

Living On Cloud 9



How to maintain happiness

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Emma is the founder of Old Town Hypnotherapy Ltd, having opened the first branch in Swindon in 2011 after successfully qualifying in Solution Focused Hypnotherapy at the prestigious Clifton Practice in Bristol.

Emma is no stranger to depression herself. In 2002 after a 15 year career in IT sales she crashed and burned out of the industry. The company doctor informed her she had depression and should be on antidepressants. At that time Emma knew nothing about depression and it wasn't until retraining as a solution focused hypnotherapist that she understood the truth behind the perceived causes and is now determined to demystify depression and the misunderstanding and stigma around it, in particular the false belief that it is something you have to 'live with' for the rest of your life – it's simply not.

Emma's direct approach empowers people suffering from depression to take control of themselves and their lives and cure themselves of this horrible disease that affects them, their families, friends and the world around them.

Emma has helped literally hundreds of people rid themselves of the life debilitating symptoms of anxiety and depression, opened six branches of Old Town Hypnotherapy in the UK and is now on a mission to empower others to make the internal changes necessary to rid themselves of these toxic diseases and live a happy, empowered and fulfilled life.

Emma is the owner and director of Old Town Hypnotherapy Ltd and also runs her own Life Coaching business, EmmajTriplett.com where she regularly holds Personal Development & Coaching Retreats on the Island of Gozo where she now lives.

Emma J. Triplett

INTRODUCTION

What does "Living on Cloud 9" mean?

I Googled it and found

'a state of perfect happiness'

or the one I like in particular is

"I'm on cloud nine" is an expression used when someone is extremely happy. Not a care in the world. Everything is going your way. You feel carefree as if floating on a cloud.

Yep, that resonates with me and I could go a step further.

When I think about being on Cloud 9 an image pops into my head: it's one of those days that I'm just inexplicably happy, nothing in particular has happened to 'make' me happy, I just feel so happy I could burst and I can't do anything about the smile that's fixed on my face. I'm walking along with a spring in my step, full of energy, my head is up, I notice the birds, flowers and other people around me. I am completely in the moment. I make eye contact with people in the street and I smile at them – they smile back, my happiness is contagious.

That's how it feels – doesn't it sounds wonderful? It is wonderful.

On a practical level, the secret to 'Living on Cloud 9' is keeping yourself topped up to overflowing with serotonin, making sure you're burning off any adrenaline you might create and being vigilant of how you are thinking, so you can stop any negative thoughts in their tracks and do something that creates positive ones.

When you have everything balanced and learn how to maintain it, you will be operating from your intellectual brain consistently. This is your responsibility and it's in your interest to do so because when your intellect is engaged and functioning efficiently, life is easy, you're happy,

opportunity and Lady Luck pops in for breakfast and everything is hunky dory.

Of course life still happens and shit happens, there is a lot we're not in control of, but on Cloud 9 we can decide the shit doesn't smell so bad after all. Or to be less basic about it – life sometimes gives us lemons; on Cloud 9 we love making lemonade.

Problems become opportunities, we're attractive to other people, we become a magnet attracting lots of new people into our lives, we're fit and healthy, our social life is buoyant, we have passions and interests in life and nothing is too much trouble.

Life is exactly how you want it to be on Cloud 9 and how it is, is how you want it to be.

Is this how you would choose to go through life if you could?

Well, you can, it is a choice.

If you've just dismissed that statement and you don't believe it, then you haven't learned the secrets to making yourself happy yet - you need to do that first.

You cannot leap onto Cloud 9 and expect to understand the secrets of how to live there permanently. You need to learn how to get there first step by step.

This is the mistake people are making and why the relapse rate for depression is so high. They are not learning (or accepting) the truth behind why they are depressed and how to get themselves out; it either just happens or the medication helps. Temporarily they can feel great, but are not in control of their happiness and, just as a cloud doesn't have a solid base, if they haven't built their own solid happiness base, they will slowly sink back to the black cloud of depression.

Book 1 in the eGuide Series 'Depression' – [Living With Depression is Rubbish](#) tells you the truth about depression and why you have it and

what you need to understand and learn in order to have the mindset and attitude you need to cure yourself.

Book 2 - [Climbing Out Of The Cloud](#) teaches you how to get from depressed to happy and build that solid base, so if you haven't read that, you need to read it and practice the strategies before attempting to implement the strategies in this book.

Book 3 - Living on Cloud 9 teaches you the principles you need to understand in order to maintain the happiness you've found and make the adjustments to your own mindset and life so you can remain happy and out of depression for ever.

This book isn't the cure for depression - it's relapse prevention.

CHAPTER 1 – PALEO MIND, MODERN LIFE

As humans we are amazing, the complexity of the human body and mind is quite literally mind-boggling and how it all intrinsically functions perfectly as one organism is wondrous.

We are perfectly designed –

for living two hundred thousand years ago!

The modern world we live in today has changed beyond recognition from the world we were designed to thrive in, but our biological make-up hasn't changed and this is at the root of what is going wrong and central to putting it right.

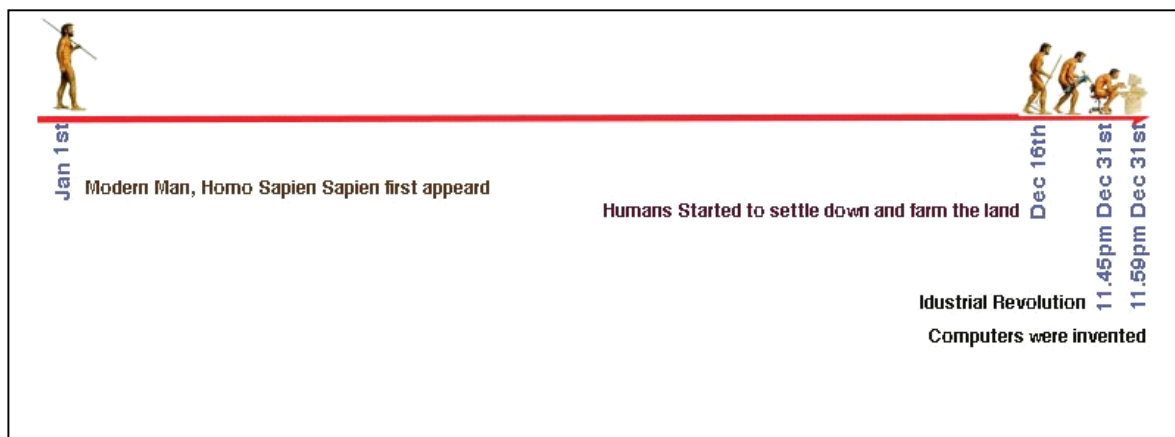
Our brains have developed an incredible intellect that drives change and advances in our evolution and society, but the original operating system in our brains cannot be updated. New programmes can be added and we've managed to adapt, but as life speeds up and technological advances introduce new circumstances and conditions, our brain doesn't have a template for optimum operating; all it can do is apply the original programme and unfortunately that doesn't always fit automatically, sometimes it needs manual input.

Modern life has got carried away with technology and progress, not necessarily a bad thing, but we need to learn to live our modern lives within our original operating system and thrive, not fall apart at the seams and then be held together with medication because our basic needs are not addressed.

A short lesson in evolution

We have been evolving at an incredible rate in the last few hundred years. To put this in perspective, if you were to reframe the period from

the first modern humans two hundred thousand years ago to today into the space of a calendar year, it would look something like this:-



If you had a time machine and could go back two hundred thousand years and bring anything living back with you and put it in our modern day world, would you expect it to adapt and thrive? You probably wouldn't expect it to even work, but that is exactly what our brains have had to do and it's evidence of how incredible we are that we have survived. However, as our modern lives and technology are still progressing at a rapidly increasing pace, the gap between our blueprint and our modern life is increasing to the point where we are breaking down.

Our brain is not a computer, so unfortunately we can't plug something in which updates the original operating system.

As we have evolved, we have developed an immense intellect, something other animals haven't managed as well as humans, which is why you don't generally see dogs driving around in cars or chatting to each other on mobile phones. Our human intellect is incredible, it is the reason for our rapid evolution, why we are the dominant species on the planet, why we can now take to the air, land on the moon and invent and understand things way beyond the comprehension of the geniuses of the day just two hundred years ago.

But, in the same instances, it is beginning to backfire and we are breaking, mentally and physically.

We have physical conditions linked to our nervous system that just did not exist even a short while ago – ME, MS, Fibromyalgia, IBS, eczema and asthma are all affected, if not yet proven to be caused, by our nervous system.

Emotional and mental health problems, so rapidly on the increase today, such as depression and anxiety, OCD, eating disorders, self harm and bipolar, did not exist very long ago. According to the World Health Organisation, by the year 2020 depression will be the leading cause of disease in the world.

And there's more, we actually had this vast intellectual resource all those years ago, but because life wasn't as complex then, we were more attuned to listening to it, we were more in touch with the operating instructions, there wasn't so much white noise and information cluttering up the channels, it was simpler and we were more able to use it effectively.

Our cleverness has forgotten our origins, but understanding the important elements of our blueprint, where this has gone wrong and what we need to do to emulate that blueprint gives us all the tools we need to live happy, mentally and physically healthy lives and take full advantage of the opportunities and tools available to us in this modern world.

Why Modern Life Doesn't Fit with Slowly Evolving Humans

Well, to put it simply there is a disparity between how we were designed and how we live today.

There are three fundamental areas that have gone wrong, but we don't need to use our imaginations too much to see how things should work.

Have you ever travelled to a Third World or developing country?

What's the first thing you notice about the people there?

They are happy.

Despite the poverty, despite not having enough food to eat, despite not having TV, mobile phones, computers, the latest trainers, cars, holidays and the internet to order an abundance of goodies to be delivered to their door – they are happy.

This is in contrast to the so called 'Developed' world where all these things are available, but one in ten adults suffers from depression at some time during their life.

