



# EARLY ACCESS SNEAK PREVIEW

## CHAPTER 7

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# 7

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## The Secret Of Eliminating Negative Beliefs

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*The reason most people think logic is more important than feeling is that we aren't usually aware of the connection between the two. A lot of people's emotional life is unconscious a lot of the time, especially when you're calmly thinking something through. You feel like you're just using logic, but you're actually using logic guided by emotion. You just aren't aware of the emotion.*

– Temple Grandin, *Animals In Translation*

### THE FENCE AROUND YOUR LIFE

So, now that you've learned how to switch **on** the “gain brain”, the *next* thing you need to know is how to switch **off** the “pain brain”.

Because as you may recall from Chapter 2, the pain brain automatically *overrides* the gain brain, when:

1. You *expect*...
2. You may *lose* something...
3. That you *can't afford to lose*.

In effect, the pain brain is a kind of **early warning system**, whose purpose is to keep you *alive* (and “in the tribe”!) in the face of various kinds of *threats*.

Now, most of the time, your brain is supposed to be in “neutral”. That is, not exclusively focused on either gain or pain, but simply making straightforward choices as to what would be *better*.

And, as you saw in chapter 6, it's very *easy* to move from this neutral state to the “gain brain”.

But practically *impossible* to get there from the “pain brain”!

So, if one of your goals is failing the “mmm” or “push” tests, it's time to do some **troubleshooting**.

But, before we get into the actual steps, we first need to take a look at just how the “pain brain” really works.

And it works almost *exactly* like an “invisible fence”!

Now, in the real world, an invisible fence is a wire buried in the ground, used in combination with an electronic dog collar. When the dog wearing the collar approaches the “fence”, the collar beeps a warning... and then gives the dog an electric shock.

And the pain brain does just about the same thing... only *inside* of you.

Because, instead of a beep and a *shock* when you get too close to a buried wire, it gives you a flash of pain and discomfort... when you get too close to a buried **memory**!

For example, let's say that when you were a kid in school, the teacher made fun of you for giving the wrong answer to a question. All the kids laughed at you, and you were absolutely mortified.

Now, the word “mortified” comes from the same root as “mortal” and “mortician”... because it literally means feeling like you could *die* of embarrassment!

Because, to your emotional brain, an occurrence like this really *is* a brush with **death**... or at least the possibility of expulsion from the tribe. (And at minimum, a loss of *status* in the group... meaning less access to the best allies, food, and mates.)

So the experience gets stored in your memory, as a scenario to *avoid at all costs*.

Now, depending on the way you thought about it at the time, your brain might have coded different summaries of the situation: you might have decided that your error was “speaking up”, or “not being more careful”, or perhaps **both**.

But however it got coded, that's what will determine where the "wire" gets "buried" – and thus, where you'll receive **pain** in the future.

For example, if you're in a meeting, and you need to speak up about something, you might feel a small twinge of that *same embarrassment*.

Not at the original *intensity*, of course, but just enough to serve as a **warning**.

Enough to make you *hesitate*, and "think twice".

### To have "mixed feelings"!

And if you try to *push* through that hesitation, to actually speak up, then you'll notice the intensity of the feeling **building**... so that by the time you're actually speaking, you're already practically mortified!

Now, you might not have had this specific issue yourself. But you can easily see the same *pattern* in any area of your life where you **hesitate**: As you approach that situation, you experience a bad feeling that gets worse and worse, until you decide not to go any further.

Of course, if it's something you "have to do", and you can muster enough willpower to do so, you can always push through it... for a while.

But sooner or later, you get tired of being shocked by the "fence", and just back away.

And throwing yourself at the fence more **often**, doesn't make it any *better*.

In fact, it usually gets **worse**!

Remember, your brain is an *anticipation machine*. It automatically learns "what's coming next"... which means the more often you **try** to do something, the *sooner you get the warning signal*!

So, if you're having trouble working on your thesis or something like that, you might start out only feeling bad while you're deep in the research or writing, and realize that you "don't know what you're doing". But gradually, that feeling can spread out to bothering you when you do so much as just *think* about going in the **room** where you do your work!

Or, if you have trouble introducing yourself to people, you might find that fear spreading to just the idea of going *into* a nightclub... and finally, to the mere **thought** of dressing up and going out!

Which means that the pain brain isn't *just* an invisible fence...

It's a **shrinking** invisible fence!

Because the longer you live in it... the smaller and smaller your life actually gets.

With fewer and fewer choices available to you.

And less and less **freedom**.

Now, it might seem kind of crazy that things work this way. Why would anybody *design* a brain to do such utterly **stupid** things as these?

