults support adolescents.

### Self-esteem

Feelings of inferiority (see page 122) and low self-esteem (page 28) are very common among adolescents, especially girls. The consequences are academic achievement, mood disturbances, relational difficulties and inability to carry out tasks and activities.

Teachers and adults need to be careful expressing negative attitudes about a young person's achievements. Instead, positive comments should be made casually and indirectly to have a positive influence.



### Problems, conflictive adolescents...

(Gardner, 2003) conducted at the University of Cardiff, UK, followed 132 families residing in the area for 12 years. They were administered a series of questionnaires and a clinical interview to find out the prevalence of problems and their effect upon family life. Surprising findings were that the babies of mothers who had experienced post-partum depression in the three months following delivery had four times more probability to display violent episodes than children of mothers who had not suffered from postpartum depression. This finding was interpreted in various ways, but they clearly point at the necessity to pay due attention, from the first few days after birth in order to avoid problems in adolescence.

### Family interaction

Family dynamics usually change when children reach adolescence. At this time, parents should be guiding their children. They may have worked hard to guide them through adolescence. Now it is their turn to offer understanding and support. However, that state, however, that state, through tact and understanding, that parents consider.

### Academic achievement

Many youth of this age experience an emotional crisis that leads to a permanent decline in academic achievement. They should be near the support of their parents and teachers when they are with them. With patience, teachers and parents should help them.

It also helps to be in permanent contact with the teachers of the adolescent. As school content becomes more complex at this stage,



## NARCISSISM, A COVERT INFERIORITY COMPLEX

Narcissism is really a **compensatory reaction of minimal self-esteem** in hiding.

If you encounter a narcissist, **do not hate him**. On the contrary, offer your sincere and friendly hand to help him. He needs it.

Of course, not all narcissists wish to be helped, but you can give it a try.

## The effects of insecurity

An insecure person tends to be caught up in the following adverse effects:

- **Lack of achievement.** These persons do not perform well at work; not because of lack of ability, but because they do not possess the necessary self-confidence.
- **Emotional dependence.** Such people need permanent support from others. This fact makes them unable to function, and they can do little by themselves.
- **Weak ego.** Behind a normal appearance (sometimes arrogant), the person hides feelings of inferiority and is very sensitive to others' actions and comments in reference to him/herself.



ers' actions and comments in reference to him/herself.

- **Avoidance behaviour.** When looking at the task to be done, insecure individuals feel inclined to avoid it, as it suggests trouble.
- **Tendency to timidity and loneliness.** The person remains quiet or isolated. He/she does this to avoid others discovering his/her 'inability.'
- **Proneness to guilt.** He or she experiences remorse for something uncertain. This constitutes a significant barrier to perform any task or function.



TWO CHAPTERS ARE DEVOTED TO **PROBLEMS CENTERED AROUND SELF**, GIVEN THAT A HIGH PROPORTION OF CONFLICTS AND PROBLEMS FACED BY MANKIND HAVE TO DO WITH ONESELF. IT PROVIDES EXPLANATIONS ON THE CAUSES OF DEPRESSION, EATING DISORDERS, IDENTITY AND INSECURITY ISSUES, AMONG OTHERS, GIVING PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR RESOLVING THEM.

### The effects of narcissism



Narcissists suffer the following as a result of their disorders:

- **Social rejection.** Everybody avoids them. Nobody wants to be their friend or hold a casual conversation with them. Even those who may approach them out of pity end up feeling disgust when they realise that narcissists never stop praising themselves.
- **Poor achievement.** Whether it be in their studies, trade or profession, narcissists do not achieve much, since their time and effort are spent building up themselves, not on actual accomplishments. When they do try to reach a goal, fear of failure leads to doubt and inability.
- **Emotional problems.** Behind the narcissistic personality is a fragile individual, insecure, lonely and determined to hide his/her vulnerability. Depression can occur when they realise that they are not what they would like to appear to be.