How could it be that the 'developing world' has happiness whilst the 'developed world' has depression – that doesn't make sense does it? Well, yes it does actually, if you look at our blueprint.

People in 'developing' countries are living a lifestyle much closer to that of our primitive ancestors:

Developing World Lifestyle	Western World Lifestyle
<p>People live in large extended family and tribal units. They support each other, they learn from people they respect and trust and how to live is passed down through generations. They share tasks, they support each other, when things are tough, they come together and help each other.</p> <p>Everyone has a defined role within the family or community, elders have a respected role, the burden of survival is shared and everyone contributes.</p> <p>Regular festivals and coming together of the community keeps face to face communication alive and if someone visits, they don't just visit for a couple of hours, they will</p>	<p>People live in small isolated groups. It's not unusual for people to live alone and isolated. Support and answers to problems are found on faceless, soulless computers.</p> <p>We don't even need to interact with anyone , we can even get our food delivered to our door without seeing a soul.</p> <p>Largely communication is through the means of technology, we text and email, we have very little face to face interaction.</p> <p>Life is lived behind closed doors, even just 100 years ago, it was much more community based with support coming from neighbours, but now it's easy to never even</p>

<p>often stay for days or weeks.</p>	<p>meet your neighbours. Visits are quick we don't need to learn to get on with each other and our support is self obtained.</p>
<p>If someone needs to go somewhere, physical activity is involved. Many people are subsistence farmers which is hard labour and without technology and electricity, many jobs and activities are labour intensive, but what they are getting from this is a sense of achievement. It may have taken two hours to prepare a meal, but the result is rewarding.</p>	<p>We get into a car or other transport, drive to our destination, get out and sit at a desk or something similar. We have spent much money and many hours inventing labour saving devices which cost us money, so we have to work more hours in a sedentary job to buy these things because we're working too many hours to do the task without them. Where's the satisfaction in putting something in the microwave?</p>
<p>They can't afford to think negatively, they have to believe that every time they go out to work in the fields or go hunting, they are going to come home with food or the means to provide for themselves and their families. They cannot think "there's no point planting the fields this year, last year there was a drought, it could happen again and they'll never grow", it's survival. Or if they're walking for hours to get water, they can't negatively forecast there won't be water in the well and not bother. They have to think positively to get motivated in order to survive.</p>	<p>We have a social safety net and a society which not only allows, but encourages, negative thinking. The media bombards us constantly with negative stories of disaster, doom and gloom, complaints, injustice and dissatisfaction. We have a culture which promotes and encourages negativity in looking for something to complain about and it's rewarded with an audience. If we can't work for whatever reason, we have a government which will give us money, a house and food. There is no necessity to be positive for our survival.</p>

We've moved so far away from our original design that we've lost the skills which help us survive and thrive - and I don't mean building shelters and hunting with spears and bows and arrows, I mean we don't behave in a natural way, we don't have the sense of achievement from hunting down a wild boar, preparing and cooking it, or living as part of a close community, they've been replaced by convenience and electronic entertainment and as a result, it's all going a bit wrong.

But it doesn't have to, I'm not suggesting we all have to go back to basics, dig up the lawns and patios and plant our food, throw away the technology and go back and live with our parents - Nooooo! I'm old enough to remember a TV programme called The Good Life where a suburban couple did just that living next door to their opposite materialistic counterparts.

What I'm saying is that understanding the fundamental reasons and physiological effects behind our natural primitive behaviours allows us to innovate and replace those outdated forms of living which just don't fit in the modern world we've evolved, with other actions and activities which have the same effect on our body and mind and will keep us mentally healthy, functioning at our best in our new world.

CHAPTER 2 – WHY MODERN LIFE IS MAKING US ILL

Technology

Although technology enhances our lives in many ways, it has also taught us anxieties of a kind we wouldn't have had until recently.

Speed of Communication.

We are very impatient these days and we can't deal with ambiguity, with not knowing. It was as recently as 25 years ago that most communication travelled by letter. People accepted having to wait; it was normal. Email has taken over from 'snail-mail' and so if we don't get answers by return, we start to wonder why and our imagination takes over. It's even more instant with text, if someone doesn't answer a text very quickly, we get frustrated and want to know why not, and because we don't know, we make it up in our heads or worry about not hearing back from that person.

Computer Games

Computer games are designed to create anxiety. Our brain doesn't know the difference between imagination and reality, so when you're playing a computer game your brain thinks it's real and you will experience the feelings of anxiety, panic, elation etc. It can also be addictive, just as survival is, as when you do something right, you get rewarded with feeling pleased with yourself and your brain wants to do it again, but it's not real.

Television

As with computer games, TV programmes, especially the news, soaps and drama series, suck us in to the anxiety and tension they create. They are also a form of distraction for our brains from the other stuff in our lives creating the anxiety and/or depression, but

we are being distracted by one source of anxiety to another which is completely unnatural for us. We are also being bombarded with propaganda setting our expectation levels of how we should compare ourselves amongst our peers. Even if we consciously disagree or don't want that lifestyle, subconsciously, if we are not doing as well as the adverts on TV suggest, then we are not keeping up with evolution and therefore it creates anxiety.

Too Clever

Having a big brain has its disadvantages, of course it has given us the ability to evolve as quickly as we have, especially in the last few hundred years, but the downside to having the vast intellect is that we overthink.

People who suffer from anxiety and depression can be from all walks of life and it's certainly not something that just afflicts a certain demographic. But one of the common elements that all people with anxiety or depression are doing wrong is overthinking things. In their attempts to figure out why they feel anxious or miserable, they analyse and imagine many different possible scenarios, going over and over things in their mind. This is not solving the problem, all it is actually doing is creating more anxiety and depression, keeping them locked in. They use their imagination to negatively forecast every possible future outcome, or try to imagine what other people are thinking or doing, without being aware that they are actually using their imagination to do this, instead they believe it as reality.

So being clever is a disadvantage if you're using your brain worrying about things that will never happen or re-examining everything you don't like about your life.

Too Much Time

Having too much time to think is not good either. Nowadays we spend too much time on our own allowing our brains to negatively imagine

and run through scenarios.

In primitive times, firstly people would not have been on their own just thinking very much at all, and secondly they didn't have time to think because they were too busy hunting and gathering and surviving.

In our progressive 'developed' world societies we have focused much time, effort and money inventing labour saving and time saving devices so we spend less time doing things that keep us mentally healthy and more time thinking about things we don't need to keep going over.

Some of the danger spots for too much thinking are:-

- The commute to work
- Driving
- Sitting in front of the TV
- Cleaning (with devices that don't need physical work)
- Any other time we are doing manual jobs on our own that don't take positive engagement of our brain.

When I lived in Nepal, I observed something interesting– people were hardly ever alone; even in tasks that only took one person, for example, cleaning the windows, there would always be at least two people doing it, and they never travelled alone. It's interesting that they are also the happiest people I've ever come across.

As people slide further into depression they do less and less, creating more and more thinking time. This thinking is negative, often introspecting about themselves and their lives; this is what causes the depression.

Before we had modern technology, cars, modern conveniences and labour saving devices we wouldn't have had time to think. Our daily schedule would have been full of useful serotonin creating activities, we would have gone from one job to another and we would have interacted with people. If we had something on our mind the

opportunity was always there to talk about it, but in today's society it is too easy to not talk about it, instead thinking about it and letting it grow out of normal perspective.

Media Propaganda

In this age of information technology, information has become more accessible. In reality we have no idea how much of the information we're being fed is true but we can be sure of that most of it is negative.

Doom and gloom, crisis and disaster, terror and fear are newsworthy, you probably wouldn't be far wrong if you had the impression that all the news is negative these days, We are bombarded at every interval by the news on TV, newspapers and radio of negativity and disasters; at home or abroad it seems that news is not news unless it is there to scare us.

I remember in 2004, I was living in Kathmandu, Nepal and at the time there was civil unrest; friction between the king, the government and the Maoist party who wanted recognition and acceptance. As a foreigner living in Nepal the local politics didn't affect me, I wasn't a target. However, my family back in the UK knew every time there had been a bomb in the city or a problem as it was being reported on, and sensationalised by the international press.

The journalists covering the stories sensationalise them with attention-grabbing headlines. We lose sight of the fact that the news is deliberately written to catch attention and the most effective thing to grab your attention is fear.

It is well known in the psychology of marketing that there are two elements you need to interrupt current thought and grab attention and they are sex or fear. These are your baselines. If you want to promote anything you either need to show that somehow this product will make you more attractive to the opposite sex, or you promote the fear of not using the product.

There is a well-known clothes washing additive that you're encouraged to use on your wash in addition to your washing detergent because if you don't your clothes will come out stained and you will look dirty! Now when you think about it this is ridiculous because why would you buy a detergent that doesn't clean properly on its own? You shouldn't need to buy another product to add to it to clean your clothes. But the advert suggests that if you don't you'll be judged as dirty.

Fear is promoted widely throughout our TV advertising, the news is full of it - every which way we turn, we are bombarded with negativity in the media.

Our modern age of information technology is designed to create anxiety and keep the audience hooked in and we are unaware we are being manipulated in this way.

Advertisers, marketers and, indeed journalists are all tapping into the part of our brain that deals with fear. To human beings this is intoxicating because if your brain detects fear and anxiety it stays focused on the source. For people using psychology to sell us goods, ideas or news it's a very powerful tool. However, the side-effect is the subconscious effect it is having on the primitive brain that becomes locked in survival mode, looking for more problems and possible danger.

The result of this constant overstimulation of the fight/flight response is having a detrimental effect on our brains and we are not getting the chance to switch it off and allow our minds to settle.

The added overstimulation by the media, stress at work and modern expectations, combined with a reduction in activity and personal interaction, is leaving us unbalanced.