Well, remember: evolution doesn't design brains for maximum **happiness**, it designs them for *maximum reproductive success*. If avoiding potentially-awkward social situations meant your ancestors managed to stay in the tribe long enough to have a shot at having kids, then, from evolution's perspective, who *cares* how much suffering was involved?

Luckily, there's also an *upside* to evolution's flawed designs.

Because while your brain's "invisible fence" wasn't built to help you achieve lasting **happiness**, it *also* wasn't built...

To resist an **attack**...

From the *inside*.

## HOW LOGIC KEEPS YOU *TRAPPED* INSIDE YOUR "INVISIBLE FENCE"

**N**ow, the really **insidious** thing about living inside the "invisible fence" of the "pain brain", is that your logical, "monkey" mind actually *collaborates* in keeping you trapped.

Because, just as the emotional brain doesn't *understand* why things happen, or think in a logical way, your logical brain doesn't really "get" emotions, either!

And the primary way that your logical brain learns about emotions, is through the **labels** that other people use, for the situations that *produce* the emotion.

For example, it learns to label the feeling you get when "people are

laughing at you”, or when you “look stupid”, as “embarrassment”.

But that’s why, when you’re in that meeting, hesitating to speak up, your logical brain usually doesn’t have the slightest *idea* what the heck is going on!

Because, without that cue of “people laughing at you” or “looking stupid”, it may not even *recognize* what you’re feeling as “embarrassment”.

Let alone realize *why* you’re feeling it!

You’ll probably just describe yourself as “uncomfortable”, and rationalize that you’re an “introvert” or something.

Because your so-called “rational” mind’s *real* job, is to make up **good-sounding explanations** for things.

In other words, to “rationalize”... or tell “rational lies”, that make us *sound better* to others. (Thereby improving our status in the tribe.)

After all, if you were to *admit* that you’re afraid or embarrassed about something, it’d be almost as bad as whatever you’re trying to avoid in the first place!

So evolution actually tuned our logical brains to be good at *hiding* things. Indeed, some scientists believe the reason we evolved big brains is precisely so we could become better liars, in this way!

And the reason I’m bringing this up is that, before you can actually **escape** your own “fence”, you first need to understand how your logical brain actually makes things *worse*.

Because every single piece of psychobabble ever invented... every pop-psych term in existence... every **label** we use for our experiences, emotions and problems...

Is nothing more than monkey-mind **propaganda**...

To make us *happier*...

About being **inside the fence**!

You see, whenever you describe your problems using *labels* – by saying things like “I must be procrastinating because of my low self-esteem and fear of success” – you get a little hit of **relief** in the monkey mind.

It makes you feel a little bit more like you're in **control** of your problem, because "at least you know what it is."

But this is complete and utter *bullshit*.

It's like asking a dog inside its invisible fence, "why did you go right up to the edge of the yard and then just stop? Don't you want to go outside?"

And the dog's all like, "Oh, well I just didn't *feel* like it. I just **meant** to stop here."

Instead of saying, "Because every time I go any further, I get a shock from this freaking collar you humans put on me!"

And so, when we say things like "procrastinating because of low self-esteem", it's the same kind of *bullshit* explanation.

Because it doesn't tell you *anything* about the **fence**!

Heck, it doesn't even tell you what kind of "shock" you're getting, let alone where the *wire* is buried!

And without that information, you can't do **squat**.

So, if you want to be a **mind hacker** – someone who can actually *change* your own beliefs and behaviors, from the "inside" – then you need to learn how to tell your "monkey" mind to **shut up**...

When it tries to give you *explanations*, in place of the **facts**.

Because those explanations are just a way to keep you from *paying attention to the fence*.

And if you can't *pay attention* to the fence, you'll never learn how to turn it **off**.

## HOW YOUR "FENCE" REALLY WORKS

**S**o how does your "fence" really work? And how can we turn it **off**... or at least *move the wires*?

Well, the key to understanding the fence is that it's an **early warning system**, based on your brain's *prediction* mechanism. In other words, its job is to anticipate dangers, and warn you away from them.

*Most of what you perceive is not coming through your senses; it is generated by your internal memory model. So the question, "What is reality?" is largely a matter of how accurately our cortical model reflects the true nature of the world.*

*– Jeff Hawkins, On Intelligence*

But, because it's built on the simpler, more robotic parts of your brain, it doesn't *think things through*.

Why? Because, as an early warning system, it's better to be *fast* than *accurate*!

After all, if you miss a warning and get **killed** – or even just get “kicked out of the tribe” – that's much worse than wasting an opportunity or two by being too cautious.

So your early-warning system is optimized for **speed** and **safety** – preferring a fast, wrong answer that keeps you safe, to a slower right answer... that might get you killed and *eaten*, before you even realize what's going on!

