

You have limitless potential. Now use it.

Just as Tai Chi has been used for centuries to balance body and mind, *Mind Chi* will help you increase your mental energy and be more effective in everything you do. And all you need is 8 minutes a day...

What is Mind Chi?

Mind Chi is a powerful synthesis of thought and action based on the most recent research into how the brain works. By following the simple, daily exercises in this book, you will raise your mental performance to a level you never thought possible.

Discover:

- Sharper powers of concentration and information management
- Improved control over your attention span, memory, thoughts and feelings
- Fast and easy ways to reduce your stress and increase your confidence
- New positive habits, thoughts and mental resilience
- Fantastic energy levels, during and after your work day

Plus

50 Strategies for Success in Business & Life

8 minutes a day is all it takes to open up a world of superior mental performance.



£14.99 / US \$23.95 / CAN \$28.95

Richard Israel is a consultant, international speaker, trainer and co-author of the bestselling *Brain\$ell* with Tony Buzan. He has forty years of experience in sales and marketing, sales training, leadership, and mental literacy.

Vanda North was President of the International Society for Accelerated Learning & Teaching, and founded Buzan Centres worldwide for 20 years. Vanda has written several books and her inspiration is sought by leading commercial organizations, educational institutions and governments.



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MIND
CHI

Re-wire
your
BRAIN

8
minutes
a day

Richard Israel
& Vanda North



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Richard Israel & Vanda North

MIND CHI

Re-wire
your BRAIN
in
8 minutes
a day



Strategies for Success in Business & Life

Reviews for *Mind Chi*

'When I read Mind Chi I said to myself, "It's about time." Mind Chi takes contemporary knowledge of the brain, the best thinking from Psychology and the wisdom of the ages and packages these in a format that allows access to their power. An eight minute daily dose of Mind Chi may not cure warts but it will certainly improve vitality, reduce stress and allow us to see the many blessings of life more clearly.'

Stephen C. Lundin PhD, author of the five million copy best-selling
FISH!

'Leonardo had it, Edison had it, and now you can have it too. "It" is Mind Chi. This powerful book will show you how to cultivate, integrate and apply your mental energy for breakthrough performance in all walks of life.'

Michael J Gelb, author of *How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci* and
Innovate Like Edison

'Mind Chi is a novel, interesting, and practical way to boost your brainpower. Eight minutes a day is a worthwhile investment for anyone who's serious about personal development, well-being and happiness.'

Dr. Karl Albrecht, executive advisor, futurist, speaker, and author of
Practical Intelligence: the Art and Science of Common Sense

'Although there are many parts of Mind Chi that are attractive to me, I believe you teach people how to conquer the No. 1 cause for forgetting: distraction. Eight minutes of uninterrupted focus not only begins the day but sets the tempo for each productive hour. Before the end of the day, you will be amazed at how much you have accomplished'

Scott Hagwood, author of *Memory Power*

'Vanda North and Richard Israel have crafted a tour de force that will transform lives. With passion, compassion, humour, and discipline, their calling is evidenced as a call to action ... that your destiny matters. Buy this book, live its contents, and help others awaken to its dazzling delights!'

Dilip Mukerjea, author of titles in *The Creative Brain* series

'Mind Chi gives you techniques you can immediately practice for long-lasting results'

Conni Gordon, best-selling author of the *4-step Instant Art Method*

'Mind Chi is a leading edge compendium of practical exercises to optimise your mental energy. Applying the techniques on a regular basis gives the reader the potential to reach their goals and maximise the quality of their life as well as achieve greater levels of work performance.'

Helen Whitten, Managing Director of Positiveworks, UK, executive coach and author of *Cognitive-behavioural Coaching Techniques For Dummies* and *Emotional Healing For Dummies*

'This easy-to-read book offers real tips to help you make remarkable changes. Discover how to replace negative thinking, sharpen your mental acuity, strengthen your concentration and increase your energy. Mix and match the 50 Mind Chi Strategies for Success to create your own inner harmony. Control the mind and become the master of your destiny.'

Margo Berman, Florida International University professor and author of *Street-Smart Advertising* and *The Brains Behind Great Ad Campaigns*

'I am delighted to recommend Richard Israel and Vanda North's Mind Chi Program. I have known Richard personally for years and I can attest to his ability to find ideas 'on the cusp' and translate those ideas into workable programs. Mind Chi is a long overdue program which has finally arrived! I hope that you find it as helpful as I did.'

Bernie Cleveland, PhD, CEO, TeacherOnlineEducation.com

'Great Insight... In a challenging world Richard Israel and Vanda North's Mind Chi paves the way to be smarter about tackling life in the workplace. Mind Chi enables the readers to step outside themselves and see what they really need to see.'

Jeffrey Meshel, author of *One Phone Call Away, Secrets of a Master Networker*

'Not only have both Vanda and Richard successfully applied Mind Chi personally, but now they can transfer this to professionals and organizations for revolutionary success!'

Jamie Nast, author of *Idea Mapping*

MIND CHI

Re-wire Your Brain in 8 Minutes a Day

*For Sarah Sutton,
whose extraordinary level of commitment to this project is unprecedented*

MIND CHI

Re-wire Your Brain in 8 Minutes a Day

*Strategies for Success in
Business and Life*

Richard Israel and Vanda North



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Who wrote *Mind Chi*?



Richard Israel is a consultant, speaker, trainer and author. Richard has forty years of experience and international expertise in sales training, leadership development, creativity, and memory training with a unique skill of applying cognitive science. As a pioneer in creating 'brain capital' he is sought after around the world. His work has increased the intellectual capital within organizations and enabled teams and individuals to achieve optimal performance. More than one and a half million people across four continents have been educated utilizing his material. He has consulted with companies in the retail, hospitality, airline, manufacturing and service industries, coaching them to achieve increased business results and discover new business opportunities.



Vanda North's life purpose is to assist people to rediscover and enhance their natural joy quotient. Her life has been dedicated to this end. From TV shows, to books, to setting up a global network, to training tens of thousands of people to living a joyous life! She concentrates on: improving stress management through 'Happiness & Wellness' classes; enabling learning through accelerated learning techniques, maps, memory, speedy-reading and info-intake methods (for both learning abled and 'dis'-abled); developing self leadership with communication, commitment and contentment; and now Mind Chi. Vanda travels the world delivering seminars and does adventure trekking, such as climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, to raise money for her local hospital.

