Some years ago a highly successful businessman saw his corporation collapse after a drop in stock prices. He was so depressed that he considered killing himself.

Fortunately, before he acted on this impulse, he called a good friend and expressed his unhappiness and self-destructive urges.

The friend listened sympathetically and then suggested, "Before you decide what to do, let's calculate exactly how much you've lost."

On a piece of paper the friend drew a vertical line. On one half of the page he wrote "assets" and on the other side "losses."

"Let's start with your assets," said the friend. "Are you married?"

"Of course. You know I'm married."

"Well then, is your wife faithful?"

"Certainly she is. Devoted to me, in fact."

The friend wrote down under assets: "Good and loving wife."

"Any children?"

"Yes, a son and a daughter."

"Have they been a great disappointment to you? Have they run away from home or gotten in trouble with the law or turned against you?"
"No." The friend listed as assets. "Son, daughter, both very fine young people."

"How about your health? Any heart problems?"

"No, at my last checkup the doctor said I was very fit."

The words "very healthy" were jotted down in the assets column.

"Would you sell your heart for $100,000?"

"Of course not."

"How about for $1 million?"

"No."

"How about $10 million?"

Several more similar questions were asked, and then the businessman interrupted his friend.

"OK, no more questions," he said. "I don't want to kill myself any more. It looks as though I have a great many valuable things in my life besides my company."

Observing this situation from the outside, you may conclude that the solution employed by the friend was pretty obvious. It was based on the old admonition to always look on the sunny side of things, to count your blessings.

But that's because you were on the outside. In the depressed businessman's position you, too, might have been tempted to destroy yourself.

Positive Restructuring of
Your Actual Domain

Having an active and growing habitual domain does not mean that you will never fail. But it does mean that you will have the resources to come through it and start again with renewed energy and commitment.

Let's say you're very discouraged. What can you do about it? Actually there are a few very simple efforts that will reap big dividends.

Physical Movement can help you to control your confidence and mental power. Happy, self-assured individuals raise their heads, stick out their chests and straighten their backs. They don't consciously think about it — their posture is a reflection of their mental state.

When you're down, instead of succumbing to a slumping, defeatist posture, force yourself to move as though it's the best day of your life.

Instead of your emotions ruling your body, your body will send a message of confidence and satisfaction to your brain. You will indeed feel confident and satisfied.

Mental Focus is the power of attention allocation I have mentioned before, and it can quickly boost your energy and mood. If you put your mind — allocate your attention — to an elevating goal, and believe you can achieve it, the goal will create a charge, and resulting drive and action. Your mental power will be activated and brought to bear on achieving the goal.

Dwelling on your misfortune can be self-indulgent and self-defeating. Focus on a task or goal, personal or professional, and by visualizing that you have reached it you will raise your level of confidence. Goal setting lets you control the charge your brain is receiving.

If your unhappiness is the result of persistent destructive behavior on your part — say, overeating — use your mind to vividly imagine the bad consequences of this behavior over time: weight gain, clogged arteries, even early death. The more vivid the mental picture you paint, the stronger the charge you will feel to change your behavior.

State Evaluation also helps to control your mood. Evaluate a situation realistically, but look for positive aspects. If you're walking through a dark tunnel, imagine there is a light at the end. This provides hope and gives you the impetus to keep walking. When facing a thorny problem, you can use the same imagination to instill hope and confidence.

State Evaluation gives you control of your expectations and increases your optimism. When you commit your mind to the expectation that you will be equal to a task, you most likely will be. "I can do this" is one of the most important things you can learn to say to yourself.

You can do it, if your mind and behavior work for you. Here are several important concepts that can be used to make that happen.
THE SELF CONCEPTS

In the core of your habitual domain, there are pervasive concepts about your Self, including your Ideal, your Roles and your Self-love or Self-esteem.

Your Ideal can be: What do you want to be? What’s the ideal state of your life? What person would you like to model yourself after?

Your Roles defined by yourself can be: What do you want to do in your life? In what role do you cast yourself in your job situation? In your family? In your community? In the grand scheme of things?

The third and most interesting concept about yourself is Self-love. Self-love isn’t the same thing as selfishness. But if we cannot love and respect ourselves, we cannot hope to have those feelings for others.

One way to build Self-love and Self-esteem is to cast yourself as a role model. Parents often reject bad or questionable behavior because they want to set good examples for their children. Managers do not want to appear lazy; they want to set a good example for their employees.

Another way is simply to reinforce Self-love every day by talking to yourself. Looking into the mirror each morning, tell yourself:

“I love myself. I appreciate myself. I love and appreciate others as well. I’m grateful to the Creator for my blessings, and I’m grateful to other people for their support.”

Once you get comfortable with this basic conversation with your Self, you can move on to specific encouragement.

Do you have an important presentation? Look yourself in the eye and say, “I am going to do a great job today.” Need to feel your best? Look in the mirror and talk about yourself as if you were a stranger: “What a beautiful woman! She’s wearing a terrific suit. She has such a pleasant face.”

Perhaps you can’t imagine yourself doing such a thing. You would feel silly. You may think this sounds like pop psychology or psychobabble.

Not at all. Scientifically speaking, this method works for the simple reason that it reinforces our already existing circuit patterns for love and appreciation.

If you want to pump up your biceps you go to the gym.
and practice curling weights. You don't do it once and then quit. You do it every day, or as part of a regular schedule. Think of your biceps as a circuit pattern. With repeated exercise this muscle/circuit pattern gets stronger and stronger.

It works the same way with Self-respect and Self-love.

Most parents know how important it is to instill self-respect in their children. They can do this with encouragement and praise. Good managers know the benefits of congratulating employees on a job well done. Neither parents nor managers really succeed unless they make an effort to say to the people they are encouraging, be it child or employee, "I am proud of you."

Unfortunately, we often tend to neglect Self-respect in ourselves. Very few people ever look themselves in the eye in the mirror and say, "Good job. I am proud of you." Try it. You'll be amazed how much it does for your Self concept.

THE EXPECTATION PRINCIPLE AND MENTAL LIGHT CONTROL

Expectations can be a tremendous motivational force. If you place high expectations upon people and give them encouragement, they will excel.

Note that there are two parts to this principle. First, high expectations or goals. And second, encouragement or confidence.

The Best Teachers

Three high school teachers were called to the principal's office and informed that since they had been judged to be among the best teachers in the school, they would be placed in charge of classes filled with the brightest students.

"I've no doubt that with your skills and the high level of intelligence among these students, that your classes will perform outstandingly," the principal told them.

At the end of the semester standardized tests were given, and the three teachers' students scored 20 percent to 30 percent higher than the class norm.

