The suggestions and treatments described in this book should not replace the care and direct supervision of a trained healthcare professional. If you have any pre-existing health problem or if you are currently taking medications of any sort, you should consult your doctor or equivalent health professional prior to following the suggestions in this book. The recommendations given in this book are intended solely as education and information, and should not be taken as medical advice. Dr Mark Atkinson does not accept liability for readers who choose to self-prescribe.

Copyright © Dr Mark Atkinson 2010

Please feel free to post this on your blog or e-mail to whomever you believe would benefit from reading it. THANK YOU
The Academy of Human Potential

- Are you looking for a pioneering training programme that will provide you with the knowledge, experience and tools to help others fulfil their potential?
- Are you interested in holistic health, well-being, the mind-body connection and personal growth?
- Are you ready to enrich the quality of your life and take your health and well-being to the next level?

If you answered 'yes' or 'maybe' to these questions, then I believe one of my three training programmes could be for you.

1. Integral Well-Being Therapy

Integral Well-Being Therapy is a 21st century personalized holistic approach to creating Total Well-Being. It’s my flagship training programme for health professionals.

2. Human Potential Coaching

Human Potential Coaching is a holistic approach to coaching and positive change that is designed to help individuals thrive and flourish personally and professionally.

3. Mind-Body Medicine

For any health professional who wants to explore the mind-body connection in depth and receive training in the latest mind-body approaches to health and healing

For more information, visit www.humanpotential.uk.com or call 0845 094 8612.
About Dr Mark Atkinson

Dr Mark Atkinson MBBS BSc (HONS) FRSPH FBSIM is an internationally renowned expert in mind-body healing, best selling author and the developer of Integral Well-Being Therapy. As a practising holistic medical doctor he advocates an integrative approach to health and healing, one that is personalised, compassionate and focused on addressing the multidimensional aspects of human beings – the physical, emotional, mental, spiritual and environmental. His work has been featured in the national press including The Daily Telegraph, Daily Mail and Sunday Times and showcased to millions of people on Europe's most popular breakfast TV show - GMTV.

Training: In 2008 Dr Mark Atkinson established The Academy of Human Potential, an educational organisation whose mission is to help facilitate a more conscious, sustainable society by guiding and inspiring as many people as possible to evolve into their fullest potential. Through the Academy he offers professional training programmes in Integral Well-Being Therapy, Human Potential Coaching & Mind-Body Medicine and a variety of personal development workshops and retreats. In addition to this he is the co-founder of Europe's first training programme in integrative medicine for doctors and nurses.

Books: Dr Mark Atkinson is an award winning writer, having won UK Health Journalist of the Year in 2005, and author of bestselling The Mind-Body Bible (Piatkus), Holistic Health Secrets for Women (Piatkus) and The Intelligent Way to Lose Weight (Higher Nature). To read more about his books click here

Education: Dr Mark Atkinson qualified as a medical doctor in 1997 from Imperial College School of Medicine in London (formerly known as St Mary's Hospital Medical School). On graduation he received two qualifications a MBBS - Bachelor of Medicine &
Surgery and a BSc (HONS) - Bachelor of Science in Clinical Pharmacology & Toxicology. As Dr Atkinson started to work with patients he became fascinated by the relationship between what was going on in their head and heart and how this was for many people obviously restricting their capacity to enjoy a healthy, happy and fulfilling life. This inspired him to build on his conventional medical training by exploring methods and approaches that help and inspire individuals to evolve into their fullest potential. He subsequently received training in a variety of disciplines and approaches including the pioneering psychological models - Human Givens Therapy and Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT) and functional diagnostic medicine, a personalised nutrition-based approach to optimum health and healing.

**Memberships:** Dr Mark Atkinson is a Fellow of the Royal Society for Public Health, a Fellow of The British Society of Integrated Medicine, a member of The International Society of Addiction Medicine, a member of The Institute for Functional Medicine and consultant to one of the UK’s leading suppliers of nutritional supplements - Higher Nature.

Today Dr Mark Atkinson offers his services through his London clinics and via The Academy of Human Potential [www.humanpotential.uk.com](http://www.humanpotential.uk.com). His own personal website is [www.drmarkatkinson.com](http://www.drmarkatkinson.com).
# Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secret One:</th>
<th>Get committed</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secret Two:</td>
<td>Check for addictions, co-dependency, depression &amp; other issues</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secret Three:</td>
<td>Learn the 4 core skills of positive mental health</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secret Four:</td>
<td>Learn how to process your emotions</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secret Five:</td>
<td>Manage your stress</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secret Six:</td>
<td>Take care of your physical needs</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secret Seven:</td>
<td>Take care of your emotional needs</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Your life is in your hands. You can experience greater peace of mind and a deeper sense of fulfilment and well-being - if you are willing to make changes to the way you live life and relate to life. The question is are you ready?

This book is an introduction to some of the approaches that I have found as an integrated medical doctor can make a lasting positive difference to our health, mood and quality of life. They are based on my experience of working with thousands of people who want to learn how to experience exceptional health and genuine happiness. One way of achieving that is by focusing on positive mental health.

Positive Mental health is an approach to life that is committed to creating a conscious, healthy and fulfilling life based on the principles of self-acceptance, self-awareness and gratitude. It’s a holistic process that addresses the whole person – body, mind, heart and spirit, whilst also empowering the individual – you – to take charge of your life and health.

In this book I am going to outline seven positive mental health approaches.

They are:

Secret One: Get committed
Secret Two: Check for addictions, codependency, depression & other issues
Secret Three: Learn for the 4 core skills of positive mental health
Secret Four: Learn how to process your emotions
Secret Five: Manage your stress
Secret Six: Take care of your physical needs
Secret Seven: Take care of your emotional needs

I wish you every success

Yours in Health

Dr Mark Atkinson
SECRET ONE
GET COMMITTED

Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness.

Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation), there is one elementary truth the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself then providence moves too.

A whole stream of events issues from the decision, rising in one’s favour all manner of unforeseen incidents, meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamt would have come his way.

W.H.Murray

How committed are you to positive mental health? How committed have you been in the past? If you read through all seven secrets – how likely is it that you will use the information that you are about to read for transformation? Are you ready for a change?

These are important questions to ask yourself and to answer honestly. In my experience most people say they are interested in improving their health, but very few are actually willing to commit themselves every single day to a programme that designed to improve their health and life. So why is that?

Quite simply we are creatures of habit – we get stuck in our old ways because they are comfortable and familiar to us. We like what we know – even though what we know and do might be causing us pain and suffering. It also depends what kind of relationship we have to the process of ‘change’, some people love change and embrace it, others less so. Some people have a pattern of starting something – for a example a new exercise programme, but then give
up after a couple of weeks. Others will stop and start – a yo-yo approach so to speak. So asking questions about our relationship to change and our level of commitment is important, perhaps the most important step to improving your mental health because if your commitment isn’t historically strong, you can take steps to change that right now.

**Why commitment is important**

The quote from the Scottish mountaineer W H Murray, is basically saying that the process of commitment actually taps us into the energy and motivation to make changes in our lives. What’s more, and this is my experience its not just a case of making a sincere commitment today and then forgetting about it, its about renewing our commitment every day – whether they be to our health, well-being, personal growth or even our relationships.