3.08

## Guilt feelings

Many live with an unfounded or false feeling of guilt. This brings conflict to their lives along with the following tendencies:

- Feelings of inferiority (see page 122)
- Perfectionism (page 192)
- Constant self-blame
- Fear of failure (with the consequent hypervigilant state)
- Being too demanding of others

On the other hand, a feeling of guilt is a **useful resource** that encourages considerate and positive behaviour and favours healthy interactions. A real sense of guilt is a symptom of an awakened conscience (something very desirable), which works as self-censorship and prevents immoralities and crimes. However, not all consciences are healthy (see the box below).

### How to face a sense of guilt

If guilt is **justified**, there is no other option but to rectify behaviour, obtain pardon and try to re-

store any damage incurred. Mary hurt her work companion greatly by initiating slander and ruining her reputation. This caused Mary a deep sense of guilt. She could not free herself from her burden until she went to her friend, admitted her fault, asked for forgiveness and talked to the other persons to rectify all the false statements made.

As far as **unfounded** or disproportionate guilt is concerned, the process is more complex and requires several strategies:

- **Avoid approaches that are too strict.** A family or social circle that is too demanding or too threatening contributes to a narrow conscience with the subsequent risk of unfounded guilt.
- **Thought control.** It is necessary to instruct oneself with messages such as: 'I have done what I could,' 'Perfection does not exist in this world,' 'Mistakes are chances to learn.'
- **Unload oneself.** Talking about guilt feelings with a trusted friend helps to organise one's own thoughts and ideas. And it is especially useful to unload the built-up tension created by guilt.
- **Practise forgiveness.** To forgive others helps one to forgive himself or herself, which is the ultimate goal to experience freedom from guilt.
- **Seek God.** God is willing to forgive even the greatest evil, including what humans are not willing to forgive: 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool' (Isaiah 1:18).



### WHEN CONSCIENCE DEGENERATES...

Consciences do not always provide a wise standard of conduct. Some are too narrow while others are too wide.

Those with a strict conscience expect similar standards in others. And those with more lenient ones often see everything as being good.

It is therefore necessary to compare one's conscience with **external and transcendent standards**; with ethical principles of transcendental validity. This is why the apostle Paul warned his disciple Timothy of some people, 'whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron' who would command others to do absurd things (see 1 Timothy 4:2, 3).

These seared consciences are insensitive. They become useless due to repeated transgressions and cannot be trusted as a valid guide for conduct.

### Gems of Ancient Wisdom

'Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered' (Romans 4:7).





# My problems with other people

IN MY PROBLEMS WITH OTHER PEOPLE, THE AUTHOR DESCRIBES THE MOST COMPLEX INTERPERSONAL PROBLEMS, WITH A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF ALL OF THEIR CHARACTERISTICS AND OFFERING DIRECT SOLUTIONS WHICH CAN BE APPLIED TO PERSONAL, WORK AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

### Hatred prevention

In order to prevent the growth of adolescent delinquency and hatred, Dacia Gerst proposed the following preventive measures (Gerst, 2005):

1. **Conflict resolution programmes.** Help young people to use negotiation and verbal skills to solve the problem among themselves as well as when facing the adult world and authorities.
2. **Empathy-improvement plans.** Empathy does not always come naturally and should be increased through stories, photographs, films, etc. in order to promote good feelings towards others and a sincere disposition to avoid hurt.
3. **Impulse-control techniques.** Help adolescents to make correct decisions in the precise moment before displaying anger and rage.
4. **Listening techniques.** Teach young people to attentively listen to verbal and non-verbal messages coming from others. Learn to read not only the words, but also the feelings of the opponent.
5. **Rational problem resolution.** Motivate adolescents to use rational methods, reducing the emotional component of the display of anger and rage.



### EFFECTS OF RAGE ON THE ENRAGED

In the past, it was thought to be beneficial to vent one's anger much as one releases the valve on a pressure cooker. Today it is clear that the risks are greater than any small achievement that may be obtained through bad manners. Compared with the person of peaceful habits, those who often get angry:

- Have four times more likelihood of suffering from **coronary disease**.
- Are at higher risk from **dying young**.
- Experience **guilt feelings** after their rage attack.
- Feel isolated from **family and friends** who avoid them because of their bad temper.

