

4 Empowering Your Mind

Our destiny changes with our thoughts; we shall become what we wish to become, do what we wish to do, when our habitual thoughts correspond with our desires.

— Orison Swett Marsden

Your Trigger for Change

There is no one reason that people are inspired to change. For some, it's a health event—a heart attack, a diagnosis, or the death of someone they love. For others, it's more internal or emotional, such as a divorce, the loss of a job or financial security, or any ego - stripping, soul - searching impetus. But that doesn't mean you need a life crisis to make a transformative change in the way you live your life. Many people have expressed to me an inner desire to know who they are, a gnawing hunger to heighten the awareness of their innate ability to harness and co - create the changes they desire in themselves and in the world. The bottom line in your making any successful and lasting change is when your motivation for change weds with a sense of responsibility for yourself. When you are finally ready to accept responsibility for your health, for actualizing your true purpose, when you are finally ready to give up the excuses and stop blaming others or situations beyond your control for what you think you cannot do or accomplish, and you act — you take some physical steps toward your goal — then shift happens!

In my experience, your health is one of the easiest ways you can experience and come to know this creative, healing potential within you. Your health at one level is physical, but when you dig deeper and begin to examine your thoughts related to health, weight, food, and habits and attitudes about food and eating, then you take the next step — you empower your heart and mind. Any disease or challenging life experience can offer you this opportunity to take responsibility for your life, to participate in your healing or co - create any desired change that you choose to pursue. Our human ability to think and the power that our thoughts, feelings, and beliefs have in contributing to our upcoming future have recently received significant attention from quantum physicists and neurophysiologists. And, of course, for centuries, this subject has been explored by religious scholars.

However you wrap your head around the truth, it ' s good news! The next step in your journey toward attaining true health is examining your thoughts, your behavior patterns, and your overall mind-set in order to further clarify what you want and heal any habitual, negative and limiting beliefs that create obstacles to achieving your true desires. You may have negative attitudes about your body or frequent thoughts of your past failures at weight loss. You may also indulge in unconscious behaviors that trigger overeating, such as drinking too much alcohol, skipping meals, or restricting and then bingeing. Or you may chronically entertain thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs that simply aren't true, such as " This is all I should expect in terms of weight - loss success or a career, given my gene pool, track record, or self - assessed opinion of unworthiness."

Yet when you really digest the holistic truth that you are not only what you eat and feel, but also what you think, you can focus on the awareness that is within you, rather than on the *trishna*, or your self-defeating debates or disempowering inner dialogues. With this awareness, you will be co-creating your health. This takes a paradigm shift. Please relax and let go of your

attachment to the idea that this process is difficult. We all come into this world with the natural ability to think about what we need and want and thereby release the creative energy to manifest the gifts and talents for our highest calling. Please open your mind to a life - transforming paradigm shift. It may very well require that you open your mind, complete this book (which means to read and actively participate in it), and enjoy the inevitable healing that results in all realms.

How Quantum Physics Shows the Power of Your Mind

At the Rice Diet Program, I usually introduce the subject of quantum physics and its relevance to health by showing the movie *What the Bleep Do We Know!?* and following it with a discussion. The film is an amazing compilation of interviews with the world's top quantum physicists, interwoven with a dramatic thread of "real life" scenes acted by Marlee Matlin, all of which illustrate numerous aspects of quantum physics, such as the law of attraction, the uncertainty principle, and the principle of complementarity. Although the movie is a must - see and impossible to summarize in a few words, I will share some of the pivotal quantum truths it discloses: "Quantum physics is the physics of possibilities Atoms are not things, they're possibilities What 's happening within us creates what happens outside us Modern materialism and religion can strip responsibility from the individual; quantum physics can assist one in restoring this responsibility to the individual Historically, the majority of what people have believed is not true If you can't control your emotional self, you must be addicted to it The same receptor sites that attach heroin to our cells attach to emotions as well Most people don't influence their world much because they don ' t believe that they can!" Wow! These truths and tantalizing possibilities are truly mind - boggling. Quantum physicist Dr. Fred Alan Wolf ends the show by asking us to think on that for a while. Yeah, right, as if we ' re capable of deep thought after he and his colleagues have just blown what's left of our minds with a million challenging things to consider. Yet being bombarded and challenged by the fact that most of what we believe is probably not true (and, historically, this has much evidence to support it) jogs our brains and expands our minds to really start reevaluating everything we catch ourselves thinking.