Now, in order to get the maximum possible speed, your brain uses the same mechanism that a **computer** does:

### **It uses a *cache*!**

Because a “cache”, in computer terminology, is memory that's been specially set aside to hold **already-determined answers**. That way, if you need the same answer more than once, you can just *look it up*, instead of *recalculating* it every time you need it.

And your brain learns to be “smarter” in exactly the same way: it stores your previous thoughts and observations in its cache, so you don't have to think them up over and over again.

Instead, they just pop to mind *instantly*, as the answers that are “obvious” to you.

(Which is one reason why “insight is irreversible” – once you have an “aha” or insight, it gets cached as the “obvious answer” for that situation.)



Now, while a cache definitely helps to speed up both brains *and* computers, it does have an important **weakness**:

It can **only** give you the right answer...

### **If nothing ever *changes*!**

Let's take our "not speaking up in meetings" scenario, for example. Because, you may **logically** know (*if* you think it through!) that your coworkers aren't *really* going to laugh at you, or kick you out of the tribe and make you starve.

But your early warning system doesn't *think* about this at all: it just looks up the "cached" answer for the current situation.

An **outdated** answer, that says you're about to be *embarrassed*!

So, in order to *turn off* this warning signal, we have to **update** the information in your brain's cache.

Now, computer programs that use caches are usually designed to *automatically* discard outdated information when something changes, or to do some kind of consistency check when looking things up.

Your brain, however, has only a very crude update mechanism.

And we call it...

### **Being *surprised*!**

Because surprise is what happens when you **expect** one thing...

But **get** something else.

In other words, surprise is when there's a *mismatch* between your brain's **predicted** outcome, and the **actual** outcome.

Now, surprise works quite well as an update mechanism for **animals**. After all, if you're surprised to find food where you didn't expect it, or to *not* find food where you *did* expect it, then, this triggers you to pay *attention*, so that your brain can update its cached expectations about where to find food.

But when it comes to humans – and the "pain brain" – there's a bit of a **problem** with this design.

First of all, if the warning system kicks in and keeps you from ever

*doing* the thing you're afraid of, then there's **no way** for you to be surprised when nothing happens! After all, if you don't speak up in the meeting, then how will you ever know for *sure* that nobody's going to laugh at you?

And this brings us to the *second* part of the problem.

So, let's say you **do** manage to speak up in the meeting, and nobody laughs. Are you surprised? Or do you instead think something like, "Whew, that was a close one! I'd better not do **that** again"?

You see, the nature of the safety mechanism is that it's supposed to get you out of *potential* jams. And just because you escaped the tiger or alligator or whatever *this* time, doesn't mean you'll be so lucky *next* time.

So, just experiencing the absence of the threat, isn't *always* enough to trigger the "surprise" machinery, or change your beliefs.

Of course, *sometimes* it **is**! Some people, for example, can learn not to be afraid of snakes by being gradually exposed to them, up to the point of actually handling them.

Other people, on the other hand, will **never** allow you to bring a snake close enough to them to do this, and if you were to put a snake in their hands anyway, they'd be **too freaked out to notice** that nothing bad was happening!

Which is why your essentially *social* fears – embarrassment, shame, abandonment, and so on – are virtually **impossible** to fix through exposure of this kind.

Because the perceived *threat*...

### **Is only in your *mind* to start with!**

So, even if you "do the thing you fear", you'll still *feel* the fear throughout... and thus will still not **like** the activity, or want to do it in the future.

Or, to put it another way, if you're afraid of public speaking, then what you're *really* avoiding is the **feeling** that you get when you do it. And since the feeling is triggered by the *anticipation* of embarrassment, rather than by *actual* embarrassment...

It can **never** get any better.

At least, not unless you find a *different* way...

To surprise yourself.

## HOW TO SURPRISE YOURSELF

Now as it turns out, there are actually an awful lot of ways to surprise yourself.

Like “aha” moments, sudden realizations, and even simple mistakes.

But, there are also some more **deliberate** ways that you can surprise yourself, and force your brain to make a change.

And in this chapter, I’m going to teach you one of the *easiest* ways to do this: a way that can produce **dramatic** improvements in your personality, and in your life.

It is, in fact, the very first systematically *repeatable*, *testable* and *teachable* method of “mind hacking” that I first learned to use myself, about two and a half years ago.

Now, I first *heard* about this method, **many** years before that. But back then, I’d dismissed it as a stupid idea. The websites of the techniques’ originators (Doyle Henderson and Bobby Matherne) were full of unlikely theories, laid out in an amateurish way that made them look, well, like crackpots, frankly.

But in mid-2006, I was suffering from an overwhelming despair, feeling like nothing I did was any use. I’d been experimenting with various primitive methods of mind-hacking, but my success with them was erratic at best. I had made a few improvements in myself, but I chronically procrastinated on the personal projects that were most important to me.