Also by the authors

Brain\$ell, Tony Buzan and Richard Israel

The BrainSmart Leader, Tony Buzan, Tony Dottino and Richard Israel

Business mapping, Vanda North

Get Ahead: Map your way to success, Vanda North

Get Ahead: Teen Learning Success, Vanda North

Grass Roots Leader: The brainsmart revolution in business, Tony Buzan, Tony Dottino, Richard Israel

How to Think Creatively: Using the 'TILS' 4-step technique, Conni Gordon and Richard Israel

Joy Journey, Vanda North

Sales Genius, Tony Buzan and Richard Israel

Shifting Gears: How you can succeed and lead in the new workplace – The technology of success, Susan Ford Collins and Richard Israel

The Spark, Vanda North

SuperSellf, Tony Buzan and Richard Israel

The Vision, Julianne Crane and Richard Israel

Your Mind at Work: Developing self-knowledge for business success, Richard Israel, Helen Whitten, Cliff Shaffran

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From Vanda:

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of the result. Then I want to say a general thank you to everyone who has shared gems with me over the years that have now become a part of who I am and how I function. There is not room to name you all and there is always a special place of gratitude in my heart for you. And most importantly, those who have had to be by my side, my family and co-author! You have been my rock, my star, my joy, my sounding board and my sustenance. You are deeply appreciated.

From both of us:

We have been blessed! The role of mid-wife, coach and guiding light has been played by an angel who goes by the name of Sarah Sutton. From conception through the early ‘formative years’ of Mind Chi, she has been there. The book you hold, is here because of her dedication and expertise. ‘Thank you’ is just the tip of the gratitude-burg we feel.

Our team from Wiley, we thank for their dedication, patience, support and flexibility and are grateful for their graciousness.

To all that have ever attended our seminars – we thank you for the learning we received from you.

Special Mention goes to our mentor, Tony Buzan, who for the last twenty years was our teacher, coach, inspiration and friend and who encouraged us to fly.

Finally, a heartfelt thanks goes to Jamie Nast for her unwavering support, she is a true believer in mental literacy and a class act.

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Mind Chi *fast track*

Here is a whistle-stop tour through the basic structure of Mind Chi – an overview of the benefits and features of the adventure you are about to start. A more detailed introduction follows, but here is what you need to know right now.

What is Mind Chi?

Mind Chi is your mental energy. Mind Chi shows you how to build, manage and direct your mental energy for increased success in business and life. It allows you to reinvent yourself with superior performance for changing times. Mind Chi provides you with a special present, to (re)gain control over yourself – your one oasis of security in this shifting season.

The benefits of Mind Chi

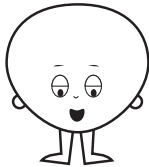
- fast and easy ways to improve your thinking
- change disruptive thoughts to supportive ones
- rapidly develop new positive habits
- mental processes that keep you stress free and confident

- upgrade your attention span, memory and belief systems
- have control over your feelings, thoughts and behaviours
- improve resilience and information management; and
- ‘more mental and physical energy during and after your work!’

Why is Mind Chi different?

- 1 Mind Chi builds four powerful change processes right into the activities, seamlessly assisting you to make the changes you want; they are your **Mind Chi Vehicle** for change.
- 2 Mind Chi applies the latest research on how your brain/mind functions to how this information can actually make a positive difference in your life, via your **Mind Chi Program**.
- 3 Mind Chi comes with a built-in guide, ‘**Chi**’ – your Mind Chi Mentor will help you achieve your goals and strengthen your willpower. ‘Chi’ will embed your positive, new **Mind Chi Meme**.
- 4 Mind Chi is a brain-friendly program, providing very ‘simple’ yet deeply profound processes that you can use to organize your thoughts and plan your life: your **Mind Chi Maps**. Mind Chi offers you control over yourself, your **Body, Emotions, Actions** and **Thoughts** in this present moment, using **Your Mind Chi BEAT**.

Yes! These are BIG claims, and we believe you can do it!



Make it Mind Chi-easy

- **Start today** – with eight minutes of Mind Chi a day for 28 days. You will gain a foothold of control and experience what is possible.
- **Solve a problem** with your Mind Chi Plan – use the 50 completed Strategies for Success, or write your own.
- **Attain your goals** – your Mind Chi Vehicle will take you there, ably assisted by ‘Chi’ your Mind Chi mentor.

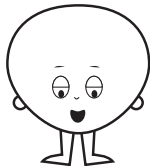
Mind Chi philosophy

It is into the schools of Positive Psychology, Mental Wellness and Eudemonics that Mind Chi firmly fits. What is right about you and how can you have more of it? What processes and knowledge can assist you to direct your will to produce the outcomes you desire. How can you fix the, relatively, minor impediments and enhance the features you want. How can you flourish!?

That is what Mind Chi is all about!

Psst ...

I can assist you!