Many people have described how they started to think about this concept: "Well, if my thoughts, feelings, and beliefs do greatly contribute to what happens next in my life, what do I want to start thinking, feeling, and believing that I can do? And if I am really that responsible for everything that I attract and create, how do I begin to forgive myself for past choices and get on with responsibly pursuing what I really want to co - create from this moment on?" This thinking is so radically different from what most Westerners were raised to believe that many Ricers have returned the next day with more questions, such as "How do I begin thinking this way?" and "How will I know if this works?" It is as if their brain freeze had begun to thaw, and they shifted out of autopilot and began to examine their gear - shifting mechanism! Although I have now seen the film dozens of times with the Ricers, who appreciate having a facilitator present for the discussion afterward, the film always reinspires me to reawaken to the abundant power within me and to remember that it is an ongoing choice and opportunity.

At the Rice Diet Program we sleep on it, and usually the next day I lead an experiential from Dr. Fred Alan Wolf ' s *Dr. Quantum Presents: A User ' s Guide to Your Universe* . This six

- CD set colorfully summarizes the history of quantum physics and laces it with inspiring stories and challenges. His story about the magician's boxes (disc 2, track 4), inspired by William Newcomb, describes the principle of complementarity, which was first proposed by Niels Bohr: "What you get depends upon what you choose." Our thoughts, our intentions, our dreams, our beliefs that we can or cannot do something make all the difference in the world. We have the choice to decide whether we see particles (fixed options) or waves of possibilities (infinite options). Dr. Wolf believes this is how consciousness affects the world, our lives, and our bodies. I play the CD for my group and write this challenging proposal on the board, because that way its unusual premise is often easier for us to see and hear in order to fully grasp.

A wizard or wise man explains that you can choose the right box *or* both boxes. If you choose both box, you are guaranteed that the left box contains \$ 1,000, and it is yours, no questions asked. The right box contains either nothing (\$ 0) or \$ 1,000,000! The wizard says, "I will make you rich if you believe in my power. You must have faith in me and you must have that faith to get the \$ 1,000,000. What you get depends upon what you choose. But if you are greedy you will just get the \$ 1,000." These are paradoxical to your mind only because what you believe: you believe what is "out there" is already "out there" independent of your choice! We have the choice to decide whether we see particles or waves of possibilities. We have the choice to believe we can actualize and co-create the health, dreams, and life we desire, or not!

This experiential is a mind bender because we tend to think our choices in life are either in the left or right box (i.e., either/or options) and that it 's not possible for us to positively affect the outcome of our choices. We also tend to think that more is better, so when in doubt, take both. But as Dr. Wolf's story suggests, these belief systems are not necessarily true. The wizard in the story is challenging us to examine whether we can believe that what he said is true—that he has the power to co-create our best outcome—or that we should take what is guaranteed and safe. These questions, like many that quantum physics has posed, invite us to reexamine the way we think and unintentionally limit ourselves and to consider whether our thoughts are co-creating what we want.

This story always leads to interesting ah a moments about paradigm shifts, or changes in our unconscious assumptions about how things are, or how our thoughts and choices have influenced various situations in our past. It can help us see whether we have a benevolent or abundant expectation from the Creative Source of the Universe, or instead we come from a scarcity - based belief system — and take what we can get, which is better than nothing. Most of us reading this were raised in an affluent society, yet many of our parents and grandparents survived the Great Depression, World War II, or the Holocaust, so their deep - seated feelings of deprivation, scarcity, and fear that things might very well get worse are understandable, yet are often not that beneficial and applicable to the next generation. It is similar to how our ancestors responded physiologically to a threat by elevating their blood pressure and heart rate to outrun a saber tooth tiger or an invading army. This may have served their escape efforts, yet it doesn't help their descendants' response to a traffic jam many generations later. Our neurological wiring is physiological, as well as highly influenced by our thoughts and beliefs that our forebears and our culture have passed down to us. The more we recognize this and become aware that we are reacting because of old memory wiring, rather than based on something in true, present-moment

reality, the more we will experience transformational awakenings to the creative power we hold within us.

