



VIDEO #2 - SENSES

A Quick Recap

The only thing that's stopping you being carefree and successful - whatever that means to you, on your terms (we're going to delve into this in detail in Video #3) - is your own thoughts. This is seriously great news - if you're the problem, you you're also the solution. If (or, in fact, when) you manage your own state of mind (by the way, that's not the same as managing your thoughts), you can change every single thing about your life. This starts with stress. You now know that stress is a choice - albeit a preprogrammed patterned automated choice. In this video, you're going to learn how to choose something entirely different. And, with the downloadable mental exercise, you're going to start exercising this choice.

Before We Go Any Further

I know all about pressure and the stress that it can cause. For starters, I work for myself (have done since February 1996) - something most anyone with a salary thinks should be stressful. I've got three grown-up children (not 100% sure they're grown up!!) who we've educated to Masters Level... if we (Lisa and I) were that way inclined, we've had loads of opportunities to suffer from stress!

And, then, there's my previous life - bear with me, there's a point to this!

In 1990 I landed the job of turning round a failing bank - I knew lots about finance, tax and insurance but nothing about banking: I was a completely fresh set of eyes. I regularly took the leadership team off for two- or three-day workshops, where all the adults in the room would agree to do new things, only for them all to go back to base... and do exactly the same stuff that had got the bank into difficulties in the first place. I genuinely thought there was something wrong with them and, consequently, went looking for help. I tried a few management schools and institutes, a couple of top universities and some training organisations... and ended up finding myself half-way up the side of a mountain in the Swiss Alps with a semi-retired psychologist. This is when I discovered that, actually, there's something wrong with all of us (when we're operating through the normal, patterned, preprogrammed repetitive thinking that is designed to enable us make it through the day). This is where my journey began.

I also understood something even more important. I was living life in the "fast lane" - I was the youngest General Manager of a bank in Europe at the time... but I was experiencing all the normal pressure and stress that goes with it. Now I knew I could have a completely different experience of life and, over the next couple of years I realised that I could offer this alternative to others too. That's why we're talking!

And, as a complete aside, it's no harm noting that the bank became one of the top ten most profitable banks in Europe over the following couple of years!

Coming to Your Senses

We met Warren in Video #1. He talked about taking two minutes to clear his mind and focus. Warren was referring to mental exercising - what the University of Massachusetts Medical School terms "coming to your senses". At this point - and we'll come back to it later in these sessions - Warren starts his day (pretty much every day) with a little mental training... and a little mental training goes a long, long way.

If you recall from our first video, moment-to-moment we take the raw data that our senses feed us appraise that data using our preprogrammed patterned repetitive thought processes to "make sense" of what's going on. In fact, because everything is filtered through our thoughts, we don't make sense of what's going on, we make nonsense of it and, as a result of our automatic mind, make things even worse by reacting to what we think is going on.

I've already said that your life is the result of how you see it and how you see it is the result of what you're thinking... the foregoing is how this works in practice (you'll remember from our first video that this process is known as cognitive appraisal).

You'll find that there's a downloadable mental exercise accompanying this video - it's an MP3 file that you can download and use anywhere and everywhere to get in closer contact with real reality. Most importantly, for now, I would suggest that you start your day with this exercise.

You have five senses - you see, feel, hear, smell and taste. An exercise such as this MP3 enables you start paying proper attention to them.

What Happens When You Train Your Mind?

When you practice coming to your senses you begin to experience what is actually happening, rather than what you think is happening. The more you practice this in a quiet space, the more your mind will adjust to perceiving real reality during the course of your ordinary everyday life. This is going to change everything - because, when you change what you perceive, you change what you achieve.

There are a couple of other key implications of doing these mental exercises. The more you develop your ability to pay attention to the reality of the here and now, the less your mind will pay attention to the "noise in your head" - your preprogrammed patterned repetitive everyday thoughts. This process is progressive.

Secondly, regular mental exercising "rewires" the brain... we already talked about how we are "hardwired" - you're wired to be stressed, you're wired to resist change (even the change you want)... and you're wired to not focus on doing what you need to do to achieve the change you want. Mental exercising restructures the brain's key structures ensuring that your brain becomes fit for purpose.

This brings me to where the real action is - because becoming stress-free and carefree is only the beginning. Developing your brain so that it is fit for purpose enables you "set" the purpose you want to achieve - that's where we're heading with our third video. This happens because, as your brain restructures itself, the key components of the subcortical brain interact in a novel way - this happens as a result of regular exercise - you don't have

to do anything extra to make it happen. Let me put it another way, at no point are you going to have to manage your thoughts - your agile brain will do this for you.

Where Mindfulness Come into the Equation?

Many people have misconceptions about mindfulness and that's understandable because what I would call "pure mindfulness", as defined by the University of Massachusetts, is all about paying attention to the present moment. The mental exercise you download with this training session enables you develop that ability.

However, being present in the moment is only half the story. The real action results from what you do with your mindfulness... the purpose to which you set your mindful mind. There is one other point that bears repeating: mindfulness is not some "nice to have", it's a necessity because, if you don't develop your mindfulness, you're going to stay (preprogrammed patterned and repetitively) mindless. Simple as that!

Controlling Your Emotions

So, coming to your senses enables you park your thoughts (that's a good enough explanation for now) and, so to speak, control your emotions. Once you start exercising your mind in this fashion, you're going to be able to choose not to be stressed. And, even though that's just the beginning, that is an enormous step forward for so many people because, free of stress, you can begin to use your mind in a completely different way.