It is not your fault if you've ended up with anxiety and depression BUT it is your responsibility to fix it by learning how to adapt your life so you operate within your primitive blueprint whilst making the most of all the opportunities the modern world has to offer.

Exercise 1 – Media Blackout

The media is not just a source of depression; it is also a source of anxiety. Anxiety and depression often coexist, we are very good at switching between the two, therefore, Exercise 1 is about imposing a media blackout in your life.

1. Complete Blackout on the news – TV, radio and newspapers

You will not miss out on what is going on in the world, you will still get to hear about events, but from active listening and conversation, not the damaging subliminal anxiety inducing subconscious programming that comes from taking in the sensationalised headlines and juicy bits the media throws out to grab attention.

Trust me on this one, I have not listened to the news on TV or bought a newspaper for years and I'm still up with current affairs. The news will still leak into your life and if you want to find out more about something, you can intentionally go online and find out.

2. Watch TV with intention, not by default

Surprised you there didn't I? Perhaps you thought I was going to say no TV. Goodness, no! I would be a complete hypocrite if I said that, I couldn't live without Netflix boxsets!!

What I mean here is set yourself a time or limit and watch programmes you are interested in. Do not switch on the TV as soon as you get home and have it droning in the background. For example, set an intention to switch the TV on only after 8pm or until 10pm. Most programmes you can watch on replay these days, but if you can't miss Eastenders at 7.30pm on a Tuesday and Thursday, watch it, then switch the TV off half an hour earlier.

In the times when there is no TV, find something else to do, listen to an audiobook, put music on and do something else, even if it is something small. You will be amazed at how many hours you gain in your life when you switch the TV off.

3. Switch your phone off at 10pm

This is a tough one for many people, but it is in here for a reason. It puts you back in control of communication in your life.

What did we do before mobile phones?

It is still considered etiquette to not disturb people outside the hours of 8am and 10pm, but it is up to you to abide by and enforce that etiquette in your life. It will feel uncomfortable initially, you will feel you are missing out on something or something might happen and you won't know. There isn't much that can't wait until the next morning and after the initial period of accepting the new routine, you will feel a new freedom from the constant stress of communicating.

The same principals apply to going out and leaving your phone behind – go for a walk or a run or perhaps go to the cinema and leave your mobile at home, it is very liberating.

CHAPTER 3 – THE SECRET TO CLOUD 9

Imagine you have learned to walk on a tightrope and you are pleased with your efforts to do it proficiently. When you are practicing your tightrope walking, you love it, everyone else is impressed with you as well – happy days!

But conditions are not always perfect for tightrope walking and the more experienced and confident you become, the more challenging the conditions you encounter. Some days it is blowing a gale, other days people are throwing things at you, or it rains making the rope slippery, but you know it hurts when you fall off, so despite the adverse conditions all around, you are determined to stay balanced.

You can use your own analogy, but the secret to staying put on Cloud 9 is practice and learning how to stay balanced so that, if something comes along to wobble your cloud, you're not going to fall off, you steady the cloud instead.

Once you [Climb Out Of The Cloud](#), staying in your intellectual brain is about learning how to recognise your own unique signs that you're wobbling and doing something – taking the action that right for you to bounce back.

The relapse rate for depression is notoriously high because people don't learn this bit. They come out of depression without ever understanding the truth behind depression or learning what part they played in the depression or the recovery, and they go back to the same life they had before without making the internal changes, shifting their mindset or making practical changes in their life.

Everything is OK for a while, but the next time 'life' happens, they relapse and follow the same cycles of behaviour.

So if you would prefer to live a happy life on Cloud 9 and you want to stay there you need to do three things:-

- Take responsibility for yourself and your happiness
- Become self aware
- Take action when you wobble

I'm not going to dwell on taking responsibility for yourself and your happiness, it was part of [Living With Depression Is Rubbish](#) and [Climbing Out Of the Cloud](#) and if that that bit hasn't sunk in yet and you're still blaming circumstances, life and people for your depression, you won't even get to Cloud 9 you need to go back and learn those basic principals first.

Tuning in to your intuition and becoming aware of your unique 'signs' is the fine tuning you can learn when you thoroughly understand how to come out of depression.

What are your signs?

To recognise your signs, we need to quickly revisit some of the characteristics of the primitive brain:-

Negative thinking:-

- Negative forecasting of the future
- Negative introspecting about life, themselves and the past
- Obsessive thoughts and behaviours
- Resenting other people
- Worrying about what other people think.
- Unwanted habits, alcohol, smoking, drugs, gambling
- Unhealthy eating patterns, especially starches and sugars

Then, for some there are physical systems:-

- Insomnia or sleeping disorders
- Upset stomach or butterflies
- Other physical symptoms and illnesses
- Contracting colds and flu more than usual.
- Headaches

I can't tell you exactly what will happen for you as everyone is unique in the symptoms they develop, but the earlier you can jump in and rebalance, the quicker and easier you can hop back onto your happy cloud. Don't wait to be feeling miserable, as you tune into your intuition and become self aware, you will notice more tangible things happening that warn you your serotonin levels have dropped.

I have been practicing keeping myself balanced for years now and I teach these techniques to help others. So I think I'm pretty good at staying on my Cloud 9, engineering my life the way I want it to be. But I am also human and I have to practice exactly the same as everyone else does or suffer the consequences!

From time to time I can slide if I am not paying attention and I don't do the things that I know keep my serotonin and dopamine levels high.

My early warning signs are these:-

Cheese sandwiches.

Yes, cheese sandwiches, bizarre, I know! This is such a strong signal for me that even my close friends and family will know that if they see me eating cheese sandwiches, I'm struggling emotionally. Bread is a simple carbohydrate that is quickly turned into sugar (serotonin substitute) and for me this becomes a binge habit leading to a lot of weight gain if I allow it to continue unchecked. Cheese sandwiches I love and it's a childhood thing, but that is irrelevant to my life today. It is

a warning sign that I need to do something to top up serotonin levels immediately because they are already too low.

When I'm in a good place, I have a very healthy diet, but when I'm not, my diet and subsequently my health, confidence and self esteem suffer.

I start thinking about ex-partners.

This is introspecting about the past. It could be anything for someone else, mine is just an example I'm prepared to share so that others can identify their warning signs. In my mind I either focus on the fondness we shared instead of the reasons we split up or I revisit old resentments. Neither are useful in any way whatsoever, they are just a waste of brain energy and space, but they are a sign for me that I need to make changes.

When I'm in a good place, I don't even think about past relationships.

I get Migraines

Migraines have been attributed to low serotonin levels and it is certainly the case for me. When my life goes off balance, I get cluster migraines – a very physical sign that I need to do something to pull it back immediately.

Physical symptoms are often a sign that you have let it go too far and your primitive mind has stepped in and is actively causing conditions to physically stop you doing whatever it is that is leading to the anxiety.

CHAPTER 4 - MINDFULNESS

Evidence is growing for the positive effects Mindfulness has on your mental health.

Mindfulness is a combination of meditation and some basic principles that provide you with tools for coping with life.

Principles of Mindfulness

Control & Acceptance

Mindfulness teaches us to accept the things we can't control. Much anxiety, stress and depression is caused by wanting to, or trying to, take control over other people, the way they behave or think, issues and circumstances and not least of all ourselves, chastising ourselves for things we are not doing or we think we 'should' do.

Learning the power of acceptance and self-acceptance will help:-

- Enhance awareness
- Reduce avoidance of the problem
- Minimise the emotional response
- Easier problem solving
- Make you happier!

Comfort with Ambiguity

One of the most difficult things for humans to accept is not knowing or 'ambiguity'. Not knowing what is going to happen or why something happened or what other people are thinking or doing can be a source of anxiety that activates the primitive brain. When that happens, the negative primitive brain hijacks our imagination and goes over fictional scenarios that we then believe. When you don't know something, be

comfortable in knowing that you don't know. Some things don't ever have a reason for having happened. It is far more comfortable to become accepting of ambiguity.

Detailed Thinking

Typically depression encourages us to develop the habit of global thinking – the all or nothing type thinking. I have lost count of the times that someone says to me "I've tried everything, nothing works". Notice the 'everything' and 'nothing' or "I will never be free of depression" the problem with thinking in this way is that your subconscious believes you and so you don't try. Become aware of your global thinking and break it down into detailed thinking. Have you really tried 'everything'? I doubt it; probably you have tried what you've heard of and decided to try and I expect that there are more things you've heard of but dismissed as not relevant or interesting to you. We only know what we know.

Focus

Whatever you focus on, you amplify. Focusing on how bad you feel, you will feel worse. Become consciously aware of where your thoughts are focused and refocus on the positive.

For example, focusing on NOT feeling like an action or working towards something you want to achieve will cause procrastination and then later you will be disappointed with yourself for not taking action. Instead of focusing on not feeling like action, focus on every detail of the action you need to take, break it down into small chunks and focus on how you will feel when you have completed the action or achieved what you intend to.

Focusing on how good you will feel and pleased you will be will motivate you.

Presence

Be present in the moment. Depression lives in the past and internally, negatively introspecting about the past, life and self. Sometimes depression also negatively forecasts the future.

Practice becoming aware of presence. Presence is a practice in itself and there are specific meditations for presence, noticing every minute detail of the things around you. Take an object, perhaps a piece of fruit or a flower and examine it closely for every detail.

Practice this with yourself and your life, be present in the moment, noticing everything you do have, the internal resources you have, your skills, your possessions. Take time out to be in the present.

Curiosity

Curiosity is an openness to experience for its own sake, finding subjects and topics fascinating, exploring and discovering.

Curiosity is an antidote to anxiety.

Practicing curiosity will enhance your quality of life, your relationships and give meaning and purpose to life.

In depression, we spend too much time making assumptions based on our imagination, become curious and discover the world outside your own mind.