Interestingly enough, Eastern thought is filled with the belief that we have power over our destiny through our minds. Recently, in *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain*, Sharon Begley, a *Wall Street Journal* science writer, gave us insight into the late-2004 meetings between leading Western scientists and the Dalai Lama at his home in Dharamsala, India. They answered the question "Is it really possible to change the structure and function of the brain, and thus how we think and feel?" with a resounding yes! Begley goes on to state:

The discovery that mere thought can alter the very stuff of the brain is another natural point of connection between the science of neuroplasticity and Buddhism. Buddhism has taught for twenty - five hundred years that the mind is an independent force that can be harnessed by will and attention to bring about physical change. "The discovery that thinking something produces effects just as doing something does is a fascinating consonance with Buddhism," says Francisca Cho [a professor in East Asian Buddhism and culture at Georgetown University]. "Buddhism challenges the traditional belief in an external, objective reality. Instead, it teaches that our reality is created by our own projections; it is thinking that creates the external world beyond us. The neuroscience findings harmonize with this Buddhist teaching."

Buddhist narratives have another consonance with the discoveries of neuroplasticity. They teach us that by detaching ourselves from our thoughts, by observing our thinking dispassionately and with clarity, we have the ability to think thoughts that allow us to overcome afflictions such as being chronically angry. "You can undergo an emotional reeducation," Cho says. "By meditative exertion and other mental exercises, you can actively change your feelings, your attitudes, and your mind - set."

I highly recommend contacting the Jon Kabat-Zinn meditation practice group (see the resources) to find out whether the group has an upcoming session near you.

If you are a religious person, you may think that you would be more comfortable if your thoughts and mind were directed toward God. These meditation techniques are not religious practices. And I am not suggesting that quantum physics and Buddhism or any other meditative approaches are recommended techniques to offer you salvation and the ultimate spiritual experience. I am simply suggesting that they can provide a way for you to nurture mindfulness and a more conscious way of being. (Indeed, chapter 5 will focus on connecting with your spirit and delving into the health advantages of having a relationship with God, a Higher Power, or Universal Truth.) For now, simply recognize here that your mind possesses the ability to harness and co - create the purpose that you believe you are called to fulfill. Given that most of our food consumption and lifestyle choices are not done mindfully, and that the majority of our diseases are the result of our unconsciously choosing disease - promoting lifestyles, it is key that we awaken to the power of our minds to co - create the health that we want. Furthermore, recognizing our power to control our thoughts and thus our feelings and opening to the truth within us all is essential for our long - term success at realizing and sustaining the optimal health and lives we desire.

Until you discover a technique that suits you, simply find a quiet, comfortable place, breathe slowly and deeply for a few breaths, then watch your breath and follow it with your mind's eye as it flows into your toes. Breathe out any tension with your exhalation, as the breath

leaves your feet, legs, hips, torso, fingers, arms, shoulders, face, and so on. As you breathe in again, return to any areas where you sense that tension remains. Then simply sit with yourself, enjoying the peace or noticing the thoughts that arise. If you practice this daily, you will not only enjoy physiological improvements (lower blood pressure, heart rate, reduction in platelet stickiness, and so on), you will also experience more moments of mindfulness and peace.

Day 12: Watch What the Bleep Do We Know!? and Listen to Dr. Quantum Presents: A User ' s Guide to Your Universe

Enhance your understanding and openness in regard to healing your mind. Watch the film *What the Bleep Do We Know!?* It's available in most video rental stores. Then journalize on what comes up for you. For those of you who haven't bought or found a journal in order to participate in these exercises, at least go get a piece of paper now. It is time to enroll your mind, reconnect with your heart and spirit, and take some action! After you watch this mind-expanding compilation of practical and powerful quantum physics research studies, journalize on what you really want to co-create.

For those who want to venture farther down the rabbit hole, listen to *Dr. Quantum Presents: A User ' s Guide to Your Universe* ; see the resources for ordering information.

The awareness that your mind affects material reality, whether you actualize the results you intend, is hardly a new concept. Neither is it restricted to the level of subatomic particles. It readily translates into helping you achieve what you most desire. This secret to success was brilliantly and practically summarized by Napoleon Hill in 1937 in what became the best - selling success book of all time, *Think and Grow Rich*. The seed for this book was planted by Andrew Carnegie into the brain of Mr. Hill more than a quarter of a century before the book was written. Carnegie provided access for Mr. Hill to interview more than five hundred of the wealthiest and most effective people of that era, including Henry Ford, Teddy Roosevelt, William Wrigley, Wilbur Wright, William Jennings Bryan, Woodrow Wilson, William Howard Taft, Alexander Graham Bell, John D. Rockefeller, F. W. Woolworth, and Thomas A. Edison. Napoleon Hill carefully analyzed their success and summarized his findings of their use of "the secret." Although we all know that education can be important in helping us achieve what we want to create, Hill clearly stated that IQ is not nearly as powerful a determining predictor of success as the implementation of "the secret" is. He shares how Thomas A. Edison, who had only three months of schooling, became the world ' s leading inventor by intelligently employing "the secret."