**So what’s stopping you from getting committed?**

Is it:

- Lack of energy or motivation?
- Inertia?
- Fear?
- Live for the moment?
- Too busy?
- Distracted easily?
- Lack support?
- Practical issues?
Or is it something not on this list? Whatever factors you identify, write them down below or in a journal. The intention with this exercise is to get clear about what might get in the way of your commitments to positive mental health.

My barriers to commitment are:

1
2
3
4
5

Now you have identified what’s got in the way of you getting committed, the next step is to find ways of overcoming those barriers. There are many ways to do this, but four I find particularly useful are

1. **Create a clear and precise goal and vision of what it is you want to achieve.** This is really important. Having a target to aim for helps keep you on track by reminding you why you are doing what you are doing. This is very useful during those inevitable times when you feel like giving up on your diet or exercise.

2. **Find a compelling reason to change some aspect of your lifestyle.** This one is easier said than done. What you are looking for is a reason that evokes a strong shift in the way you feel. It must carry meaning and be important to you. For example, stopping smoking because your doctor told you to, usually doesn’t work. Stopping smoking because you and your partner are going to have a baby, might however work. The most compelling reasons to change often involve other people.
3. **Resolve the underlying beliefs that are preventing change from happening.** Anyone who works with people facing health challenges will be very familiar with the idea that our beliefs can hold us back in life. Beliefs are silent assumptions that we have about ourselves and the world. They hold incredible power over us, as they shape the majority of our behaviours and influence the decisions we make. If you look to your past, and can identify repeating patterns, for example you tend to stop exercising after a week, you always give up on diet, or you forget to take supplements, then beliefs are probably playing a part. My book The Mind-Body Bible offers a tool called *The Emotional Freedom Technique* a very simple and effective way to overcome these self-limiting beliefs. You can also download instructions from www.emofree.com

4. **Find practical solutions to address the specific barriers that you identified.** For example if ‘being distracted’ or ‘lack of support’, are potential barriers for you, one solution, for example, would be to employ a life coach to support and motivate you. If time is an issue, why not sit down for an hour or two, and re-arrange your schedule. The most important thing is to put in place strategies to deal with these potential barriers before they happen.

Being clear about your goals, having strategies to deal with the potential barriers, and feeling emotionally committed to improving your health and life provides the best possible mental climate for making positive change in your life.

Before we finish on commitment I would like to invite you to do the following exercise which I use with quite a few of my patients who are less-than wholly accepting of themselves. This is relevant to pretty much everyone. I am including it because for some people it can have a powerful and motivating influence on their lives.
Make a Commitment to Self-Acceptance

In a journal or on a clean piece of A4 paper write out the following sentence - the first time with your dominant hand, second time with non-dominant hand and third and final time with dominant hand

'I, (your name), make a sincere commitment to ending self-criticism now and for ever.'

Then having finished writing it for the third time - read it out and notice where the block to its acceptance. Use either The Release Method and/or Emotrance (Secret Four) to dissolve that block. Once that is done write out the following three times (dominant hand then non-dominant hand then dominant hand)

'I, (your name), make a sincere commitment to unconditionally loving and accepting myself'

Again - after the third time, say it out loud and notice where the block is in your body and use either The Release Method and/or Emotrance (Secret Four) to dissolve that block. If you’ve done this congratulations!

Keep the piece of paper with your commitment on in a location where you can look at it each day or make a habit of turning to the relevant page in your journal each day. Just a few seconds of tuning into that commitment can provide a real boost to your motivation – try it out!
SECRET TWO
CHECK FOR ADDICTIONS, DEPRESSION, CO-DEPENDENCY & OTHER ISSUES

It would be nice to think that you could follow my suggestions and within no-time be happy and flourishing. That might actually happen, however many people have a number of health problems that represent a very real barrier to positive mental health. These need to be identified and addressed early on with the help of an experienced health professional, whilst also following the other recommendations in this book. The barriers that I come across most and the ones that you should consider as to whether they are relevant to you are:

Addictions

In my experience one of the most significant barriers to positive mental health are addictions and compulsions. At least 25% of my patients have what I refer to as addictive tendencies, which need to be addressed in parallel with the other suggestions in this book. Addiction can be described as the compulsive, continuing use of any substance, activity or behaviour that is beyond your control and affects your life for the worse. Any behaviour that removes you from reality, responsibility or relationships is suggestive that you might have addictive tendencies. Addictions can be to pretty much anything including: alcohol, food, gambling, drugs, medications, caretaking, sex, shopping, caffeine, work and relationships.

To work out whether you have addictive tendencies I encourage you to fill in a 160-question online questionnaire that was developed by UK based PROMIS Recovery Centre. You can access it by going to www.s-p-q.com. I have found it to be a very useful way of screening my patients for addictive tendencies. If you do have addictive tendencies, I would encourage you
to work with a practitioner who has experience in treating addictions. My book The Mind-Body Bible has a list of suggestions to support your recovery. I also have a variety of articles on addictions that can be accessed through the front page of my website www.drmarkatkinson.com

**Depression**

There are many definitions of depression but I like the definition provided by the Institute of Psychiatry. They describe depression as a series of behavioural and biological changes that spans mind, brain, genes, body – and indeed affect both psychological and physical health. Put another way, depression is a whole-person illness, a disorder of mind, body and soul that influences every aspect of your life, including thoughts, feelings, behaviour and relationships.

To screen patients for possible depression I use the following questionnaire:

“During the last month, have you often been bothered by

- feeling down, depressed or hopeless?”
- having little interest or pleasure in doing things?
- experiencing fatigue or low energy?”

If you have experienced at least one of these, most days, most of the time for at least 2 weeks, then depression is a real possibility. If so I would recommend that you get a formal diagnosis from a doctor or psychologist. You can access my article on depression by clicking [here](#). You might also like to consider an online depression management course. There are many different programmes for recovering from depression, but the two that my patients like most and the two that I highly regard can be found at [www.clinical-depression.co.uk](http://www.clinical-depression.co.uk) and [www.moodgym.anu.edu.au](http://www.moodgym.anu.edu.au)
Co-Dependency

Co-dependency is a term that has been around for over 30 years and defined in at least over 30 different ways! However it’s generally used to describe an adult whose emotional management style and dysfunctional patterns of behaviour and relating to themselves and others have failed to mature and develop since childhood. Put another way co-dependency is a disease of emotional immaturity that prevents a person from experiencing healthy, intimate and fulfilling relationships. It’s very common in people with addictions and even more common amongst the family members and friends of people with addictions. Here are just some of the characteristics of people with co-dependency:

- Positive feelings about themselves stem from being liked and accepted by others.
- Mental attention is focused on solving the problems of others or relieving their pain, and when these goals are accomplished, their self-esteem rises.
- Co-dependents tend to personalize all that happens around them, seeing everything as being directly related to them.
- Unless they are externally validated, they have difficulty trusting their own perceptions.
- Significant others’ clothing, personal appearance and behaviour are dictated by the co-dependent, as he or she feels that the significant other is a reflection of him or her.
- Co-dependents have unrealistic expectations of themselves, are unable to accept their own limitations, and use control and manipulation to avoid facing reality.
- They view themselves as failures when they cannot control everything or meet everyone’s expectations.
- They fear rejection and abandonment, so they feel they must be involved and needed in every aspect of the lives of others. Not to be involved and needed equals abandonment.
• Co-dependents are not aware of how they feel; they are aware of how others feel. Co-dependents are not aware of what they want; they ask what others want. If they are not aware, they assume.

