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## **Installing Mental Positivity and Meta-Positivity: AKA Investing in My Wholistic Internal Bank Account<sup>1</sup>**

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Most psychotherapy approaches address both acute and chronic emotional distresses. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), the prevalent mode for psychological interventions today, engages the mind to identify and address troublesome emotions, interpersonal issues and trauma residues through our thinking processes.

Cognitive distress is distinctly different from emotional distress, though it is usually still intimately linked with it. But because much of our mental distress is one or more steps or levels removed from immediate emotional upsets, it is often easier to engage and use our mental powers to deal with the distress.

To a great extent, it's our thoughts, critiques, anticipations, anxieties and worries *about* our distressed feelings and emotional discomforts that we address with CBT. I call this level of issues 'meta-anxieties' because they are anxieties *about* our anxieties.

All of this focuses us on dealing with the negativity in our lives. Far too often, however, psychotherapists terminate therapy when the presenting problems have been addressed. This misses many opportunities for using psychotherapy methods for installing and strengthening mental positivity, which can markedly enhance our course through life.

When we focus on installing and strengthening positivity we can markedly enhance our lives, and boost our abilities to deal with problems which are already present, as well as preventing the development of new problems.

So in this editorial I invite you to consider how you can use your self-healing skills proactively. And as you develop your skills and confidence in doing so, you will also develop meta-positive beliefs and anticipations and confidence about your abilities and proficiency in building and strengthening the positivities in your life.

### **Preventive clearing of negativity, AKA wholistic housecleaning**

You can develop and improve your wholistic internal housecleaning with mental intent and a modest amount of practice. This involves clearing away buried clutter and tangles in your emotions and mind, as well as tidying up and putting everything in its place. Sometimes this can be in a trash bin that you quickly empty! Then you can move ahead with fuller inner resources available to you, as and when you need them, because your unconscious mind will now be free of the tasks of standing vigilantly alert to protect you from being hurt again now, as you were hurt earlier in your life.

And regular, preventive clearing of negativity offers you enormous benefits. Just as you brush your teeth in the morning and at night, I recommend that you search for any stress-grit, worry niggles, or annoyance residues you can brush away before you start and end your day. You may choose to put a quiet period into your calendar for a regularly scheduled pause some time in your daily routine, between opening your eyes in the morning and closing them at night. For many, the best plan is to do this first thing in the morning. Most of us are busy enough that we won't usually stop during our work or leisure time to deal with stressful issues as they arise. But an alarm clock set five minutes earlier in the morning, and a deliberate allocation of a few moments for internal housecleaning before dozing off at night, can make a great difference in your personal life and in your relationships.

I'm sure you've experienced times when you're stressed or distressed over a personal problem, and due to your inner tensions you get uncharacteristically irritable with someone who really didn't deserve to be the target of your annoyed responses. The target of your annoyance might even be yourself. You may become aware that you are fretting over issues you cannot influence or change. But your mind persists in niggling thoughts and frustrated feelings, despite your best efforts to keep yourself on task.

You can learn how to deal with such challenges competently, so that you remain calm, knowing you can sort them out. Not only is it helpful with the problems you are working on currently, but you can install and reinforce your meta-confidence that you know you can sort out anxieties, worries and distresses of any sorts. When you've done this, then when you encounter future stresses and distresses, you won't feel as upset or overwhelmed.

What I'm addressing here is how you can develop a habit of setting your emotional thermostat so that it doesn't turn on the heat when that's really not necessary, and so you don't fret or lose sleep, worrying over problems that you are unable to change, or perhaps ones that you're really able to handle comfortably but can't let go of worrying about. When you develop this meta-confidence that you can manage challenges in your life, you will find that you can deal with these issues competently, without going into worrying about whether you can overcome them. You will simply know that you can handle them.

Let me share an example to bring all of this to life. Assumed names are used for confidentiality in these composite examples.

