EARLY ACCESS SNEAK PREVIEW
CHAPTER 3

3

Work On Your *Mind*, Not On Your *Life*

"In learning any art the important things to learn are, first, Principles; and second, Method."

– *James Webb Young,* A Technique For Producing Ideas

Planet Of The Horse-Monkeys

Since I promised I wouldn't get too technical, I'm going to start this chapter off with a little fable:

Once upon a time, on a not-so-distant planet, there lived a band of monkeys called the Nam'uh.

The Nam'uh had two characteristics that distinguished them from other monkeys. First, they could speak and think, much as we do. And second, they spent their entire lives – from birth to death – on **horseback**.

Over many generations, the monkey limbs of the Nam'uh gradually withered away, until there was just enough left to let them cling to their horses, and guide them by nudging, kicking, or shifting their weight on the horse's back.

And so, after a time, they came to see their horses as merely *extensions of themselves*: the bodies in which they lived. They did not see themselves as monkeys on horseback, but rather as simply "Nam'uh": a mind and a body.

But the horses (being ever practical creatures themselves) **lacked** this imaginative point of view. They tolerated the monkeys upon their backs

as a simple fact of nature, but largely followed their own impulses, according to their own goals.

Of course, much of the time, the goals of the monkey and the horse were served by the same actions. For example, if a wolf or other dangerous predator appeared, the horse would bolt or kick, and the monkey would be happy to be saved.

Of course, the monkey would still take personal **credit** for the actions of his or her horse, and perhaps even receive praise from other Nam'uh for having such "quick thinking" or "good instincts"!

However, when the goals of a monkey and its horse were *not* the same, and the horse refused a command, or began to wander off on some mission of its own, the monkey would become frustrated. What's more, the other monkeys would chitter disapprovingly, saying that a Nam'uh should have better "self-control" than to be ruled by the passions of the "flesh" (horse).

(At times, this even led to problems in matters of love, since the attraction between monkeys and horses didn't always match up. The monkey might be attracted to one partner, yet find his or her horse unable to perform... or straying towards another!)

Anyway, one day, a traveler from our world came to visit the Nam'uh, to study their strange and delusional ways. And the Nam'uh, for their part, found the traveler equally strange.

You see, while the Nam'uh were expounding their philosophy of self-control, the traveler interrupted to ask how they could call it "self-control", since they really couldn't "control" their horses, only guide, train, or suggest things to them.

The Nam'uh looked confused. "What are these "horses" you speak of?"

"Those things you're riding on," replied the traveler, pointing.

"You mean our bodies?"

"No, I mean the things you're riding on. Look, you don't understand. This whole 'self-control' thing is mixed up. *You are not the same creature as your horse*. None of the credit or blame for your 'actions' truly lies with you, because it's only your horse that **does** anything. Sure, you can *guide* the horse, but that's not the same thing as **controlling** it."

"See, your horse has *different needs* than you do, but it can't directly tell you what they are. So when it won't obey, you need to observe and understand its needs, instead of trying to force it. Yelling and striking might make it go sometimes, but then it'll learn to hate you, and disobey you even more!"

"Wait," said the Nam'uh. "You must be talking about that 'unconscious mind' thing, right?"

The traveler became upset. "No, no! There's nothing 'unconscious' about it. Heck, it's not even a question of *mind*. It's just, well... it's a whole different animal. And you're **riding** on it."

But the Nam'uh did not understand. Their long-standing idea of "mind and body" blinded them to the bigger picture: that they were not one creature, but *two*. And although their monkey-minds might appear to hold the upper hand, they were not *really* the ones in control of "themselves".

———

Of course, "Nam'uh" is just "Human" spelled backwards. And we, in our way, are just as backward as them!

Because like the Nam'uh, we humans are **not** single beings, even though our chattering monkey-minds happily take the credit (and blame) for the actions of our "horses" (our animal brains and bodies).

And, just as the Nam'uh had to control their horses **indirectly** – watching for their reactions, teaching them to respond to commands, and so on – so too do we only control our "selves" in a very *indirect* fashion.

It doesn't *seem* that way to us, of course, any more than it did to the Nam'uh. Just like them, we train with our horses from birth, and so in most things we move as if with **one purpose**. Our horses have even learned to walk and talk and dress themselves, to ride bicycles and drive cars and so on, all so well that they seem like mere extensions of our "will".