While "the secret" is not really a secret, it is not easily obtained in school. It is found as we seek our definite purpose and deepest desire. The word *educate* is derived from the Latin *educare*, which means "to educe, to draw out, to develop from within." A few of the many coaching tips Napoleon Hill shared include developing a definite desire and being ready to receive it, the importance of converting defeat into stepping - stones of opportunity, becoming success conscious (seeking abundance versus scarcity consciousness), maintaining open-mindedness, and determining and documenting your goal with action plans and specific dates. As quantum physics research has repeatedly shown, energetic quantum leaps occur when people think, feel, know it as truth, and act.

The Power of Our Words

In a recent group at the Rice Diet Program, we discussed the healing power of the spoken word and the importance of honesty and integrity imbuing everything that comes from our mouths and enters our ears. I gave a few examples of how often I hear participants come in talking about “my arthritis” or how they have “inherited my heart disease” or that they are overweight” because all the members of my family are just big people.” Even those of us who strive to speak only the truth will catch ourselves doing otherwise, but the more we become mindful of what we say and hear, the more intentional we will become about saying what we really mean. Tapping into the truth within us and consistently speaking from this source will release power.

I experienced this firsthand. After at least five years of saying that I knew I was supposed to write a book on the history and efficacy of the Rice Diet,” but I didn’t have time,” I finally figured out that I was limiting my own power to do so. I had chanted the mantra “but I don’t have time” for years, until one day it became very clear to me that by doing so, I was creating a reality that included not having enough time. This particular shift in consciousness occurred during a group experiential, where I stood in front of a large room full of people and stated, “I will sell this book to a major publishing house by July 31.”

In less than a month, a front - page *New York Times* business section article titled “Durham, the Weight Loss Capital of the World” focused on the Rice Diet Program and our many successful participants. The very next day, a senior editor from Simon & Schuster called me to see if they could publish my next book. When I said that I wondered how I would sell this by July 31, because I wanted the book in stores by the following January, she explained that I would have to have the entire manuscript completed by July 31 — not only sold by then! This successful book was birthed in less than two months, immediately after I quit chanting that I didn’t have enough time!

At first, it may sound simple and also crazy that words can actually have so much power, but they do. If you don’t yet believe it, over the next month meditate and journalize about what you have thought and felt about what comes out of your mouth, as well as about the conversations around you. Also challenge a friend who is interested in experiencing a shift in his or her life to join you in the exercise of pointing out to each other when you use the following disabling phrases, or “back door open” expressions. A “back door open” response is vague and noncommittal, giving you a way out before you’ve barely made it through the door. An example of this would be if you asked someone to dinner on a certain date and she said, “I’ll try.” Would you bet money on the likelihood of her coming? Probably not. In this way, the use of the word “try” undermines a person’s intention and becomes almost wishy-washy. The next time you insert the word “try” in relation to a purpose or a goal you would like to achieve, take a moment to reflect on the degree of your commitment: are you only going to try? Or are you going to go for it? The use of disabling words will not help you achieve your goal of healing and develop awareness and integrity with what you say, thus create. Say what you mean; mean what you say. It is okay to change your plans; simply do your best to pursue the completion of your stated intentions.

Getting in touch with what you really want and becoming aware that what you think, speak, and hear can positively and intentionally support your achievement of your goal. Louise Hay’s *You Can Heal Your Life* has many pages of positive affirmations that have benefited numerous people as they consciously chose to replace negative sayings or thought patterns with positive, empowering ones.

Words That Disable	Words That Empower
Try	Do (think Yoda from <i>Star Wars</i>)
My arthritis	My joints are healing
Suppose to, have to, ought to	Choose to, get to
My bad knee or back	My healing knee or back
I've inherited obesity	A genetic propensity is not as strong a factor as my <i>dieta</i>
I don't have enough willpower	I can amaze myself with my focus and follow-through
I hope	I will
Decide	Choose

Practicing these commitments and positively supporting yourself with other introspective practices, such as yoga, journalizing, and playing or listening to music, especially in concert, will ready you for the quantum leap you seek.