'Phil' was generally an easy-going, pleasant hardware store assistant manager. Sadly, his wife, 'Millie,' was diagnosed with breast cancer, and the whole family was very stressed. Phil, in particular, became unusually huffy and irritable with family members and with customers at work. His manager did her best to cover for him, but complaints started coming in and, as much as she wanted to be considerate, she had to warn Phil to shape up or he'd be demoted to doing office work.

Long story short, I saw Millie and Phil for stress management. Both were very quick to learn and use relaxation, meditation and TWR/WHEE, an Energy Psychology self-treatment method (Benor, 2009). With TWR/WHEE you alternate tapping on the left and right sides of your body, as you focus your mind on your stress and distress, followed by reciting a calming statement to yourself. This did well managing their acute stresses. Phil settled back to being his old self at work, so this crisis was sorted out.

Looking at the longer-term situation, I suggested they might find it helpful to use TWR/WHEE preventively. Millie, in particular, felt very unhappy with the prospect of months of sitting in tense waiting rooms for chemotherapy and radiotherapy. I suggested she might consider tapping preventively on her anticipatory anxieties of not enjoying these long, dreary waiting periods – so that she didn't suffer from worrying about what might or might not happen. I also suggested she could tap on her problems while sitting in the waiting rooms.

To her surprise, Millie found that by eliminating her anticipatory anxieties she was calm enough that she rarely needed to tap on worries while she was waiting for treatments or to see doctors. She nevertheless chose to tap during those waiting periods on other stresses in her life. This changed her waiting room experience from one of not looking forward to her treatments into looking forward to times when she could sit in a place of inner calm and peace. And Phil found that by tapping while sitting in his car, before leaving the parking lot at work, first on any residual stresses from his workday, and then on anticipatory anxieties about Millie's condition, he was much calmer when he came home and more available to support Millie.

In these ways, you too can build and strengthen your positivity.

There are many further ways you can address both major and minor ongoing problems and frustrations that otherwise could build up to the point of tipping you into anxiety and irritability – in which states you are at risk for being triggered by current stresses or trauma residues. You don't have to have a serious illness, like Millie, to benefit from reducing your anticipatory anxieties. How about tapping when you're:

- Sitting in your car in heavy traffic that is moving slowly (Tapping with your tongue against your teeth on the right and left sides of your teeth or cheeks is recommended, as tapping with hands or feet could impair your ability to drive.)
- Standing in a long line at a checkout counter
- Waiting on the phone for customer service
- Waiting for the kettle to boil or roast to cook.
- Waiting for a family member to get ready to leave home

And once you've immunized yourself against irritability over your niggling frustrations, you can then use these opportunities to focus on other, generally irritating and annoying issues that lower your tolerance for dealing with more important and immediate issues in your life, such as:

- Frustrations with bureaucratic problems
- Habits of people around you that you find irritating but can do nothing to change
- Delays in bringing your hopes, dreams and plans to rapid and satisfying fruition
- Financial limitations
- Political and economic issues that are beyond your abilities to influence

By doing these preventive clearings of irritating, annoying and frustrating issues, you leave yourself with much more energy to address the more immediate and really important issues in your life. And here, too, there may be opportunities for preventive clearing of negativities. For instance:

- If you find yourself over-focused on personal issues that stir your emotions, and you obsess over issues you can't change or fix
- If you find that you have to repeatedly remind people around you that in dealing with you or your sensitive child she has to allow each of you time to process your feelings about situations and relationships before you can move into decision-making mode

### **Clearing meta-negative thoughts and feelings**

We've considered some of the basics of tapping to reduce emotional distress and build positivity. Here, we'll look at how you can address your meta-negative and meta-positive feelings to enhance how you deal with your emotions.