• Social circles diminish as they become more involved in their disease.

If any of these apply to you I would encourage you to read my article on co-depency to see if it’s something that you need to address. Click here. A good book to get you started is: Breaking Free of the Co-dependency Trap by Barry & Janae Weinhold. New World Library; 2Rev Ed edition (21 Mar 2008)

Undiagnosed Chronic Tiredness

Tiredness is very common and like most symptoms is an invitation to identify and address the underlying causes. In my experience the some of the most common causes of tiredness, in addition to existing disease and medications are: Insomnia, Anaemia, Unhealthy Diet, Stress, Depression, Adrenal Fatigue, Hypothyroidism and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. My book The Mind-Body Bible offers suggestions for addressing all of these.

Food Intolerances

Over the years I have found that quite a number of my patients have symptoms that are exacerbated by reactions to foods – food intolerances. This is worth considering especially if you also experience abdominal bloating, headaches, skin rashes and swelling of the fingers or face. The test I recommend is called the Food Allergen Cellular Test (FACT) from Genova Diagnostics (see resources). These tests can be arranged by an integrated medical doctor or nutritional therapist who is experienced in supporting women who are going through the
menopause. They will then be able to use the results of the test to create a personalised programme for you.

**Hormonal Imbalances**

Imbalances of hormones such as thyroid, adrenal and sex hormones are a relatively common barrier to positive mental health if left untreated. If you score 10 or more on the following questionnaire you should read the hormone chapter in my book *The Mind-Body Bible*

Do you: \[\text{no} = 0, \text{occasionally} = 1, \text{yes} = 3\]

- Feel stressed, restless, overwhelmed and/or exhausted
- Suffer from interrupted sleep, insomnia or low libido
- Experience anxiety, depression, nervousness, phobias or panic attacks
- Get absent minded or feel that your short-term memory lets you down
- Keep yourself going on sugar, caffeine and/or snacks
- Get easily chilled (especially hands and feet)
- Gain weight easily despite eating little/ find it hard to lose excess weight
- Experience low energy levels
- Experience peri-or post menopausal discomfort, period problems or known to have PMS or PCOS
- Want to learn about the secrets to balancing your hormones (score yourself 10)

**TOTAL SCORE:**
Physical Illness

Any kind of illness whether it be cancer, chronic pain or neurological illness will impact on the way you are feeling and the types of thoughts you are thinking, especially if that illness is influencing your ability to live a full and meaningful life. If you have symptoms that are undiagnosed or if you are less-than satisfactory with the treatment you have received to date, you might want to consider getting a second opinion on your treatment from an integrated medical doctor, nutritional therapist or other relevant health professional.

Medications

If you are taking medications, you should check with your doctor to see if that could be influencing your mood and mental health. Some of the most common medication groups that can cause mood changes are accutane (prescribed for acne), oral contraceptives, anti-inflammatories, anti-depressants, pain killers, steroids, anti-histamines, anticonvulsants, blood pressure medication (especially beta-blockers), statins (lower cholesterol), anti-cholinergics (to relieve spasms), ritalin (ADHD), antipsychotics and anaesthetics
SECRET THREE

LEARN THE 4 CORE SKILLS OF POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

Whilst there are numerous different tools and skills for improving your mental health, I am going to share with you the four that I use with most of my patients. Take time to read through each one and then decide which one or combination of skills you would like to start with. I usually get my patients to start with watching the pain body and self-nurturing for a couple of weeks, and then when they feel comfortable with those to add in the remaining two. Use whatever works for you.

SKILL ONE: MINDFULNESS

To be mindful of something is to become aware of something. Mindfulness is a skill and practice that is increasingly recognised as an effective way to reduce stress, increase self-awareness, enhance emotional intelligence, and undermine destructive emotive, cognitive, and behavioural processes. Although mindfulness has only recently been embraced by Western psychology, it is an ancient practice found in a wide range of Eastern philosophies, including Buddhism, Taoism and Yoga. Mindfulness involves consciously bringing awareness to your here-and-now experience with openness, interest, and receptiveness. Jon Kabat-Zinn, a world authority on the use of mindfulness training in the management of clinical problems, defines it as: "Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally." My own definition of mindfulness is alert, calm presence with what is. Mindfulness is about waking up, connecting with ourselves, and appreciating the fullness of each moment of life. Kabat-Zinn calls it, "The art of conscious living." It is a profound way to enhance psychological and emotional resilience, and increase life satisfaction.
Here are a couple of tips to get you started with mindfulness meditation.

- Decide when you want to practise mindfulness. I usually recommend, using it when brushing teeth, washing and walking. Then as you get better at it, using it whenever you meet someone.

- Starting tonight, when you brush your teeth, rather than brushing your teeth and thinking about something completely unrelated, become aware of the experience of brushing your teeth. Notice your thoughts, your feelings and sensations, allow yourself to become aware of the total experience without judgement or analysis. This is mindfulness – well done!

- Try this again when you have a shower or bath and when you go for a walk. Most people will be caught up in their thinking when they go for a walk, when you walk mindfully, allow yourself to pay attention to the experience of walking. Start by paying attention to what you are feeling, then what you are thinking, then what you are seeing, then what you are hearing. Rotate around these. With time and practise you will eventually become aware of all of these at the same time.

As you awareness grows, you will start to notice how you feel uncomfortable in certain situations, or that your body feels heavy after eating certain foods. Further more you might start to notice patterns of predictable behaviour, of you and other people. For example you might notice that feelings of anxiety always precede you getting the urge to eat chocolate or smoke a cigarette. Sometimes the light of awareness will result in the spontaneous change of these behaviours, more often than not it lessens the hold they have over us. What’s more as your awareness expands and deepens your ability to see and acknowledge the reality of each moment deepens, with that comes a greater connection and appreciation of life.

If you would like to explore mindfulness in more detail I can recommend the books
SKILL TWO: WATCHING THE PAIN BODY

In his best-selling books The Power of Now and The New Earth, the spiritual teacher Eckhart Tolle talks about the pain body, a parasite that lives in our bodymind which feeds and sustains itself by creating drama in our life. This drama includes all forms of negativity, judgements, self-criticisms and blame. The pain body consists of all of the emotional upset and trauma that we have accumulated throughout our life. Because the pain body thrives on any negativity, the way to reduce its power and influence over us is to dis-identify from the thoughts, the story that you are telling yourself. This is not easy at first, but with some practice you will probably get quite proficient at it. Here is what I recommend to my patients

1. Whenever you notice yourself getting caught up in negativity, judgements or drama, turn your attention to your body and locate where you feel the pain body is – often it’s around the solar plexus, chest or throat area – although it can be anywhere. Having located it, say silently to yourself ‘I see you - and I accept you’ breathe deeply as you do so. Keep focusing on that area and on the breathing until whatever you are feeling passes. In the early days of doing this you might get caught up in your feelings and thoughts and that’s ok, when you remember just turn your attention back to the sensations in your body and repeat. Whatever happens – be gentle and respectful to yourself. If you criticise yourself whilst doing this – that’s the pain body speaking!