Compassion

The compassion we feel for others

- External focus

- Comparisons

- Wishing freedom from suffering – activates our mirror neurons

- Increases kindness

Gratitude

Practicing gratitude is part of one of the exercises in Climbing out of the Cloud. When in depression or anxiety, the person suffering spends much of the time inside their own head focusing on what is wrong or could be wrong or was wrong in the past! Gratitude encourages you to focus on the positive things in your life, past, present and future and takes you outside your mind to become aware of the larger world around you.

Practice

Understanding the above concepts will change your outlook on life and bring you greater happiness and balance. However, until these notions are put into practice, it's merely an entertaining intellectual exercise. Seeds that are not planted do not grow. Therefore, we make a commitment to actively practice exercises to reinforce these principles and cultivate our peace of mind and body.

Mindful Meditation

Meditation and hypnosis, although having opposite beneficial effects, when used together are super effective.

They both work at a subconscious level but in different ways.

Hypnosis helps build positive neural networks and make new connections in your intellectual brain that may change your perception of a situation or find positive solutions.

Mindful meditation helps you let go of unhelpful connections that you have inadvertently built.

As you probably know if you've read the first two books in the series, my background is in Information Technology and I like to understand things in a logical way. How I see the difference between hypnosis and meditation is this:-

Hypnosis is programming your mind

Meditation is bug fixing for past programming

Using both is an excellent daily maintenance routine for your mind.

You need to find your own rhythm within your daily routines, but I would suggest 20 minutes of mindful meditation in the morning when you get up, before you start your day, and listening to a hypnosis track when you are in bed ready to go to sleep at night.

I have included below a guided mindful meditation track. When you have learned the principles of meditation, you don't need to use the track, but you might find it helpful in the beginning.

Meditation is a practice and it is something you do need to practice. Don't worry if you find it difficult to relax your mind enough so it doesn't wander off initially, that's one of the things the guided meditation track with help you with and it is very normal for these things to happen. Just keep practicing.

Exercise 2 – Mindful Meditation Practice

Click the picture of the disk below and you will be linked to our Soundcloud account where you can play and/or download the track.

Follow the meditation for 24 minutes every morning



CHAPTER 5 – CHANGE

If you have depression or anxiety, something in your life needs to change and it might not be what you think it is.

Your intellect will know what it is – your intellect will come up with answers based on a proper assessment of the situation and is generally very positive.

Your primitive brain will focus on the problems and what you tend to think you need to change, but it isn't necessarily correct; let me give you some examples from past clients:-

I had a young lady come to see me for help with an eating disorder; she was bulimic. She was only 22 years old, but she was a professional horseracing jockey, so there was pressure to keep her weight down. All was going well and she was gradually starting to get herself a life back and gain confidence. One day she came for her appointment and announced that she had made a decision. She was happy and excited and I asked her what it was – “I'm going to Australia”, she announced.

“Wow” I said, “that's a bit of a curve ball, where has that come from?”

She explained that she had worked out that it was horses and horseracing she loved and there were other forms of horseracing all around the world where she could earn a good living, but what she was doing at the moment wasn't the right type of racing for her, she just thought it was the only option before. She bought me in a newspaper clipping about her winning her last UK race and opening up to the press about her struggle with bulimia (which incidentally had faded away).

That was a big life change, but another client I had just made a small tweak to her life, resulting in an equally dramatic cure.

This lady came for help with IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome). She was a single mum working a full-time job, so as you can imagine, her life was pretty full. She knew something had to change, but as she said to me “I'm not in control of anything, my baby takes priority in my life and I

can't afford to lose my job, there isn't any time for me, there is nothing I can do about it" (*notice the 'all or nothing' thinking*). On her fourth session she arrived a different person, she was bubbly and happy and full of energy, a complete contrast to the exhausted emotional client of early weeks. I said to her "You are a different person this week, what changed?" "Nothing" she said, "I just feel better and my IBS has cleared up."

"Why?" I asked.

She went on to explain that all she had done was started leaving work on time. The only change was fifteen minutes of her day. Instead of leaving late at 4.45pm, she left on time at 4.30pm. This meant that she missed the worst of the traffic and got to her child minder on time instead of late and stressed. When she picked up her baby she was more relaxed and so, instead of having a screaming 18 month old in the car all the way home, the journey was relaxed and she was able to interact calmly with her daughter. They both arrived home less stressed and so she became more engaged in the moment with dinner time, enjoyed time with her daughter, she started to look forward to the bedtime routine and telling stories instead of dreading the tantrums, and because she was more relaxed her baby slept better – so she slept better. The next morning she woke feeling more refreshed and the whole morning routine was calm and she arrived at work on time instead of rushed.

But the most surprising result for her was the positive effect it had on work. When she was at her worst, she was constantly worried that she would be judged as a single mum juggling responsibilities and her performance at work would deteriorate. So she was staying late just to get cleared up and it looked as if she was putting in the time even though she was a single mum. But her work was deteriorating because of the stress she was putting herself under. Shortly after she made the decision to leave on time, her performance improved, she was more able to focus, more proactive and returned to the happy fun work colleague she was before and she enjoyed being at work instead of resenting it.

All she had done was adjust her day by fifteen minutes, but she had made a change that changed a life.

The third client also had an eating disorder and she came for help because she was getting engaged to her boyfriend, they wanted to get married and start a family, but she didn't want to pass the unhealthy attitude towards food she had developed at seven years old on to her children. She was a lovely client to work with, she went through all the processes she needed to and made lots of changes in her life, she got more involved in social activities with friends, took up netball as a sport, resolved some leadership issues at work where she had been promoted to a manager, and as the weeks went on she noticed many improvements to herself and her confidence, but the eating disorder hadn't gone. She felt braver about tackling it and wanted to, but it was still there.

Week 12 she came in with a big smile on her face, it was just after Christmas and she had figured something out -

She realised that she had been resenting her fiancé for not doing the things she thought he should to show her that he loves her. She had opened her eyes to what he was doing that previously she hadn't appreciated; for him they were big gestures. She was so fixed on what he wasn't doing that she missed what he was doing.

For this client the change needed was a mindset shift. She needed to let go of trying to control things that weren't hers to control – in her case, her boyfriend's displays of affection. But this was just a catalyst, it flowed into other areas of her life, when she let go of control in other areas, the lifelong eating disorder disappeared.

Incidentally eating disorders are always about control, especially in children. Children are not in control of much in their life, but they are always in control of what they put in their mouth. But for this client, the cure wasn't getting control of her eating, it was letting go of control of other things.

What these examples demonstrate is that the solution is not in the problem; it never is.

Finally as further proof that the solution is not in the problem, the solution is in changing something. Another client came to see me wanting to stop eating chocolate. The problem had got out of hand to the extent that she was secretly stealing chocolate from her children and hated herself for it. She was an intelligent lady who chose to put her career on the back burner while the children were young. But her youngest child was now 16 years old. She worked out that she was unfulfilled intellectually and decided to go to University as a mature student and get a degree. She still likes chocolate, but she can go into a shop now without buying five bars of it.

The chocolate was not the problem, it was just a warning sign that something else wasn't right in her life and this is usually the case.

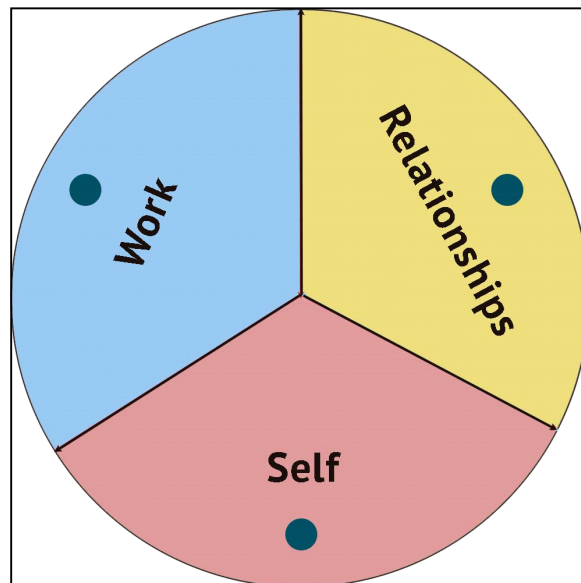
Your job is to get your life balanced and create sufficient levels of serotonin and dopamine so your intellectual brain will work out what needs to change.

It will work it out, you just have to feed it serotonin and get out of its way.

CHAPTER 6 – LIFE BALANCE

We all need to find and maintain a balance in our lives. It's not necessarily equal and it's not the same for everyone, but you do need your balance. When you are deciding what is most effectively going to create serotonin and dopamine for you, taking a look at your life balance is a good starting point.

There are three areas you need to consider



You could think of it like those ball bearing games with each section having its own ball bearing that you have to carefully and delicately balance into the hole and then keep that one there while you work on getting the next one in, and so on.

What tends to happen is that we get everything balanced, life is good and we're happy living on Cloud 9, then we put the balancing game down on the sideboard and forget to check everything is OK.

Something or someone comes along to dislodge one of the ball bearings – perhaps it's work or maybe a relationship with someone, but what we immediately do is give that section all our attention and focus.

We are so focused on getting that particular ball bearing back in the hole, we ignore everything else and, before we know it, we are completely off balance again, heading on a downhill spiral towards depression, hell-bent on getting the problem ball bearing under control.

The solution is NOT in the problem, it never is.

The secret to rebalancing is getting the 'self' ball bearing back in first and then the other two will fall into place easily.

Stepping back and focusing on yourself when you're fighting with a partner or work is particularly stressful. It's the hardest thing to do, partly because you think you will drop the problem ball bearing if you step back from it, but equally because we think it is selfish to put your own needs first.

NEWSFLASH

Putting your own needs first is NOT selfish - it is selfless

We are taught that it is selfish to put ourselves first, but this is often misinterpreted or misunderstood. Someone who only thinks about themselves and doesn't give any consideration to other people could be considered selfish, but this is not the same as looking after your own needs.