Your awareness of having negative experiences generates various feelings and thoughts – about the feelings and thoughts that you're having. This is particularly relevant to those of us who are HSPs, because our heightened sensitivities make us more reactive in general when we're feeling reactive in any areas of our lives. For instance:

- You may get anxious that your anxieties and worries about your finances are going to derail your abilities to concentrate on your studies and work.
- You may become discouraged, frustrated and angry when you find that your progress in clearing an issue is slower than you had hoped, or that you're finding more problems linked to your initial focus issue and needing to clear the decks of side-issues and sharpen your attention before you can clear the main problem you want to address.
- You may be depressed that you're having so much reactivity and annoyance to your situation that you are also irritable in general, and this is impacting how you get along with your HSPC.
- You may develop a generalized 'poor me' attitude, expecting you'll never be able to overcome your problems, feel better, or have a better relationship with your HSPC or HSP.
- You may get into a negative spiral of irritation and negativity with your HSP or HSPC, coming to a place where you put up your guard when you're together because you anticipate your interactions will be annoying, disappointing or painful.
- Being frustrated, anxious, depressed or discouraged about your tapping, your two-chair work, or other approaches you are using may weaken your motivation to put in the time to do the clearing that can lighten your load.

So, when you find yourself discouraged and holding negative anticipations because your progress is slower than you had hoped, or your relationships more difficult and frustrating than you know how to address, you can ask yourself whether you have any meta-feelings or meta-thoughts that are getting in your way of giving all you've got to helping yourself be the best you can be and do the best you can do.

Writing down your observations about your situation can be enormously helpful. When you're stressed, it's easy to forget a brilliant insight into your problems, or a very promising new approach for dealing with them.

The good news is that meta-feelings and thoughts usually respond much more readily to tapping and other clearing approaches than your primary issues do.

I (Dan) developed a partial paralysis of my left vocal cord for no apparent reason. Medical examinations, including varieties of scans, revealed no physical cause for the hoarseness in my voice, which was worse when I was tired, dehydrated or anxious. Tapping on general and specific outer-world anxieties was only mildly effective, and minimally effective regarding my anxieties about my hoarse voice.

I developed meta-anxieties, as I became more concerned and anxious about my work on my voice being only modestly helpful. This was paralyzing. I started spiraling into despair.

Realizing I was succumbing to meta-anxieties, I started tapping on these fears. Within a day, I reduced them to close to zero. But the hoarseness remained annoyingly troublesome.

I then came into awareness that in the course of the early childhood abuse that I had suffered over a period of 3-4 years, my abusers had told me that I must never speak about what I experienced, and that if I did, there would be very negative consequences. It felt as though these threats were probably reinforced with post-hypnotic suggestions never to speak about any of these experiences. I've been unable to clarify many of the precise details of this silencing aspect of the abuse I suffered, but I've had moderate improvements in my voice through clearing more general meta-statements, such as:

- "Even though I'm afraid to speak out about the traumas I've suffered because I've been told I'd lose my voice if I did..."
- "Even though I'm feeling scared that something bad will happen to me if I tell anyone about the bad things that were done to me and the terrible emotional scars I've carried from these experiences through the rest of my live..."

Gradually, my voice continues to improve with these sorts of tapping statements, addressing the meta-anxieties and meta-injunctions to not speak out regarding the abuse I experienced, along with the memories of my suffering the abuses themselves.

### **Clearing meta-negative expectations in repeating situations**

You can also be proactive about dealing with meta-anxieties. Think for a few moments about meta-negative feelings and thoughts in your life.

- Do you feel unhappy or anxious when you think of particular people with whom you have to interact?
- Are there parts of your job, chores or responsibilities that weigh heavily on you, that you are prone to worry or fret over?
- Do issues you anticipate in the future worry you, such as finances, health or the unfolding of relationships over time?
- Do you sigh or feel heaviness or other unpleasant sensations in some parts of your body when you find your mind and feelings visiting such concerns?

Tapping on the meta-anxieties that are attached to your past experiences of such issues can markedly facilitate the releases of thoughts and feelings you have directly about them. Tapping on meta-negative anticipations of repeated negativities can likewise reduce their intensity and ease your future repetitions of similar experiences.