- Have a **more conflictive marital relationship**.
  - Are more likely to **use psychoactive substances** (tobacco, alcohol, drugs...).
  - Run higher risk to **overeat** and be overweight.
- Before displaying anger, think twice, as it is possible to stop the process and prevent greater problems.



# How to face challenges (resilience)

**RESILIENCE IS AN INTERESTING CONCEPT THAT ALLUDES TO THE ABILITY TO FACE AND OVERCOME ADVERSITY. AN ENTIRE CHAPTER IS DEDICATED TO THOROUGHLY EXPLORING DIFFERENT SITUATIONS THAT ARE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT AND CAN HAPPEN TO ALL OF US, AND EXPLAINS HOW THE PERSON BEING AFFECTED CAN WITHSTAND IT AND GET THEIR LIFE BACK THROUGH THEIR ABILITY TO BE RESILIENT.**

## Financial crisis · Unemployment

5.07

Everyone faces circumstances when money becomes scarce for days or weeks. The necessary adjustments and sacrifices are made and, in the end, the situation balances itself. However, things may reach a critical stage where one owes much more than he/she owns. Under such circumstances, mental and health problems may result. In order to prevent this, a few firm measures must be put in place.

Other times, the fundamental problem is to lose one's job and be unemployed for a long period of time. Becoming unemployed is a very hard emotional blow. This is not only because of the loss of income that accompanies unemployment, but also because of the reduction in the psychological and emotional flow due to lack of self-esteem, behavioural structure, social interaction and personal development.

...meets a multitude of psychological and emotional needs. ...losing it almost always into a traumatic loss.

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5.03

## Adversity

Nobody is free from adversity. It touches everyone without exception and all need to face it at some time. These are frequent sources of adversity:

- **Relationships:** Serious problems with the spouse (see page 270), family or friends.
- **Work:** Losing one's employment (see page 266), coming across some obstacles to professional development.

cause the result is not perfect or quick. Due to the adversity, circumstances may be against us and it is not realistic to expect perfect solutions.

- **Avoid regretting the past.** Gazing at a misfortune and saying: 'I could have prevented it... Why didn't I do it differently?' is an automatic and negative reaction. Regretting past events is a source of irritation that can be avoided by controlling one's thoughts. Past errors may be observed as a way of learning in order to avoid future mistakes.



## SYMPTOMS THAT MAY FAVOUR VIOLENCE

If you observe any of the following symptoms (especially three or more) in your children, try to carefully apply the tips given on these pages in order to prevent violent behaviour:

### Primary school child

- Has an attention and concentration problem.
- Tends to annoy and provoke other children.
- Tends to fight with other children at school and in the streets.
- Gets bad marks consistently.
- Loses control and becomes very angry if others tease him/her.
- Is rejected by other children because of his/her attitude.
- Is cruel with pets.
- Is not patient and gets very frustrated when things do not work out.

### Adolescent

- Is too rebellious with parents, teachers and other adults.
- Does not respect others' rights.
- Drinks alcohol or uses drugs.
- Misses classes without a good reason.
- Complains too much that he/she is treated unfairly.
- Becomes friends with other problem youth.

5.02

## Death

Death is a universal reality. From early in life everyone witnesses the death of others and learns that some day they will face their own death.

In spite of this, people possess a strong instinct for survival, which inspires the desire to live and a certain amount of fear towards dying.

There are those who view death with relative indifference and seem hardly affected by it. However, others are tormented by the idea. Sometimes this is due to an existential fear—to cease to be.

Other times, it is caused by an anticipation of the physical pain that often accompanies the passage of life to death. Still other times, it is due to the fear of separation from dear ones or for the possibilities left behind.

### How to prepare for death

There are people who prefer not to think or talk about the topic, as they view it as unpleasant. However, a balanced dialogue about death can help one to face it. If you want to be prepared for this inevitable reality, consider the following advice, especially if you suffer from a terminal disease or if you are advanced in age:

- **Seek an adequate social environment.** The presence of some loving family member or close friend is basic. Seek the company of persons willing to be near you and to carry out tasks with you. These people should transmit a cheerful attitude, ease and the desire to live.
- **Follow a regular routine and habits.** Your days should be marked by regular activity with only

continued on page 250



# Therapies

LASTLY, IN THE CHAPTER DEDICATED TO **THERAPIES**, A SERIES OF THE MOST COMMON PSYCHOTHERAPY METHODS IS PRESENTED, GROUPED BY SCHOOLS AND TRENDS, SUCH AS PSYCHOANALYSIS, BEHAVIORAL THERAPY OR NEUROLINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING, AMONG OTHERS.