2. Start keeping a journal and for the first two weeks I want you to write down incidences of when the pain body took over your thinking. When you write, write in third person as this
helps with the process of dis-identifying from the pain body. For example you might write something like:

Mark’s pain body started to criticise him when he dropped a cup of tea on the floor, this triggered anger and sadness inside of him

If you would like to discover more about healing the pain body I can recommend the books

- The New Earth by Eckhart Tolle
- The Presence Process by Michael Brown

**SKILL THREE: SELF-NURTURING**

How hard are you on yourself? Does your pain body mentally beat yourself up? Can you look in the mirror and say I value and respect myself and really feel it to be true? One of the most important skills to develop is that of self-nurturing and self-care. Just as we need loving attention and nurturing as children so we need to experience it as adults, the only difference now being that as adults we are responsible for giving it to ourselves.

I find the metaphor of an inner child within side of ourselves as an accurate image of that part of us that needs to be nurtured and loved. The inner child is a source of wonder, joy and spontaneity, but in the majority of people it is rarely allowed to express itself. Do you feel uncomfortable around joyous care-free people or children? Do you struggle to let go and play? If so that might be an indicator that your inner child is waiting to come out.

Whilst some schools of psychotherapy and psychology frown on inner child work, I have found it to be an important skill and tool for healing the pain body and creating more joy. As you start to disengage your pain body and the thoughts and emotions that arise from it, I have
found it to be very important to also start to take care of your inner child at the same time. Here are just some of the suggestions to start doing that.

**The Inner Child Meditation**

Twice a day – usually first thing in the morning and then last thing at night evening - take a couple of deep breaths and imagine yourself as a five or six year old body/girl in front of you. Give that child some space and just watch him/her, notice they are – are they sad, scared, angry, shy, distracted or happy? Now speak to them kindly and say that you now want to take care of them, that you are sorry that you have ignored them, but you are not committed to loving them just as they are. When they are ready, imagine picking him/her up and them to your chest. Tell him/her how much you love him and how you are going to take care of him/her - do whatever feels natural - the most important thing is that he/she feels understood, validated, safe and loved. If you struggle to see yourself when you close your eyes one idea is to find a photograph of yourself to look at.

If you find this inner child work strange or weird, you are not alone – I also did. However when I look back at all of the different self-help approaches that I have used this one has brought me more joy than most. My advice is to give it a try and see for yourself.

**Inner Child Journal**

Writing to your inner child and having a conversation is a simple and powerful way to start nurturing the inner child. If you are doing the pain body journaling, try doing this afterwards

- With your dominant hand write ‘How are you today little (your name)?’
Then with your non-dominant hand allow him/her to write back to you - don't censor it and allow it to flow (this takes a little practice). Your inner child might only say a few words.

Then go backwards and forwards adult to inner child to adult and so on until it feels appropriate to stop.

Essentially you are getting to know one another, plus it provides you with an opportunity to express how committed you are to taking care of her/him.

**Meeting your Inner Child’s Needs**

As you go throughout the day check in with your inner child, especially when you are feeling out of sorts or stressed and say to yourself silently ‘what do I need right now?’ Do you need food, water, rest, sleep, to remove yourself from the situation, to get help or to pick up the phone and talk to someone? What do you need to take care of yourself? This is a very important exercise because so many of us are out of touch with what we really need in any given moment. Our pushy or perfectionist part of our personality will tend to drive us at the expense of our needs – whilst this is ok sometimes, done consistently it leads to stress and exhaustion. Getting in touch with your needs and taking action to meet them is just plain good self-care.

If you would like to discover more about inner child healing I can recommend the books

- Recovery of Your Inner Child by Lucia Capacchione
- Homecoming: Reclaiming and Championing Your Inner Child by John Bradshaw
SKILL FOUR – PRACTISING GRATITUDE

One of the many fascinating discoveries to emerge from the field of positive psychology – the study of human thriving and flourishing – is that the regular deliberate practise of gratitude can bring about significant improvements in happiness, motivation, optimism, energy levels, sleep and quality of life. It is also a powerful antidote to ‘negative emotions’ and depression, as well as the foundations upon which positive mental health is created. The physician, humanitarian and Nobel-prize winner Albert Schweitzer referred to gratitude as the Secret to Life. He was quoted as saying:

“the greatest thing is to give thanks to everything. He who has learned this knows what it means to live. He has penetrated the whole mystery of life: giving thanks for everything.”

One of the best definitions of gratitude is by the world’s leading gratitude researcher Robert Emmons. He describes gratitude as the ‘felt sense of wonder, thankfulness and appreciation for life’. Summarizing the findings from studies to date, Emmons says that those who practice grateful thinking “reap emotional, physical and interpersonal benefits.” People who regularly keep a gratitude journal report fewer illness symptoms, feel better about their lives as a whole, and are more optimistic about the future. Emmons conclusion is that gratitude is a choice, one possible response to our life experiences.

Getting Started

If you would like to increase the level of gratitude in your life, here are five suggestions for getting started.
Keep a Gratitude Journal

Writing in a journal a list of between 3 and 5 things you have to be grateful. This can be anything from anything from the beauty of the sky outside to the joy of your children – whatever works for you. Some people really enjoy doing this every day, others once a week – you will have to find out for yourself what works for you. I get my patients to start by writing down two things they are grateful and two things that they appreciate about themselves. For example:

Today, I am grateful for:

1. The aliveness that I am feeling in my body, as it provides me with the inspiration and energy to do my work
2. The fingers I have as they allow me to type this message

Today I appreciate:

1. The loving respect with which I greeted my daughter this morning
2. The friendly manner with which I spoke to Susan on the phone

Write a gratitude letter.

Research by Martin Seligman the founder of positive psychology has shown this one to be particularly effective. Write a letter to a mentor, family member, or some other important person in your life whom you've never properly thanked. Deliver it in person. Read it out loud.
**Have a Gratitude Partner**

Social support encourages healthy behaviours, because we often lack the discipline to do things on our own. Just as you may be more likely to exercise if you have an exercise partner or participate in a class, you may be able to maintain the discipline of gratitude more easily if you have a partner with whom to share gratitude lists and to discuss the effects of gratitude in your life. Emmons says, “If we hang out with ungrateful people, we will ‘catch’ one set of emotions; if we choose to associate with more grateful individuals, the influence will be in another direction. Find a grateful person and spend more time with him or her.”

If you would like to discover more about gratitude I can recommend the books

- *The How of Happiness* by Sonja Lyubomirsky
- *Thanks* by Robert Emmons
SECRET FOUR
LEARN HOW TO PROCESS YOUR EMOTIONS

When we feel overwhelmed by a given situation and fail to process those emotions fully, that emotional charge lives on inside of ourselves. Think back to a recent distressing event and notice what you are now feeling in your body. If you are feeling anything that is the emotional charge I am referring to. As the saying goes ‘feelings buried alive never die’.