### **Preventive installing of positivity and meta-positivity**

In the early years of my studies of how to help people understand themselves and feel better, I had difficulties understanding why healthcare is focused so heavily on treating problems when people are sick, rather than on promoting health and preventive healing. It finally dawned on me that the answers to this question are similar from both the caregivers' and the careseekers' perspectives. Caregivers are demonstrably helpful when people are sick or in pain. Careseekers come for help when they are sick or in pain. In most cases, neither careseekers nor caregivers are particularly motivated to address how to become healthy and to stay healthy.

This is also why caregivers tend to stop their interventions when people have recuperated from injuries or illnesses. Neither caregivers nor careseekers have the mindset to continue working on what doesn't seem to need any more fixing.

A further disincentive for caregivers is that there are enormous investments in facilities and therapies, particularly in drugs, for treating people. There is far more money to be made in treating illness than in preventive it, particularly in countries with private healthcare systems.

In my experience, this is a serious mistake. Particularly with pain, stress, trauma and other psychological problems, and especially when these impact your body and other parts of your wholistic being, you are far better off when you go the extra miles required to install positive thoughts and feelings after releasing negative ones. Whatever negativity you have released is much less likely to return when you address your problems with this sort of wholistic healing.

Furthermore, your positivities in any areas of your life are great models for building positivity for other problems. In addition, the habit of installing positivities develops meta-positive attitudes, expectations and skills. And the meta-meta-positives (meta-positive about meta-positives) is that meta-positives build your confidence in your abilities to deal with issues in general, and then to install positives and meta-positives to replace the negativity you've released.

- "I'm really doing well with my \_\_\_\_\_ [name issue(s)]. I'm certain I can also do well with my \_\_\_\_\_ [other issue(s)]."

- “I’m having serious challenges standing up to my [boss/ husband/ parents]. I wonder how I can apply the approaches I learned to use when I was in school, to help me now in dealing with my challenges in these current situations?”

Similarly, you can build meta-positive thoughts and feelings as you have pleasant and enjoyable emotions and thoughts about aspects of your life, and not just when you’ve succeeded in dealing with negativity. These meta-positives encourage you to persist and expand your positive activities on your own and in interactions with other people, which in turn improve your chances of having further good experiences developing in your life. On intuitive and spiritual levels, this also sets up vibrations that invite the universe to send more positivity your way.

Another way to build positivity is to create an inner place of peace and safety and healing (PPSH). This is an imaginary place where you are absolutely safe, where you can have anything you need for protection and healing. You’ll find that when you use your PPSH for enhancing your sense of being safe in the world, as well as for relaxation, meditation and stress reduction, you’ll gain confidence in how well your PPSH can help you. Even anticipating visiting and spending some time there will feel positive – which is a meta-positive.

You can further enhance such meta-positives by pausing as you’re ending your positive experiences (such as a visit in your PPSH), consciously looking forward to the next time you will be in this special space, and tapping as you do so. This will enhance the intensity of your positive awarenesses and your intention to remember to access this positivity whenever you wish and need to do so. You can also anchor your sense of a positive connection with your PPSH by pressing on any part of your body. This links that point which you have touched to the PPSH, so that in the future you can press on the point and it will connect you with the PPSH.

You can enhance the future effectiveness of positive experiences with the help of TWR/WHEE and other approaches by deliberately creating meta-positives associated with these positivities. Here’s how you can do this. When you experience relief from pains, stress, trauma residues and other negativity, take a few moments to build, install and strengthen meta-positives about the benefits you are experiencing.

- “Wow! I’ve really had wonderful pain relief after suffering from [insert your pain experience] that I’ve suffered for [insert length of time]. I now know I can do this with other physical pains and for relief from other stress and distress.”