Only you can look after your own needs. People who care about you will tell you that "you need to do this" or "you should do that", but only you can make the decisions and actually do something for yourself.

The reason looking after your own needs is selfless not selfish is because when you are looking after your own needs, you are balanced, you feel good, you have the right chemical balance and life balance.

Then and only then you are in the best place to look after the other people you need to.

You cannot just give and give and give if you are not right yourself, you need to be in a good place first.

Think of the emergency safety instructions you hear about oxygen masks before any flight takes off. You are told to put your own oxygen mask on first BEFORE you help others, even young children. If you run out of oxygen, you can't help anyone.

Your wellbeing is exactly the same, you have to look after yourself first as a priority, then you can look after others.

When you give to other people, but quietly resent them for it, then that is selfish – how do they know you are so drained yourself you don't have the personal resources to keep giving? Some people even go as far as insisting on giving, even when someone says there is no need, because they've decided that the other person needs their help – they then get stressed at the time it takes out of their day.

Look after your own needs and you will become happy to give selflessly.

Looking after yourself as a priority is vital, as becoming aware of your triggers, early warning signs and effective solutions for the very unique you is the secret to living on Cloud 9.

I have a tattoo on my right wrist, where I see it every day, it says

“Memento Vivere”

which means “Remember to Live”

I'm not suggesting everyone gets tattoos, but the reason I had it done was to remind me to get a life and live. I have a tendency to work too much and become too focused on work. I love my work, I'm very passionate about it, but it can take over my life if I don't keep a check on the balances in my life.

When I start working too much, I stop looking after my own needs and my serotonin levels drop. It generally takes about two weeks for me to notice I've dropped if I ignore my intuition screaming at me and let it go too far. The areas I compromise for work are socialising and exercise (running).

When this happens, I deliberately arrange to see friends or I arrange social engagements and activities. I don't want to at the time, I want to work because I've become focused on something in particular and I'm determined to fix something or get a piece of work finished that I'm struggling with. However, I know that I'm not as focused as I should be, I know deep down that I'm procrastinating and I'm easily distracted, I'm cutting corners, I'm not putting 100% effort in when I am working and the results are not my best work – I know this and I'm annoyed at myself.

The answer is NOT to work harder.

The answer is to put it down and go and have some fun.

When I return to it, I'm refreshed, refocused, sharper and I have new inspiration and energy.

Focusing on the problem is not the solution – it never is.

I have to constantly remind myself to have fun. When we are not doing the things we think we should, we punish ourselves with not having fun, we don't think we deserve it, so we do nothing at all.

Having fun and enjoying yourself will create serotonin – guaranteed, then and only then will you feel more motivated to do the things you need to do.

Of course you do need discipline in your life – but it's a balance.

Exercise 3 – How Balanced Is Your Life

Write a list of what you do in a typical week and attach a time value to it.

There are 168 hours in a week, you should be getting 56 hours sleep a week, leaving 112 hours you need to account for.

(If you are sleeping more than 56 hours, you need to introduce more discipline about being awake. You may be exhausted, but you won't turn things around until you spend more time creating serotonin.)

Then go through that list and put each thing into one of the categories

Work

Relationships

Self

Next add up the time you spend in each segment and have a look at it – does anything jump out at you?

If you are spending an hour commuting to work, it goes under the "work" segment. But, if you are spending the time during the commute listening to self development audiobooks or something similar you can put it under "self".

If you take an hour for lunch and meet friends, not talking about work, put it in "relationships". If you do something for yourself or exercise, it goes in "self". If you work through lunch or spend lunch time talking about work – it goes in "work " (and put yourself on the naughty step).

Make a positive intention for yourself to rebalance yourself and your life. If there's a large portion of TV watching in there, commit to changing some of that time to doing something more productive; giving your brain something positive to do.

CHAPTER 7 – BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

I would recommend a book by Joe Griffin and Ivan Tyrell call 'The Human Givens' ([recommended reading list](#)) that explains how humans have certain fundamental psychological and emotional needs.

These needs fall into two broad categories – Purpose and Relationships.

Purpose

We all need a purpose in life – a reason to get out of bed in the morning. Once our basic needs for safety, food and shelter are satisfied, what motivates us? For some it is being a parent, for others it's their job or the work they do in the community. Work is important, but this isn't necessarily traditional 'paid' work, by work I mean 'doing something that contributes'.

Contributes to what? 'What' it contributes to isn't necessarily important, but it should be something that makes you feel valued, that can be your family, your community, mankind?

Relationships

We also need to know where we fit in within our intimate relationships, our families, friends, social circle, work colleagues and communities. We need a role within those relationships and we need to feel that we're accepted and we fit in. For humans, fitting into the tribe means survival and safety.

When we are displaced from our normal purpose or relationships our anxiety levels rise. You will remember from [Living With Depression is Rubbish](#) and [Climbing Out Of the Cloud](#) that when anxiety rises, the primitive brain steps in and takes control, thinking there is some sort of crisis, emergency or danger. The primitive brain always works within the parameters of anxiety, depression and anger – or a combination of all three.

If you were actually in those primitive times and you were displaced from your tribe or unable to carry out your purpose for some reason, you would probably be in a life-threatening situation. Of course, it isn't life-threatening today, but your blueprint hasn't changed and your primitive brain doesn't know that.

When we have life changing events and the status quo is upset, for those who are worrying about the future and what might happen, anxiety can become overwhelming, and those who negatively introspect about themselves and their lives and what they have lost become depressed.

I see this happening frequently on the island I live on. Many couples retire to the island and for a period of time everything is wonderful; they've been looking forward to "not having to work" for years and life is an exciting new start in a beautiful place.

However, after the "honeymoon period" or when the excitement and novelty of being on an island and not working wears off, some people become depressed or develop symptoms of anxiety because they have disrupted their status quo and not rebalanced with a new one.

And they are confused by this – "Why am I depressed? I have all the time in the world to do things, I don't have to work any more, I live on a beautiful island in the sun, so why do I feel so miserable?"

Both areas of their fundamental human needs have changed and until they replace them and create their new purpose and relationships, their primitive brain is going to carry on believing there is a crisis, emergency or danger.

Even in retirement, people still need to find a purpose and a reason for getting up in the morning. Life has changed, but that need hasn't suddenly gone, we need to adapt and change with life's ever changing circumstances.

Even though they made the choice to move abroad, they are still displaced from their friends, family and the community they know in a

new environment with new people, they need to build new relationships and find their place and role within this new community.

Traditionally people would have stayed within the same community and their role would have naturally progressed through very clearly defined parameters. As people become too old to hunt or do hard physical labour, they became 'elders', people respected for their wisdom and knowledge. When women were past child-bearing age, they had a valued role in helping their daughters with childcare and had other valuable skills to contribute to the family and community.

In modern society those traditional roles have become blurred, the natural tribal support networks have all but disappeared and new life changing circumstances have emerged.

Divorce, moving house to a new area, changing job, children leaving home, coping with a new baby on your own, retirement, redundancy or not having a job, they all disrupt the status quo of our basic human psychological and emotional needs.

So what do we do about it?

To be blunt - you get up off your backside and start addressing these needs – without coming up with negative excuses for why you can't.

I'm not completely heartless, I do understand that if you've had depression for a long time you will have lost confidence, energy and motivation and maybe you are not at the stage yet where you have sufficient serotonin to do some of these things. Go back and study [Climbing Out Of the Cloud](#) to understand how you create serotonin until you are at the level where your intellectual brain kicks in and works out how you're going to fulfill these needs.

Most importantly, you know you need to do this, so set yourself a positive intention that you are going to find new (whatever you need to do) and your brain will work out the rest – get out of its way.

CHAPTER 8 – SOCIAL LIFE AND INTERESTS

Have you ever noticed how much more sociable you are when you're in a good place and happy?

It is no coincidence that you meet significant people in your life when you are at your best.

Depression and loneliness are co-conspirators. People need to be with people, it's in our blueprint, so when we don't have enough interaction with our own kind, our serotonin and dopamine levels drop, resulting in a lack of motivation to go out and meet people and we become lonely.

When life circumstances change you may find yourself displaced from your 'tribe', your family, friends, social circle and communities.

It's sad that some people believe that their depression will magically disappear when they find someone special to be with. The truth is they will find someone special when they are out of depression.

Of course I am talking about partners and someone to love, but equally I'm talking about friends in general.

Someone who is depressed is hard work to be around. They are negative, complain about everything, talk about themselves and their problems constantly and bring everything back to being about them. As I described in '[Living With Depression Is Rubbish](#)' they are having their own pity party and are looking for other people to join in.

Or they can't get motivated to go out and be with people, instead they complain that no one ever contacts them or visits.

When you have depression, you inadvertently push people away, it's hard work and not much fun for other people to be around you and, as well as that, a habit of a depressed person is to think negatively about other people, so they will look for faults and problems in other people, focus on what their friends are NOT doing – but they don't tell them,

they just believe their own negative imagined reasons why and cut friends out of their life.

People like to be around people who are happy, relaxed, calm, easy to be around, fun.

So you have two jobs:-

- Work on your own self-development so you become the relaxed, happy, calm person who is easy to be with, ie get yourself out of depression.
- Go out and get yourself a social life – it is up to YOU to create your social life. It isn't going to come knocking on your door.

When you start doing the positive self development things in your life that create serotonin – Positive Thinking, Positive Interaction and Positive Activity – you will also become naturally more confident and you will find that you attract people to you without any effort on your part. You will also feel braver and more able to step out of your comfort zone and try new things, which is exactly what you need to do in order to create even more serotonin.

If you want to meet someone special and attract a new lover or partner into your life, you will do it without even trying when you are the best you can be, happy, relaxed and calm.

Until you are better, you will continue to follow the same patterns as always with your relationships. It is not everyone else who needs to change; it is you, from the inside out.

It's not unusual for clients to make statements along the lines of;

“I don't know what I like”

“I don't have any interests”

"I'm doing the things I used to like, but they don't excite me any more"

"I can't do the things I like because ..."