4

Mind Chi Basic

Overview

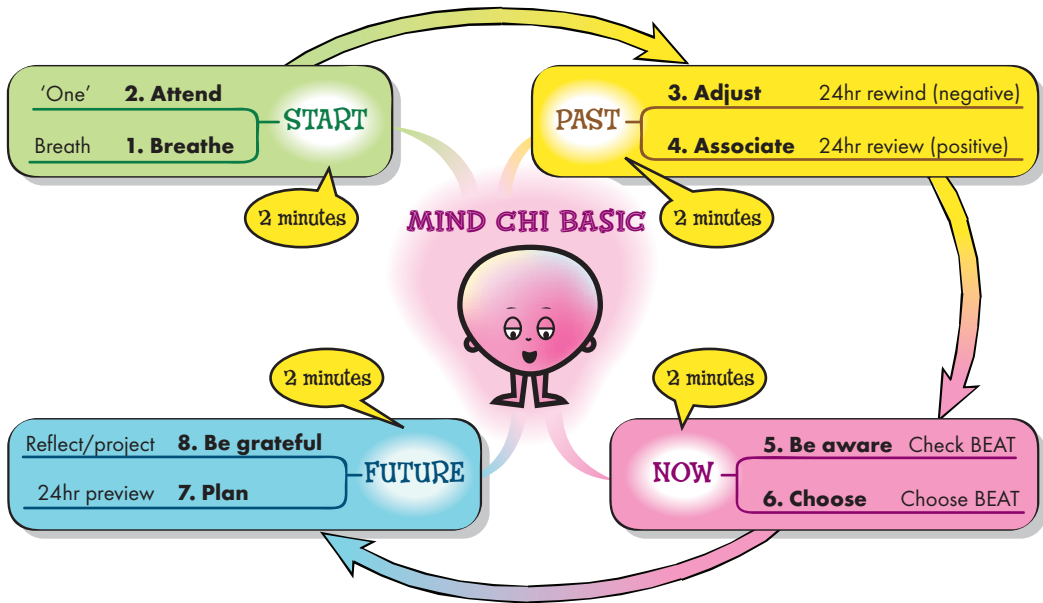
- Mind Chi Start
- Mind Chi Past
- Mind Chi Now
- Mind Chi Future
- Mind Chi FAQs

The eight steps of the Mind Chi Basic process will take you only eight minutes a day. Mind Chi takes place in your mind. You don't need pens, paper or a computer, which means you can do it easily – at your desk, while you travel, at home or in bed. Try doing Mind Chi at different times of day to see what works best for you and your routine.

Initially you will need a timer, watch, clock or mobile phone with a second hand or a beeper setting, to alert you when the one minute time is up.

If possible, do the eight minute activities at the same time of day and in the same place each day. Select a time when you are not likely to be interrupted.

NOTE: If you are interrupted and need to stop your Mind Chi Basic before you have completed the eight steps, then start again with the Mind Chi Breath and continue where you left off.



Here is a map summary of the eight steps. You may find it helpful to print the map (Sample pages, page 328 or from the website, www.MindChi.com).

The topic is the Mind Chi Basic, so it is in the centre of the map.

Begin at '10 o'clock' to **Start**: Steps 1 and 2; follow the 'clock face' round to cross over to 1 o'clock for **Past**: Steps 3 and 4; down to 4 o'clock for **Now**: Steps 5 and 6. Finally, over to 7 o'clock for the two steps to create your **Future**: Steps 7 and 8.

Mind Chi Start



There are two steps at the start of Mind Chi; they are concerned with regaining control over your breath and mind. They will increase your personal wellness by helping to reduce your feelings of stress and take up the reins to bring your runaway attention span under control.

If your mind is easily distracted or preoccupied with past or future events – events you can't change and events that might never happen – you become stuck. Instead of moving forwards you become lodged in inactivity or negative thinking. So, before you start, summon up a 'vision' inside your head of the 'you' that is *all you want to be*. Just stay with that experience and feel its impact for a few seconds.

Breath control is at the foundation of nearly all stress-relieving strategies, from yoga to modern sports psychology. The power of breath to improve the health of the mind and body has been known for generations.

- Step 1: Breathe – to find inner calm and focus and increase your awareness of the present moment.
- Step 2: Attend – to focus on your ability to strengthen your command of focus and attention. The vitally important 'One' exercise is deceptively simple and yet powerful in its impact. It allows you to practice refocusing at will. You can regard this Mind Chi activity as strengthening your ability to concentrate by improving mental conditioning. Focused attention is a prime element of intelligence.

NOTE:

As you are learning these Mind Chi Basic steps, you may choose to become familiar with just one step per day for eight days. Or you may feel ready to take on several or all at one time. Pace yourself as you feel comfortable.

Step 1. *Breathe*

When you are anxious or excited, you may find yourself feeling breathless. You may gasp, in an attempt to increase the flow of oxygen to your brain – which helps you to cope with your anxiety. For example, even the thought of public speaking will put many people into ‘panic’ mode. The Mind Chi Breath technique can be an effective tool in managing anxiety.

Breathing exercises have long been at the heart of many health and healing practices and appear to have numerous positive effects. Breathing deeply and from the diaphragm will give you more energy; reduce your mental and physical fatigue; increase the supply of oxygen and nutrients to cells throughout your body, especially your brain; ease the strain on your heart by increasing the oxygen supply; relax muscle spasms and relieve tension. Further, breathing exercises can partially compensate for lack of exercise and inactivity due to illness or injury and enable you to recover faster from stress and exertion.

The act of breathing is not the same as the art of breathing! The act of breathing is controlled by your autonomic nervous system (ANS) and fortunately for you, it occurs naturally, without your intervention. This is fine most of the time; however, there is a sting in that tail. When you are nervous or feeling under threat, your automatic reaction takes over with the ‘fight or flight’ response. This means you are either gearing up for attack, or you want to run away. Adrenalin levels increase and your breathing becomes shallow, fast and short. This is alright for brief periods of time, but if you live life in a constant state of stress you will develop a shallow breathing pattern that actually reinforces your stress state. Conversely, when you are naturally relaxed, you take deeper, fuller, longer and slower breaths. This type of breathing is health inducing. This is the type of breathing you will do in Step 1: Breathe.

Activity 1: Your Mind Chi Breath

PURPOSE

Step 1 of Mind Chi Basic shows you how – when stressed and breathing fast and shallowly, you can consciously alter your breath to become slow, deep and full. Controlled breathing will calm your nerves and undo the negative impact of constant stressors. You may find the Mind Chi Breath especially useful at moments when you are anxious or angry. Your Mind Chi Breath is a quick and effective way to safeguard and restore your health and reduce the effects of negative stress.

ACTION

Set your timer or look at the second hand on a clock for one minute, so you can concentrate on your breathing. Place one open hand over your belly and the other high on your chest.

Breathe in slowly and deeply, check that your belly hand moves in and out with each breath while your chest hand remains almost still. Breathe slowly and deeply, as if you were deeply relaxed or asleep.

One way to control your breathing is to count through each part of the Mind Chi Breath cycle. Count slowly for three seconds as you breathe in, hold your breath for the count of three seconds and breathe out for three seconds: nine seconds per cycle. (If you feel comfortable, stay empty – wait for three seconds to breathe in: 12 seconds per cycle.) Then start the cycle again. Continue for a full minute.