- “I did so well on my last exam because I was tapping my feet quietly as I considered the questions and wrote out my answers. I’m certain I can be calm when I study for future exams, as well as when I take the exams, and I’ll continue to do better and better. My exam anxiety is a thing of the past now!”

Building and strengthening your meta-positive thoughts and feelings about your relationships with other people can also be enormously helpful. If either of you is prone to recurrent upsets or feeling down or hopeless, this can be very trying and wearing in your relationship. Instead of saying to yourself, “OMG! Here we go again...”

- “into the bottomless pit of anger/ low self-esteem/ poor me/ family issues!”
- “into the cycle of comfort eating/ drinking/ sleepless nights with worrying about \_\_\_\_\_!”
- “into his blaming me/ our kids/ our limited earnings/ our \_\_\_\_\_!”

You can draw upon your PPSH or anchored positivity and ask yourself:

- “What can I say that will help him feel better?”

- “What can I point out about her progress that will help her, like a life-raft would, when she’s feeling she’s drowning in her negative experiences?”

- “I could remind her how successful she was with \_\_\_\_\_”
- “She’s tired and frustrated with these problems right now. I could suggest putting the problems on the shelf for this evening, as it’s getting late, and promise to help her tomorrow over breakfast. She’s a morning person, anyway, so that’s a better time to deal with these issues.”

- Endless repetitions of the same stresses from the same people”
  - “How would it be if I offered to run interference for him?”
- “I could thank his parents for their well-meant (but inappropriate) advice, but let them know I’m here to help him, particularly in issues in our marriage, our parenting, and our life together in general, and we’ve been doing better and better figuring things out together.”
  - “What comforts can I offer when she’s facing challenges from the universe?”
- “I could remind her of Mother Theresa’s complaints about the universe sending her major challenges because she’s done so well with the less challenging ones...”

*Mother Theresa was asked, “How do you manage to continue your work, considering how serious the challenges are that you are constantly being asked to deal with?”*

*She closed her eyes briefly, heaving a great sigh, and answered, “The Good Lord sends us challenges that we are meant to learn from, and that we are able to deal with. Sometimes, though, I wish He wouldn’t compliment me so much!”*

- Anonymous

Acknowledging progress in the form of change over time is another type of meta-positive. For example, if you’re an NHSP, you may have to keep reminding yourself that when your HSP is upset, if you want to help her shift out of her ‘down’ feelings, she may feel better if she has some praises and reassurances. Helpful ego boosters might include:

- “You’re pretty upset, and with good reasons. [Pause for acknowledgment.] But look at the progress you’ve made since...”
- “You’re really doing well, considering how you used to get triggered by... and now you just...”
- “You used to react [describe details] and now you’re able to [note improvements]...”

#### WHAT ARE MILESTONES AND PROGRESS YOU CAN ACKNOWLEDGE?

Let’s put expand a little on some of these observations.

#### **Broader applications of proactive, preventive positivity and wholistic housecleaning**

If governments invested in preventive measures, like teaching and promoting healthy diets, exercise and stress reduction, trillions of dollars would be saved in long-term healthcare costs. Similarly, when people have been willing to address their stresses proactively, I’ve seen enormous benefits with preventive uses of TWR/WHEE, both personally and professionally. My dream is to see children taught these methods from their earliest years in school. Teachers report that children are able to settle down quickly in class with tapping, and find it enormously helpful with anxieties around tests, social anxieties and bullying. They appreciate it enormously for its easy, immediate availability, ease of use, and for being able to use it discretely, without anyone else knowing they are de-stressing.

Once children (and adults too) have some of these positive experiences with de-stressing, they build up their meta-positive anticipations and expectations that they will be successful in dealing with future challenges. They also remind each other to tap on their problems when they see someone else who is getting frustrated, irritated or upset.

And let’s remember also to be proactive in building, sharing and spreading general positivity. It can be a lovely warm fuzzy to share your good feelings and emotions with your partner, family and friends. And you needn’t restrict yourself to these inner circles of people in your life. You can generate lots of more warm fuzzies when you connect with random strangers and share little warm fuzzies with them.