And yet, in *other* matters, where they are *not* so well-trained, they may sometimes balk, or fail to respond as desired. And, as eccentric and unpredictable as any **real** horses, our figurative horses can learn to be "spooked" by the craziest and stupidest things... including things they simply haven't done before!

And, as you might expect, our "horses" also develop their own idiosyncratic tastes and impulses, and often indulge them whenever we don't "keep a tight rein" on ourselves!

But despite the impression that you might get from traditional self-help material, the *real* answer to improving yourself is **not** to tighten the reins further, or kick the spurs harder.

It's to become a "horse whisperer".

In other words, someone whose principal method of control is not **force**, but *understanding*.

And to do that, we first need to understand how this whole horse-monkey combination actually *works*.

WHY WILLPOWER FAILS YOU... JUST WHEN YOU NEED IT MOST!

> *Hence to fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.*
>
> – *Sun Tzu,* The Art Of War

Now, traditional "productivity and organization" books assume you already have a well-trained "horse" that goes wherever you tell it to. And traditional self-help books merely suggest that you just train your "horse" with **repetition** (affirmation and visualization), or that you persuade it to co-operate using "carrot and stick" methods (dangling rewards or threatening punishments).

But **all** of these approaches require that you already **at least** have your horse's *trust and attention*, and that it's not bucking, bolting, or otherwise shying away from the thing you're trying to get it to do!

And that's a really bad assumption.

Because if you have any area in your life where you've tried and failed to use willpower – any area where you're naturally *struggling*, in other words – then that is **exactly** what is happening to you.

In other words, your willpower always fails in *precisely* the areas where you need it most!

Because, let's face it: your puny, withered monkey-limbs are **no match** for the horse's strength in the long run.

And I don't just mean that metaphorically! In fact, scientists have already done experiments showing that willpower is really just like a **muscle**. And although it can be strengthened with practice, it also gets *tired* very easily.

After all, have you ever noticed how your best intentions are *much* more likely to go out the window when you're feeling tired? Or for that matter, have you ever noticed how tired you can get by just sitting in a boring meeting and **trying not to scream** at someone?

Even controlling our **emotions** with willpower makes us tired, because when we try to "keep a stiff upper lip", "put a good face on it", or "look on the bright side", we literally use the muscles of our head, neck, and face!

Indeed, I'll bet that when those scientists do some more specific testing, they'll discover that willpower is *literally* a muscle: that is, when we try to "control ourselves", we are actually using one set of muscles to **oppose** another. That's almost certainly why we feel tension and stress when we use willpower, and why it gets so much harder to maintain our willpower when we're tired or hungry.

So if you're a naturally struggling person, this is why you find everything so much more difficult than other people do: you're actually working **harder** than a naturally successful person would, to do the same damn thing!

Because as you saw in the last chapter, the sensation of "effort" is not *only* about physical exertion. After all, you can exert yourself quite heavily in playing a game or sport, and not feel like you're "making an effort"!

No, the sensation of effort is quite literally the physical sensation of you **struggling** against yourself – like two minds sharing a single body.

And so – despite the impression you may have gotten from friends, relatives, bosses, and self-help gurus – putting in "more effort" is **not** a good idea here!

Because the flip side of willpower failing when you need it most, is that whenever someone tells **you** to use willpower, it probably means that **they** didn't *need* any!

Exercise books, after all, are written by people who *already* exercise, and productivity books are written by people who are *already* productive. And if, like you, they'd really *needed* willpower to do those things, there's no way they could've succeeded!

So, when a naturally successful person says they used "willpower" to do something, they don't really mean they **fought** their horse; they really only needed to *nudge* it a bit.

And that's why they usually don't have a lot of sympathy for naturally struggling people, when we have trouble doing what they did. Since it was **easier** for them, it looks like *we're just not trying*.

Even when we're trying much, **much** harder than they are!

After all, we're using twice as much muscle to **fail**, as they do to *succeed*.

And that's because we're trying to use the *monkey*...

To carry the **horse**!

YOU, YOURSELF, AND YOU

> *"I used to think that the brain was the most wonderful organ in my body. Then I realized who was telling me this."*
>
> *– Emo Phillips*

Now, it's perfectly natural to feel as if we are – or at least *should* be! – in direct control of our lives. After all, quite a lot of the time, it even seems to be true!

But in the overall scheme of things, it isn't.

And the reason "you" can't control "yourself", is because "you" and "yourself" are **two different parts of your brain**.

The monkey part ("you"), and the horse part ("yourself").