And I was seriously **depressed** about it.

Then, one day, I remembered the weird website with the crazy theories. And I thought, “what the hell... why not?”

I found the website again, read through the steps, and did the practice exercise the author recommended. And then I gave it a try, on my overwhelming feeling of despair.

And the cloud of depression – that I'd been suffering under for weeks! – vanished in mere *minutes*. In fact, it was as if an almost **life-long** sense of uselessness had just disappeared in a puff of smoke.

And I found myself procrastinating maybe 50% less, *immediately*.

Wow, I thought...

### **These guys must be on to something!**

So I started using the technique more and more often. As Matherne said on his site, “when in doubt, trace it out.” And I began to notice several interesting things – especially once I began *teaching* the method to other people.

It quickly became clear that, although the *technique* worked, there were some serious problems with the ideas Matherne and Henderson had for *why* and **how** it worked. (In fact, many of my experimental results flatly **contradicted** their hypotheses!)

Eventually, however, I found a more scientific explanation... in a neurological phenomenon known as *reconsolidation*. The simple – but profound! – idea, that:

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### **An Active Memory... Is A *Changeable* Memory!**

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And over the last decade or so, scientists have learned a lot of interesting things about how it works physically... and *chemically*. Especially in relation to **fear and trauma**.

For example, they've found that if you stimulate a traumatic memory, and then interrupt or **distract** the mind with conflicting information, you can actually generate amnesia for the trauma or fear response. Or, you can *overwrite* the memory with **new** information, blocking off access to the old information!

In other words, it's *precisely* the kind of tool you could use...

To change your thoughts, feelings, and beliefs.

In other words...

Your whole **personality**!

Because, think about it: what would your life be like, if you could **go back in time**, and *wipe out all the bad parts*?

Not the things that actually *happened*, of course. But rather, the **feelings** – like guilt, fear, shame, rage, and despair – that you experienced as the *result* of what happened?

The beliefs you formed... the negative judgments... the fears, the low self-esteem. All of it, able to be wiped out...

Maybe in **minutes**.

Using a method you can learn to do *yourself*... in just a few more minutes.

Now, back when I first experienced this technique, I thought its creators had discovered a universal cure. However, as it turns out, it's memory *reconsolidation* that's the **real** universal cure.

And the technique I'm about to show you is simply **one** way of triggering reconsolidation, for one particular **kind** of memory, belief, or behavior pattern.

Specifically, it works on **conditioned feeling responses**.

And so, I call my “new and improved” version of Henderson & Matherne's technique...

### **Feeling Elimination!**

Because really, that's what it *does*: it gets rid of a negative feeling associated with some idea, experience, or activity.

And, if used correctly, it's perhaps the fastest way possible to *eliminate* these feelings.

And quite often, the elimination is **permanent**.

And the sense of **relief** and **control** that it gives you, can be life-transforming.

Because, the more often you use it, the more quickly you'll realize...

That your **feelings** don't have to *control* you.

And that you can control **them**, instead!

## HOW TO FIND YOUR “FENCE”

**N**ow, the actual feeling elimination technique is ridiculously *simple*. In essence, all you’re doing is *activating* a series of memories connected with a feeling, and then “writing over them” with new information.

However, there are a couple of important points to look out for.

First, and most critical, is that you must identify and **locate** the feeling in your **body**.

It is absolutely *not* enough to think about it intellectually, and just give it a label like “fear” or “shame”. Because remember, these labels are just what your monkey-mind uses to think about the *idea* of an emotion – not the raw, *physical* emotion your “fence” uses to **shock** you!

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### Key Point #1:

#### Find The Feeling In Your *Body*

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So, instead of a label like “rage” or “despair”, you must look for the *physical* manifestation of that feeling **in your body**. For example, you might check for:

- Tightness in the throat or chest
- Gritting or clenching of the jaw
- Making fists
- Slouching or slumping forward
- Curling the torso inward to protect the belly
- “Butterflies” in the stomach
- Wrinkling of the forehead, or tension in the eyebrows
- Any kind of tension or flushing, anywhere in the body

This is far from an exhaustive list, of course; it’s just to give you some ideas for where to check.

Also, bear in mind that if you find yourself saying, “I don’t feel

anything in my body, it's just in my *mind*," then you should check to make sure you're not talking about your **face and head**! So far, every time that anyone has told me they felt something "in their mind", it actually turned out to be a feeling in the muscles of their face, neck, or head.

And apparently, our monkey mind can easily end up labeling such feelings as being "all in our head" – and then mixes up the meanings of "all in your head" and "all in your mind". But I guarantee you, your *horse* brain isn't confused about these two things, so make certain **you** don't confuse them either!