When you are looking at the problems all the time, of course you're not going to be able to work out what you like or might like. If your life circumstances have changed significantly and you can no longer do the things you used to do or be with the people you used to spend time with, it's challenging to know what to do.

How do you discover new things to do and like?

How do you meet people who are like you that you will have a natural rapport with?

You put yourself in situations that increase your opportunities to meet them. This means doing the things you enjoy and you will meet others who like the same things.

I discovered a passion for sailing completely by accident by trying something new.

When I split up with my husband in 2012, I needed to create a life as a single person again and I desperately needed to get away and have a holiday. However, all my close friends were married, in relationships and had children. I had been taking groups trekking in the Himalayas for the last eight years, which I loved, but I wanted to be near the sea in the sunshine and take a holiday where I was not responsible for anyone else.

When I was depressed the first time around, I did go on a beach resort holiday in Greece on my own – honestly, it was miserable, I felt like Billy No Mates all week. I wasn't in the right place to do that emotionally, I wasn't yet out of the depression really and I kept myself to myself, at that time I didn't have the confidence to be sociable.

I didn't want to repeat that experience so I tried another strategy. Many of the people on the trekking groups I organised came on their own and,

as we were a group, it was always friendly and sociable and we had a great time, so I started looking for group activity holidays. I didn't want to book on a 'singles' holiday, that came with expectations and pressure so I looked at something I knew I would be OK with - yoga retreats; "get healthy" I thought.

I came across many yoga retreats that also offered other activities and it dawned on me that I was checking out the dates for yoga retreats that also offered sailing as an extra activity and I realised that it was in fact sailing I wanted to try.

So I switched my search to Cabin Charters.

To cut a long story short, I had an amazing holiday, I met a lovely bunch of people, everyone had to be sociable, we were all stuck on a boat with a bunch of strangers with a common interest. Becoming friends was easy.

Just four years on and I have loads of lovely sailing friends. I had no idea how much my life would change at the time, but that small act of making the decision to step outside my comfort zone and try something new was the seed that grew into a whole new life. I now live on an island in the Mediterranean and next year I will be living on a yacht (and working from it) – four years ago I lived in the middle of the UK and I didn't even know how to sail.

I had a hypnotherapy client who came to see me for general anxiety. He was a lovely guy, but the worst workaholic I had ever come across, I would have said he had OCD about work. But I didn't need to point out that he needed a better work/life balance, he already knew that, unfortunately however, his social anxiety held him back and he hadn't socialised for so long, he didn't know how to any more.

But he worked out that if he booked himself on evening classes he would have to leave work earlier those nights, he would be around other people outside work and he might even discover a new interest or passion.

He tried many different things, languages, art, archaeology, I don't know how he chose what he wanted to study but the way he put it was to use the analogy of a bowling alley.

He said, "if I throw enough balls at the pins, eventually I'm going to get a strike".

And he did, he discovered he had a passion for archaeology, so he booked on digs as a volunteer and created a social life that he loved.

Having an online social life isn't enough, you need to get out and be with other people, it is essential for your mental health.

Of course it is scary, your primitive brain is going to try and stop you stepping outside your comfort zone at all costs, but you can overrule it, feel the fear and do it anyway.

The internet is a valuable resource for finding new things to get involved with that you can do alone

- [Local evening classes](#)
- [Volunteering](#)
- [Meetup.com](#)

The last one, meetup.com is a site that brings like-minded people together and you can even organise a group get-together that you would like to do.

Getting involved in activities for the first time is a daunting prospect, but they are all very friendly and welcoming and all in the position of going along alone for the first time themselves.

There will be other similar websites and social groups local to you. The more you are with other people, the more serotonin and dopamine you are creating and the less time you spend by yourself thinking too much.

Exercise 4 – Brainstorm & Research

What do you like to do?

If you could introduce something new in your life, what would it be?

Education – Learn something new

Hobbies, passions and interests

Volunteering, getting involved with community projects

CHAPTER 9 – SUBCONSCIOUS WIRING

Let's return to science for a moment and learn another strategy that you can proactively practice. Your mind cannot hope to consciously contemplate everything you're exposed to during a day, you are bombarded with information from all your senses and if it were to attempt manual processing of this information, you would become completely overwhelmed and go just a little bit mad! Your subconscious mind selectively brings your attention to what you need to know; it knows what you need to know because you've told it by how you think.

Have you ever noticed how, when something important is happening in your life, it also seems to be happening everywhere and to everybody at the same time; for example when you were pregnant, getting married or bought a new car (not necessarily in that order), there seemed to be babies or weddings everywhere and suddenly everybody has the same car as you – coincidence? No!

You had told your brain to bring to your conscious attention to anything to do with that thing currently important in your life.

There is a part of your brain called the Basal Ganglia that is responsible for setting the parameters of the filters in your brain. As babies these filters have not been set, but very quickly the brain learns what is normal that the subconscious can deal with and what is important enough to alert your conscious mind. Throughout our lives we are constantly adapting, tweaking and changing these filters, depending on what's important to us right at that moment.

When you have practiced thinking negatively for a while, you will have reset the parameter of the filters in the basal ganglia to filter in negative stuff from the sense and the environment or what's happening around you. Have you ever thought, "my glass is half empty" or "shit always happens to me"? It's not, but you are noticing all the negative things above everything else because you've told you brain to notice.

You also have your own central sorting office, called the thalamus, your senses, sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste all bring information to the central sorting office via the filters. Then it's the job of the sorting office to decide what to do with that information. Does it send it to the emergency response room because it's something that has been tagged as a potential threat, does it dismiss it as irrelevant to your needs, does it send it to your subconscious to be stored away for later use? Or does it bring it to the attention of your conscious brain?

You are subconsciously in control of the sorting office by how you think.

Do you think of yourself as a lucky or unlucky person, is your glass half full or half empty?

Until I learned how this worked, I had always thought of myself as a lucky person, my glass was half full, I was known for falling in the proverbial poo, but coming up smelling of roses. It pleased me that I was a lucky person and I accepted it.

When I had my spell of depression, I thought 'luck' had left me, everything had turned unlucky in my life. It hadn't, my mindset had shifted to negative.

However, these days I don't believe in luck at all because I now know that we are all in control of our own luck. Everyone has the power or opportunity to be lucky or unlucky - it is choice, thought patterns and perception.

Of course nobody would rationally choose to be unlucky (although I do come across people who seem to relish in being a "glass half empty" person), most people are not aware of how they are directly affecting their own "luck" and life, just as I wasn't aware I was choosing to be lucky.

Nonetheless it is a choice. You choose how you think at a subconscious level and if that is not working for you right now, you can retrain it.

You do this by understanding that what you think about sets the parameters of the filters and instructs the sorting office about how to handle the incoming information.

You can reset this at a subconscious level to start working in your favour.

If you have spent many years wiring your brain for negativity, you will need to retrain your brain, but this can be done easily, it just takes consistency and practice.

The more you retrain your thinking to be positive and let go of the negative inhibitions which hold you back, the quicker your mind will let go of the negative neural pathways.

As you practice, it is important to genuinely think in a positive way and not with the negative verb, for example

"It's going to be a lovely sunny day tomorrow", Instead of
"it's not going to rain"

"I'm going to have a productive day today", instead of
"I'm not going to procrastinate and waste time"

It's also important not to build opt-out clauses and caveats into your thinking, for example

"I'll apply for a new job, when the right thing comes up".

How is your brain to know when the right thing comes up if you haven't told it what that is? You need to take action and put in the work to give your brain some guidelines of what that is, instead of building in opt-out clauses for doing nothing.

You might reply "I will know when it does". You might be waiting a very long time. You might not know right now what the right thing is, but you can still give your brain positive instructions and take positive action towards your goals and in this way you take control and you make luck happen.

Your brain is incredible powerful, beyond anything we can understand at the moment, it will come up with answers for you, but it needs to know what you do want, not what you don't want.

So a much more productive way is thinking about how you would like things to be.

"I'm going to get a new job, what sort of thing would I like to do or what is out there that I can apply for?"

The question is almost the same, you need a job but you don't know what. However there is a subtle but significant difference, and that difference is you have just given your brain the positive instruction to look at something.

In that moment of positive decision you have changed the filters and instructed the sorting office in a positive way that will bring you opportunities you might be interested in. It starts a whole chain reaction of events in your brain that you have started with a positive thought. You will start to mention during conversations with friends that you're looking for a new job and they will provide input that could take you down a completely new thought path and trigger thought patterns that may consider possibilities you may not have thought about before.

You have just opened up your life and possibilities instead of shut it down which was your previous modus operandi.

This way of thinking has nothing to do with waiting for the right thing to come up, it has everything to do with making the right thing come up. You put yourself in control of your destiny instead of waiting for the destiny to happen to you.

Putting caveats on your thinking is equally unhelpful.

"I will get fit when I can find a time to go to the gym."

In the statement above you haven't decided to find time, it's a statement of your subconscious intent not go to the gym.

"When I can afford it, When I have time, I will when..."

are all caveats ensuring it's not going to happen. Maybe it is not the right time right now, but adding a "when" something else has happened is not solidifying any intent, it is inserting an intentional delay. If it is genuinely bad timing right now a better subconscious statement would be:

"In January I'm going to change jobs, I'll start applying in November and in the meantime I'm going to look at what I would like to do now."

These examples all show the difference between giving your mind something positive to do and putting up barriers to doing anything.

People who are perceived as lucky are lucky because they open up the filters and allow opportunities to be filtered in purely because they think in a positive way.

People who think positively have ideas and opportunities coming at them all the time, which they then consider and decide to let go or follow through.

People who perceive themselves as unlucky are doing the exact opposite, their negative thinking habits are blocking opportunities and ideas or dismissing them because they look for the negative consequences instead of the positive outcomes.