The principal congratulated the teachers on their outstanding efforts.

"Actually it was the kids," one of the teachers replied.

"They were so smart to begin with."

"I don't think so," said the principal. "You see, they weren't as gifted as I first indicated. In fact, they were chosen randomly from the student body."

The teachers were at first perplexed by this, then delighted.

"I guess we really are the best teachers you have," one said.

"Well, not really," the principal replied. "You three were chosen randomly as well."

Because the principal had given the teachers positive encouragement and high expectations in advance, they had high expectations of themselves and their students. This strengthened their determination and confidence that they could attain the goals they set out to achieve. Although the students were randomly chosen and not necessarily more intelligent than others, through the expectation and hard work of the teachers, they too excelled.

Expectation creates a charge, confidence turns the charge into drive force. Together they increase our ability to achieve a goal.

It happens all the time in everyday life when a parent tells a child: "You're really looking great in soccer practice. I bet you can score a goal in Saturday's game." Thus armed, the child is much better equipped to play well and possibly score a goal.

Of course, there is no guarantee that the child will have a great game. If not, is the whole effort a waste?

Hardly. In any effort, if you can enjoy each step in the process of improving, you will have gained much.

On the other hand, if each step toward your goal is painful and tiresome, you're unlikely to reach your destination. And even if you do, you may not be particularly pleased by your effort, which may then seem to have been too great for the reward.

Lighting Up Control is to set your mind on the positive side of possible results. Try to see and feel the consequences of success before you actually attain it. By changing your actual domain, you will generate yet more charge and increase the likelihood of actually reaching the goal.
Moreover, the pleasure of success is not limited to the end of your efforts. By anticipating success, you have a taste of it as you progress. There is much to be said for the old adage, "Look on the bright side."

It is important to believe that you will succeed. The belief creates a charge and keeps you focused on success and your chances of attaining it.

Mental Focus Control

Mental Focus Control permits us to control the activation of circuit patterns in the brain to control our moods, judgment and behavior. Remember, you feel happy or sad because your actual domain (the circuit patterns presently activated in your brain) are happy or sad ones at the moment. If you can change your actual domains, your mood, related thoughts and behavior can be changed as well.

Instead of being the victims of our emotions, we can learn to change them to states we want. Suppose you’re walking through a cemetery on a dark night. It’s creepy. How do you prevent yourself from becoming afraid?

Try singing. It works because we have to employ our mind to recall the lyrics and melody, while employing our facial muscles and body to sing. These efforts activate our circuit patterns related to music. As our attention is occupied by these circuit patterns, we’re too busy to be frightened.

In fact, music has tremendous power to change your mood. When you’re feeling down, the tendency is to listen to moody music that reflects your gloom.

Instead, play something upbeat, even funny. Your circuit patterns for lighthearted musical enjoyment will kick in.

Actually, your brain is the world’s most comprehensive jukebox, only instead of just songs, it holds emotions. And with the punch of a mental button, you can call up those emotions and experience them. You can bring back the elation of crossing the finish line in a race run 30 years ago or recall the nervous anticipation of the first day of kindergarten or college.

Depending on which button you choose (where you put your attention), you can change or reinforce your mental attitudes and your mood.

Suppose you need to buck up your confidence. Think about a time when you felt incredibly self-assured and happy. Perhaps it was getting an A on a big exam, winning an important game, earning a major scholastic award, making a big sale or successfully completing a project. By recalling those memories you can relive those positive emotions and carry them over to your current life. Let the circuit pattern for success, confidence and happiness occupy your mind.

A key advantage of Mental Focus Control is the ability to look at negative experiences in a new and positive light. All of us will experience failure. The question to be asked of ourselves is, “What did I learn from this matter?”

The answers to this question can change the circuit patterns that are activated in our brain. We will be able to look at the event more positively and constructively. Our minds will give us better suggestions to solve the problem.

Mental Focus Control is a positive force, but it carries a contrasting negative aspect. Because you can focus sharply — that’s what allows you to control your attention — you will always be leaving something out of focus as you think. Your mind is somewhat like the lens of a camera. When you focus your lens on an object and shoot, you will probably neglect everything outside the frame of the picture.

When you are observing experiences or the behavior of others, it is good to remember this. People can’t get to know each other just by taking a glance at each other, or even by focusing on one aspect of a person just met. To take in enough information to form good judgments, you must shift your mental focus, considering different facets of a situation or another person.

When you are trying to change your emotional state or to make up your mind to act on a problem, your mental focus control needs to be exclusive, shutting out what’s unwanted or unneeded at that moment. When you are trying to expand your understanding or knowledge, your mental focus needs to be inclusive, shifting to take in lots of new information.

To strengthen your Mental Focus Control, use some of the techniques I talked about in Chapters 4 and 7. Look for the positive side in whatever is frustrating you. Take the higher view. Or try thinking about your problem or dilemma from another angle, not positive or negative so much as simply different.

Here’s an exercise to try that will show you exactly how the mind works in creating mental focus. Look around the room, making a special point to notice all the objects that are blue.

Now close your eyes and recall all the objects you can that are red and what their shapes are. If you are like most people, you will not know where all the red objects are or be able to describe their shapes. The experiment tells us that if we choose to pay attention to blue, we will neglect much of the appearance of other colors.
Ask yourself encouraging questions. Don’t say, “Why me?” or “Where did I go wrong?” Try, “What valuable insight will come to me from this experience?” or “What should I do to reach an agreement?” Positive questions trigger positive responses in your brain and you will feel more confident and resourceful.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Fear of failure, fear of success and fear of rejection can result in a lack of confidence. An athlete may want to win a competition and enjoy the prestige that goes along with it. But if he fears failure, he may not even try.

Or perhaps he fears that if he does win the medal, he will be expected to endure even more intense training, more competitions and increased pressures. In this case, he fears success, which can be just as debilitating.

An employee may desire a good relationship with his manager. But he may also fear that too much close contact will result in being asked to do extra work.

Fearing rejection, a salesperson may procrastinate in making necessary phone calls because she’s afraid customers will turn her down. Or what about the lovesick individual who cannot manage to express passionate feelings for fear of rejection?

These fears usually have their sources in the following:

- Lack of clarity and consistency of goals. When goals are unclear, conflicts among them are inevitable. This results in uncertainty, indecisiveness, worry and fear. For example, the dual goals of good quality and low price simply may not be possible in some products.
- The dominance of negative circuit patterns regarding success, failure and rejection.

We can combat these by recalling successful experiences. Or, we can put ourselves in the position of never failing by seeing that gaining experience constitutes success: “I cannot fail unless I don’t learn anything from this situation.”