Instead of using a timer, you can just count 7 Mind Chi Breath cycles of 9 seconds or 5 Mind Chi Breath cycles of 12 seconds = 60 seconds.

BENEFIT

Step 1 will reduce your negative stress levels, and improve the balance and harmony of your life. The depth, quality and rhythm of your breath are the keys to your health, well-being and positive performance. This simple activity has a great influence. It will create a positive shift in outlook in a very short time.

Step 2. Attend

How well can you attend? Attention is the ability to focus on a task and your ability to concentrate. Having full control over your concentration is central to your effective functioning in the world. Most people are frequently distracted throughout the day. In our increasingly frenetic world there is no rest from TV and the media; we allow phone calls and emails to interrupt our thoughts and the pace of technological multitasking leaves many people quailing in a fibrillating heap. But the main issue is that few people have ever been taught how to pay attention in the first place. 'Look at me when I am speaking to you!' was the cry from your teachers; so you learned to 'look' while your mind was everywhere else.

The Mind Chi Attention exercise will show you whether your thoughts are fragmented and what level of mind control you have currently. Practicing the 'One' activity will assist you to build your 'focused attention' and allow you to have the control to focus your attention for as long as you wish. To begin with you may find you have little control at all. The good news is that the exercise will quickly train your brain to concentrate more effectively. You will experience fast progress which will increase your motivation to keep going.

When you are concentrating, waves of electricity called the 'beta rhythm' are produced by your brain at a frequency of 12+ Hz. The 'One' exercise will tune up your concentration levels and increase your ability to focus your attention.

Activity 2: Your Mind Chi ‘One’

PURPOSE

Are you easily distracted, especially when slightly bored? This tendency is a real disadvantage in business, when concentration on the task in hand is all-important; and in communication, where your colleague or client is expecting your rapt attention.

ACTION

Set a clock or timer to 1 minute and focus on the blinker or look at the second hand on a watch or clock as you silently repeat, ‘One, one, one...’ to yourself.

As soon as a distracting thought intrudes, stop counting ‘one’ and change to ‘Two, two, two...’ and so on. Increase the number each time you have another intruding thought, even if the thought is just on the periphery of your mind. This way you will keep count of how many intruding thoughts you have during the minute.

This seems so simple. However, the way it tends to work is something like this, ‘One, one, one, Ah this is easy – Oops! – that was an intruding thought! Two, two, two, two, two, Have I planned for today’s meeting? – Oh! This is harder than I thought. Three, three, three, three, three ...’ and so on.

At the end of one minute note the number you reached. The goal is to be able to stay on ‘one’ without a single intruding thought for the whole sixty seconds.

BENEFIT

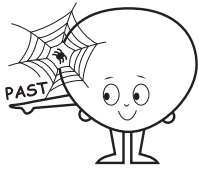
Step 2 will increase your attention span and improve your clarity of thought. These steps can be done whenever you feel the need to clear your mind, refocus or relieve stress.

Attention!

There are several kinds of attention:

- **Selective attention** – selecting a single aspect of a situation and ignoring all others, such as at a conference when you are striving to hear one person speak over the babble around you.
- **Divided attention** – where you are trying to focus on conflicting priorities, such as trying to concentrate on a serious telephone conversation whilst simultaneously writing an email. (Multiple and simultaneous responses are seldom effective, both usually suffer.)
- **Focused attention** – the ability to know how to concentrate on the subject of your choice (even if you find it boring) for an extended period of time. It is easier to pay focused attention to matters that interest you. However, you require your focused attention ‘muscle’ to work whenever necessary, even with activities that may not be on the top of your high interest list!

Mind Chi Past



Steps 3 and 4 make your memory sharper and fine tune your awareness of how negative or positive your thoughts really are, so you can choose and direct them consciously to become more positive and well-motivated.

By taking these two minutes each day, while your memories of the past 24 hours are still fresh, you gain control over their impact on your future. You will learn to put the negative into perspective and tease the ‘lessons’ from the experience. Most importantly, you will focus on all the things you did that were helpful and successful and start to build your positive memories. By building up a memory bank of positive thoughts, you are creating an antidote to moments of self-doubt; which means that when you feel less than positive your ‘Chi’ can remind you of all your positive deposits and bolster your self-confidence.

The process of memory is a complex and fascinating one that still continues to baffle and challenge scientists. Memory begins when the mind consciously, through one or more of your senses (sound, sight, smell, touch and taste) takes in some information or an experience. This is known as sensory memory. (Less well-known is *proprioception memory* – the sense of knowing where your body is – which allows precise movements to be repeated; as when playing a musical instrument, typing, swinging a golf club, driving etc.). When you pay attention to an experience, your senses transform each element into short-term memory. Your short-term memory lasts only a few minutes. The key is to be able to transfer short-term memories into your long-term memory bank in a way that the information can be readily recalled on demand.

Long-term memory is the largest component of the memory system; its storage capacity is virtually limitless, so there is no need to worry about running out of memory space as you age. There are two important aspects to effective long-term memory. These are encoding and retrieval. Encoding is the ability to organize and store information into your mental filing system. Both encoding and retrieval are assisted by a) paying *focused attention* and using your senses to create associations between facts or information you have in your memory files already and b) rehearsing information using a process called ‘spaced repetition’ (page 278).

Step 3. Adjust

In Activity 3: Adjust, you will be practicing and strengthening your memory and adjusting the influence of your negative memories in the process.

Think of your memory as a computer – your input can be through keyboard, mouse or any number of USB devices. Your RAM stores things in the short term (and is typically a few gigabytes in size) and your hard disk stores your long-term memory via a series of interpretation programs. Your hard disk memory capacity is almost limitless.

However, sometimes our memory habits will distort information; recalling some types of information more readily than others. (For example, when given three compliments and one criticism many people will take the criticism to heart and downplay the compliments.) Step 3: Adjust will improve your ability to recall information more accurately simply by focusing on the experiences of the day and reassessing aspects that felt negative or unhelpful.