## 6.02 Behavioural therapy

**Observable behaviour** is the most important factor for behavioural therapy. Once the undesirable conduct is identified, it can be modified with the application of appropriate techniques.

This therapy recognises feelings, thoughts and personal values, but does not consider them highly when applying intervention. In fact, according to behavioural theory, there is no need to change them. Having altered the behaviour, feelings and thoughts will start to change.

But this does not always happen. That is why, over the last few years, the combined cognitive-behavioural approach has been emphasised to use both cognitive and behavioural therapies, as explained in the next unit.

Behavioural therapy works well by itself when the problem does not have deep roots. It is especially adequate under the following circumstances:

**When the cause of the problem is a learned behaviour.** Undesirable conducts learned by repetition or observation are more easily modifiable than those appearing as a result of trauma or of consolidated personality. If, for example, a depression comes as a result of living together with a depressive person and observing and imitating that individual, behavioural therapy will be quite useful.

**When rewards and prizes are appropriate.** If a child with enuresis (see page ) is under treatment, could use a point system wherein the child is

given one point for each night without wetting the bed and later on the points can be exchanged for toys.

- **When punishment is avoided.** For example, in an intoxication treatment, it is better to reward abstinence for two months than to punish a relapse.
- **When the desirable behaviour can be learned by imitation.** For example, an adolescent displaying violence will change more by observing the normal behaviour in other adolescents than from receiving a sermon.



## RESEARCH RESULTS

### Exercise and memory

One of the latest research findings is the relationship between physical exercise and mental capacity. **Woo and Sharp (2003)** recruited teen and adult participants who were submitted to physical exercise as well as several mental tests.

The influence of physical exercise upon mental test results was not clear in all areas, but it did improve a number of test scores. Specifically, young people experienced increased ability to recall data classified under categories.

Adults under the exercise regime obtained better results in verbal memory.



### Physical exercise myths

Although the possibility of physical exercise decreasing so late to start an adolescent, there are many physical people of 60, 70 or 80 years of age whose muscular tissue has been maintained by people involved in sports.

**Exercise can be harmful.** Complete inactivity or sitting or swimming carry you are afraid to practise a physical exercise causes pain, you are doing wrong, or reaching the limit and you need to incorporate more physical activity, there is more risk of illness from sitting on a sofa than in exercising.

- 3. It takes too much time.** It is true that exercise takes some time, about 20 minutes a day. However, exercise yields agility, good mood and helps one to lose weight. These will help you save time in other tasks, as you will do them with greater speed and effectiveness.
- 4. It is boring.** It does not have to be. Practise the physical activities you enjoy most. Include other people you like to be with, add music, and do it as you work. The Self-help box on the adjoining page can give you some ideas.
- 5. It exhausts you.** You need to practise it for a while in order to reach fitness and experience a light and pleasant fatigue. And remember: the quality of sleep increases with exercise, so you will end up feeling more rested.



THE BOOK IS ORGANIZED IN A VERY PRACTICAL AND EASY-TO-USE FORMAT. EACH TOPIC BEGINS WITH A CLINICAL CASE SCENARIO THAT HELPS THE READER CONNECT WITH THE INTIMATE FEELINGS AND ATTITUDES OF "THE PATIENT". AFTER SUMMARIZING THE MOST IMPORTANT CONCEPTS OF THE CHAPTER, THERE IS A BRIEF BUT DETAILED AND CLEAR SCIENTIFIC PIECE ON THE TOPIC, INCLUDING GRAPHS WITH RESEARCH, SELF-HELP AND PRACTICAL CASES. THE INFORMATION IS PRESENTED AND SUPPORTED BY **JESUS' WORDS** AND IN **GEMS OF ANCIENT WISDOM**, AND SEVERAL TESTS ARE OFFERED SO THE READER CAN DIAGNOSE AND CONFIRM A POTENTIAL HEALTH ISSUE.