We can redefine success to make it easier: “If I can learn something, or if I’m still trying, I’m successful.” One reason we are afraid to take risks is that we define success too stringently.
The Sun's Lesson

Only one woman ruled as an empress in Chinese history. Her name was Wu Zer-Tian. During her reign, she developed many worthy ministers and raised her son to succeed her. But when she grew old, the ministers and her son could not wait for the throne and they conspired to overthrow her.

When the coup was successful and she was removed from power, the aged empress languished in her chamber. All day and night Wu Zer-Tian said to herself, "These are the people I helped. Why did they do this to me? What caused this traitorous behavior? Why are they so ungrateful?" She was consumed by this.

She was so miserable that she could not rest enough even to die. Finally she asked an enlightened monk for a solution.

"Do you see the sun which gives light and heat to everyone equally?" he said. "It doesn't distinguish between good people and bad people, giving more heat and light to the good and less to the bad."

From this lesson, the empress realized it was not her responsibility to judge her son and the ministers or right from wrong. Not even the great sun judges, she said to herself at last. It is not our obligation to judge.

According to legend, she died happily with a smile on her face. Through acceptance, she had come to peace.

The comedian George Burns, then in his 90s, was once asked, "What is your definition of success?" He answered: "To keep on breathing."

You can also redefine rejection. Remind yourself that you are a priceless living entity. Just because one attempt at communication or one activity of yours is rejected by another, it doesn't mean that all of the myriad possibilities that make up your Self have been rejected. Many ways are still open to you to reach your goals.

Become an Observer of Yourself

It's an interesting paradox of human behavior that when something goes wrong in our lives, we often find it perversely pleasurable to dwell on our unhappiness, to chew it over again and again.

This can be a tremendously self-destructive trap that can sap your confidence and limit your growth. What's doubly ironic is that getting out of this situation is amazingly simple.

When you find yourself in this cycle of self-imposed misery, ask yourself why you're unhappy. It doesn't matter what the answer is. Just the process of posing the question lets you step outside your misery and become an observer/analyst, looking at your unhappiness.

Before you asked the question, you were a slave to feelings of unhappiness. With this incredibly easy method, you become an observer and gain a measure of control. You may think this is too easy to be true, that it's all semantics. But I assure you, it works.

On a 3-by-5 card, write down 10 strong and constructive self-suggestions that can empower you to become more powerful, positive, active and confident. Carry the card with you and use it to remind yourself of your potential.
Each of us has a habitual domain that is unique. Organizations of all kinds also have habitual domains, similar to individual domains in the way they can be understood, but, of course, different in some important aspects.

As you have read this book, you have probably begun to see that some elements of the concept of habitual domains appear in descriptions of human thought and behavior in various cultures. It may be expressed in different ways, but the core concept is the same. Each of us has a Self that is uniquely our own, but the Self can be expanded to take in new ideas, new information, new possibilities.

Each of us may develop a picture of our habitual domain, a way to think about it in concrete terms. Earlier, I said it was like a snail's shell, going with the snail everywhere throughout a lifetime. Another person might see the habitual domain as a house with all the hopes, memories, fears, dreams, and experiences of a lifetime serving as the "furniture" of the rooms; a quiet courtyard at the center of the house is a haven for meditation and rest, while beyond the doors the busy street offers a place to go to find new experiences. Someone else might see the habitual domain...
library which collects a large number of books registering a
wealth of experiences, thought and judgments. Some books
are frequently retrieved and used, while others are not.

We may each picture it differently, but my studies and
reflection have led me to see that no matter how each of us
imagines it, the habitual domain really has an anatomy, an
essential structure that can be analyzed. That analysis has
formed the basis for the self-discovery this book has been
designed to lead you toward.

The ideas and operators that may be regarded as memory
and “programs” are like a human “software” for the super-
computer of your brain. This software can be reprogrammed
and upgraded. The collection of ideas and operators is your
habitual domain.

Let’s review briefly to help you get the concept of
habitual domains well within your own habitual domain.
For individuals, the habitual domain is made up of four
elements:

- **Potential domain**: all the ideas and operators that
can potentially be activated in our brain.
- **Actual domain**: the ideas and operators that actually
are being used at one time.
- **Activation probability**: the likelihood that particular
ideas and operators will be activated.
- **Reachable domain**: new ideas and operators generat-
ed by the current or actual domain.

**A Singing Star’s Discovery**

Some years ago a young singer on the eve of a big con-
cert found he could not get the sleep he desperately needed
because of the crying of a child in a nearby hotel room. The
singer expected the child to exhaust itself with the loud bawl-
ing, but instead the cries became louder and continued for
hours.

Fearful that he would be in terrible shape for the next
day’s performance, the singer became extremely annoyed
and agitated. As his frustration mounted, though, an unex-
pected question came to his mind. How, he wondered, could
this child not be tired after crying for so long?

The singer then began listening very carefully and found
that the child actually was crying using a form of deep
breath controlled by his diaphragm. Hence, the baby did not
tire of making the sounds.

The singer decided to try this method, and he began
practicing in earnest. In a relatively short time he had mas-
tered the technique and was a rising star in the opera world.

His name was Luciano Pavarotti.

This story is a lesson in the importance of controlling
one’s actual domain. Had Pavarotti allowed his actual
domain to remain in an anger state because of the child’s
crying, he would have learned nothing and spent his night in
helpless frustration.

Instead he changed his actual domain to view the situa-
tion as a learning experience. The result of that decision is
now celebrated throughout the world of music.

The **core** of your habitual domain is the set of ideas and
operators that are most likely to be activated at any given
moment. These are the important basics of your Self, put in
place by your own talents and interests, your experiences,
your interactions with others (especially parents and teach-
ers when you are very young), and the knowledge base you
have put in place with your studies, travels and conversa-
tions. Thus, the core includes your personal beliefs, your
names and enduring habits.

Every part of your habitual domain can be changed —
ideas, behavior, even your core set of ideas. Some changes,
like adding a happy new experience to your memories, are
easy. Other changes, like giving up a long-held belief or an
ingrained habit, are difficult. But changes are possible because
your brain is a supercomputer that can be continuously pro-
grammed and your human “software” upgraded. Your capacity
to program learning and change is huge, almost unlimited.

From the beginning of human reasoning, people have
understood that the great truths of life are usually not to be
observed directly. Lao Tzu, a famous Chinese philosopher,
said that we can only see Being on its Way by the results of
its passing, as a rabbit leaves its tracks in snow. The Hebrew people described God's voice as the sound of the whirlwind. Native Americans saw the Sky Spirit in the shadow of a flying eagle sweeping across the prairie grass.