Most of us spend our lives running away from our emotions, we either control or sedate them with a variety of strategies – denial, dissociation, suppression, repression, distraction, alcohol, smoking, drugs, drama, addictions, gossip – the list is pretty much endless. And whilst this appears to be a good idea at the time, it has consequences. When we avoid our feelings, we avoid reality and embedded within reality is life itself. Hence through habit we end up never engaging with life directly and that creates a lot of distress and dis-ease because we experience ourselves as disconnected from ourselves, from others and from the world. Learning how to reconnect ourselves to life, whilst a long and sometimes uncomfortable process, involves facing and embracing reality as it is and addressing the factors that pull us out of reality. Emotional pain and trauma is one of them.

Processing Emotional Pain

I have found that learning how to process emotions effectively to be an extremely important skill to develop when developing positive mental health. The following two skills are very effective in helping to process emotions and I encourage you to try both of them. The reason I have provided you with two is because some people prefer one over the other. In practice I tend to use a combination of both.
Tool One – The Release Method

The Release method is designed to release felt emotions, attachments, aversions, resistances and blockages in the body. Next time you feel imbalanced, stressed, anxious, worried or anything that is less-than peaceful, grounded and balanced try the following:

- Locate where you feel that block in your body
- Imagine a gate opening - connecting that block with the space outside of your body
- Start releasing that energy - allow it to leave your body via the door
- If it gets stuck - or if it feels deep inside, imagine placing a hollow tube inside that energy so that the energy can escape out of the tube into the space around you
- If it is really stuck - and particularly if you find yourself being tense around the releasing process say to the energy 'I release the resistance to the release of this energy' - notice how the energy will now start to move
- Continue this process until it has gone completely
- Notice how much calmer you are now feeling - breathe in and out of that calmness and enjoy the feeling

I would use this as often as possible - maybe 10 - 15 times a day - as you continue to use it you will become progressively calmer and lighter. This is the tool that my patients enjoy using the most, so whilst it might not appeal to you, particularly if you are already comfortable feeling your feelings, please release your resistance to it!

Tool 2- EmoTrance

Place your full attention on the issue you wish to let go of - locate it in your body - breathe in and out of that area and tell the energy to 'soften and flow' - allow it to move and sense where it wants to exit your body. Once it starts flowing allow it to exit completely from your body.
Once moved out, revisit the issue and repeat Emotrance a couple of times, until you no longer feel and negative emotions - but feel energised and light. Other tips (massage the area - stroke the route it wishes to take with your hands – deep breaths - loving patience!)

**Summary:**

- Locate where you are feeling the energy
- tell it to soften and flow
- get a sense of where it wants to exit your body
- Allow it to flow If you catch yourself trying to force it - or get frustrated by it - breathe deeply and let go
- Repeat until you have gone as far as you can

For more information on EmoTrance visit [www.emotrance.com](http://www.emotrance.com)

Try both of these tools out with a couple of issues that are currently upsetting you. The key is not to rush when using them – notice how your mind rushes things! Both of these tools have transformed by clinical work and I really encourage you to spend at least 30 minutes on each one so you can familiarise yourself with them.
Applying the Emotional Healing Tools

Before I start I want to make clear that if you have suffered from any serious abuse or trauma in the past then you should not use these tools. You should consult with a health professional who is trained to help people with trauma. For more information on approaches that might help I suggest you take a look at the following

The Rewind Technique – [www.rewindtechnique.com](http://www.rewindtechnique.com)

Trauma Incident Reduction – [www.tir.org](http://www.tir.org)

Somatic Experiencing – [www.traumahealing.com](http://www.traumahealing.com)

EMDR – [www.emdr.com](http://www.emdr.com)

THE RELEASE METHOD & EMOTRANCE

The release method and EmoTrance can be used to release blocked energy in a methodical way by focusing in turn on a specific issue or challenge. This is pretty intensive work – but the results are consistently outstanding. On average it will take 5 hours to release on the following subjects. My advice is to do about 30 to 60 minutes a day, so that you don’t too overwhelmed – however this depends on you and your preferences.

You will need a journal for this exercise as you are going to be writing down your responses to the following questions

STRESS

- Write a list of all of the sources of stress in your life at the moment. Process the energy of each one.
• Write a list of all of the sources of stress, upset, trauma and abuse from the past. Process the energy of each one.

• Write a list of all the ways you put yourself under stress and pressure. For example by being a people-pleaser, perfectionist, overly conscientious, overly nice or overly sensitive. Process the energy of each one.

• What potentially stressful aspects of your life are you not facing up to right now? Process the energy of each one.

• Write a list of all of the different ways you escape control or sedate your stressful feelings? Process the energy of each one.

OTHERS

• Write a list of all of the things that you are currently feeling angry, irritated, frustrated or resentful about right now? Process the energy of each one.

• Write a list of all of the resentments that you have relating to events in the past. Process the energy of each one.

• Write a list of all of the things that you are fearful about. Process the energy of each one.

• Write a list of all of the things that you feel guilty, embarrassed or ashamed about past and present. Process the energy of each one.

• Write a list of all of the things that you feel sad, upset or grieved about past and present? Process the energy of each one.

• What are you currently worrying about? Process the energy of each one.

• What about the future worries you? Process the energy of each one.

• How do you see yourself? Write a list. Process the energy of each one.

• How do you portray yourself to the world? Process the energy of each one.

• What aspects of yourself are you hiding from the world? Process the energy of each one.

• What would you like to change about yourself? Process the energy of each one.
• Write a list of the ways that you seek approval? Process the energy of each one.

• Write a list of the ways that you seek control/control? Process the energy of each one.

• Write a list of the ways that you seek security/safety/survival? Process the energy of each one.

• Write a list of the ways that you do not accept yourself just as you are. Process the energy of each one.

• What are your blocks to total self-acceptance? Process the energy of each one.

• Look in the mirror at yourself. Process the energy that arises.

• Say to yourself “I deeply and completely accept and love myself.” Process the energy that arises

Using the release method and emotrance in your daily life

• When you wake up in the morning, become aware of what you are feeling and process it

• Preview the day and process the energy that arises

• Build in mini-processing sessions throughout the day – I recommend x5 episodes of 2 minutes minimum

• Reflect on day and process the energy that arises
SECRET FIVE

MANAGE YOUR STRESS

Stress is part and parcel of life, it’s a natural and normal response to the many challenges that life brings to us most days. Whilst we tend to think of stress in a negative light – it’s not all bad. We each need a degree of stress and challenge in our lives, that’s how we learn, grow and create meaning and purpose. As long as we are equipped with the skills to manage situations, stress in small doses can be healthy for us.

The flip-side of stress however occurs when we feel overwhelmed by certain situations or we experience constant low-grade stress (for example from relationships) – that’s when it starts to take a toll on our health. When we are stressed we tend to rush our food, overeat, eat too much processed and sugary foods and eat too little fibre containing foods. What’s more in addition to contributing to and exacerbating menopausal symptoms, chronic stress is also recognised as a factor in numerous diseases including heart disease, cancer, depression and anxiety.