- Just wearing a smile generates smiles in return.
- Smiling at babies and children and their parents costs very little, but can be a nice little boost in their day and yours.

- Make it a point on a chosen day to smile as often as you can remember to do so. See how you feel at the end of the day. Next day, make it a point to refrain from smiling as much as you can manage. See how you feel at the end of that day.
- Adding your positive, warm comment to something positive you see or overhear while waiting on a street corner for a red light, at a bus stop, or in a checkout lane in a store reinforces the positivity you are observing and resonating with.
- Thanking a store clerk, a telephone salesperson, or a public vehicle driver for their help is often an unexpected and much appreciated little boost in their day.
  - I laughingly complimented a phone banking person on her precision and clarity in repeating a standard, formalized explanation of procedures to me, which was required for every customer with whom she spoke. I speculated that this was probably not the first time she had repeated these sentences. She burst out laughing, which was a total change from her tense, hurried recital of what must have become absolutely boring to her. She thanked me, with a cheerful tone in her voice, for being the first customer to have ever acknowledged this. We were both cheerful on ending what otherwise would have been a routine and boring call for each of us.
- Get to know your neighbors. Even if it's again just through smiles and little comments. This can markedly change your feeling about the physical place in the world where you live.

## **Meditation**

*If you are depressed, you are living in the past.  
 If you are anxious, you are living in the future.  
 If you are at peace, you are living in the present.*  
 - Lao Tzu

Meditation has been practiced by people around the world for thousands of years. Meditation is a discipline of the mind, which can help you to calm every aspect of your being. This is an outstanding proactive healing practice.

There are countless ways to meditate. The core principle is to choose a focus for concentration and then practice, practice, practice – disciplining your consciousness to remain engaged only with your chosen focus, and releasing attachments to any other sensations, feelings, thoughts or other awarenesses.

When you're learning and practicing your meditation, your mind may wander anywhere and everywhere. Don't wrestle with these distractions or get engaged with the meta-awareness that you are distracted. Just return your awareness gently to your chosen focus of breathing in and out.

While it is easy to describe the process of meditation, it is challenging for most people to get in the groove of a limited focus and remain there. Most people actually find this to be a challenge at first. The mind has been described by meditators as being like "a band of cavorting monkeys." When you start practicing, you will probably find endless distractions.

- Body sensations will draw your attention, as in stiffness or aches in muscles and joints, itches, tiredness of muscles that are unfamiliar with resting in stillness, eyes that want to wander, ears that attend to any and every sound, and so on...
- Emotions will arise, such as anxieties, sadness and anger.
- Thoughts will intrude, like frustration, impatience, disappointment, irritation, annoyance, self-criticism and random awarenesses about your life and activities.
- If you're in a meditation group, you may criticize yourself for not being as good as others around you, or you may berate yourself due to your expectations that you ought to be able to do as well as others seem to be doing or as you expected you'd be able to do.
- You may be hoping to open into spiritual awareness, one of the ultimate goals of many forms of meditation, and frustrated that this is not happening.



There is no way around this but to practice, practice, practice!

My favorite book on meditation is by Lawrence LeShan (1974), a very wise psychologist who worked for decades to help people deal effectively with their cancers, and has studied meditation and healing through intentions. He finds, as I do, that different people do better with different meditations.