A habitual domain is no different, really. It cannot be directly observed, but it can be described, examined, pictured, visualized, understood. It can be seen indirectly in three dimensions:

- Behavior functions, such as goal setting, state evaluation, charge structures, attention allocation. (Chapter 5)
- Concerned events, such as attention allocated to job, family, social interactions and health. (Chapter 6)
- External interactions, such as others within our identification spheres, our living domains, role maps and attitudes. (Chapter 6)

How Our Minds Operate

These three dimensions have vast implications which result from the operations of our minds. For the sake of remembering them, I have summarized them into four hypotheses of the mind.

GOAL SETTING AND STATE EVALUATION

Each one of us has a set of goal functions, and for each goal function we have an ideal state, or an equilibrium point, we want to reach and maintain (this is goal setting). We continuously monitor, consciously or subconsciously, where we are relative to that ideal state (this is state evaluation).

Goal setting and state evaluation are dynamic, interactive and subject to all kinds of forces. These include:

- physiological condition — our health can affect our goal setting.
- self-suggestion — confidence and power depend on what we say to ourselves.
- external information — much of what we do depends
on information that comes to us from outside ourselves.

- **memory** — everything we have learned is part of our behavior and decision making.
- **our capacity to process information** — people have different methods and abilities to use what they learn to solve problems.

**CHARGE STRUCTURE AND ATTENTION ALLOCATION**

Each event in our lives is related to a set of goal functions in our brains. When the event deviates from what we perceive as ideal, the goal functions will produce various levels of charge. All together these charges make up our charge structure, and this can change dynamically. At any given point in time, our attention will be paid to the event that has the most influence on our charge structure, either because it is the most urgent or the most deeply ingrained.

**RELEASING CHARGE**

To release charges, we tend to select the action that leads to the lowest remaining charge. We will never release all charges, even when we are sleeping, because the brain continues actively processing information and ideas. A person is most comfortable and happiest when charges are reduced to a comparatively low level. This can be partly accomplished by using our minds to see the charges that affect us as being positive forces.

**INFORMATION INPUT**

Humans have innate needs to know or to gather external information. Mental focus helps us gather the information we need. Even when some information comes to us randomly, by paying attention we can process it productively. If we do not pay attention to it, the arriving external information will not be processed in our mind.

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**How Our Brains Process Information**

Exactly how our brains process information, handle charges, evaluate circumstances and set goals is still a mystery. But neurophysiology and psychology have provided lots of clues. Four hypotheses sum up the neuro-information processes that affect our habitual domains. I call these hypotheses, because no one completely understands the miracles of the human brain yet.

**CIRCUIT PATTERN HYPOTHESIS**

Thoughts, concepts or ideas are represented by circuit patterns in the brain that are reinforced when the ideas are repeatedly used or rehearsed. The stronger the circuit patterns (the more often used), the more easily the corresponding thoughts are retrieved in our thinking and decision making process.

A good example: You drive the same route home from work so often that if you don't make a conscious decision to change your route, you will find your way home on "auto pilot" while you are really thinking about other things than the direction you are driving.

To apply this hypothesis to your life, think periodically about the experience of your successes. Let these happy events occupy your brain to make you feel good and confident (because success breeds confidence).

**UNLIMITED CAPACITY HYPOTHESIS**

Each normal brain has a practically unlimited capacity for encoding and storing all the thoughts and concepts that its owner will ever need. All evidence points to the fact that the capacity of our brains far exceeds even our ability to imagine that capacity.

To prove your brain's capacity to encode new and different ideas quickly and effectively, try this exercise. Think of a person you are afraid of or are nervous about meeting. In your mind's eye, see that person reduced to one-tenth of his or her size. Do it again. Now the person is less than 1 inch tall. Visualize the tiny person jumping into your palm. You
Challenge your creativity and the flexibility of your habitual domain. Think up five new products you believe people might buy.

could let him change forms or dance etc. Repeat this several times. Then open your eyes. You will find that your fear or nervousness about the meeting has disappeared because the person is no larger than your palm and is subject to your control. Why can you do this? Because you have unlimited capacity to change your mind and what you think.

**EFFICIENT RESTRUCTURING HYPOTHESIS**

Encoded ideas are organized systematically, like data bases, for efficient retrieval and are continuously restructured according to the dictation of our attention. In this way relevant ideas can be efficiently retrieved to release charges.

While computers take time to reprogram, our brains do it instantaneously and constantly. Some of this restructuring goes without our notice; other times we cause it to happen. Here's a quick exercise to show you how this works:

When you are very angry about something, restructure your thinking like this. Take 10 or more deep breaths. Hold the inhaled breath for as long as you can; exhale and keep your lungs empty as long as you can. As you repeat the process you will find you cannot hold in mind whatever it was that was annoying you. The deep breathing is signaling to your brain, "I need oxygen!" Obtaining the oxygen becomes uppermost in your brain's attention as it tries to meet the body's need. At the end of 10 breaths, your mind will most likely be empty of the annoyance. To get it back, you will have to purposely recall it, again restructuring your brain's activity.

**ANALOGY/ASSOCIATION HYPOTHESIS**

When confronted with a new event, the brain first investigates its features and attributes to establish a relationship to things the brain already knows. Once the relationship is established, the whole of past knowledge is brought to bear on understanding the new event.

The positive aspect of this brain scan is the value of accumulated experience. If our brains did not work this way, we would never amass enough knowledge to be competent. The negative aspect is that we can bring baggage or old ideas to new experiences. If we aren't careful, we can reject experiences and knowledge that would benefit us because we are resting on old information.

Almost all human behavior can be explained by these two sets of hypotheses (how our mind operates and how our brain processes information), including the behavior tendencies described in Chapter 3.

**Properties Of Habitual Domains**

Once we have grasped how the brain works to create a habitual domain, and how it is structured, we can see its properties. Understanding these properties can help us understand some of the most mystifying aspects of our own thoughts and behavior. Then we can move toward positive change and releasing our potential.

Within a person's habitual domain are usually four pairs of contrasting and paradoxical properties.

**SIMPLICITY / COMPLEXITY**

If you are old enough to read this, you already have an untold number of strong and useful circuit patterns in your brain. You are capable of making a great many judgments. For example, if you see someone crying, you may reasonably assume that they are sad. If they are laughing, it means they are happy, or at least amused. These patterns are so much a part of you that they seem simple. But every simple pattern is really the surface of complex understanding or knowledge. Superficially, the whole concept of habitual domain may seem all too simple and obvious. But if you oversimplify it, you will lose your curiosity and will to explore, and thus will never really discover what wonders it contains.

Judging the message of habitual domain, or dismissing it as nothing new, will close your mind. And a closed mind will pay no attention, let alone make new discoveries.

