

# Train the Brain Vol. I

## Challenges and Opportunities

### A Challenge

How many challenges do you face each day?

Well, just getting started each day is a real challenge for many people. The bed monster tends to grab us just when the alarm sounds, or when the snooze button's been hit for the 9<sup>th</sup> time.

For some, being in a routine is a constant challenge, especially when they know it's not what they want to be doing. They feel stuck and in that well trodden groove which may seem quite impossible to pull out from and change direction.

Other people have internal challenges due to illness which prevents them from carrying out their usual functions. Some face other internal challenges from their own unresourceful thoughts and negative self-talk.

Other challenges could be boredom, fitness, anxiety, enthusiasm, prejudice, too much time, too little time, relaxation, money, family, lack of spontaneity, etc.

Given the fact there are many potential challenges, would we all act/react the same way when faced with the same one?

If we all suddenly became bored, would we all see it the same way? Some may relish the opportunity to hit the 'pause' button and others would despise having nothing to do. What if we all had less money? Some would see that as devastating and yet some would be even more inspired to do something about it.

I have worked with people who have had strokes (at various ages) and even then I was unable to find a universal response. For many it was terrible and they had no idea how to respond and yet for some they became even more determined to try new things and use whatever they had to experience different aspects of life.

### A Response

We know we can respond to challenges in many ways:

- Meet it head on and use all our will power to tackle it
- Use it as a spring board and overcome it
- Ignore it
- Ask others to help us through it
- Go around it as best we can
- Put it off for another day
- Allow it to overtake us and give up etc.

In knowing we have many ways to respond, what actually decides *how* we respond?

For some people they allow the situation/event to decide for them, which when faced with something outside of their control, seems the only response they can take and there is another way of looking at this though.

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### The Radical Bit

If it's raining, there's not a great deal we can do about it, except decide for ourselves what it means to us! As Billy Connolly says *'There's no such thing as bad weather, only the wrong clothes.'*

Of course there are things we cannot directly control and yet (here it comes) we always have 100% control over how we view and respond to what happens. Make sure that makes complete sense to you before you move on.

Whilst it may be debatable that we are the most adaptable species on our planet, we do have amazing skills in responding to change and knowing how to respond is a key ingredient for our personal and professional happiness and success!

*"It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change."* Charles Darwin

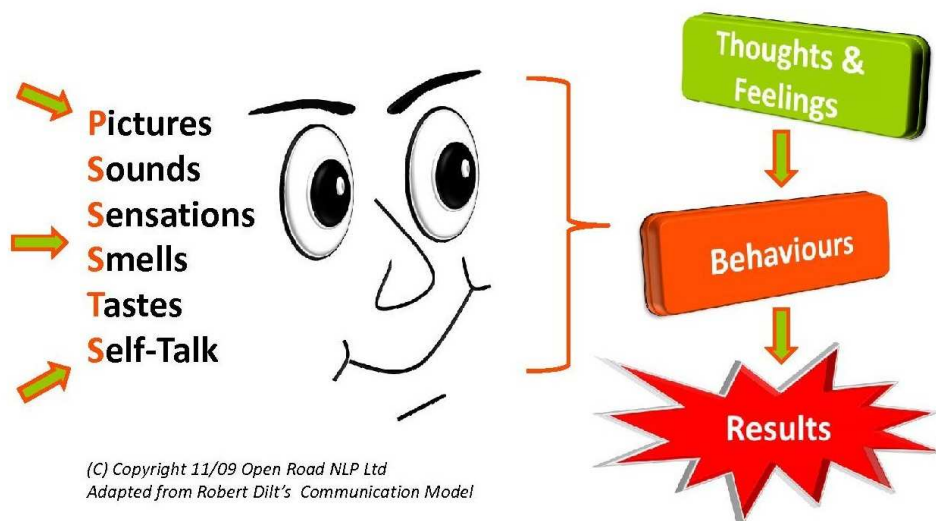
### A Challenging Thought

Some people believe their mind controls *them*. Random thoughts just pop in there and they have no control over how they think and feel and often behave. One of the worst limiting beliefs I hear is 'That's just the way I am!' Some people are resigned to remain the same because they believe they have no other choice.

*"If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got."* Mark Twain

The choice is always yours in how you think, feel and behave. You can choose to use challenges to your advantage by using your mind even more effectively and resourcefully!

### State of Mind Management



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### Pushing Your Buttons

You are 100% responsible for how you use these ingredients and therefore how you respond to challenges. No-one can ever 'make' you think or feel anything, it's always your choice. No-one can reach inside your mind and create your ingredients for you. No-one can literally make you feel any emotion and of course they can influence but never make you!

That is the world of difference!

Imagine how your life would be different if you had full control over your thoughts, feelings and behaviours! Guess what? You do!

The great thing is we can still be human about this. There will be times when I don't want to control what I'm thinking and feeling, when I just want to react, like at the cinema. If I'm watching a comedy, I want the film to lead me to raucous laugh or if someone were to hurt someone I love, I want to get angry very quickly! However there are many more times when there are greater opportunities in deciding how I want to think, feel and behave in a more resourceful way!

Take an everyday example (for some more than others) of being stuck in traffic. Are you going to be late? Maybe! Can you change your event? No! Can you decide how to view your event? Always!

Of course you can sit there and get very wound up with the situation. Your body becomes tense and you're sitting in your own little rage bubble, knowing this is not doing your body or mind any good at all. Or you can decide to take this opportunity to chill, relax and have a few minutes to yourself or watch other people picking their nose!

By knowing how to use our brain, we have far greater *conscious* control over our emotions and response.

### Opportunities

Being more aware of our six ingredients affords us two great opportunities:

1. To identify which ingredients, and indeed the particular mix of those ingredients, gives us our resourceful and unresourceful results
2. To change the ingredients which give us our unresourceful results and keep/enhance the ones which give us our resourceful results

If each time before exercise you created a picture of you being totally knackered, breathing really hard, being all hot and sweaty and feeling really uncomfortable, would this be a resourceful picture to motivate you?

If, before any learning, you told yourself 'I'll never learn this, I've never been any good at this etc.' would that create the right state of mind to learn?

We need to use what we already have to gain the results we want! We have to be very careful in our assumptions of what we call 'reality'. Each of us could look at our lives and the

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World in which we live and create so many unresourceful assumptions and we can always see, hear, feel, smell, taste and talk ourselves into other opportunities which may indeed exist!

### Practical Examples

In making your mind work for you, choose the right ingredients for what you want to create!

**Anxiety & Stress** - Try feeling stressed when you now create pictures of you being barefoot on a beach, hearing the waves, feeling the warm sand under your feet, smelling that salt air and telling yourself how relaxed you feel! It's impossible to do stress and relaxed at the same time. You know what ingredients create stress, so just change the ingredients to do relaxed!

**Goals** – Only think about what you want, not what you don't want! Create the pictures, sounds, sensations, self-talk etc. which will motivate *you* to achieve! Decide on a goal, do this and notice the difference. If any 'don't wants' come into your mind, just flip it around and think about your 'do wants' instead.

**Anger** - Try feeling angry when you replay your favourite comedy sketch in your mind and hear yourself laughing!

**Fitness** – Choose the ingredients which will feed your fitness! Put in everything which will only add to your strength. Your mind is also your energy machine; give it clear instructions to let your body work!

You have all the resources you need to thrive on the opportunity for great change, so decide now to use what you already have even more effectively and have fun!

Sláinte!

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Next time on 'Train the Brain' ...

Resourceful V's Unresourceful – How our emotions can work for us!