And the horse was doing just fine, before the monkey showed up on its back!

You see, the monkey part of your brain, is the curious, logical, analytical mind, while the horse part is what you might call an **organic robot**. Rather than wires and logic, it runs on chemicals and emotions.

I call the monkey part "you", and the horse part "yourself", because these names fit with common English phrases like "you need to control yourself" and "you need to ask yourself something". (Our language seems to already reflect the idea that there's more to "you" than meets the eye.)

Now, every animal with a brain above a certain complexity level (especially a social mammal such as a dog, horse, or monkey) has a "yourself" – the organic, emotional robot part. But as far as we know right now, only certain primates (and possibly some birds) have anything resembling a "you" – the analytical, reflective part.

And this means that it's entirely possible for your animal brain and body ("yourself") to survive *without you*. In other words, "yourself" is essential to life, but "you" are not!

It doesn't seem that way, I know. When we look at our minds, our bodies, and our world, it feels like something so good *must* have been made for our benefit. But the very reason it seems so fitting is *precisely* the thing that proves this truth:

The world wasn't made for us to live in. Rather, *we* were made... to live in this world!

You see, our brains and bodies don't exist to serve **us**. *We* exist to serve them.

And the world *seems* right to us, because it's what we were built to help our genes **cope with**!

Because your animal brain and body – "yourself" – is simply an organic **robot**, blindly engineered by evolution to help its genes survive and reproduce in an otherwise-hostile environment.

And thus, every **feeling** we receive in our lives – every form of joy and sorrow – is actually a *control signal* from those very same genes... sent to

instruct and train their **robot**... and its **slave**.

You!

Okay, that's kind of a colorful way to put things. Genes don't think or "want" anything; they're just "code" that describes how to build organic robots (animals and people). Each gene defines how to build one feature of a robot, and robots pass on their genes to their descendants. Thus, any features that help a robot get more descendants, causes the genes for those features to **spread**.

So, it's not so much that genes *want* things, as that only the genes that help (or at least don't hurt) a robot's chances of surviving and reproducing, will get passed on and spread. And as new genes develop or mutate, new features get added to the current "model" (species) of robot.

And the "you" part – the monkey mind – is one of those features that got added on, to improve the existing "yourself" model – not unlike a monkey being grafted on top of a horse!

But "you" weren't added on so you could be the **control** system. Oh no.

Remember, our genes' biological robots were doing *fine* for millions of years before we got here! (Some models, like the cockroach, have been going strong for **hundreds** of millions of years.)

And all of these bio-robot models are more than capable of making *choices* - just look at a dog or a monkey, for goodness' sake.

So, "yourself" is perfectly capable of making decisions on its own, without you... which is why it will sometimes freeze or do its own thing, instead of following your "commands". (Which are really more like **suggestions**, when it comes right down to it!)

So what are we here **for**? If the old model worked okay without a "you", why add this new feature?

Well, one reason is that having a "you" allows your robot to **understand** things.

You see, your bio-robot can automatically detect, record, and respond to patterns in the world around it.

But it doesn't actually *understand* these patterns, and can't *reason*

about them. It has no ability to consider *changing* them, either!

It's sort of like when you try to point something out to a cat, but it just looks at your finger instead: it doesn't "get" that the finger *means* something. In the same way, your brain can notice that certain things are followed by (or come with) other things, but it doesn't know *why*.

So, one of the primary functions "you" perform, is to **question** things. You observe, analyze, reflect, and speculate about the patterns that "yourself" presents you with.

And in effect, you tell the robot what to **pay attention** to.

Now, the bad news is, that's essentially **all** you can do: look for meaning, and direct attention.

But the good news is, it's *enough*!

Because without these new abilities, our robots simply **couldn't** have made the world we live in today, any more than cats or dogs could have. The "robot" brain simply doesn't have a way to "let its attention wander", as we do, nor can it question whether things could actually be *changed*.

But by questioning, and directing attention, "you" can actually combine old ideas to create **new** ones. You can make up "stories" and "rules" to try and *explain* the patterns that "yourself" detects. And you can even **test** your new ideas and explanations, by questioning them.

And that's why, once these spiffy new "add-on" features (i.e., questioning and reflection) were available, the robots that *had* them pretty much took over the world from the ones who *didn't*.

However, these new features are still **really** new. Scientists disagree as to *how* new, exactly, but some estimates range from about 5000 to 50,000 years ago, and one especially controversial hypothesis claims that our current form of consciousness only began about two or three thousand years ago, if that.