"Simplifying" makes it easier for us to cope with daily problems; "complexifying" makes us appreciate the uniqueness and marvel of each HD. Therefore, let us properly embrace the simplicity and treasure the complexity of HD.
Why? Consider that a newly wedded couple usually find each other new, exciting and attractive. But after a period of time, being together becomes monotonous. After one or two years the desire to know one another and the interest in each other is lowered because of oversimplification and the feeling that nothing new is happening.

Couples hoping to overcome this difficulty must open their minds to discovering new things about one another. Since there are no two identical individuals or habitual domains, there is plenty to learn even about someone with whom we are intimate. And by learning more about another person, we are expanding our own habitual domain.

In fact, there is no way you could ever completely understand your spouse's habitual domain. That means there will always be a sense of mystery about that person, and something new to discover.

STABILITY/DYNAMICS

On one hand, a *stable* habitual domain represents maturity and experience. On the other, it can mean rigid, fixed and unchanging thought patterns which stifle mental growth.

The word *dynamic* means “changing with time.” Habitual domain, especially the actual domain, is dynamic. At any one time, a variety of ideas and operators might be combining in our actual domain. But unless we encounter extraordinary circumstances and previously unexperienced events, it’s difficult to change or expand our potential domain, which is the total of all our existing ideas and operators. To do that we must encounter something new.

Not all of us can travel to exotic places or have intimate encounters with great minds. But reading good books, tackling new projects, even talking with new people are examples of effective ways of expanding your potential domain.

Suspending our dependence on our actual domain and allowing possibilities in is important to every individual. But companies can also benefit from the willingness to change.

By the mid-1960s, Universal Studios was the biggest movie corporation in the United States. About that time, one of the company's vice presidents suggested that the firm invest in Florida, where the costs of both real estate and wages were
lower. But this represented a major break with tradition. Other company officials noted that Universal was tops in the industry and was in excellent financial condition. Their attitude was, “Why should we change when everything is fine?”

The proposal was shelved.

Shortly afterward, the Walt Disney Company discovered the advantages of Florida and made a huge investment there. Walt Disney World is now the world’s number one tourist attraction.

Today Disney is a much bigger company than Universal. Because of Universal’s misplaced belief in its position and stability, it was surpassed by its competitor.

CONSISTENCY/ CONTRARINESS

Consistency is very reassuring. It makes us feel comfortable and peaceful. But it is Contrariness that pushes us to expand our habitual domains.

For example, contradiction emerges when a company tries to cut production costs while improving product quality. Conventional wisdom holds that better quality requires more time and higher capital investment, which would seem to be contrary to lowering costs.

This contradiction presents a challenge and, perhaps, will drive us to discover new processes to resolve it. Henry Ford revolutionized the automobile business by introducing techniques of mass production and standardization that made autos affordable to most individuals while generating substantial profits.

A good leader must understand the need for contrariness and seize the opportunity when it occurs. An individual needs the courage to do the same. Facing the contradictions that experience offers us takes determination and courage, but each contradiction represents a chance for breaking through constraining limits.

ABSORPTION/REJECTION OF EXTERNAL INFORMATION

It’s considerably more trouble to absorb new information and ideas than to reject them. Acceptance means our brain has to encode and restructure our existing memory so that the
new information can be integrated into our past experiences. This is a time-consuming and laborious task. Only those individuals willing to open their minds and expand their habitual domains will initiate this complicated effort.

Also remember that it is best not to rush to judgment. Making a judgment usually means coming to a conclusion; thereafter we are likely to close our minds to any new observations or information.

"Other people may be right" is a valuable concept. If you accept it, your mind will always be open and willing to question. You won't be reluctant to ask the questions that offer you the potential to learn from others.

Examining the anatomy of your habitual domain is, like studying human physical anatomy, enormously fascinating. But it is not the study itself that is the goal, rather the use that can be made of it. Understanding our physical anatomy gives us ways to be healthier and more physically capable. Understanding the anatomy of our habitual domain gives us ways to be more capable in everything we do and become.

Understanding is ideal. But even without full understanding, we can control our behavior and thought processes to allow growth and positive change.

Learning the anatomy of your habitual domain is just a tool, like so much of the rest of this book. Its value is to get you where you deserve to go — toward the full realization of yourself. That realization can be found as you strive toward the Ideal Habitual Domain. This ideal calls to all of us, and in our individual ways all of us can reach it in some measure.

Absorption of external information takes time and effort and can expand our HD, while rejection of that insulates us from the increasing interference of the external world. Therefore, let us properly embrace the absorption and treasure the rejection.

Children absorb external information quickly. As we grow older, the process is more laborious.
Chapter 10
Reaching Toward the
Ideal Habitual Domain

Why make the commitment to understand and expand your own habitual domain? Will it make you rich? Happy? Wise? Successful? Yes, it can.
If you're determined to earn your first million by a certain age or to become president of your company, working on your habitual domain will help get you there—or as close as you personally can be. Understanding the power of habitual domains can help you achieve any goal you set.
But more importantly, being aware of your habitual domain will provide something enormously valuable—and more difficult to gain than wealth for many people: a sense of balance in your life.

We've all heard stories of business and professional people, entertainers and others who fought furiously to reach a particular goal, but found once they had achieved it that they were somehow dissatisfied. For all their accomplishments, they felt oddly incomplete.

A person who truly understands his or her habitual domain will certainly be capable of achieving fame, fortune and power. If those are the goals you set for yourself, knowing your habitual domain will be part of your success in reaching them.

But you will also maintain a balance, a sense of stability...
Create the ideal job and the ideal state of the company in which you would like to work. How is it different from your present job? How will you implement changes to bring your present work life closer to your ideal?

An Unchanging Domain

In any situation a number of outcomes could possibly occur, but only one outcome actually does occur.

Similarly, our habitual domain can be classified into our Potential Domain (possible outcomes) and Actual Domain (actual outcome). The former is the collection of all ideas and operators that can potentially occur, the latter is those ideas and operators that actually become activated in our minds.

If you have no knowledge of, say, microbiology, you have no circuit patterns representing ideas about microbiology. Thus, microbiology is not part of your potential domain. But as soon as you read a book or article dealing with microbiology, or see a TV documentary on the subject, then you absorb that information into your potential domain. Even if you cannot consciously remember it, it remains there in your brain (at least it does until the corresponding circuit patterns are wiped out because too many neurons have died).

When you can consciously draw upon that information it becomes part of your actual domain at that moment.

Of course, the potential and actual domains are always in flux, with ideas and operators shifting back and forth from one to the other. Neither is permanent and unchanging.

The only unchanging domain would be an ideal habitual domain. The ideal habitual domain represents an enormous sphere of awareness and understanding. To possess it means one has achieved a nearly godlike state.