Another way that your monkey mind can confuse you about this, is to claim that you "don't feel anything"... when in fact what you're feeling is either *numbness*, or what I call "suppression" – a form of muscle tension that we use to "clamp down" on an emotion, in an effort...

### **Not to *feel* it!**

And the easy way to tell the *difference*, is to clear your mind...

Shake out your **body**...

Take a deep breath...

And *relax*.

Then, pay attention to what *that* feels like... because that's what "feeling nothing" *really* is!

Then, think again about whatever the problem is, and notice how your body *changes*. This will help you to precisely pinpoint what is happening.

Now, if what you're feeling is numbness or a suppression/clamp-down response, that's perfectly all right! Don't bother trying to find out what's underneath it or what the "real" feeling is. Just apply the elimination technique on the numbness or suppression!

Of course, you may find during the actual technique that your body *shifts* from the suppression to the underlying feeling, or you may have to go back and do the technique a second time after you've gotten rid of the numbness or suppression.

The important thing, though, is to find whatever it is you're feeling

*now*, in your *body*, that's *different* from when you're emotionally neutral or positive. (That's why we covered **positive** motivation first: I wanted you to have a basis for *comparison* here!)

Now, if after all this, you still don't **feel** anything *at all* – whether “in your head” or otherwise – or are having difficulty pinning it down, then it's might be because you didn't start by doing this:

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**Key Point #2:**  
**Address A Single, *Specific* Incident (and Feeling)**

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Because, if you just sit down one day and decide to work on your (let's say) “fear of success”, then you won't have much luck! (Unless, as with my “despair”, it's something you're feeling **all the time**.)

Instead, you need to pick **one specific incident** where you had that feeling, that you can recall in a vivid enough way to cause you to get the feeling *again*. For example, if your “fear of success” just made you turn down a job offer, then you need to recall whatever you were *thinking* at the moment just *before* you *felt* the need to hesitate.

And then, check to make sure that thinking of it causes you to **feel** something, *again*.

In other words, it is not enough to simply *remember* the feeling...

You must be able to **reproduce** it!

It's just like being a mechanic, testing an automobile: if you can't get the problem to happen *on purpose*, then you won't be able to identify or fix what's wrong with it!

And that means the **ideal** time to perform feeling elimination, is *as soon as possible* after the emotion is actually triggered, by a *real-life situation*.

Fortunately, feeling elimination is *so* quick and easy to do, that once you've had a bit of practice, you can actually do it almost any time, any place, as long as you can get a moment or two of privacy. (For example, by stepping outside or going to the bathroom.) In fact, if you get *really* good at it, you can even do it while walking or driving. (Although I don't recommend that for beginners!)



Now, whether you're doing this right after a real-life situation triggers the feeling, or thinking back on it later, we call this triggering stimulus your **test**.

Because first, you will use it to verify that you can *make* the feeling happen **on purpose**. Then, after you do the feeling elimination, you will use the *same* test, to verify that you actually **eliminated** it... or to determine what *else* you need to eliminate, to fix the problem.

To go back to the “invisible fence” analogy, the **test** is like identifying a specific spot in the “yard” where you can go, and reliably get shocked. And, by locating the feeling in your *body*, we're determining where the “collar” and “electrodes” are.

At which point, we're ready to start *digging up the wires*.

## HOW TO DIG UP – AND CUT! – THE WIRES

**N**ow, the way I first learned to do this technique, was by practicing it first on a *food dislike* – the way Bobby Matherne suggested on his website.

Because our reactions to a disgusting food, after all, are very easy to reproduce, but are also mild enough in nature, so as not to distract you from learning the steps of the technique.

What's more, by easily eliminating a lifelong, *automatic* reaction, you can quickly get a powerful experience of what rapid, automatic change is like.

*Without* needing to fight yourself, or use willpower!

And on this point at least, I wholeheartedly **agree**.

So, before you proceed with the following steps, I want you to pick some food you dislike. Something that you dislike so much, in fact, that it makes you *physically* wrinkle your face in **disgust**... preferably just by *thinking* about it!

Of course, if you happen to *have* some of this food available (maybe something your spouse or roommate eats?), then it's even better. But don't put off doing the exercise if you don't; just pick something that curls your face when you so much as *think* about eating it.

Now in this case, the food – or the *idea* of the food – will be your **test**. Think about it, or look at and smell it, and observe the reaction in your body.

And then, let me show you how to *eliminate* that reaction.

### ***Step 1: Hold It!***

The first thing you need to do is **intensify** your reaction, by *consciously* doing whatever you were already doing *unconsciously*.