The same amount of good and bad things happens to everybody. The difference is the way the parameters of the filters have been set by the way that person thinks.

Who would choose to be the negative person?

It doesn't make any rational sense to do that, does it?

Your subconscious needs to know your intentions, without any ambiguity, caveat or opt-out clauses and then it can start working towards your goals.

CHAPTER 10 – REWIRING YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS

It is said that we have to routinely practice something 11 times before it becomes habit.

The saying "practice makes perfect" is a little ambiguous, it implies that you get a very good at what you practice and I would agree, you do; but it doesn't define whether the way you are practicing is a right or wrong, so you could be very good at doing something badly if you practice it that way.

A more accurate statement might be "practice makes permanent", so if you practice something regularly however you are doing it - that's what will stick.

This is also true of how you practice thinking. If you have practiced negativity, that will be your habit.

You already know that changing habits and establishing better ones can take some concentration and persistence. There is an easy way to do this that starts with changing routines and becoming aware of triggers.

As we grow up we build up a database of associations in our mind, a bit like playing 'snap' in our head with a huge pack of life cards. When we turn over a card it will trigger associations and actions and we unconsciously follow a set of preprogrammed instructions.

People close to you may well know your habits and instruction sets better than you do. If you talk to couples who have been together for many years they will know each other's routines inside out.

This isn't a bad thing - we can't go throughout our day consciously thinking about every step or action we take - but if we have become stuck in negative patterns and want to change, we can help this process by changing our routines.

It doesn't have to be anything big just switching the order in which we do something could be enough to give us a conscious jolt out of the automatic and form new associations and positive habits.

For example if you are trying to think in a more positive way, there are several things you can easily change that will jolt you out of your routine thinking, for example:-

- Change the order of your morning routine
- Get up at a different time and do something else first, meditate first perhaps.
- On your way to work listen to podcasts or audiobooks that you have to actively engage with and listen to instead of having the radio or background music on.
- Go away from your desk or workplace at lunchtime. Go for a walk, meet friends or do something different.
- On your way home from work do something different - pop in and see a friend perhaps.
- Change your routine in the evening. This is one of the downtimes where we have too much negative thinking time. Just because you've always got home and had dinner first, it doesn't mean that's how you always have to do it.

Everything is completely within your control. The choices you make determine how your life pans out, it's up to you to make different choices if you are not happy.

The significance of changing those routines is in the subtle disconnection of automatic thought patterns and associations that are linked to habits. So if you have decided to practice thinking in a positive way, changing your habits will give you a conscious poke back to thinking positively when you're about to slip back to thinking negatively.

Over time the new routines become associated with positive thinking and the positive thinking creates serotonin so you get rewarded with enjoying your new routines as new associations settle in and become habits.

CHAPTER 11 – CREATING REALITY FROM IMAGINATION

Dare to dream– what does that mean to you?

We use our imagination constantly, but largely we're not aware we are doing it. Becoming aware of when your imagination is in play and what is reality is a vital skill in regaining control over your mind.

Skill may seem a strange expression to use, but it is something we have to learn to do, then practice. Much of the time we are unconscious of when our imagination is taking over and we believe it to be true. You need to develop the habit of noticing your imagination and accepting it for what it is.

Or, turn it around and use this knowledge to your advantage.

You can take positive control and use your imagination to enhance your life and improve your skills by practicing them in your imagination.

Many top sportsmen and women understand very well the importance of practicing their skills in their mind.

A top golfer will go over and over a shot in his or her mind, visualising the golf ball flying through the air in exactly the trajectory and distance they intended, landing in the perfect spot.

A sprinter or runner will see themselves finishing first and breaking through the tape.

A boxer will practice in their mind routines and set pieces, as will an ice skater, a dancer, an actor, or a musician.

Practicing something in your mind is as good as the thing itself.

You already know this as well. When you are trying to remember something, going over and over it in your mind will imprint it to your memory. As you practice something in your mind you form and strengthen neural networks.

You can actively and consciously take your imagination and put it to work for you, deciding to believe in a future you want to create, for example.

If you decide that within the next two years, you will have a new job, double your current salary and be driving that new car you have always wanted, you will make it happen.

You are using your imagination and simultaneously dropping the caveats and opt-outs, resetting the parameters in your mind to filter in relevant opportunities that your sorting office it will know to bring to your conscious attention.

You are already creating reality from your imagination on a daily basis, but perhaps this has been in a negative way until now.

When someone has depression, they may think in terms of

"it's really hard fighting depression"

They have just created their own reality. Because they believe it to be hard – it is.

How powerful would it be if you could do the opposite and create the reality you want if you switch your thinking 180 degrees to positive?

You can.

CHAPTER 12 – YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS SUPERPOWERS

On Cloud 9 you have superpowers!

Yep, you can do anything you want to and you can make anything happen that you want to.

But remember, your superpowers are restricted to being superhero superpowers - they cannot be villain superpowers.

So, for example, you cannot use your superpower to control someone else or what they are thinking or doing, that would be a villain superpower; you can only use your superpower to make positive things happen and bring happiness to yourself and others.

I have already touched on using your imagination to create your reality and how you programme your mind to filter in or out information depending on the way you think. Along the same lines is focus.

Whatever you focus on will increase, so if you focus on your problems, they will increase, focusing on what you don't have will repel it even more which is why you need to focus on the things you want to bring into your life.

You cannot tell yourself to NOT focus on something because your brain will only focus on the object in question, so if you say you don't want any more bills to arrive, inevitably more bills will arrive through the letterbox.

This is very evident with sleeping. If you go to bed worrying about not being able to sleep – what happens? And if you tell yourself to not worry about not sleeping – what happens?

Living on Cloud 9 is the practice of setting positive intentions and engineering the life you really want.

Forget what you believe is or isn't possible. If you think something is impossible, you will be right, so if you want to switch your superpowers on, you have to learn to drop preconceived ideas of what is or isn't possible.

There is a quote from Henry Ford that goes

"Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you're right"

Learning to use this knowledge without doubt, caveats or opt-out clauses is the secret to tapping into your superpower.

You can engineer your life to be exactly how you want it to be, you just need to believe it and then you make it happen.

Walt Disney is quoted as saying

"If you can dream it, you can do it."

That statement backs up what I have been saying about using your imagination in a positive way to create your future.

All these things are true and, if I may, I would like to tell you the true story about how my life has changed since learning how to operate my brain properly.

Before I begin, I'm not sharing this with you for any boastful or self serving purposes, I'm sharing it as a demonstration of what you can do for yourself and your life with positive intention. I'm sure there are people who have bigger and more interesting stories and I'm also not suggesting you need to do what I've done, you need to follow a path that is right by you, but turn on your superpowers and you can achieve anything.

As I reveal in [Climbing Out of The Cloud](#), I first got knocked sideways by depression in 2002 and subsequently I relapsed in 2010 all set to follow the same patterns of behaviour because I didn't understand my contribution to the cause of depression or even that I was responsible, let alone have any tools or techniques to bringing myself out of

depression. Both times I bounced back by making major changes in my life.

The second time I made a decision to retrain, no matter how long it took; I was going to do it. My best friend suggested I should train as a counsellor, I didn't have any better ideas and I trusted her judgment more than mine at the time, so I enrolled on a course. I won't go into why, it's not relevant, but I decided counselling wasn't for me, however, during the course of the Level 1 Counselling, hypnotherapy was mentioned (and dismissed) but I was curious, I had never heard of it before, so I started looking for courses.

I discovered a professional course in Bristol at The Clifton Practice and applied. Within two weeks I had been interviewed, accepted and started on the course.

On the very first day, I experienced hypnosis myself for the first time. I was a bit skeptical and scared of letting go of control of my mind, exactly the same as everyone is the first time, but I needn't have worried, you don't actually relinquish control of your mind, you are in control all the time, it was just a lovely uplifting experience.

But what changed my life was a paragraph from the script the lecturer used that went like this:-

"Whenever you allow your conscious mind to become focused on your problems, you drag your problems into the future with you and they automatically attract still more of the same. Your own negative thought patterns provide the psychic energies that feed your problems and keep them alive. So just relax and switch the polarity around and focus your thought energy on how you want things to be, rather than how you don't want them to be and withdraw all your thought energy from the problems, so that you attract the solutions. You attract good fortune like a magnet. The control mind now knows what you want and what you want, or something even more useful, presents itself, as though what you have been always seeking has, somehow, always been seeking you, seeking to find creative expression in your everyday living reality, and the incredible fact is, that it has.

"So, make a moving picture in your mind, a picture of you as you see yourself having accomplished all the desired changes. The unwanted patterns of

behaviour have ceased. Everything is exactly as you want it to be, see it, feel it, know it, experience it. Everything, just as you want it to be...the picture becoming clearer, brighter, bigger. The new picture dominates the screen. Leave the picture in the mirror of the mind to serve as an attracting force, and it will – just want it to happen, know it can happen, it happens. You struggled with your problems in the past and tried to outrun the shadow of your past conditioning; now you can relax. Just relax and create the attracting force from the stillness and be amazed at the quality of the success you attract."

You will recognise this part of the script if you have downloaded the 'lift depression' self hypnosis MP3.

Remember that I knew nothing about any of this, it was my first day on the course, I had never been hypnotised before and, to be honest, if you knew me, you would know that I don't believe in much that's considered "fluffy", I'm very much logical, practical and science-based.

However, when that second paragraph started with "make a moving picture in your mind" the image that popped into my mind was of me standing next to a grey Audi TT sports car. I knew several things without a doubt from that picture, a) I was happy, b) I was single and c) it was MY car.

After the session, we went to lunch, I did feel on my Cloud 9, but I forgot about the image from the script.

At that particular time I was married, skint, overweight and a smoker. I had taken a loan to pay for the course to retrain, so the image was more amusing than believable as a future reality.

Less than a year later, I was single, I had a brand new Audi TT, had stopped smoking, lost two stone in weight and was Living on Cloud 9.