Those who possess an ideal habitual domain have potential domains that can identify with all people and all living things, that can understand all events and problems. Their actual domains are extremely liquid and flexible, with the power to solve any problems instantaneously.

Such an ideal habitual domain would release our individual frustrations and those of others. It represents thinking and behavior of an extraordinarily vital, powerful and creative nature. A person with this habitual domain would be welcome everywhere — free from hatred, anger, jealousy, sorrow, frustration and depression.

No doubt, very few human beings have accomplished this. Many sages in the East and West may have had HDs close to this ideal. Persons with a particular religious commitment might say that Jesus or Buddha or Mohammed were human examples of ideal HDs, and the God you worship, no matter what your religion, must have an ideal HD. Perhaps no one else has come close.

Nonetheless, it is the goal toward which we should be striving. Simply the effort of striving to reach an ideal habitual domain can enormously enrich and expand our potential and actual habitual domains. Almost all religious thought is based on this principle of reaching toward a perfection perhaps mortally unattainable.

After years of thought on the subject, I’ve come up with a list of features that would be enjoyed by the ideal habitual domain.

The Potential Domain of the ideal habitual domain must be broad enough to contain all the concepts allowing us to comprehend everything in the universe and the universe itself.

An ideal habitual domain’s Actual Domain must be fluid, flexible, spontaneous, peaceful and potent. It’s always ready to respond instantly, spontaneously and powerfully to help us solve our problems.

I realize that this goal is well out of our reach. If we spent every moment of every day poring over books in a library we couldn’t hope to absorb that much information in a lifetime.

The idea is to do what we can with the time we’ve got.

The ideal habitual domain must be deep, with concentration and focus. It allows us to understand the details and depth of every concept. It also must be integrated so that concepts are systematically organized.

It must have a high degree of self-containment, already
Seven Operators

EMPOWERMENT (GOAL SETTING)

1. Self-Image:
   You are a unique creation and the transformation of the divine, so am I. Respect is both.

2. Self-empowering:
   Clear and specific goals produce the energy for your life; be committed to learning and doing with confidence.

MEANING (STATE EVALUATIONS)

1. Events:
   In everything that comes to your life, there are reasons. One of the main reasons is to help you grow and develop. Enjoy and learn from your experiences.

2. Works:
   Every task is part of your mission; your work can bring happiness. Bring enthusiasm and trust to your mission.

ATTITUDE

Living domains:
   Lead the domain; take responsibility for what occurs in it.

Failure:
   One must be grateful for every experience; contribute to.

TIME

Enjoy life; love life. The more you make contributions, the more you enjoy life. The more you contribute, the more you love life. The more love, the more life.

holding all the concepts and knowledge needed, so that it can detach itself from external influences as seen fit.

Finally, it must be simple.

Now I imagine you are really incredulous. How can all this be simple?

But an ideal habitual domain would be simple. Like light and air, the ideal habitual domain exists simply, peacefully and inconspicuously.

An ideal habitual domain is absorbing. It absorbs and digests all arriving ideas and concepts, and it absorbs and releases all incoming charges and frustrations.

It's non-judgmental. It holds no prejudice and does not allow itself to judge right or wrong on arriving events. It may predict the outcome of such events, but that's a different matter than judging them.

An ideal habitual domain is free and detached from the desires and wishes of the self. By forgetting the self, it thinks without predetermined conclusions and the restriction of assumptions.

It's rich. It can identify with and appreciate anything that exists in the world and the universe.

And finally, the ideal habitual domain loves. No ideal habitual domain can be without love. The perfect habitual domain has room within it to love all human beings and, for that matter, all the living things in the universe.

The Elusive Goal

Although each of us has unlimited capacity, many events continuously limit us, preventing us from reaching an ideal habitual domain. The need humans feel to reach an ideal is reflected in the windows of all the centuries of human thought, handed down in proverbs, texts, schools, common sense and great systems of belief such as Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and Taoism. In developing the concepts of Habitual Domains, I have identified seven self-perpetuating operators that help us strive toward an ideal habitual domain.
Seven Self-Perpetuating Operators

We've already seen the tools represented by eight expansion methods (Chapter 7), nine principles for deep knowledge (Chapter 4), and letting our brain and behavior work for us (Chapter 8). Now we turn to the seven self-perpetuating operators, methods, principles and ideas that can change our minds in positive ways.

In the discussion that follows, keep in mind that you should not judge whether the operators as described are right or wrong. Indeed, you may find yourself philosophically disagreeing with the operators as stated.

Don't let that dissuade you from taking them seriously.

Just as the plus and minus operators in mathematics help us to arrive at another set of numbers, the following operators, the circuit patterns, are not right or wrong, but they can help us to reach another set of ideas or concepts.

These operators are self-perpetuating because once they are implanted in your habitual domain and used they will continuously grow and help you expand and enrich your habitual domain toward the ideal. Of all the ideas I have shared in this book, these are the most important.

1. Everyone is a priceless living entity. We all are unique creations who carry the spark of the divine.

If you're an atheist or an agnostic you're probably readying a protest. Even if you regard yourself as a religious person, you may be uncomfortable with that statement.

First, try to overcome the circuit patterns that may be set off by the use of words like “divine.” Don’t pass judgment on these operators. Let them go into your mind and feel the possibilities.

Consider that in Alcoholics Anonymous recovering substance abusers are asked to call upon a “higher power” in their battle against addiction. This does not mean that every AA member is religious.

But within the structure of AA, members find that whether they believe in God or not, they must at some point admit that on their own they have been powerless to control their addictive behavior. Thus they are asked to rely on a “higher power” — whether you call it God, the superego, dedication to family or whatever — to provide strength and hope.

That’s the same attitude to assume in this discussion of operators.

Let’s talk for a moment about the idea that everyone is a priceless living entity. We don’t have to talk in religious terms. We can discuss it in business terms:

Suppose you were offered $1 million for your eyes. Would you take it?

What if someone wanted to buy your limbs? Or your heart or kidneys? What would they be worth to you?

Of course you’d never sell vital parts of your own body. They are priceless to you.

You are priceless. So is everybody else.

Once this idea of the pricelessness of yourself and every other living person becomes such a strong circuit pattern as to be a core element of your belief system, it will be the source of tremendous power.

The motivational speaker Zig Ziglar asks: If you have a race horse worth $1 million, would you let it drink alcohol, smoke, stay awake all night or be poisoned by drugs?

Isn’t your priceless body worth the care you’d lavish on a race horse?

It’s not just our bodies that require nurturing. Our minds (and souls, if you will) require it as well. In fact, we must be wary of establishing destructive circuit patterns.