The ‘adjustment’ here is that having recalled the past 24 hours and focused on the negatives – you then *adjust* to think ‘what could I have done differently?’ ‘What will I do next time?’ ‘How can I adjust my thinking/actions/emotions to be better next time?’

Your memory will accommodate your adjustments and will begin to recall the lessons learned more easily. Your brain will learn that it needs to pay more attention to achieving positive outcomes during each day. It also means you will live each day more consciously and work towards reducing the negative and increasing the positive, because you know your daily review exercise is coming up.

Activity 3: 24 Hour Rewind (Negative)

PURPOSE

Looking at the negative or unhelpful aspects of the past 24 hours might be uncomfortable because negatives often carry more weight in the mind and have a tendency to overshadow or ‘erase’ the positives. By looking at the negatives more closely, you may find the situation more balanced than you realize. You can discover any inherent lessons and ask yourself what you might do differently another time. Choose to rewind and adjust your approach to the past.

ACTION

Set your timer for one minute so you can concentrate on your recall of the day. Rewind the past 24 hours as if you were replaying a movie of your day. It helps to close your eyes when conducting this review as it cuts out any external visual distractions. Particularly look for times when:

- 1 You were hijacked emotionally by your thoughts or reactions – you may have found yourself thinking about an emotionally charged issue over and over again such as, ‘My supervisor really seems to have it in for me.’
- 2 You got caught in an unhelpful repetitive pattern of behaviour – such as eating comfort foods when you felt stressed.

Note each unhelpful memory by counting it on a different finger of your non-dominant hand (i.e. your left hand if you are right-handed, and vice versa). Then at the end of the minute brush them off your non-dominant hand as if removing some dust, symbolically releasing those negative and unhelpful thoughts. By metaphorically brushing them away, you let them go. Tell yourself, ‘the past is past’.

BENEFIT

Step 3 will make you more aware of your negative thoughts and therefore able to reduce their power; you will then be able to adjust your thinking and have more positive energy/Mind Chi available throughout the day.

Step 4. Associate

To associate is a function of the brain that is automatic. Associations focus on strengthening the basic function of your brain and memory. You will find that as you start to remember one thing, it associates with another and helps you to pull up the other memories.

You tend to associate in two main ways (Blooms, page 76).

- 1 A 'bloom' of associations: from a central topic you bloom out associations (like petals on a flower) so you might say 'butterfly' and Vanda might respond with: 'change; beauty; brooches; mother, joy and bananas'. All words are directly related to the central stimulus of the word 'butterfly' in a way that is *unique* to her. Your words would be your own particular associations showing all your memories, connections, experiences and thoughts relate directly to the central topic.
- 2 A 'flow' of associations: here one word triggers the next and that one the one after it, in a more linear fashion. Starting with 'butterfly' Vanda might say; 'wings – plane – travel – holiday – adventure – Mt Kilimanjaro...' one word causing an association with the next, moving outwards from the central trigger, in a flow. Unlike a 'bloom', the final word may have no direct association with the first.

However, if you wish to store, retain and recall with the greatest efficiency, then taking care with your associations will pay dividends.

MEMORY TIP: If you do NOT have pen and paper to hand and you want to recall your ideas, then think of your front door at home and use your imagination to attach (associate) the thought in some fun, exaggerated, multi-sensory and dramatic way to your front door. If you have more than one thing to recall, open your front door and imagine attaching the next idea to the first thing that you see, like a picture hanging on the wall or a coat stand. You can, of course, write them down as soon as you have pen and paper.

Activity 4: 24-Hour Review (Positive)

PURPOSE

Step 4 is similar to step 3, but this time you will look back over the past twenty four hours and recall what *positive* and *successful* things occurred. As you recall and review your day, teasing the happenings from your mind, you will experience how each event links, connects and reminds you of another. The more associations you create, the more you are reinforcing the behaviour that you want to repeat.

ACTION

Set your timer for one minute so you can concentrate on your appraisal. Review the past 24 hours as if you were replaying a movie of your day. It helps to close your eyes when conducting this review as it cuts out any external visual distractions. Particularly look for times when:

- You had a small success, acted or felt the way you wanted, ‘I successfully completed that report on time.’ ‘I kept calm all through the meeting.’
- You had a peak experience – moments of happiness, contentment or joy, such as ‘I was so pleased with how my presentation went at the meeting.’

Note each positive and helpful memory, by counting it on a different finger of your dominant hand (your right hand if you are right-handed or vice versa). At the end of the minute, gently squeeze your dominant hand to symbolically reinforce your positive memories and successes.

BENEFIT

Step 4 will give you a chance to applaud yourself on how well you have used your Mind Chi over the past 24 hours with successes and positive thoughts. This will directly increase your self-esteem and energy.

When you have completed Steps 3 *and* 4, become aware of whether you had more positive or negative memories. Simply observe. The important thing is to help your self to have a better day tomorrow. Step 7 will help you to make this a reality.

Success filing: it's especially important to acknowledge and file your creative success. These seemingly tiny, minor decisions – consciously made – are actually profound choices that lead to major changes that you want. What plans or projects did you create? What new methods or systems, such as a new way to store your clothes or organize your work did you invent today? Susan Ford Collins, *The Joy of Success*.

Associations

Associations can be strengthened by:

- Making sure the association process is fun or turning it into a game;
- Visualizing – allow your imagination to be creative;
- Using actions to connect your associations together;
- Charging them with positive emotion and making them multi-sensory;
- Keeping things simple – only two things connected and in sequence;
- Exaggerating and using the bizarre and ridiculous; and
- Practicing – this strengthens the association.

Eight times World Memory Champion – Dominic O'Brien – uses journeys to create memory associations. He has many 'mental videos' of places he knows and he associates what he wishes to remember with a place on the journey.

Mind Chi Now

Steps 5 and 6 will increase your ability to live an aware and positive life, choosing not to be hampered by the past, or overly shaped by the future. The term 'awareness' usually refers to the present moment (the power of 'now'). It is also akin to the popular psychological concept of 'self-awareness'. However, for thousands of years it has been a core component of Buddhist philosophy, that of developing 'mindful awareness'. This means the capacity to observe your inner experience in a 'fully aware' manner without 'attachment'. In simple terms this means not holding on too tightly to past feelings; allowing yourself to 'let go' of past hurt, disappointments, needs and feelings, in order that you can fully experience this present moment.