Heck, truth be told, a lot of people still don't seem to be *using* these features all that much!

And of the people who **do** use them, fewer still know how to use them *effectively*.

Instead of wasting them on **micromanagement**.

DECISIONS, DECISIONS, DECISIONS

"Man cannot move, think, or speak of his own accord. He is a marionette pulled here and there by invisible strings. If he understands this, he can learn more about himself, and possibly then things may begin to change for him. But if he cannot realize and understand his utter mechanicalness, or if he does not wish to accept it as a fact, he can learn nothing more, and things cannot change for him."

– P.D. Ouspensky, *The Psychology Of Man's Possible Evolution*

How many decisions did you make yesterday?

Let's just think about that for a moment. There are 24 hours in a day, and you probably slept for about 8 of them. That means you were awake for about 16 hours, or 960 minutes.

So you were awake for almost 1000 minutes yesterday. But how many actual **consciously thought-out** choices did you make, during all that time? Can you remember even 10? Take a moment now and try.

But don't count decisions where there was only *one* possible or reasonable choice for you to take, unless it was the first time you had to make that decision (and therefore had to *think* about it). And don't count decisions you made by gut feeling, either. (Like, "I think I'll have the strawberry today.")

Now, add up all the minutes you consciously spent either making decisions, or *thinking* about making them... and that's basically how much time you spent using your "free will" yesterday!

Because for the rest of your 1000 minutes, you just left things up to your "non-conscious processor" – your robot.

Now, the conventional wisdom in self-help is that being more "conscious" is a good thing, while being a robot is "bad", or at least "unenlightened". (Which is just another way of saying "bad"!)

But this is a *serious* mistake. You're not *good* if you make a lot of conscious decisions, and you're not *bad* if you don't.

Because it's not **how** you make the decisions that counts.

It's whether the *results* are any good!

In the past, though, I used to confuse these two things a **lot**. If somebody said, "you need to make better decisions", I would think they meant I needed to *pay more attention* to the decisions I was making.

But what I didn't understand then, is that this is actually a formula for **disaster**!

First of all, you simply can't forcibly pay conscious attention to *everything*, all day long. You just don't have that kind of mental stamina. Zen monks practice for in monasteries for **decades** learning to develop that kind of attention... and rarely succeed!

Yes, you can develop your ability to concentrate and pay conscious attention, but the simple truth is that it doesn't give you very much bang for the buck. It takes a long time to develop the skill, and it's not really necessary anyway.

You see, your conscious mind isn't all that **good** at making decisions in the first place! Indeed, if you talk to a world-class expert in any field – be it business, the arts, or technology – you'll find that their decision-making strategies tend to fall into one of two categories:

Either the constraints of a situation mean there's only *one* possible choice they could make... or else they make the decision with their "gut"!

In other words – they do exactly the same as **you** did yesterday: they let their *robots* do most of the work.

Even a chess grandmaster, carefully considering the outcomes of each possible move, is still letting his or her robot do the majority of the work. So in a standard timed match, a grandmaster can beat a novice to a pulp... even if the novice has the conscious focus and concentration of a Zen master.

That's because a chess novice has to examine a lot of *possible* moves, in order to find any that are good – or at least not *bad*. But a chess grandmaster's brain automatically **filters out** the bad moves. Less-useful moves don't even **occur** to them, because their robot instantly recognizes each possible move as "bad" or "good", and presents only the "good" ones for conscious consideration.

Thus, even if the grandmaster thinks far more slowly or in a less focused way than the novice, the grandmaster can still find moves of similar quality in **less time**, or find **better** moves in the same amount of

time.

In other words, micromanaging every detail is *inefficient*. Once it's properly trained, your robot can do things **better** than you, **faster** than you. Because your robot doesn't have to *think*. It just *knows*. (And acts!)

Not only that, but it makes fewer mistakes than you do!

Because again, unless you have the patience of a true Zen master, can you really pay attention to *every* detail of every decision, *every* time you make one?

But your robot is **excellent** at handling these details. You never forget how to ride a bike or drive a car, or really any other skill. Sure, a skill might get "rusty" if you haven't used it for a long enough time, but it all "comes back to you" very quickly.

And when you were learning to drive, it was difficult precisely *because* you had to use your conscious mind to focus on more than one thing at a time. But now, all those details are handled automatically, so you can pay attention to **where you're going** instead.