Develop Your Positivity

Recently, I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Barbara Fredrickson. Dr. Fredrickson entered the positivity research arena soon after its inception in the late 1990s, and she addressed certain key points that have helped establish its recent success. Although her mentors were some of the first leaders in the field, she charted a new course by proposing that unlike negative emotions, which narrow people's ideas about possible actions, positive emotions actually do the opposite. She developed the broaden - and - build theory of positive emotions to show that positive emotions open us; they open our hearts and minds, which in turn inspires more receptiveness and creativeness and builds these psychological strengths into habits until we feel a newfound sense of purpose and resiliency within ourselves and in our lives.

It is beyond exciting to observe her ability to design and implement studies that identify which aspects of positivity are most effective and how to translate these into practical suggestions for developing more positivity, health, and love in our lives. All of us probably think that positive feelings are good, but her recent book, *Positivity*, beautifully summarizes what is really so good about feeling good. Her research inspires you to want to cultivate more positive emotions in your life, to enjoy the many proven benefits she cites — from more success in your marriage, a larger salary, and better health to greater longevity (up to ten years longer). Who wouldn't want these fruits?

Although many forms of positivity fill our days, she walks you through the research that specifically addresses the following ten emotions: joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, and love. Her research suggests and has been repeatedly confirmed by others that we would all greatly benefit from a positivity to negativity ratio of 3 to 1. Although 80 percent of people taking the Positivity Self Test that follows (see pages 120–121) score less than this, and average scores are around 2 to 1, she provides plenty of evidence that we are trainable and that by practicing the numerous recommended techniques, we will be able to increase our ratio and thus improve our odds for enjoying optimal health and an upward spiral toward flourishing.

Because emotions arise from how we interpret life events and ideas as they occur, the essence of improving our positivity ratio is becoming more aware of what we think and feel and then take responsibility for choosing to nurture positive thoughts and feelings. In addition, Dr. Fredrickson's book documents research that has shown that people who practiced the positivity

techniques were healthier and had fewer sore throats, less nausea, less acne, lower levels of stress-related hormones and higher levels of growth - related and bond - related hormones, higher dopamine and opioids, enhanced immune system functioning, and diminished inflammatory responses to stress. Dr. Fredrickson states that with positivity, “you are literally steeped in a different biochemical stew,” so it’s little wonder that the health benefits go on and on. Positivity also brings lower blood pressure, less pain, fewer colds, better sleep, and less hypertension, diabetes, and strokes, and did I mention that it increases longevity? Yes, that, too!

Well, how do we get and maintain this positivity? A first step is by taking up meditation, which requires only ten to twenty - five minutes per day. In one of Dr. Fredrickson ’ s experiments, she purposely created anxiety in her subjects by telling them they would be videotaped making a speech, which is a proven way to threaten the majority of people. They were also told that they might be placed in a group that would see a movie and be exempt from making a speech. While they watched the movie and began to think, Yeah, I ’ m in the movie group, their cardiovascular reactions shifted from panic after experiencing the speech threat to a more relaxed state. This showed that positivity can quell or undo the cardiovascular aftereffects of negativity within seconds to more than a minute. Those who were shown movies evoking serenity or amusement experienced the undoing faster than those who were shown negative or neutral - type movies. When you realize that you are anxious, you can help your heart recover with serenity or amusement - producing media. We all experience stress. It is empowering to know that the stress is not nearly as harmful as your response to it — and you have the choice to exercise your power by choosing relaxing and humorous activities over nail biting and hand wringing!

Although positivity ratios are in part inherited from your family, science has shown that this is only half of the story. The other half depends on a combination of circumstances and how you choose to think and respond. You are never too old to learn; it is your choice to practice meditation, journalize, and be mindful of how you respond to what some people call stress. You can literally train yourself to view this as an opportunity to reframe the way you look at and experience your life.

Although my brother learned the same anger and control - ridden responses that I did as a child, he can make lemons out of lemonade faster than anyone I know. Within twenty - four hours of his lakefront home burning to the ground, he called me and told me what had happened and about everything that was destroyed.

No more than two minutes into the conversation, he got excited and said,

You know, as awful as this is, few people get to design and build their own dream home, and fewer still get to do it twice . . . I always wished my kitchen was a few feet wider, and I think I’ll change the garage entry so I don’t have to walk through the laundry room. You know, it’s a shame that new Lexus went up in smoke, too, but I think I’ll get the color I really wanted this time!