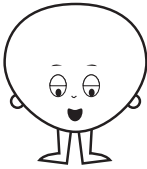
Normally when you observe something, the left cortex of your brain gives you a running commentary; this is your 'Chi' in action. Mindful awareness requires you just to 'stare' and appreciate, receiving information via all your senses, without judgement. Over the years this kind of awareness has been given many names, Adam Smith a leading philosopher from the eighteenth century, called it 'the impartial and well informed spectator'. It is the ability to witness your actions, thoughts and emotions as a disinterested observer.

Your 'Chi' is a willing guide to help you to increase your awareness of 'Now' so that you can check your current reality of your Mind Chi BEAT.

Step 5. Be aware

Awareness is the ability to think consciously; to feel or perceive what is happening *now*: it is the mind's point of focus at any given moment. If you were asked to become aware of your right foot, you could do so in an instant: immediately the feeling of your right foot comes into your conscious thought. Your right foot has been there all the time but there was no need to be aware of it (unless it was being tickled!).

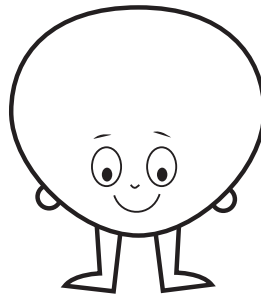
Pay attention to your Mind Chi BEAT. It is at the heart of the Mind Chi process.



Becoming aware can also be triggered by events occurring outside your body, as in the case of someone walking into the room while you are reading. Your senses will pick this up and you become aware of that person.

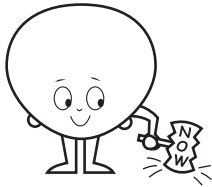
In the Mind Chi Awareness activity, your awareness is brought to four very specific aspects. By asking a set of questions regarding your **B**ody, **E**motions, **A**ctions and **T**houghts, you focus your awareness on them at this moment in time. Together they form your Mind Chi BEAT (the acronym is based on the first letter of each stage, see page 39).

After you have completed 28 days of practice you will find that you are increasing your sensitivity in the four BEAT areas and will notice subtle signs of being either 'on form' or 'out of sorts'. By focusing on your Mind Chi BEAT you will be able to increase your awareness and then adjust and change your state of being to become more constructively directed and in control of you.



'Are you aware?'

Activity 5: Check Your BEAT



PURPOSE

To change consciously requires you first to have awareness; and then to introduce new directed thoughts. Activity 5 will train your conscious mind to become aware of your mind and body, by asking four important questions.

ACTION

Set your timer for one minute so you can concentrate on this activity. Bring your attention to the present. Sit quietly for this minute, and tune in by asking yourself and responding to these questions.

- 1 What is my *Body* experiencing NOW?
I have a bit of a headache and my neck feels tight.
- 2 What *Emotions* am I feeling NOW?
I am worried and feel under pressure and stressed.
- 3 What are my *Actions* NOW? (or, what was I just doing?)
I was gathering some data for a report.
- 4 What *Thoughts* am I having NOW?
I am battling with all of my priorities, which should I do first?

This is the Mind Chi BEAT check. Use it to help increase your self-awareness so that (in the next step) you can make rapid, positive changes to your Body, Emotions, Actions and Thoughts. By focusing your awareness on the here and now, you will begin to live more fully and consciously 'in the moment'.

BENEFIT

Step 5 will bring your awareness to the present moment to help you check how you are currently functioning. Once you have acquired this awareness you can successfully gain control over your reactions to any situation you face.

Step 6. Choose

Every step of the Mind Chi program is designed to enable you to gain (or regain) control over yourself and your life.

This Mind Chi step focuses on how you choose to use your mental energy. It will make ALL the difference; it is the realization that at this very moment YOU are in control. Nothing and no one else – just YOU! So, take this minute to make sure that you are taking control and *choosing* what you want to experience *now*.

When you bring your awareness to your Body, Emotions, Actions and Thoughts, ask yourself: ‘Are they functioning at their best for my productivity and happiness?’

If not, then take the next Mind Chi step to consider what and how you want to change.

You will experience a whole new level of functioning and satisfaction with yourself as you hold the reins of self control. The result is exhilarating and liberating.

Activity 6: Choose Your Beat

PURPOSE

Feeling a lack of control is one of the greatest stressors that you can face. For example, when it seems that everything ‘out there’ has it in for you. ‘Choice’ is the point where you choose to regain control and is of critical importance.

You are already aware of your current Mind Chi BEAT (although you may not know it); and you can, at this moment if you so choose, create a *different* BEAT. You can change your Thoughts, alter your Emotions, slow your Actions and consciously release the tension in your Body. You can make a choice to regain control over yourself. This will enable you to handle any external situation with far greater ease.

ACTION

If your Mind Chi **BEAT** is not what you want it to be, then set your timer for one minute so you can concentrate on choosing the BEAT that would be most productive for you. In doing so you will realize that you *do* have control over your **BEAT** state.

Look at each one of the four areas, how would you choose them to be? For example:

- 1 **Body:** My head feels clear and my neck relaxed.
- 2 **Emotions:** I feel calm and focused.
- 3 **Action:** Keep writing my report.
- 4 **Thoughts:** I have selected this as my top priority.

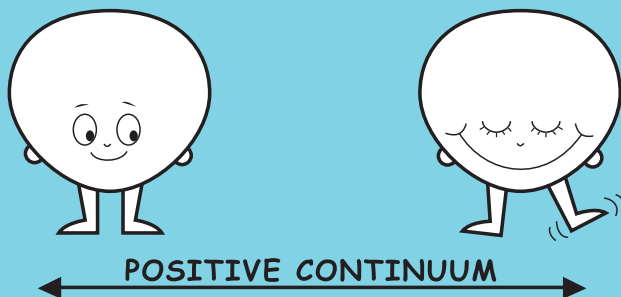
BENEFIT

Step 6 is a MOST crucial skill, which is directly related to the ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ findings of Steps 4 and 5. If you learn to manage and direct your Mind Chi BEAT state you can do and be what you really want. This is another area where your ‘Chi’ may assist. Let your self-talk heighten your awareness of ‘now’, correct the negatives, enhance the positives and create a self-directed future.