So, in your life as a whole, what should we expect will produce better *results*: paying more conscious attention to every little decision, or letting your robot do most of the work?

And what takes up *less* of your precious, limited, and absolutely irreplaceable time?

Think about it.

ROBOT POWERS, ACTIVATE!

> *A man isn't his mind. His mind is the instrument that can* ***do his work and thinking for him*** *if he thinks of it as a possession given to him for that purpose.*
>
> *– David Seabury*

Of all the productivity-related books I own, there is one that I treasure above all others. I re-read it frequently, and almost always learn something *new* from doing so.

It's a rare, out-of-print book, written in 1938 by a psychologist

named David Seabury. And although Dr. Seabury probably never saw a computer in his life, he had a far deeper understanding of how to **use** the mind *like* a computer, than most modern self-help and productivity authors seem to. (In fact, he frequently spoke of constructing "mental machinery" to automate various tasks – something we'll be talking more about later.)

Anyway, in his book, he had a certain **catchphrase** which he repeated over and over, in nearly every chapter. It was only six words long, but it summed up the core of his philosophy, and an essential principle of what I now call The Effortless Way™:

Use your abilities. ***Don't work yourself.***

And it took me a **long** time to truly understand this *deceptively simple* catchphrase.

At first, I didn't really pay it any attention at all, because it didn't really sound like it *meant* anything.

And later, it just sounded like a cryptic way of saying that you shouldn't micro-manage yourself, and instead make use of your unconscious abilities to do things. That is, just as you don't concern yourself with every muscle needed to move your legs when you walk, you should just focus on your overall goals, and let your brain do the rest.

But I still didn't really *get* it, because the classic examples of unconscious skill are nearly always simple, repetitive, **physical** things like walking, riding a bicycle or driving a car. And it hadn't occurred to me at first, that you could also develop automatic **mental** skills. Skills like:

- Motivation,
- Intuition/Creativity,
- Planning,
- Consistency,
- Prioritizing.

...and so on.

In fact, it wasn't until I'd independently *re-invented* some of Seabury's methods, that I finally understood what he was **really** saying:

1. That *every imaginable skill* (no matter how complex or sophisticated) can be made **effortless**,
2. That "expertise" and "effortlessness" are actually the *same thing*, and therefore...
3. Getting rid of "effort" actually *improves your abilities*!

And there is actually no special secret to doing this. In fact, your "robot brain" has already done this for **dozens** of activities... including complex activities like reading and speaking.

Think about it: when you read, who **remembers** what the words mean? Your *robot* does.

And when you talk, who **chooses** what words to use, most of the time? Your *robot* does.

Don't believe me? The next time you're deep in conversation or explaining something to someone, try this little experiment: instead of focusing on what you're trying to say, just *listen* to your voice on the **outside**, actually *saying* it.

And you'll be surprised to discover this spooky little truth: the words you're using aren't coming from **you**. They just show up, courtesy of your robot!

And the words show up because of where your *attention* is focused: i.e., on your goal or intention for what you want to say. And as long as your robot has enough information about what you want to say, it's more than capable of saying it for you. In fact, it does it all the time!

One day, I was planning how I would start off a talk I was about to give to my self-improvement group. I was getting a lot of good ideas about what I wanted to say, and I kept wanting to write them down and memorize them, to make sure I'd say them right.

Then, I realized I was being an **idiot**. After all, if I could come up with plenty of good ways to say things *before* the talk, then surely my brain could be trusted to come up with them *during* the talk!

And since then, giving talks has been a lot less effort. I just put my focus on **what** I want to say, and let my robot take care of the **how**.

You see, your robot is really just a sophisticated database of actions, sorted by sensory input patterns, and prioritized by associated emotions.

When you were young, your robot picked up the sounds your mouth made, and learned the muscle actions that went with the sound patterns.

And it picked up the sound patterns ("words") your parents used, and matched them to the patterns of the things you saw your parents doing, or that you did yourself.

And piece by piece, layer by layer, it automatically accumulated an incredible wealth of knowledge and ability... more than you even *realize* you possess.

But none of that knowledge or ability will **ever** come to light...

Until you learn how to *ask* for it.

HOW TO GET INSIDE YOUR OWN HEAD

So what would it be like if you were a *naturally* successful person, developing and using all of your unconscious abilities to their fullest potential?

If, any time you wanted, you could experience *effortless* motivation to get started...