Here are a few examples you can explore:

- Observe your breath moving in and out. Say, silently, to yourself “In” as you breathe in, and “Out” as you release your breath. Nothing more to do. Just observe and acknowledge.
- Count your breaths. Say, silently, to yourself, “One” as you breathe in, “and” as you breathe out; “two” as you breathe in, “and” as you breathe out; etc. up to “four” and then start over again.
- Word focus: Choose a word or phrase that feels good to you, making it your mantra (meditation word(s) for focusing your mind). Anything like
  - Peace
  - Healing
  - “I am one with [Nature/ the All/ the Infinite Source/ God/ Christ/ Allah/ the Buddha]
  - Or any other word or phrase that you resonate with in a good way.
  - Repeat your mantra at a slow and regular pace, perhaps matching your word or phrase to your breathing.
- Focus on an object: Pick anything you find attractive and engaging, such as a flower, a picture, a meaningful symbol or whatever else appeals to you. Connect with its shape, color, texture and essence. Open your mind and heart to join and become one with it. Sense its inner essence.
- For anyone with a chatty mind which doesn’t want to stop chewing on one thing after another (like my own), one of the following may be helpful:
  - Picture to yourself that you’re sitting comfortably by the side of a flowing stream or river, after a brisk rain, with many little bits of branches, leaves and other flotsam floating past you. As any inner distraction draws your attention away from your image of the stream, place whatever has distracted you, gently and lovingly, on something that is floating by. You may release your attention as soon as you do so, or watch it till it floats out of sight. Then return, waiting patiently for any further distractions that arise, and treat each of them the same way.
  - Imagine yourself sitting on a bridge over railroad tracks, with an endless line of empty boxcars passing below you. Drop anything that intrudes on your attention into one of the boxcars below you and return to wait patiently for any further distractions that arise, and treat each of them the same way.
- Ritualized movement can be a meditation. T’ai Chi is a ritualized Chinese series of exercises in slow motion, requiring your focus on your breath and on each step of the movement exercise.
- Mindfulness meditation invites you to observe whatever draws your attention, without engaging with it. You simply note to yourself it is there and let it drift by your awareness, without any attachment to it. Some find that holding your attention on your heart, noting what it is feeling but not engaging with the feelings is particularly effective. Mindfulness meditation is one of the most popular and well researched in the West. It has been shown to help the brain to grow and maintain its thickness, improve interpersonal relationships, improve abilities to study, decrease anxiety, depression and chronic pains and more (AMRA, web ref; Flaxman & Flook, web ref; Goyal, Singh & Sibinga, 2014).
- And last on this introductory meditations list, I add “the Zone,” a growing awareness of sports as an additional form of mindfulness focus, as explained by Rick Leskowitz (2017), a Harvard psychiatrist, who has been studying measurable effects of collective consciousness in sports spectators.
 

“...preliminary data suggest that sport is like yoga and meditation and prayer, a powerful vehicle for entering the integral state of psychospiritual union.” This is referred to “as ‘the Zone’ – the near-mythical state of mind-body alignment that all athletes (elite and recreational) seek... [A]chieving this state can be facilitated by a range of practices that include many modalities from the world of alternative and complementary medicine... innovators have developed training methods that enable their students to intentionally enter this so-called flow state.”

There are countless other varieties of meditations. Any activity can, in effect, become a meditation when we use it as a mental focus. Yoga, tai chi and quigong are commonly used in this way, and any other activity can serve the same purpose.

Various wholistic benefits of meditation may include:

- Decreases in stress reactions, anxieties, pains and other body symptoms
- Thicker brain cortex areas serving attention and sensory processing
- Enhanced immune system functioning
- Heightened empathic awareness
- Improved relationships
- Improved school and work performance

With any of these approaches, you will do increasingly better with a regularly scheduled meditation practice. Daily meditation is recommended. Check how it feels to meditate at different hours of the day, to find which works best for you. In some ancient meditative traditions, 3:00 or 4:00 a.m. is recommended.

You may wish to explore several of these variations on the theme of meditation. You may find that a particular one works well for you now, but stops being as helpful after a while. If that happens, check out another approach. It may work well at that later date, even if you didn't do well with it earlier.

You may find meditation helpful in decreasing stress, in addition to enhancing your mental focus. A regular practice of meditations offers a resource similar to your PPSH. This is an invaluable tool with enormous wholistic spectrum benefits. While it doesn't have as great an impact in reducing the intensity of acute situations, nor is it as focused and specific in its effects as tapping, its overall effects are very deeply healing.