If reading the biography of a great person can result in our incorporating some of that person’s habitual domain into our own, then one must assume that hours devoted to violent entertainments, destructive gossip or pornography will result in those negative forces forming circuit patterns as well.

Ziglar notes that if someone dumped garbage in our living rooms we’d be furious, but that daily we unwittingly pollute our minds with intellectual garbage. Do you monitor the food for thought you incorporate into your habitual domain?

Do you allow time in each day to clean the garbage out of your mind with prayer or meditation or contemplation of nature and beauty so that your mind can grow in tranquillity?

Once this operator has been established in your habitual
Develop a plan to expand your HD in one of your most prejudiced areas. Ask someone else for an opinion you have pre-judged as invalid and note his or her response to your asking. Use the solicited opinion in your plan and document a positive change. Note how this changes your relationship with that person.

domain, you'll find your attitude toward others will go through a profound change.

If we're all sparks of the divine (I often say that we are all "transformed from God or Buddha"), then on a very basic level we all are equals. Because of that awareness, I try to be polite and humble to others, to listen to their ideas and problems.

Personally, I believe that God or Buddha may sometimes be testing me through others. When a person aggravates or challenges me, I try to respond as if I were being tested in some ultimate way.

But even if you do not share my attitude, there are very pragmatic reasons for treating others well. If you're good to them, they will reciprocate and be good to you. This can lead to lives of joy and fortune for all.

In my own experience I've found this operator reaps huge benefits. For example, I've won teaching awards, which might seem unlikely given that my classes are in quantitative methods (not exactly a favorite of students) and I speak with a pronounced accent as a result of a childhood spent in Taiwan.

But I try to treat my students well, and they respond — both by giving me their support and friendship and by learning.

It's not always easy. After every exam I'll have a few students who storm into my office because they received poor grades. The exam was unfair, they'll usually say.

In most instances it's all too apparent why these students got poor marks — they didn't do the work. And I'm tempted to respond in a brusque and impatient manner.

But I quickly remind myself that these unhappy students also are "transformations of God or Buddha," and that I must be polite.

Once this operator is activated (meaning that it enters my actual domain), I become patient and feel that even this combative encounter holds the possibility for encouraging the student both to look honestly at his or her performance and to pump up enthusiasm for learning in the future.

This operator works not only for personal development but also for the development of organizational culture. It can make you well liked by your colleagues. If everyone in your organization could subscribe to this operator, how wonderful would be your work environment. Eventually this would lead to higher productivity, profitability and satisfaction.

2. Clear, specific and challenging goals produce energy for our lives. I am totally committed to doing and learning with confidence. This is the only way I can reach the goals.

Without goals, we are adrift. We have no control over our destinies. Instead we are blown about by the wind, or carried wherever the current runs.

Imagine, though, that you are rowing a boat across an ocean strait. If you have a clear destination and you know how far you are from it, then the charge of reaching your goal can be transformed into drive. You will continuously row until you reach your goal. You won't lose your confidence, give up or drift. But if you have no idea where the shore may be, keeping on may become impossible.

Goals energize us. They fill us with vitality. But to be effective they must be:

- Clear
- Specific
- Measurable
- Reachable
- Challenging

This last point is important, since it's human nature to take it easy on ourselves. If your goals are too low, the generated charge and drive won't be significant. Even when you reach such a goal, you may not feel much satisfaction.

Specific goals are vital because in the rush of daily events we may find ourselves being attracted to randomly arriving goals and desires. We may even be controlled by them if we lack a clear focus on just what it is we hope to accomplish.

But with a clear, specific and challenging goal, we create a high level of charge that focuses our efforts. We won't be distracted by randomly arriving events.

Developing Confidence

Let's talk about confidence. Without it, you may abandon your goals. You'll be fearful and miserable. With it, you can
accomplish things you never thought possible. Here are five ways to increase your confidence:

- Keep learning. As you increase your abilities and knowledge, your confidence will grow as well.
- Develop a good working attitude. Instead of throwing in the towel at the first sign of difficulty, develop your perseverance and persistence.
- Develop as many good relationships with as many good people as you can. It's simple networking — you'll be creating more sources and channels for useful information, not to mention building a support system of friends and colleagues who can help you get through tough times.
- Break down your goals into small, measurable and achievable subgoals. Finish each of these subgoals one by one. At each step in the process you will increase your confidence and abilities. You may even want to celebrate these milestone victories to enhance your confidence.
- Do it. Don't wait until you know all the facts. You'll never know all the facts.

The fact is that most challenging problems, by definition, lie outside our existing domain of knowledge. That's why they pose a challenge.

Since we're dealing at least in part with unknowns, we cannot know ahead of time everything we might encounter on the journey to our goal. But if we're adequately armed with knowledge, confidence and a general blueprint of action, then we can begin to execute it.

Yes, this involves risk. But without taking risks we cannot explore our potential. Taking risks is an essential part of exploring and expanding our domains. After all, we learn even from our failures. Through the confidence we have gained by learning and doing, the charge generated by taking risk can be transformed into drive.

3. There are reasons for everything that occurs. One major reason is to help us grow and develop.

Because I carry the divine spark (since I am transformed...
from God or Buddha), everything that happens to me has a reason: i.e., to help me grow and mature.

Therefore I must pay close attention to the events in my life. I must be concerned and look for understanding.

When firmly established, this circuit pattern encourages us to take advantage of the events in our lives, to use them to expand our habitual domains.

Now I fully realize that many readers may believe that the world operates in a random fashion, that in fact things happen for no apparent reason. Look at events from your individual perspective. What is the sense that can be made in your life of an experience or occurrence? The "reason" something occurs may not be a sweeping cosmic rationale, but something that will differ from person to person.

Remember, you don't have to fully agree with each of these operators, only give them a chance.

Let's talk for a moment about failure. Nobody likes it, but everybody experiences it.

As commonly defined, failure is a situation in which less than satisfying events have occurred to affect our performance and produce an outcome less than expected. This narrow definition is dangerous. The very thought of failure can bring on depression and erode our confidence. But it needn't be the case. We can avoid these feelings if we're able to turn failure into a success — even a limited success.

Scientists working on research say they may learn nearly as much from an experiment that doesn't work as they do from one that does. If nothing else, they have eliminated one possible solution, freeing themselves to pursue others.

An unsatisfactory outcome should be regarded simply as a different type of meaningful experience. If you overreact to frustration and fear, your actual domain may be occupied by those negative emotions.

Don't let that happen. Every less-than-desirable event has some special meaning, some important lesson, some seed for success. In such a situation, don't give in to suffering; ask yourself what you can learn from the experience. Write it down. The very act of writing will make it positive and it will become a more permanent part of your habitual domain.