In other words, wrinkle your face **more**, on *purpose*. If your hands are clenched, clench them tighter. If your chest or throat are tight, tighten them more. And so on. Whatever **physical** response the emotion (or food dislike) creates in your body, *do more of it*.

Now, notice that this is the exact *opposite* of how we normally deal with our feelings! Normally, we avoid negative feelings, and try to either suppress them, or distract ourselves.

However, for the feeling elimination technique to work, you must do the **opposite**: not only *feel* the feeling, but actually *intensify* it.

So that then you can begin to...

### ***Step 2: Trace It!***

Now that you are holding the feeling, you are going to “trace” the memories connected with it. And you will do this, by counting your age backwards, allowing any associated memories to surface.

Count backwards in intervals of five years, beginning with your age rounded down to the nearest five years. For example, if you’re 37 years old, you would begin like this:

- “I’m 35, and I’m feeling this”
- “I’m 30, and I’m feeling this”
- “I’m 25, and I’m feeling this”

In between each statement, pause a moment to breathe, and allow your mind to drift back through the experiences you might have had in the years between, where you experienced that same feeling. You do not need to consciously try to remember anything - it’s sufficient to just

think in general terms about being that approximate age or range of ages... and even that, you can just allow your brain to do for you, RMI-style.

**T**IP: Some people find they have difficulty feeling, counting, and remembering all at the same time. If so, remember that you can always record your voice on a tape deck, iPod, or phone, and then *play it back* to do this. Just leave a few seconds between each count on the recording.

Or, another alternative is to have someone else do the count for you – I often count things down for my wife, or for my clients. However you do it, though, the words should basically remain the same, i.e. "I'm feeling this", even though you're hearing yourself or someone else say it.

Continue to hold the intensified feeling as you count, until you reach the age of 5. At that point, continue as follows:

- "I'm 5 years old, am I feeling this?"
- "I'm 4 years old, am I feeling this?"
- "I'm 3 years old, am I feeling this?"
- "I'm 2 years old, am I feeling this?"
- "I'm 1 year old, am I feeling this?"
- "I'm 6 months old, am I feeling this?"
- "I'm 3 months old, am I feeling this?"
- "I'm 1 month old, am I feeling this?"
- "It's a month before I'm born, am I feeling this?"
- "It's 3 months before I'm born, am I feeling this?"
- "It's 6 months before I'm born, am I feeling this?"

- “It’s 9 months before I’m born, am I feeling this?”

Now, sometimes people ask how you can *possibly* have memories this far back! But the thing is, it’s not when you *actually* experience something, it’s when your brain has *coded* the experience as happening.

And sometimes, people **hear stories from their parents** about things that happened before they were born, and appear to *retroactively* associate a feeling with an event that they never directly experienced.

Heck, on rare occasions, you can even have events from your *parents’* or *grandparents’* childhoods retroactively encoded this way!

I find, however, that going back 9 months prior to birth usually covers 99% or more of such retroactively-encoded experiences... even though going back that far is totally unnecessary for maybe 80-90% of the things you’ll use the technique on.

But I find it’s *much* easier to learn and do the technique, if you’re not sitting there wondering whether you can stop now or whether you should go forward!

So, I just recommend using a **fixed** counting pattern, and this particular pattern happens to be one that has worked very well for myself and my clients. (There are probably a lot of other changes that *could* be made to it... but since it already **works**, why bother?)

Now, at various points during the process of counting, you may notice that the feeling *changes* in some way. If so, just **continue** holding it... but hold and intensify the **new** form that the feeling takes, rather than continuing to hold the *old* feeling. And, even if the feeling seems to entirely go away on its own, just continue the count to the end anyway.

Then, once you’ve finished the count, let go and breathe deeply. “Shake out” any remnants of the feeling that remain, and then proceed to...

### ***Step 3: Test It!***

Think about your trigger stimulus, or if you’re doing this with real food, look at it and smell it again.

Surprised?

Well, you *will* be!

Because I've never seen anyone who actually tried this, who didn't:

1. Find their disgust completely extinguished, and
2. Find themselves thoroughly *surprised* by the fact!

Now, if you *didn't* successfully eliminate your reaction to a food, go back and check the directions again.

Make sure that you're **intensifying** all of the things your body is doing when you see or smell the food. And make sure that you're just *allowing* your mind to drift back over the years, not forcibly **trying** to recall things.

Also, if you're using this on an emotion, rather than a food dislike, you may notice only a *decrease* in the feeling, rather than an outright elimination. If this happens, check the **location** of the feeling again!

Because most likely, what you're describing to yourself as decreased intensity, is actually a *shift* in the location or "flavor" of the feeling.

And usually, it's simply an indication that there's **more than one** feeling associated with your test stimulus. After all, your brain and body tend to give priority to the most *intense* emotional association, while ignoring the less-intense ones.