But that's not all that has happened since.

Two years on I'm running a very successful practice in Swindon, I have another hypnotherapist working with me to cope with the workload I was generating – right from day one of training, it didn't even cross my mind that I wouldn't be successful as a hypnotherapist, I just believed I would without questions. What I didn't appreciate at the time was that

most of my counterparts struggled to find clients after qualifying, the opposite was happening to me.

It was December and I was having a birthday drink in a pub with my best friend (yes, the same one responsible for starting off down this path) and I asked her, "If you moved out of Swindon, where would you move to?"

"I don't think I would", she said "but if I did, it would probably be Brighton".

"Yes, I like Brighton" I agreed.

This planted the seed and I started thinking about moving. We continued the conversation and I said "I would love to move to Brighton, but it's probably a year or more away from me being able to do that"

Just four months later, the following April, I moved to Brighton and Hove and started a second branch of Old Town Hypnotherapy.

I loved living in Brighton and Hove, it's a great place, but it didn't end there.

I loved being a hypnotherapist and I love helping people to make positive changes in their lives, but there are two drawbacks for me, the first is that it's a fixed location. When you take a new client, you are committed to that client for 8-12 weeks and of course it's a rolling programme of new clients and you can't just leave them and go away or hand them on to someone else, you need to see through their treatment with them. Secondly, as a hypnotherapist you are paid per hour, so if you want to earn more, you have to work more and there's an obvious limit to this.

I wanted freedom without limitation in my life, but I had no idea how I could achieve that.

And, that's quite an important point to note – you don't have to know the details of how you are going to achieve something before you start, you just need to start and the path starts to reveal itself.

Since I was a teenager, I had wanted to live near the Mediterranean, even better be on the sea, messing around on the water. But I had never even considered it as a possible reality.

But, living by the sea in Hove set me dreaming. I used to say that Brighton and Hove is the closest place you can get in the UK to the culture of living in the Med (what I imagined the Med to be like anyway).

Eight months later, I packed up my house in Hove, put all my belongings in storage and moved to Gozo with no idea whatsoever of how I was going to live beyond the very modest income I earned from franchising Old Town Hypnotherapy.

I've lived here in Gozo 19 months now and I love it, I write eBooks and record video courses and run the hypnotherapy businesses as well as my coaching business, all online.

So I have achieved the freedom I dreamed of – but it still doesn't end there.

As I become more confident in my abilities to engineer the life I want, my belief in possibilities grows.

This year living in Gozo, I have been following my passion of sailing more regularly and a couple of weeks ago, I decided that I wanted to get my own yacht and spend next year sailing around the Greek islands whilst working.

A week ago I set my intention and told friends I was on a mission to get a yacht now.

One week later I was offered the free loan of a 40 ft yacht.

So from depressed, overweight, unhappy, married, stressed and skint having just left my career, to living on a yacht in the Mediterranean, the fittest and healthiest I've ever been, earning my income from anywhere I want to with just a laptop and internet connection in just five years.

If someone has told me back then that my life would develop in this way, I think I might have laughed in disbelief

If I had stopped for just one minute to think of what might go wrong, I would never have made the first step and I would have sealed my own destiny.

Everyone has the ability to engineer their own life to exactly how they want it to be, there is nothing special about me at all.

I just opened my mind to learning something new and how to think positively, harness the power of my subconscious to work with me instead of against me and believed in possibilities instead of impossibilities.

What I discovered is that with each small step you make that shows you are making progress in a direction that is better than before, your self-belief grows. As your self-belief grows, your belief in possibilities grows and you make bigger things happen. It is just a matter of belief.

When you are in alignment, when your conscious brain is working WITH your subconscious, that's when you can make the impossible possible and you will find solutions for whatever you perceive to be wrong in your life right now and you will learn to let go of what you are clinging onto that's holding you back.

CHAPTER 13 – HOW TO ACTIVATE YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS SUPERPOWERS

Do's

- Think Positively.
- Become self aware of your warning signs and practice early intervention if you are slipping.
- Know exactly what creates serotonin for you.
- Maintain a healthy life balance.
- Focus on what you Do Want.
- Let go of what is holding you back.
- Open your mind to possibilities.
- Use your Imagination to instruct your subconscious of what you do want .
- Believe you can and you will achieve whatever you set your mind to.
- Take action and step forwards towards your future self and life.
- Trust your subconscious. It knows more than you do and it has your interests at heart.

Don'ts

- Don't second-guess your intuition or gut feeling, you know the difference between that and negative thinking.
- Don't get in the way of your intellect, let it do its job, your job is to create serotonin so it can work effectively.
- Don't listen to naysayers telling you what is or isn't possible, they are advising you purely from their own agenda and experience.

- Don't ever be fooled into thinking you've got it sussed, you can never stop practicing balancing your life and maintaining your chemical balance.

SUMMARY

Your mind is extraordinarily powerful. Science has only touched the surface in understanding our brain, but some things we do know:-

1. Your brain is the control centre for your whole mind, body and emotions.
2. How you think influences every part of your mind and body, physically and emotionally.
3. How you think will determine the outcomes in your daily life.
4. There is no right and wrong, there is just belief and it is your choice how and what you believe.
5. What you choose to believe will influence your life – positively or negatively.

You won't change a lifetime of habits and beliefs overnight, some things do change quickly because you decide change your mind, others take time to retrain habits and neural pathways.

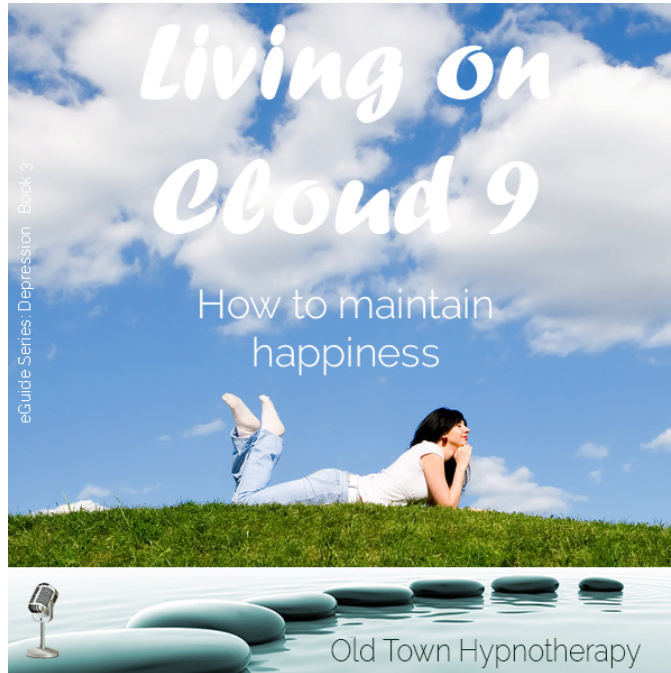
I'm still learning what my brain can do, but some things are clear:-

- It's exciting discovering what I'm capable of, discarding old beliefs and learning new things. You will be amazed at what you will change your mind about.
- The more you practice, the more control you will have over your own mind.
- As you practice, your mind becomes even more powerful at bringing the things to you that you need and want. The secret is to focus on what you do want, not on what you don't want.

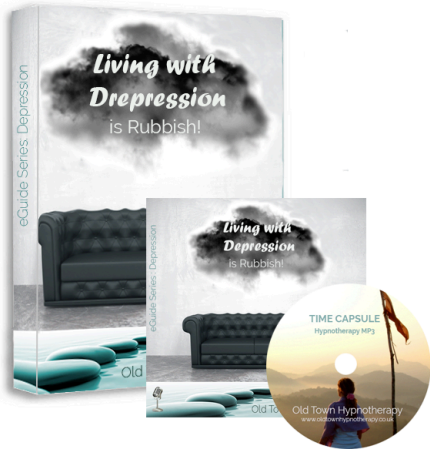
Trust Your Intellect and Get Out Of Its Way

[LINK TO DOWNLOAD PAGE](#)

Click on either of the pictures below to access your audio files in Soundcloud and download them.



FURTHER READING



Living With Depression is Rubbish

Book 1 – eGuide Series: Depression

A comprehensive eBook and audiobook that explains the real cause of depression, it will make you rethink your beliefs about depression, empower and motivate you to rid yourself of this toxic disease.

Start living again instead of just existing



Climbing Out Of The Cloud

Book 2 – eGuide Series: Depression

It's time to learn the easy way to rid yourself of depression.

It's time to climb out for under that black cloud and experience joy in your life again.

Learn the easiest, quickest and most effective way to get the real 'you' back.

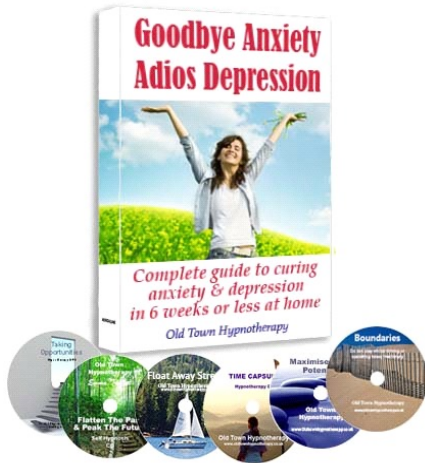


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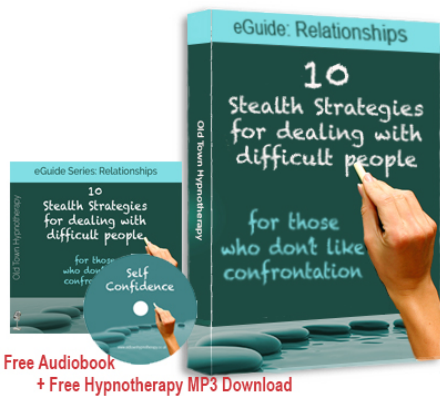


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