PRACTICAL CASE

Behaviour modification for temper tantrums

Four-year-old Alfred was always an easy child. However, since his little brother was born, everything changed. Alfred used to lose his temper far too often—sometimes 5 or 6 strong episodes in the day. He also lost his appetite. Finally, his parents went to the psychologist for help.

The psychologist visited their house two afternoons. Without talking much, she observed life in the family and took some notes. She held two interviews with the parents and one with Alfred. It became clear that Alfred's mother was reinforcing the inadequate behaviour. He had learned that to attract his mum's attention when she was busy with the baby. He only had to throw a tantrum, scream and kick and say that he didn't want to eat. Straight away, his mother would come by to affectionately attend to Alfred. The behaviour modification plan had two objectives:

- 1. To eliminate temper tantrums.
  - 2. To return to normal eating habits.
- This was the counsel to follow:

- 1. **Do not pay attention** to Alfred when he throws a temper tantrum.
- 2. **Devote exclusive time** to him every day, showing that, in spite of the arrival of the baby, his parents' love and care have not diminished. Do not show approval and affection when Alfred has a temper tantrum or when he refuses to eat.
- 3. **Encourage him to participate in the care of the little one.** This will make him forget about himself.
- 4. **Do not pay attention to him when he refuses to eat.** Do not permit him to eat between meals so that he will be hungry at the table. Start the plan with his favourite recipes.
- 5. Use a **token economy.** Alfred is to receive tokens for obeying, for helping with small tasks, for eating well, for not having tantrums, etc.
- 6. Whenever a whole week passes with good eating habits and without temper tantrums, Alfred can visit and play with his cousins for a whole day as a **reward.**

The plan worked well to the point of reaching the objectives within the first week. There were minimal relapses, and after one month, the problem was considered solved.

Am I an optimist or a pessimist?

	T	F
1. I like to think about pleasant things of the past.		
2. I like to look at the future in hope.		
3. I have a tendency to look at the positive side of everything.		
4. It is good to bring some humour to tragic situations.		
5. My past has been a disaster.		
6. I am unlucky.		
7. I bring doom to everyone.		
8. It is always safe to mistrust others.		

**Scoring:**  
Count 1 point for each T of statements 1-4.  
Count 1 point for each F of statements 5-8.

Interpretation:

7-8 points Definitely optimist.	5-6 points Tendency to optimism.	3-4 points Tendency to pessimism.	0-2 points Definitely pessimist.
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selfhelp4u

RELIGION AND SUPERSTITION

Said **Voltaire**, 'superstition is to religion as astrology to astronomy: the crazy daughter of a prudent mother.'

Religious faith may be used as support in the middle of doubt. God promises: 'And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age' (Matthew 28:20).

This statement comes from the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and it is worth accepting. Reflect on these words, try to pray to God and share your anxieties and doubts; trust that he, and not superstition, will lead you to a positive result in all aspects of your life.