I’m serious, folks—I’ll bet he shifted into the possibilities that this tragedy offered faster than anyone in history ever has! Those who have developed resiliency make use of positivity and openness. This gives them a wide lens, to appreciate the present moment (my brother and his family were all unharmed) and to find the good within the bad (yes, bigger kitchen, better house layout, and newer car in preferred color).

Let's see where we each stand by taking Dr. Fredrickson's Positivity Self Test. This test can be taken here (see below) and hand calculated or taken and tabulated more quickly on her Web site, www.PositivtyRatio.com.

I challenge you to take the Positivity Self Test daily for at least one month. Let it give you valuable and concrete evidence, much as your scale does with daily weight checks. I would also recommend taking the test at the same time of day if you can. Although this is less crucial than your timing in weighing yourself, it does help create a habit that can serve you well over the long haul. Dr. Fredrickson's Web site not only scores you automatically, it also tracks your positivity ratio week by week, month by month, and year by year. As with the diet itself, there is nothing like great results to fuel and stoke your ongoing commitment to succeed. You simply need to choose a user name and a password and indicate whether you want to contribute your scores to the growing database maintained by Dr. Fredrickson's research lab. Your first visit will take no more than five minutes and thereafter only a minute to complete. It's like brushing your teeth; simply do it for your health and sparkling smile!

Day 13: Positivity Self Test

How have you felt during the last twenty - four hours? Look back over the previous day and, using the 0-4 scale, indicate the degree that you've experienced each of the following feelings.

- 0 = not at all
- 1 = a little bit
- 2 = moderately
- 3 = quite a bit
- 4 = extremely

1. What is the most amused, fun - loving, or silly you felt?
2. What is the most angry, irritated, or annoyed you felt?
3. What is the most ashamed, humiliated, or disgraced you felt?
4. What is the most awe, wonder, or amazement you felt?
5. What is the most contemptuous, scornful, or disdainful you felt?
6. What is the most disgust, distaste, or revulsion you felt?
7. What is the most embarrassed, self - conscious, or blushing you felt?
8. What is the most grateful, appreciative, or thankful you felt?
9. What is the most guilty, repentant, or blameworthy you felt?
10. What is the most hate, distrust, or suspicion you felt?
11. What is the most hopeful, optimistic, or encouraged you felt?
12. What is the most inspired, uplifted, or elevated you felt?
13. What is the most interested, alert, or curious you felt?
14. What is the most joyful, glad, or happy you felt?
15. What is the most love, closeness, or trust you felt?
16. What is the most proud, confident, or self - assured you felt?
17. What is the most sad, down - hearted, or unhappy you felt?
18. What is the most scared, fearful, or afraid you felt?
19. What is the most serene, content, or peaceful you felt?
20. What is the most stressed, nervous, or overwhelmed you felt?

You'll notice that each item within the Positivity Self Test casts a wide net. Each includes a trio of words that are related but are not quite the same. With this strategy, each item captures a set of emotions and all of the feelings share a key resemblance.

If you do not have access to Dr. Fredrickson's Web site, which instantly tabulates your positivity ratio, you can compute your own by following these five simple steps:

1. Go back and circle the ten items that reflect positivity.
2. Go back and underline the ten items that reflect negativity.
3. Count the number of circled positivity items that you scored as 2 or higher.
4. Count the number of underlined negativity items that you scored as 1 or higher.
5. Calculate the ratio by dividing your positivity tally by your negativity tally. If your negativity count is zero for today, consider it instead to be a 1, to sidestep the can't-divide-by-zero problem. The resulting number represents your positivity ratio for today.

As stated earlier, if you scored below 3 to 1 you've got plenty of company—about 80 percent of the population will have this score, but one month of practicing your mindfulness meditation and other recommended offerings in this chapter will improve this. If your ratio is persistently as low as 1 to 1, Dr. Fredrickson suggests that you seek professional assistance. Considering that depression affects one in five people, it would be worth having yourself assessed. She also mentions that the National Institutes of Mental Health has an excellent, user-friendly online brochure currently available at www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/depression/nimhdepression.pdf.

Literally hundreds of scientific studies show us that when people change their thinking, they change their emotions as well. So, commit to your meditation practice, and invite all of your senses to the healing party. This is better known as the “so you think, so you will feel, believe, and ‘act as if’ way of life.” Because we basically make up everything we believe, on one level, why not make it up as you want it to be, rather than fearing what you don't want it to be?