Thus, removing the more intense reaction can "uncover" some lesser, different feelings, and it can be easy to confuse this with the old feeling having decreased in intensity... especially if your monkey mind uses the same **word** to describe both feelings.

So don't be fooled. Pay attention to what your **body** is doing, not what *labels* your monkey mind attaches to the feeling.

Because, once you've eliminated the more-intense association, you may need to go back and eliminate one or more less-intense ones as well!

Just repeat the process until you feel **nothing bad** in response to your test stimulus, or until there's no further decrease in the intensity.

Now, this "nothing bad" or "neutral" state is what I sometimes call the "no big deal" state. It's not positive (except by comparison to your previously negative state!), but it's also not **negative**. You feel like you *could* eat the food or handle the negative situation, even if you'd still *prefer* not to. It's like moving from a *compulsion*, to a mere *preference*.

So, practicing this technique will not necessarily make you *like* a food you hate, or enjoy a negative circumstance! And when you practice this technique initially, it doesn't matter whether you can make yourself eat the food, or that you still don't **want** to. All that's really important here, is that you eliminate the *automatic physical response*.

Because if you can eliminate *this* automatic physical response, then you can eliminate **others**, too!

And no matter how small a change it might be to get rid of an “eww, yuck” response to a food...

It's only the *beginning* of what you're going to be able to do with this technique.

So, pause a moment now to *celebrate* your results, and to accept my congratulations on your very first **mind hack**!

Then, as soon as you're done celebrating, get **ready**...

To work on your *next* one!

## LEAVING YOUR FENCES BEHIND

Now, in the case of a food, you had a belief that you “hated” that food. However, that “belief” was really nothing more than your monkey-mind's **explanation**... for an *automatic physical response*.

And what you'll find, as you begin to work through your **own** negative beliefs and emotional baggage, is that quite a lot of what passes for “insight” or “understanding” of our problems, is about as valid and meaningful as your logical brain's attempts to explain your food dislikes!

In other words, **not very meaningful**!

Because *so* many of the things we do and feel...

So many things that we label, analyze, and fret over...

Are nothing more than *automatic physical responses*...

That we have no reason to *keep*!

Now, back when I first learned Matherne's version of this technique, I thought that the obvious thing to do was to apply it to all the places in my life where I felt **blocked**. And in fact, there is certainly *some* benefit

to doing this.

However, after I took the Vow I mentioned in Chapter 2 (to never force myself to do anything), I soon realized something interesting:

It's not the baggage that **stops** you from doing things, that's the most *important*.

It's the baggage that **pushes** you to do the things in the first place!

And that's why, the very *first* baggage that you need to use this on, are your "push test" failures from chapter 6.

For example, let's say that you're putting off writing your Ph.D. thesis. And when you do the "push test", thinking about what will happen if you *don't* write the thesis, you get a **bad** feeling.

Well, that's *precisely* the sort of bad feeling that's **most useful** to eliminate! Because, remember: what pushes you forward, holds you back.

That is, your *negative* motivation, puts you in the **pain brain**: more stressed, less creative, and less energetic. Thereby draining you of...

### ***Exactly what you need most!***

But, once you eliminate the feelings that are *creating* your negative motivation... then you will be in a "neutral" or "no big deal" frame of mind, instead.

And, instead of getting "shocked" by a feeling of fear or guilt or shame every time you just *think* about working on the thesis, it'll seem like "no big deal" – something you could just do, or not do. "No big deal."

And *then*, you can use the **positive** motivation technique from chapter 6... because you won't have a *bad* feeling getting in the way of feeling **good** about your goal.

Now, if you also feel bad about *getting* your goal – that is, if you feel guilty or afraid or something else when you imagine successfully **completing** – or working on – your goal, then you should eliminate those feelings, too.

However, more often than not, these other bad feelings are just echoes or **shadows** arising from your "pain brain" state. So, if you don't *first* eliminate your negative motivation, you could end up chasing these

“shadows” forever, and never making any real progress.

That’s why it’s absolutely critical that you always apply the “push test” *first*, and then eliminate any feelings that come up from it.

Because, once you’re out of the “pain brain” about your goal, these “shadow” feelings will often...

### Disappear on their own!

So, begin with the list you made in chapter 6. For every item where you wrote down something negative in the “What happens if you *don’t* get it?” column, see if you can locate a feeling in your **body** that comes up when you think about that.

And if the response isn’t strong enough to precisely identify, ask yourself, “What’s *bad* about that?” (using RMI), and repeat until the feeling is strong enough for you to tell, clearly and precisely, where it is in your **body**.