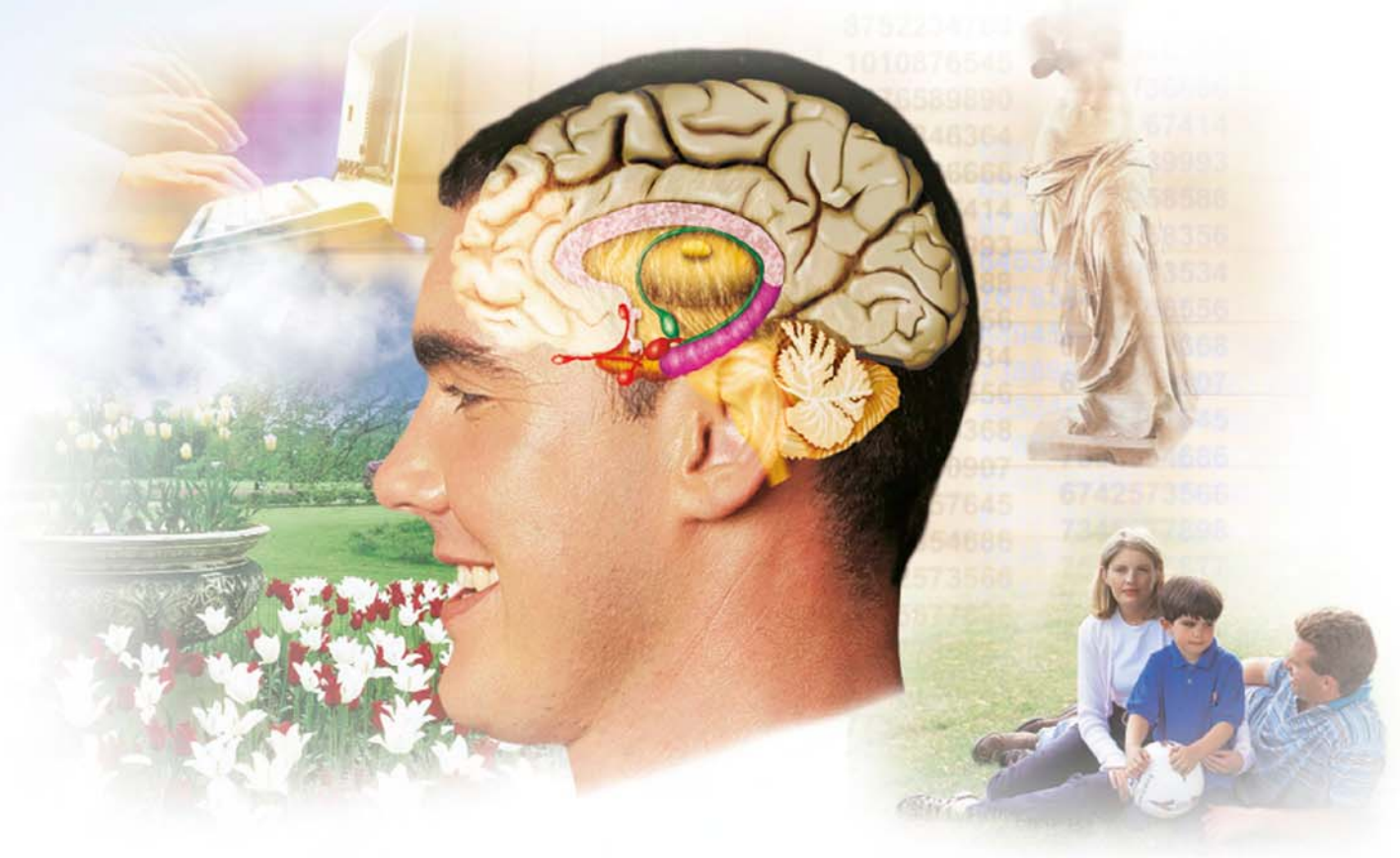
Gems of Ancient Wisdom

'Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you' (1 Peter 5:7).



**POSITIVE MIND** IS A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO ANY SITUATION. APPLYING ITS METHODS TO ONE'S PERSONAL ROUTINES WILL, WITHOUT A DOUBT, RESULT IN A HEALTHIER, MORE BALANCED AND HAPPIER LIFE.

# POSITIVE MIND



## Sayings of Jesus

*'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest' (Matthew 11:28).*



# POSITIVE MIND



**POSITIVE MIND** provides tools for challenges that we sometimes seem unable to solve. In a single volume, this handbook offers an extensive inventory of problem situations that affect everyone. Adversities and behavioural options are analysed in an interesting yet scientific way by a recognised communicator with decades of success as professor and writer.



To address these situations, the book includes valuable self-help techniques, professional psychotherapeutic strategies, and a large number of natural treatments. This guide of holistic mental health provides counsel and practical remedies—many times for immediate application—about principles for better living, self-centred and interpersonal problems, resilience (or ability to face and overcome adversity), as well as major therapeutic techniques grouped by theoretical school.

“Whether or not the reader has a background in the behavioural sciences, I am sure that no-one will regret reading this excellent book. It will not protect them from all pain, but it will prevent evil from taking over their spirit” (From the Foreword by José Luis Pinillos, Spanish Royal Academy)



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