Accentuate the positive

Before you can direct change in your life it helps to look on the positive side of life.

- 1 This is where your 'Chi' can be most helpful. Ask it to bring your awareness to your negative thoughts and words. Becoming aware of what you say and think will take you nine tenths of the way to positive change. Why are you saying or thinking in the negative? Is it necessary?
- 2 Consider your options. Might it be better to say nothing than to say something negative? Can you make a constructive suggestion rather than a complaint? Can you find some aspect of the situation to compliment?
- 3 Be kind to yourself. Negative thinking/talking/being may well be tied up with your self-concept. Ask yourself how you can start to bolster your view of yourself, then you may find that you do not feel the need to be so negative. When you start to be more positive, you will probably feel better about yourself as well (Growing self-esteem, page 250).
- 4 Do not fuel negativity. Speak to positive people about positive things. Build yourself up, not tear yourself down. Focus on growing a positive environment about you. Banish cynical remarks from your conversation. (Only listen to the news once a day.)
- 5 Give your mind 'homework' to hone your positive thinking. If you begin thinking negative thoughts, then focus on coming up with four positive things to counter-balance each one.
- 6 There are many shades of positive. Consider it as a whole continuum, from slightly positive to overjoyed! Experiment with the shades of positive, put one on and see if it suits you. Practice feeling comfortable at the joy-filled end of the spectrum.
- 7 Tie this together with developing your 'Attitude of gratitude' and enjoying work and soon you may find that you have developed a positive addiction.



Mind Chi Future

The final two steps in Mind Chi Basic are designed to help you to develop a 'realistically positive' attitude. Even when there are problems to be dealt with, it doesn't mean that all is bleak. Problems are surmountable and there are always good moments amidst the not-so-good. Taking stock of what IS good helps you to have the necessary energy to face the rest. That is the 'glass half full' outlook on life.

This is an important stage – especially for those who habitually think that the worst is going to happen. You don't have to think that way, so use Step 7 to Plan your next 24 hours and accentuate the realistic and truthful positives which you want to have happen.

Step 7. Plan

When you give your 'Chi' a sense of direction and a plan to go towards, you automatically increase your momentum. As any truly successful person knows, planning is the secret to success. It is a powerful tool that will assist you to accomplish everything from a simple activity to your life's purpose. Step 7 will enable you to plan more effectively. Step 8 will encourage you to tune in to your successes and feel gratitude for all that you have achieved; and for the on-going process of improvement. The success of both these stages is dependent upon your attitude and state of mind.

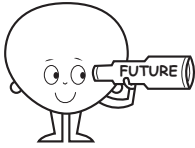
Research has shown that if you take a positive approach to living, your health is better than average and you will live longer! The University of Texas found that people with an upbeat view of life were less likely than pessimists to show signs of frailty. They speculated that positive emotions may directly affect health by altering the chemical balance of the body.

When you are optimistic, your brain creates endorphins, which are natural painkillers: *gamma globulin* for fortifying your immune system; and *interferon* for combating infections, viruses, and even battling cancer. Your brain can combine these and other substances into a vast number of tailor-made prescriptions for whatever ails you.

Attitudes are your established ways of responding to people, events and situations. You have learned these based on your beliefs, values and assumptions. Attitude drives your behaviour and can show in your body language. If you plan to think upbeat thoughts, you can send out a message that everyone around you will understand. You will receive feedback such as, 'You certainly appear to be on top of the world today.'

Success is not dependent upon education, intelligence or title; anyone can choose what their attitude will be at any time. It is a question of adjusting your thinking. The next two Mind Chi processes will help you to take control and responsibility for your thoughts and attitude – so that lasting adjustment and success will follow.

Activity 7: 24-Hour Preview



PURPOSE

Your mind responds to your future thoughts in the same way as it does to past or current thoughts. By taking time to plan and project how you want to be in the future, your brain will start to react, think and act as if you have already made those events happen. Remember the saying, ‘Be careful what you wish for, it just might happen’? It is true. Every time you think a thought, you increase the likelihood of it actually happening. You have formed a ‘future memory’ (page 98) within the plasticity of your brain. This is why Step 7 is so important.

ACTION

Set your timer for one minute so you can concentrate on **previewing** the next 24 hours of your life. Now create a movie of your next 24 hours as you would like it to be. (It helps to close your eyes when conducting this preview as it cuts out any external visual distractions.)

Take a few deep Mind Chi breaths. Visualize (experience in your mind) all the people you may see, the activities or events you may do. Focus specifically on how your Body feels when you preview each event. Make is a multi-sensory event; what Emotions you will experience; what positive Actions you will be taking; and the quality of your Thoughts. You are projecting forward your Mind Chi BEAT so that your memory understands that that is the way you wish to respond.

Make sure that your preview is a positive projection of the way you *choose* things to be, and how you want to have responded to them. This is your chance to set your future attitude and outcomes.

BENEFIT

Step 7 will build your energy and the ability to craft your positive activities and responses to the day ahead. This lets your ‘Chi’ know what you want and helps you to make it so!

Step 8. Be Grateful

‘Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.’ – Melody Beattie (author)

Gratitude, thankfulness or appreciation can be for what you have received as well as what you may receive. Psychologists have started to measure gratitude and have crafted eight aspects: appreciation of people; possessions; the present moment; rituals; feelings of awe; social comparisons; existential concerns, and behaviour which expresses gratitude.

There is a real payoff for being grateful, extensive research has shown that you will sleep better, experience less negative stress, feel more ‘in control’ of your life and environment and will be happier! Gratitude is shown to be ‘uniquely important’ in coping with life transitions and appears to be the attitude most likely to improve your overall well being.

Gratitude is like a muscle, so start to get it to work better for you by taking a few minutes, once a week, to write down things for which you are grateful. It is free and you can find out for yourself whether it works. You have nothing to lose and a great deal to gain.