Have absolute, *crystal clarity* about what you want (not to mention how to **get** it!)...

And summon up the *easy staying power* of a marathon runner, taking each next step **automatically**, without even having to *think* about it?

Take a moment now to imagine what it might be like, if that was **you**, right now. What would you be doing differently? How would you feel?

Don't try to reason it out, or imagine it one piece at a time. Just ask yourself "What would it be like?", and **allow your mind to respond**. You may get images, sounds, and feelings back. Maybe together, maybe one at a time. But just relax and allow your mind to project its *automatic* response to your questions.

This isn't some pointless self-help "exercise". Rather, it's the **single most important skill** you will learn and use throughout this entire book. I call it "relaxed mental inquiry", or RMI for short.

RMI is the primary tool I use for **mind hacking**. It's my secret weapon for both creating powerful positive emotions *and* eliminating negative ones. When used with the right questions, it can not only remove mental blocks and negative beliefs, but also install **new**, positive beliefs, qualities, and habits. (And last, but far from least, it's also the fundamental basis for the creativity and planning skills you'll be learning in Part 3 of this book!)

Now, as with every other skill you'll learn in this book, there is only **one right way** to do RMI... and *many* wrong ways.

And the truth is, you already know how to do RMI the right way. Because you already **do it** every day!

Every time you ask yourself a question or genuinely "wonder" about something... whether it's as trivial as "Should I have the salad or the soup today?" or as profound as "What should I be doing with my life?"...

That's RMI.

You see, I didn't *invent* it, I just gave it a new **name**. And I'm not the first person to do so, either!

That's because RMI is the **fundamental** basis of virtually every self-improvement method there is. Psychologists may call it "observing ego" or "directed visualization", while new-agers and self-help gurus may refer to it as anything from "brainstorming" to "contacting your higher self" to "creative visualization". It's also the basis of all intuition, creativity, and science. (Oh, and let's not forget hypnosis and meditation, either!)

Not too bad for one trivial little skill we're all born with, huh?

But you do have to use it the *right* way, and there are many **wrong** ways to do it.

In fact, here's a list of just *some* of the ways I've personally seen people doing it **wrong**:

- Not relaxing
- Not *waiting* for your mind to answer
- Thinking you already *know* what your mind will answer
- Rejecting, hiding, second-guessing, judging, or reinterpreting what your mind answers
- Trying to logically **figure out** what you *should* answer
- Trying to force a particular answer to come up, or to change what's coming up to fit some pre-existing idea
- *Thinking* about something instead of just waiting. For example:
  - Thinking how bad you are at this stuff
  - Wondering why you're not getting anything
  - Thinking how stupid this is
  - Thinking how stupid you are
  - Criticizing yourself for letting your mind wander
- Believing in whatever comes up as absolute **truth**, instead of simply *observing*
- Trying to "concentrate" by holding your breath or straining like you're constipated
- Treating it as something difficult, instead of *effortless*
- Not doing it in the first place!

But all of these wrong ways really have one thing in **common**:

They're all trying to "put the monkey before the horse". That is, sending the monkey brain to do the horse brain's job.

For example, the way most self-help books talk about using your imagination or visualizing things, you can easily get the impression that

you are the one who's supposed to do the imagining, by making up what you're supposed to see, and then projecting it in your mind like a movie.

But that's *not* how it's supposed to work.

Because if **you** try to do the imagining – if **you** script the movie, in other words – then you can't possibly learn anything *new*! (And, as we'll see in chapter 7, it can also prevent your beliefs from being updated.)

Now, remember how I said that "yourself" was just a massive database of automatically-detected patterns?

Well, RMI – done correctly – is just *searching* that database. Sort of like typing a phrase into a search engine, to see what web pages come up.

Only *this* search engine can also make **predictions**.

Simulations. Projections. Plans.

In fact, what we call **thinking** consists of little more than repeatedly querying this database! You ask yourself things like, "Should I ask my boss for that raise today?" And the answer comes back, faster than a blink: "No, he looks like he's in a bad mood today."

And that was your robot making a *prediction*, based on past experiences stored in its database.

In other words, **you** didn't make that prediction – or decision.

You just *asked* for it.

And "yourself" delivered it, by looking up the patterns it had already detected and stored.

But if you didn't *ask* for that information, you might not have known it was even there!

Indeed, scientific experiments have repeatedly shown that our robot brain can notice and learn a **lot** of things that we aren't consciously aware are even *happening* – let alone noticing the *pattern* to them.