### **Clearing trauma**

Trauma is such a common and serious contributor to problems on every wholistic level of your being that I mention it briefly here. It is generally through your conscious mind that you can identify when you are being triggered into trauma memories and emotions, and through your mental understanding, intentions and learned skills that you can constructively address your traumas.

It can be very difficult when you first become aware of your traumas to identify when you are being triggered, much less to muster resources to deal with the trauma when you are in a triggered state. Typically, something in your current life will stimulate you into an emotional reaction that other observers would call an excessively strong response. For you, however, the triggered feelings are so intense that you are very focused on your anxieties, fears, trauma memories, anger, panic or other emotions. You attribute these feelings to whatever in your current life is triggering them.

Other observers, such as a friend or a therapist may point out to you that the reactions you experienced to the trauma may be addressed and cleared with various therapies and self-healing approaches. With time and repeated reflections on recurring situations of these sorts, you, too, can come to recognize when your responses to the situations are more strong than is probably warranted by the current life situations that triggered them. You will then be able to open the doors of your memories to earlier traumas that were triggered by your current life situation and clear these deeper sources of stress and distress along with the current life triggers and their sources.

It is very common to find that people who develop close relationships have similar trauma issues in their past that are part of the parcel of factors that draw you to each other. The similarities in your life histories give you common points of references, life experiences and understandings of each other and of the world at large. On spiritual levels, our higher selves also bring us together to help each other recognize the issues that have left us with trauma residues and to help each other learn to identify and to clear them.

And once we clear our trauma residues, we become much less vulnerable to getting triggered again by these particular sorts of issues. This is one of the most important and helpful approaches to housecleaning that we can do

## Journaling

Writing down the problems, emotions and thoughts you experience, and how you deal with them can be enormously helpful (Dalebout, 2016; Patel, 2015). Benefits include:

- Having a record of the issues that triggered your trauma responses
- Calming yourself through the writing down your trauma responses
- Exploring various approaches to see which work best for you
- Having a record of the various wordings you used in clearing traumas, so you can return to use those that were most successful, as well as working on improving the focus on various issues and refining the wordings that only cleared your issues partially or not at all.
- Creating a list of issues you can address through whatever therapeutic approaches work best for you
- Building habits of clearing triggers for your trauma responses
- Having a record of your successes in dealing with problems
- Building habits of installing positive thoughts and feelings to replace the negative ones you've released
- Having a record of the wordings you used for building positivities

*In the journal I do not just express myself more openly than I could to any person; I create myself. The journal is a vehicle for my sense of selfhood. It represents me as emotionally and spiritually independent. Therefore... it does not simply record my actual, daily life but rather – in many cases - offers an alternative to it.*

- Susan Sontag

People often find journaling to be:

- An aid in sorting out emotions that feel overwhelming
- A very calming approach for sorting out triggered trauma responses
- A serious aid in bringing in a more grounded and calmer awareness of yourself, helping you put more distance between your core, safe self and the intensity of your emotional reactions when you feel overwhelmed and helpless to deal with these
- A reliable resource and aid in decreasing the intensity of negative triggering you experience
- A help in your building more positivity in your life.
- A record of progress on your path of healing

## So what's it all about?

My personal sense of spiritual awareness is that we are all parts of the Infinite Source, gathering our experiences on this planet to bring back with us when we return from this field trip into denser realms of experience, and from distancing of our consciousness from the Infinite Source.

I sometimes speculate whether the Infinite Source might have gotten bored with knowing everything about everything. S/he therefore created beings who periodically forgot their connection to their own higher selves and to the Infinite Source. Their challenge is to work their ways back into remembering their connection to Spirit. We would not know light as light in the same ways that we do when we contrast it with darkness.

## Endnote

1. This editorial is taken largely from a chapter in my upcoming book on wholistic healing for the highly sensitive person (HSP).

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