Are You Stressed?

By far the easiest way to work out whether stress is compromising your health and quality of life – is to ask yourself honestly “is stress affecting my health or quality of life?!”. If you are like most people, the chances are that you will say yes. Here are some more subtle and not-so subtle signs and symptoms of stress. Are any of these familiar?
Effects of stress on your body

Headache, Pounding heart, Shortness of breath, Muscle aches, Back pain, Clenched jaws, Tooth grinding, Stomach upset, Increased sweating, Tiredness, Sleep problems, Weight gain or loss, Sex problems, Skin breakouts

Effects of stress on your thoughts and feelings

Anxiety, Restlessness, Worrying, Irritability, Depression, Sadness, Anger, Mood swings, Job dissatisfaction, Burnout, Forgetfulness, Inability to concentrate, seeing only the negatives

Effects of stress on your behaviour

Overeating, Undereating, Angry outbursts, Drug abuse, Excessive drinking, Increased smoking, Social withdrawal, Relationship conflicts, Decreased productivity, Blaming others

If you associate with any other the above I would encourage you to try out my five steps to stress reduction.

Reducing Stress

The most effective way to deal with stress is an integrated holistic approach, one that deals with the underlying problems, whilst also supporting the bodymind’s health through the use of supplements and stress reduction techniques, such as meditation, mindfulness, deep breathing and guided imagery. Here are a couple of suggestions for tackling stress.
1 - Facing Reality and Taking Action versus Accepting What Is

Facing reality is about taking an honest look at the facts of any matter and admitting to yourself that there is a problem. For example you can use all the stress reduction techniques you want to, but if the stress you are experiencing is related to your addiction to alcohol or work, that’s the area you need to address. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What is it exactly I am stressed about?
- What areas of my life are less-than-ideal?
- Of those areas identified which do I have control over (and therefore can take action about) and which do I not have any control over (and therefore need to accept to the best of your ability)
- What can I do in the next 24 hours to address the areas that are causing me stress?

If you find it difficult to accept things or tend to be affected by negative thoughts and beliefs, I recommend that you read a book called Loving What Is by Bryon Katie. Alternatively you can visit her website www.thework.com

2 – Taking Supplements to Support Your Health

Nutritional supplements play an important role in helping the bodymind recover from the ill-effects of stress. Here are some ones to consider:

- **B Vitamins** and particularly vitamin B5 are regarded as the anti-stress nutrients. I tend to recommend that my patients take at least 25 to 50mg of the B vitamins a day

- **Vitamin C** at a dose of between 1000 and 3000mg per day helps to support adrenal gland function, as well as the immune system
- **Calcium and Magnesium** can both help to relax and calm the bodymind, and should be considered in addition to the above.

- **L-theanine** - this amino acid works by increasing levels of a chemical in the brain called GABA, which in turn triggers relaxation.

- **Valerian** (Valeriana officinalis) has been widely used for centuries in North America and Europe for its calmative and sedative properties. It is often combined with Passion Flower (Passiflora incarnata), Oatstraw (Avena sativa), and Chamomile (Chamaemelum nobile) to increase its effectiveness.

- **Rhodiola** also called Arctic Root is an adaptogen meaning it helps the body to restore balance, fight fatigue and boost energy levels.

- **Siberian Ginseng** – is another adaptogen that has been used for thousands of years in Traditional Chinese medicine as a tonic to help the body reach its full potential for health. There are a few different types of Ginseng, but the ones most useful for helping recharge the adrenals are Siberian, Korean and American Ginseng.

Before using any of these make sure that they do not interfere with any medications that you are taking. You can check this by visiting [www.wholehealthmd.com](http://www.wholehealthmd.com). All of these can be bought from [www.highernature.co.uk](http://www.highernature.co.uk).

3 – **Instant Stress Reduction Techniques**

The next time you are feeling stressed try one of these:
4/7 Breathing

Breathe in for the count of four, then out to the count of seven and repeat this until you feel calmer. Breathing out longer compared with the in-breath helps to trigger the relaxation mechanism in your body.

Feet Breathing

This one is particularly effective. When you feel stressed turn your attention to your feet and breathe as though you are breathing in and out of them. Imagine roots growing down from your feet into the floor beneath you – this helps to ground you and slow down racing thoughts. Combine this with 4/7 breathing for even more effectiveness

Emotional Release

When you feel upset, angry or stressed, locate where you feel it in the body. Once you have done that imagine a door opening from that place into the space around you and feel the energy start pouring out. It will do this automatically. Be patient, breath deeply in and out of that area and allow it to continue until that energy has completely left the body

4 – What’s Your Story?

Whenever you feel stressed, immediately notice what thoughts are going through your mind – what story are you telling yourself? Now watch this stream of thoughts just as you would watch a movie on your TV, watch it without judging it or trying to change it – allow those thoughts to simply be and breathe slowly and deeply as you do. This practise of watching your thoughts without getting caught up in them is part of the mindfulness practice that I talked about in secret three
SECRET SIX
TAKE CARE OF YOUR PHYSICAL NEEDS

Your body and brain has an immense capacity for healing and improving your emotional well-being as long as certain physical needs are met. This includes the need for a nutrient rich diet, supplements (unfortunately diet alone doesn’t provide enough nutrients), rest, relaxation, sleep, physical activity, sunlight and a healthy environment, and the need to be minimally exposed to smoking, excessive amounts of sugar, caffeine and alcohol. Many health and mental problems will often improve or even resolve just by meeting these needs. When provided in balance and moderation they enable the bodymind to do what it does best, that is heal and restore balance.

Physical Needs Questionnaire

Read through the following list of questions and answer honestly. A no response to one or more of these indicates that you will need to address this area

- Are you drinking between one litre and three litres of water a day? (herbal teas count)
- Are you getting your 5 servings of fruit and vegetables a day?
- Are you restricting your intake of processed / take-away foods to less than 3 times a week?
- Are you getting at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity five times a week?
- Are you getting at least 30 minutes of deep relaxation five times a week? (Meditation, yoga, walking, etc – anything that triggers your body to relax – alcohol/TV does not count!)
- Do you get regular age-appropriate health check-ups? (for example cholesterol, blood pressure and homocysteine levels)
• Are you abstinent from smoking, are you taking any illegal drugs or drinking more than one alcohol containing drink a night?
• Are you overweight? A waist size of over 40 inches for men and 34 inches for women is a big risk factor for future health problems
• To you take care of your body? (for example do you see a dental hygienist every 6 months)

Meeting Your Body’s Physical Needs

These are the steps that I provide my own patients who come to me for advice on improving their mental health and well-being

Step One – Remove All Sugar, Alcohol & Caffeine from Your Diet

This recommendation tends not to go down that well with my patients, but it can really make a noticeable difference to your mood within a couple of days if you do this. I have had many patients experience a significant improvement in their mood from doing this.