The power of gratitude

Vanda selects special stones from her beach and paints them with happy faces. She has sold these ‘Gratitude Stones’ to raise money for her local hospital charity. She suggests that you place one by your bed so that last thing at night and first thing in the morning, you will see it and it will help you to smile as you think of the happy things in your life. It is a good way to start and end your day. (Further resources, page 323)

Activity 8: Mind Chi – Reflect and Project

PURPOSE

To appreciate what you have achieved and received there needs to be a time for reflection and being grateful. The final Mind Chi Basic step is to wrap yourself in a cloak of Gratitude. When you take this last minute to reflect on everything for which you are grateful, you cull the positives and successes from the last 24 hours as well as projecting your gratitude into the next day.

It allows you to bring into your conscious awareness the good things that are happening daily in your life. It closes the eight minutes with a smile and leaves you with a positive attitude to go about your day.

The purpose of the Gratitude step is to put you into a mindset where you find that you do have positive, good things happening to you in many areas of your life. When you are grateful for what life offers you, you reinforce new behaviours as well as the new thought patterns. By shifting the focus away from the negative aspects of a situation you are able to see the positives more clearly. This in turn puts you into a state of mind where your ‘antennae’ will notice more of life’s opportunities and benefits.

ACTION

Set your timer for one minute so you can concentrate on your GRATITUDE. It helps to close your eyes as it cuts out any external visual distractions. As you think over both now and the upcoming 24 hours what things pop in to your mind? ‘I am so grateful that ...’ Or, ‘I feel so fortunate that ...’ Taking just one minute to complete your Mind Chi eighth step with all that you have to be grateful for, sets you up with a wonderful attitude to be receptive to even more areas of gratitude!

BENEFIT

Step 8 will energize your mind to appreciate all the wonders that have come and will come your way over next 24 hours. This increases your chance of making them a reality; additionally you feel better right now!

Mind Chi FAQs

Q I have such a hectic day, when can I do my Mind Chi Basic?

A Even with the busiest day, you have to go to bed sometime! If you have not been able to create time for eight Mind Chi minutes during the day, then start Mind Chi Steps 1 and 2 as you lie in bed. If you can, do Mind Chi 3 and 4 as well (the unhelpful and positive reviews of the past 24 hours) as it is still fresh in your mind. Then, when you wake up the next morning, do your Mind Chi Breath and continue where you left off.

Q What if I miss a day (or two)?

A Just carry on! If it happens, smile and say, ‘I choose to continue today’ and extend the Mind Chi Basic days on your diary (Tracker, page 329). In order for a new habit to ‘stick’, it is preferable to continue the practice for 28 consecutive days – but if you were to miss a couple of days, just add those days on at the end.

Q Must I do Step 3 – the ‘unhelpful/negative’ review?

A Yes, because you have much to learn from the ‘negative’ or ‘unhelpful’ review. It brings any negativity to your attention will help you to improve management of your ‘Chi’ self-talk. Negative (‘unhelpful’) body reactions, emotions, actions or thoughts are depleting your energy. By increasing your awareness of them, you think of coping strategies and start to put them into action as you plan your next 24 hours, before too much energy has been wasted!

Q Can I use the Mind Chi BEAT throughout the day?

A Yes! Please do. It is such a powerful way to check in to what is happening inside you, allowing you to grab the reins of control

and respond in the way that is least damaging to your body and leads to the most efficient use of your energy.

Q Why do I do the Mind Chi eight steps for 28 days?

A Because it takes 28 days to create a new neural network or habit. After this you may find that you are naturally doing some of the steps as they are needed throughout the day: especially the Mind Chi Breath (page 46) and your Mind Chi BEAT (page 39).

Q What can I expect once I have practised my Mind Chi Basic for 28 days?

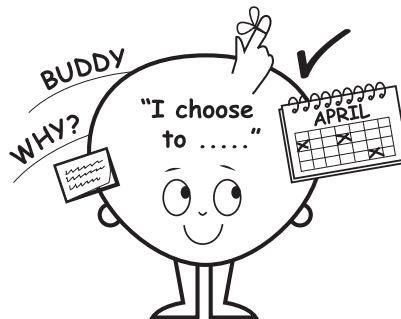
A Mind Chi Basic is the foundation of the Mind Chi program. In 28 days you will have regained control over yourself. You will be able to:

- 1 Negate the effects of negative stress by using the Mind Chi Breath.
- 2 Focus your concentration as and when you desire through Mind Chi 'One'.
- 3 Check and choose your BEAT (Body, Emotions, Actions and Thoughts) to gain control over yourself and your reactions.
- 4 Balance any negative memories from the past 24 hours and harness the joy of your successes.
- 5 Project what you do want to experience in the future and remember all the things for which you are grateful, enabling you to live the life you choose.

All that from your commitment of just eight minutes a day – what a return on investment!

Support to help you complete the Mind Chi Basic 28-Day routine

- An excellent form of support is to have a Mind Chi buddy so you can do the Mind Chi program together. Having someone to answer to can help ensure that you complete the daily activities. Plus you will share your progress tips and, most importantly, offer each other moral support.
- Support can also take the form of a friend who is simply willing to listen and encourage you along the way.
- Set yourself personal goals. Mark the 28 days of your Mind Chi Basic from 1–28 on a calendar. As each day passes – and you complete your activities for that day – note it on your calendar. This way you can see your progress. (Mind Chi Tracker, page 329.)
- Tune in to your self-talk and encourage your ‘Chi’ to encourage you to make time to incorporate eight minutes into each day.
- Write out all your reasons and the benefits of completing your Mind Chi Basic. (Remember to ask WIIFM?: (‘What’s In It For Me?’ – your Mind Chi radio station!) Make several copies and post them around the house: in your bedroom; bathroom; kitchen and back of the front door and in your office: on your computer; planner or wall. You need to keep reminding your ‘Chi’ and yourself as you build this new habit.
- Keep a small card in your wallet or purse with all the WIIFM reasons listed on it. At various moments during the day, take time to read it. This reinforces your intentions to master Mind Chi Basic, reminds your inner voice and strengthens your commitment too. Your persistence will pay handsome dividends that you will enjoy from now on.



‘Chi’ using the supports above