And, they've also shown we can *retrieve* that information, so long as:

1. We *ask* for it, and
2. We don't expect our brain to **explain** the answer!

Because explanation, you see, is **your** job.

"Yourself" just *records* the patterns, remember? It doesn't **understand** them.

And that means, if you're explaining, interpreting, analyzing, or anything of that sort, you're **not** doing RMI: you're doing mental tail-chasing!

That's why, back in chapter 2, I said that armchair psychoanalysis rarely accomplishes anything. Focusing on analysis, instead of **observation**, just sends you into a meaningless loop.

That's why you need to *observe* what your brain is doing "behind your back".

(Only, it's not really behind your back; you just haven't been paying close enough attention!)

When you ask yourself a question like, "Should I ask my boss for a raise today?", what usually happens is that your brain flashes back a picture of the boss scowling as he came in (or maybe the growling tone of his voice), and you **feel** nervousness or hesitation. Your analytical brain – "you" – then *makes up a story* about that set of responses, in order to "explain" it: e.g., "No, he's in a bad mood".

But you're not actually paying *attention* to these images, sounds, and feelings flashing by, because you're too wrapped up in your own story-telling. And because of this, you don't realize that it wasn't **you** who made the decision not to take action! "You" only *explained* the decision after the fact, and then *took credit* for it.

But in truth, the feeling of hesitation was the **signal** from "yourself" that your database predicted a bad outcome, and your *robot* didn't want to risk taking **action**.

So, in normal thinking, what happens is that you just take the data from your robot brain and *analyze* it, looping back to ask more questions. For example, after you "decide" not to ask for the raise, you'll probably go on to a question like, "Why does this always happen to me?", or "God I hate Mondays!" (The latter isn't phrased as a question, but your robot brain will happily oblige you anyway, by bringing up feelings about all the other Mondays you've hated, and adding today's pain to the list!)

In RMI, however, you *avoid* this immediate analysis and loopback. You temporarily turn off your storytelling and meaning-making, so you

can simply **observe** the raw projections coming back from your robot.

Because this is the *only* way you can find out what's actually **in** your robot brain's database...

And *change* it.

So give it a try, right **now**. We're going to be doing RMI a **lot** in this book, so you might as well get some practice at it right away!

EXERCISE

Based on what you've read so far about what naturally successful people are like, and your own memories of the naturally successful people you've met, seen, or heard about...

Simply allow your mind to *project* what it would be like, if **you** were that kind of person. (Or, if you already *are* one, allow your mind to project what it would be like if you were even **more** productive and successful than you already are!)

Do this by simply reflecting on the question, and allowing any images, sounds, or feelings to surface in your mind, without imposing any particular interpretation or explanation, or trying to deliberately imagine anything in particular. Instead, just "**wonder**" or "**ponder**" what it would be like.

So what was it like? Did you feel good? Bad?

Did anything *surprise* you? Did you learn or discover anything **new** about yourself?

If you did, then congratulations! You definitely did it *right*. Done correctly, RMI nearly always produces **some** new insight or surprises, however small.

And it's okay if the surprise you got was **bad**! For example, if you found yourself feeling disbelief that you could *ever* be that successful, or afraid that people wouldn't **like** you being that successful, or something

like that, then *that still counts as an insight*.

(And, as we'll see in later chapters, such "negative" insights are **extremely** useful and important when you want to install new beliefs or habits, because they tell you *precisely* what "software conflicts" need to be handled before you can install a new ability or personality trait.)

However, if everything you experienced was exactly what you *expected* to experience (be it good **or** bad), then the odds are good that you made some kind of mistake. So go back, and do it again. But this time, keep your mental "hands" off! Don't **think**, just *observe*. Just put yourself into that "hmm" state of just "seeing what you think", and *relax* as much of your body as you can.

Because if it's not *effortless*, **you're probably doing it wrong**.

Now at this point, my goal is not for you to *do* anything in particular with any insights you might get; it's a bit too early for that just yet. Right now, all I want is for you to get a little taste of what RMI **feels like**, when it's done correctly.

Because, beginning in part 2 of this book, you'll be using RMI to both identify and **remove** various kinds of emotional baggage... and to **install** things like motivation, confidence, and commitment.

But first, there's just *one* more chapter left in part 1.

The chapter where I show you how the "robots" of **naturally successful** people work...

And how you'll be *troubleshooting* yours.