This is a one-week commitment programme. In my experience most people can just about cope with the idea of doing this for seven days, it’s do-able. Once you reach seven days, if you have noticed an improvement in your mood, then I would commit yourself to another seven days, by which you can decide whether you want to eliminate them completely or have them on an occasional basis.

Sugar
This includes all refined sugar, confectionary, cakes, biscuits, ice cream, soft drinks and any other sugar containing food/drink. I’m not saying you can’t have these in the future, but I do know that committing yourself to the initial week without them can make the world of difference to your recovery programme. Some people are extremely sensitive to sugar and will experience withdrawal symptoms within 48 hours of coming off sugar. If you really love sugar and sugary foods I would get yourself a copy of the book Potatoes not Prozac by Kathleen DesMasions, it will help you to prepare for coming off sugar. See http://www.radiantrecovery.com/

- Tip: If you start getting cravings try taking 800 mcg of the mineral chromium and 5g of l-glutamine powder to help alleviate sugar and carbohydrate cravings

**Alcohol**

Alcohol doesn’t pose that much of a health risk if drunk in moderation - 21 units (men) and 14 units (women). However what I have found is that many of my patients use alcohol to sedate and control the emotional pain within their bodymind. This combined with alcohol’s affect on blood-sugar balance, mood and memory. If you are abusing or addictive to alcohol my advice is to seek the help of an experienced health professional. Otherwise you might want to consider cutting down on your intake or coming off it all together.

- Tip: The amino acid taurine 3g to help reduce alcohol cravings

**Caffeine**

Caffeine is one of the most widely used chemicals to alter mood. Some people are particularly sensitive to its effects and many others are addicted to their caffeine fix. If you have been drinking more than two cups a day for quite some time my advice would be to reduce your
consumption of coffee and tea by one cup a day, until you are down to zero. This should help to limit any withdrawal effects.

- The amino acid l-tyrosine, 500mg to 1000mg three times daily in between meals for coffee addiction. Tyrosine converts to the energising neurotransmitter noradrenaline.
- For caffeine replacement try herbal teas, rooibus tea, white tea and dandelion coffee.

**Step Two – Eat a healthy diet**

The food you put in your mouth has a big effect on your mood. Carbohydrates provide the brain with glucose, its main fuel source, amino acids provide a ready supply of building blocks from which the body’s neurotransmitters are manufactured, and fat provides the raw material for the brain (over 50% of the brain consists of fat). Vitamins, minerals and antioxidants help to ensure that everything works smoothly. So getting these nutrients in the right quantity and balance is one of the essential steps to lifting your mood. In a nutshell try:

- Stabilising your blood sugar levels by eating three main meals and two snacks every day and a protein source such as seeds, nuts, fish, egg, lentils, beans, hummus or nut butter with every meal and snack.
- Rotating the foods that you eat, so you don’t eat the same foods on consecutive days and to eat as wide a variety of foods as possible to benefit from the unique nutritional content of those different foods.
- Eating high-vitality organic produce as a preference, if not then fresh produce, followed by frozen produce.
- Limiting your intake of processed, packet, tinned, ready, microwave and take-away meals to 3 times a week.
- Avoiding foods to which you are intolerant.
Using natural cold-pressed oils such as extra virgin olive and coconut oil and unsalted butter sparingly and to avoid all commercial salts (Celtic sea salt or Solo is fine), ketchup, deep-fried food, sweet pickles, foods containing artificial additives, MSG, cordials, fizzy drinks, preservatives, artificial sweeteners, decaffeinated coffee, colourings, canola oil, trans, hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated foods, margarine, vegetable oils including corn oil, hemp oil, canola oil and sunflower oil, and mayonnaise and all fried foods. All of these can exacerbate menopausal symptoms. Alcohol if drunk should be limited to one unit a day

Swapping caffeinated drinks for herbal teas and mineral water – try and drink at least 2 litres a day. An alternative to mineral water is water filtered through a wellness carafe. You can purchase this from Higher Nature www.highernature.co.uk

Whilst a healthy eating programme really needs to be tailored to you – and I would encourage you to see a nutritional therapist to do this – the following provides a useful guideline as too the kinds of foods and quantities you could be eating.

5 free-range, organic eggs per week. These are rich in omega-3 and phospholipids
3 servings of green leafy and root vegetables a day: such as broccoli, spinach, kale, sweet potato, celery, peppers and green beans.
2 servings of colourful fruits a day: such as apples, pears, plums, and berries (fresh or frozen). Consider starting your day with a breakfast juice made from frozen berries, nut milk, protein powder, apples, and flaxseed oil.
3 servings of oily fish a week: such as mackerel, salmon, sardines and herring
2-3 servings of whole grains a day: such as organic oats, buckwheat, quinoa, rye and brown rice
1-2 servings of beans, peas or lentils a day
1-2 raw cloves of garlic a day
1 handful of organic nuts a day: such as organic walnuts, almonds or brazil nuts
1 heaped teaspoon of ground seeds a day: such as sunflower, flax, sesame and hemp
1 tablespoon of organic cold-pressed extra-virgin olive oil a day

**Step Three – Get Active**

Keeping active and physically fit does wonders for your mood, as well as reducing your risk of numerous health challenges including depression, cancer and heart disease. The key is to

- Follow a regular moderate intensity exercise programme that incorporates weight bearing – works against gravity (such as jogging, walking and dancing) and resistance training (such as weights).
- Aim for at least 30 minutes five times a week of exercise
- Avoid high intensity, infrequent exercise, as this can actually make symptoms worse
- Exercising outdoors has the added benefit of exposing yourself to the sunlight each day, which helps to stimulate the body’s own production of vitamin D.
- Getting or keeping motivated is the biggest barrier for most people when it comes to exercise. Exercising with a motivated friend or trainer, keeping the exercise you do interesting and enjoyable and making it part of your weekly routine will all help.

**Step 4 – Sleep Well**

Sleep deprivation represents a big barrier to positive mental health. It’s a common problem with about 40% of the population getting less than seven hours of sleep on weekdays and 70% less than eight hours. If you feel sleep deprived, have young children/babies, feel tired most of the time, work long hours or sleep less than eight hours more than five times a week, you are probably sleep deprived. Here are my suggestions:
• Explore the underlying causes and contributors and take action to address them. Are you under stress? How are your relationships, health and work? What are you not facing up to? Do you fully relax before going to bed?

• If you are still awake after 20 minutes of attempting to sleep, get up and do something that you really don’t enjoy doing – such as cleaning the cutlery. This sets up a negative conditioning pattern that associates not sleeping with discomfort, by doing so you are training the brain to help you get asleep. This method works really well for a lot of people.

• Get into a routine whereby you go to bed and get up at the same time

• Consider taking a natural sleep remedy such as Valerian, or 5-HTP 100 to 200mg at night-time.

• Avoid eating heavy meals at least two hours prior to going to sleep.

• Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol late in the day or at night.

• Listen to a guided imagery sleep CD before going to bed. See resources

• Keep a slightly cool temperature in the room as this helps both to get to sleep and achieve a deeper level of sleep. 65°-70° is the ideal temperature.