For example, if you’re afraid that if you don’t make sales calls you’ll go broke, ask “What’s *bad* about that?”

Now, don’t *analyze* it – it’s not a question for your conscious, logical mind. We’re trying to flush out the **emotional** reason why it’s bad, not the *logical* reasons! Because, a logical reason might be something like, “Well, then I won’t have any money,” whereas an emotional one might be, “Because I’ll be a loser”.

In general, the closer you are getting to the source of a feeling, the more likely it is your answers will be **personal** (about you, not your circumstances), **pervasive** (applying to all areas of life, not just the one at issue), and **permanent** (having consequences that continue forever). (“I’ll be a loser,” for example, is all three!)

Now, you might get an in-between response, like, “I won’t be able to take care of my family” – a little bit emotional, but not all the way there yet. And in such cases, it can be helpful to ask, “What does that mean about *me*?” or “What kind of person does that make *me*?”, as this is often helpful to get you focused on the underlying issue.

Remember, for reconsolidation to work, you must actually *activate* the **specific** memories to be modified!

So, the more *specifically* you can target the underlying negative belief



or self-judgment, the better your odds of making a **significant** personal-ity improvement.

And so, if you don't get a strong *physical* response to your thoughts, or have difficulty making a change, there's a good chance that you aren't getting **specific** enough.

Think of it this way: if you were *really* imprisoned by an invisible fence, you would have to endure a certain amount of *pain* from the fence, before you could identify *precisely* enough where it was, to begin your actual escape attempt. (e.g. digging up the wire, shorting out the system, etc.)

And in the same way here...

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**If You're Not *Feeling* The Pain,  
You're Not *Finding* The Fence!**

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And that means you need to get *past* your monkey-mind's attempts to "explain away" the pain of believing you're a **loser** or a **failure**... or whatever else it is you're actually afraid you'll *be*, if you don't *do* the things you've set out for yourself to do.

So, *lean into the pain*. Say to yourself, "I'm a failure" or "I'm a loser" or "Nobody will like me", or whatever it is **you're most afraid is true**.

Because, as soon as you can feel it in your **body** – clearly and distinctly – you can find and "trace the circuit"...

Of that part of your fence.

And then, after just a minute or two of pain, you'll be able to put it all *behind* you.

Forever!

**IF YOU *STILL* CAN'T ESCAPE...**

Now, the good news is that this technique can work *wonders*. And the more *intense* a feeling is, and the *longer* you've had it, the **better** it actually works!

However, the bad news is that it does not work on absolutely **everything**.

For example, as far as I can tell, it appears to only work on *directly conditioned* responses, where you learned through direct experience that something was bad, and you expect to experience that something again.

For more complex expectations or predictions, though, where your brain has used multiple “belief rules” to generate its projection, this technique may clear the response from your “cache” memory, but it won’t stop your brain from coming to the *same* conclusion again *later*...

And thus putting it **back** in the cache!

What’s more, for some things, you may not be able to get this technique to work at all.

It seems almost as though our brains have various kinds of *specialized* memory systems – or at least *patterns* of memory storage – that require different techniques to locate, activate, and alter the relevant memories.

And unfortunately, there isn’t enough room in this book to offer complete coverage of **all** the techniques I’ve discovered, developed, or adapted for locating and altering these memories, even if I wrote about nothing else for the entire remainder of the book!

But I **do** teach those techniques on a regular basis, through the live and recorded internet workshops I do for my self-improvement group: the **Mind Hackers’ Guild**.

So, if you find that you have a problem that does not respond to this “feeling elimination” technique at all, or that seems to come *back* afterwards, the Guild workshops might be something you want to check out.

But *first*, you should double-check to make sure that you’re doing the technique correctly! If you can successfully eliminate a food dislike, then you’ve *definitely* learned to do at least steps 2 and 3 correctly.

But, you may still need to practice identifying the **locations** of feelings more.

For example, you could make a game of noticing, throughout the day, what your body and face are doing as you think about different things and experience different emotions. This will begin to give you some skill at noticing where feelings are in your body.

Also, make sure that you repeat the technique on any “leftover” feelings that occur after the first pass through. Many times, for example, you may notice a pattern of shifting from a “sad” or “afraid” kind of feeling to a “mad” feeling, as if fear and sadness are often used to hide a first feeling of anger.

So, be sure to get all the way to a true “no big deal” state, where you don’t feel any negative emotion of *any* kind.

And finally, don’t be discouraged if this fails to work on one or two items now and again! Focus on applying it to the things it *does* work on, so that you’ll get plenty of practice at locating feelings and setting up tests.

Because these skills are not only *critical* for all of the more advanced techniques I teach...

But, as you’re about to learn in the *next* chapter, they’re *also* critical...

To the process of **commitment**.