4. Every task is part of my life's mission. I have the enthusiasm and confidence to accomplish this mission.

Some people discover their mission in life and are able to find work that provides the necessary support for them and their families as well as for their mission. This is a wonderful state to be in, when work seems simply to be part of a person's reason for being, and achievements in work bring not only monetary gain but great spiritual or emotional rewards.

Not everyone is so fortunate. Sometimes understanding our life's mission takes many years. Sometimes we see the goal and must work toward it through setbacks and challenges. Sometimes the work is very hard and even if we see it as part of a mission, the hardship itself is daunting.

Nonetheless, all the work we do is important. In fact, everything we do matters. Basically, there is no such thing as an unimportant task. We must regard every task as important to our lives. Whatever we are doing at a given moment is occupying 100 percent of our lives at that time. We must learn to say, "All my life is being given right now to what I am doing. I must do this as though it were worth taking up my life."

Once this operator has taken root in your habitual domain, you will find that it flowers in very positive ways:

- You'll approach each job with a total dedication of mind and effort.
- You'll experience feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction. This, of course, further builds up your confidence.
- Your abilities will become apparent to others. This is gratifying, but more is at stake than having your ego stroked. Others will respect you for your efforts and will rely on you. This, in turn, will increase your opportunities to help others solve their problems. By doing that, you will be offered more opportunity, simultaneously serving your own goals as you build up more skills, knowledge and confidence.

Whatever tasks engage most of your attention — employment, creating art or music, studies, building a company, sustaining a home and raising children, or some combination of these — comprise a major part of your habitual domain. All

Most people will choose goals within their habitual domains. Imagine a situation where you are forced to choose a goal outside your domain. How could it help you?
these tasks can be made more manageable and more meaningful by applying the concepts you have learned in this book.

But the most important thing to remember is that your "work" is your life. Living a good life — a life that fulfills your potential and shares it with society — is your primary occupation, and it deserves your very best. If the tasks that engage you right now are not the ones you really want to do over time, then set about to change them. Even while you are working toward change, however, it is important to apply your very best efforts to what is at hand.

Remember, what you are doing in any given moment is your life. You deserve that it be done superbly.

Most people want to find enjoyable work, but they forget that the joy is here and now by changing the meaning of the work or actual domain. Say "I want to enjoy it" for the task you dislike. Your brain will restructure to make it enjoyable, or at least less dislikable (please review chapter 8).

5. I am the owner of my living domain. I take responsibility for everything that happens in it.

We are the masters of the domains wherein we live, act and connect with the outside world. Therefore, we must take responsibility — that is, agree to be a positive force — in every thing within our world. We cannot simply let things happen around us and expect to succeed at reaching our own potential.

At a fundamental level, we all know this. The Nike company has had such success with its slogan “Just Do It” because at some level we all know we must act if we are to change for the better.

When this circuit pattern or belief becomes strong, it will push you on to a keener understanding of your habitual domain. You’ll be willing to take the initiative to be your best self.

Taking responsibility is a sign of maturity. Individuals unwilling to take charge of events and be responsible for their actions generally have closed minds. Their habitual domains lack flexibility and are difficult to expand.

In my teaching career I’ve identified basically two types of student. The first actively participates and is willing to take charge. The second tries to steer clear of social or extracurric-
ular activities and avoids responsibility whenever possible.

The first student learns through his or her experiences and will establish beneficial relations with others; the second often is isolated and has little opportunity to learn about and understand his fellow humans. These two types of approach are not limited to university students.

The implications of this in a business setting are obvious. A manager who is unwilling to take charge and be responsible for his subordinates will find that those subordinates will not commit themselves completely to their work. This initiates a vicious circle.

If an employee tries to avoid responsibility, a boss will be reluctant to assign challenging tasks. Denied the chance to excel and to perform, such an employee will find advancement opportunities extremely limited.

6. Be appreciative and grateful, and don't forget to give back to society. This world is full of beautiful living things, scenery and events. At a simple level, we must never fail to appreciate the world around us that reminds us every day how precious life is.

Appreciation, gratification and making contributions are all circuit patterns, modes of behavior which can be cultivated until they become second nature.

They benefit us first, because such circuit patterns make us feel good. But they also benefit others. Through reciprocation, by making a contribution and giving back some of what we have gained we will assure that our circuit patterns create an upward spiral of joy and satisfaction that affects not only ourselves but those around us.

Do you think that sounds too good to be true? It works. The sharp rise of volunteering in America is due to the fact that people receive immeasurable satisfaction from helping others.

On a simple level, when you receive compliments, make sure you reciprocate to show your appreciation. It is important to say "Thank you."

When others complain about something you've done, your first response may be resentment. Don't fall into that trap. As hard as it may be, try to appreciate an opportunity to improve yourself. View their criticism as a form of encouragement. Thank them for sharing their views.

Using the tools you've learned, evaluate the HDs of five clients, competitors, contacts and colleagues. Evaluate the HDs of five family members, friends and fellow committee or club members.
Moving beyond personal relationships, I believe it is imperative that those of us who have benefited from society give something back.

Those of us with money can give money. Those of us with skills and knowledge can contribute those. The important thing is to share what we have gained.

Our remaining lifetime is our most valuable asset. I want to enjoy it 100 percent and make a 100 percent contribution to society in each moment of my remaining life.

Time is ticking continuously. When the time comes, we all return to the Great Nature, no matter how valuable your body and life are now. Without life, our body becomes useless. Therefore, our remaining lifetime is our most valuable asset. There are two notorious ways of wasting time. One is to regret, resent or feel guilty over something we've done or have failed to do.

"If I'd done things differently, I wouldn't be suffering today." Such regrets only waste precious time, depress us and rob us of confidence, leaving us unable to enjoy our lives fully.

Another time-waster is worrying about the future and the accompanying hesitation. Worry is often the result of a fear of taking risks. We're afraid of making the wrong decision.

Trouble is, challenges usually are not all that clear at the very beginning. Uncertainty and the unknown have a tendency to unfold gradually. We learn by doing. If you wait until you have all the facts, it may be too late to do anything.

Some of us go through life unwilling to risk anything. We end up doing little. We might feel safe in our very limited domain, but we're not going to accomplish very much. Put aside worry. You likely will extend your life. In any case, the life that remains will be more meaningful.

When you say to yourself that you want to enjoy your lifetime here and now and make a 100 percent contribution to society in each moment of your remaining life, your brain will restructure your circuit patterns, allowing you more likelihood to do so. Your life and habitual domain will consequently be expanded and enriched. Enjoy your life and make your contributions here and now.