• If you have got things on your mind, try off-loading it into a journal, talking about it or trying some relaxation techniques

Step Five: Take Supplements to Support Your Mood

Whilst switching to a healthy diet can support positive mental health, most people will benefit even more by taking specific high quality nutritional supplements. Because supplements can interact with medications you should check with your GP or health professional before doing so. You can also visit the website www.wholehealthmd.com which has a list of drug/nutrient/herb interactions.
As a basic foundation programme I start most of my patients on:

- A high potency multivitamin/mineral
- Vitamin C – 1000 to 3000 mg a day
- Fish Oils – 3000mg a day

And to this I will usually add a number of other supplements once an accurate diagnosis has been made

- If depression is a problem I will consider St Johns Wort or 5-HTP +/- the amino acid L-Tyrosine
- If anxiety is also a problem, I will usually use l-theanine (an amino acid that promotes relaxation), and possibly l-glutamine (which converts to the relaxation neurotransmitter GABA)
- If adrenal fatigue is a problem, I will consider Siberian Ginseng or Rhodiola
- If low energy level is a problem (and all underlying causes explored) I will consider Co-Q 10 - 100 to 300 mg daily and L-Carnitine: 2000 - 3000 mg daily
SECRET SEVEN
TAKE CARE OF YOUR EMOTIONAL NEEDS

Its not something many of us take time to do, or are even aware of the benefits of doing, but taking an inventory of the degree to which our emotional needs are being met in our lives right now, and then taking practical action to start meeting those needs that are obviously unmet, is one of the quickest and most effective ways to experience positive mental health.

These emotional needs include the need for security, giving & receiving positive attention, connection with a wider community, an intimate close relationship with at least one other person, autonomy, status, competence, privacy and meaning and purpose.

Fortunately our bodymind provides many of us with the innate resources to meet those needs – this includes imagination (using visual imagery), self-awareness (an awareness and detachment from our thoughts, feelings, actions and re-actions as they arise), memory (ability to recall – short/long term) and problem-solving abilities (ability to analyse and find solutions to a situation).

If any of these emotional needs are seriously unmet, or any of our innate resources are damaged, missing or used incorrectly, we suffer mental distress. Which if left unresolved often deteriorates into anxiety and depression. The key therefore to a high level of emotional, social and psychological well-being, from the psychological perspective, is to make sure that you are using your innate resources to get your needs met.

What Emotional Needs are Unmet?
I ask all my patients to fill in the following emotional needs questionnaire and I invite you to do the same. (If you prefer, write it in your notebook or journal). The following is a slightly modified version of the human givens questionnaire (this is the organisation whose work is focused around meeting emotional needs) - you can access the original by visiting www.enaproject.org/. Read through each question slowly and rate how well the following emotional needs are being met in your life now. For each emotional need, give yourself a score of between 1 and 7 (1 = emotional need completely unmet and unfulfilled, 7 = emotional need completely met and fulfilled).

Watch out for the tendency to rush this exercise or to score yourself too highly. Ask yourself once you have a score in mind, ‘does this score feel accurate?’ If it does, great, write it down. If it doesn’t, reassess and score again.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you feel secure in all major areas of your life? __

Do you feel that you are receiving enough positive attention? __

Do you think you give other people enough positive attention? __

Do you feel that you have a choice as to how you live your life? __

Do you feel connected to some part of the wider community? __

Do you take time for reflection when you need and want to? __

Do you have at least one intimate relationship in which you are totally accepted for who you are? __

Do you feel emotionally connected to your partner? (if applicable) __
Do you feel emotionally connected to your close friends? ____

Do you feel emotionally connected to your family? (if applicable) ____

Do you feel competent in your main occupation? (if applicable) ____

Do you have a sense of accomplishment in what you do on most days? ____

Are you respected and acknowledged by your friends? ____

Are you respected and acknowledged by your work peers? (if applicable) ____

Are you respected and acknowledged by your family? ____

Are you respected and acknowledged by your partner? (if applicable) ____

Overall, do you feel that your life is meaningful and fulfilling? ____

Having completed the questionnaire, go through it again reflect on whether the score you have given yourself is an accurate reflection of reality. Note which areas scored five or less. Generally the lower the score for a particular emotional need, the greater the need for some action to be taken in order for that need to be met. My experience has been that a score of 5 or less represents a barrier to well-being, and that a score of 3 or less is indicates an unmet need that is almost certainly contributing to stress and/or a mental health problem.

**How to start meeting your emotional needs**

Once you know what your unmet emotional needs are its time to start taking practical action to meet them. Of course that’s easier said than done particularly if you are experiencing distress and/or a mental health problem. It might well be that you need a friend or even a Human Givens therapist to support you. See [http://www.hgi.org.uk](http://www.hgi.org.uk). However in my experience it is possible to make very positive changes by yourself. Start by writing down the three lowest scoring emotional needs below
It’s now time to meet these needs. For each emotional need I have provided a series of questions and suggestions that are designed to support you in discovering creative and simple ways to meet that particular need. I have provided a template into which you simply insert the unmet need that you want to work on. The template asks you a series of questions to which you will need to write your response to. It will guide you through the same process that I use with my own patients. Start with the unmet emotional need that is troubling you most now.

**The Emotional Need Fulfilment Process**

Ask yourself the following questions and write down your answers in a journal or on a piece of paper. Just place the emotional need that you want to work on into the space with italics

- What does ‘emotional need’ mean to me? If this need was being fulfilled, what would be different and positive about my life right now?
- I wonder how I can meet ‘emotional need?’ Allow ideas to flow without judging them at this stage, write every idea down.
- What underlying beliefs are contributing to my issues around ‘emotional need?’ How can I transform them?
- What practical steps can I take today in order to meet my ‘emotional need’?
- Who can I ask for support and help in relationship to this issue?

For example
What does ‘giving and receiving positive attention’ mean to me? If my need for giving and receiving positive attention was fulfilled, what would be different and positive about my life right now? Close your eyes and imagine that this is true for you – what would you see, hear, feel, notice? Give yourself plenty of time to do this.

I wonder how I can give and allow myself to receive more positive attention? Allow ideas to flow without judging them at this stage, write every idea down.

What underlying beliefs are contributing to my issues around attention? How can I transform them?

What practical steps can I take today in order to increase my ability to give and receive attention?

Who can I ask for support and help in relationship to this issue?

For more information on the process of meeting emotional needs through the use of your own innate resources read the book Human Givens – a new approach to emotional health and clear thinking by Joe Griffin and Ivan Tyrrell

I hope this short book has provided you with some tools and insights as to how you can create a healthier and more fulfilling life. If you want to read more about my approach to health and healing I have three other books, The Mind-Body Bible, Holistic Health Secrets for Women & The Intelligent Way to Lose Weight, all of which can be purchased from www.highernature.co.uk
RESOURCES

Dr Mark Atkinson’s Contact Details
For consultations, lectures, books and workshops

Website:  www.drmarkatkinson.com
Clinic:  0845 094 6450

Supplements

Higher Nature  T: 0800 458 4747
www.highernature.co.uk

Food Intolerance Testing

Genova Diagnostics  T: 020 8336 7750
http://www.gdx.uk.net

This e-book is supported by

Higher Nature www.highernature.co.uk