

NeuroTips

for Money, Happiness & Success

21 Productivity Tips for your Brain

A Companion to the book *NeuroWisdom,
The New Brain Science of Money,
Happiness & Success*

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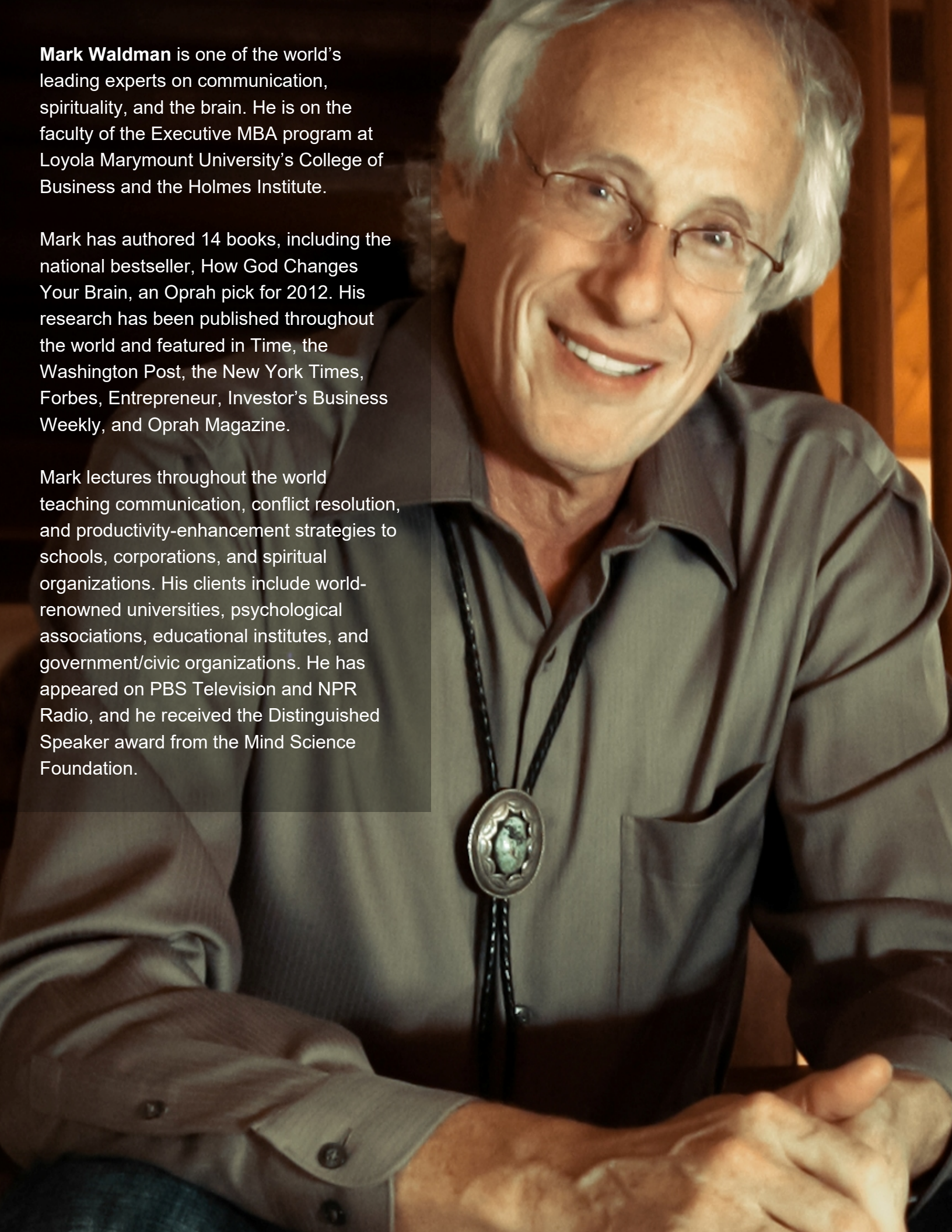
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Mark Waldman is one of the world's leading experts on communication, spirituality, and the brain. He is on the faculty of the Executive MBA program at Loyola Marymount University's College of Business and the Holmes Institute.

Mark has authored 14 books, including the national bestseller, *How God Changes Your Brain*, an Oprah pick for 2012. His research has been published throughout the world and featured in *Time*, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, *Forbes*, *Entrepreneur*, *Investor's Business Weekly*, and *Oprah Magazine*.

Mark lectures throughout the world teaching communication, conflict resolution, and productivity-enhancement strategies to schools, corporations, and spiritual organizations. His clients include world-renowned universities, psychological associations, educational institutes, and government/civic organizations. He has appeared on PBS Television and NPR Radio, and he received the Distinguished Speaker award from the Mind Science Foundation.





Introduction...

NeuroWisdom

(n(y)oo-rō-wiz-dəm)

Tapping Into the Hidden Knowledge of Your Brain to Bring Greater Happiness, Wealth and Success

Behind the folds of your neocortex are special neurons that give you profound powers of perception. They enhance your ability to be self-directed and socially aware, but you have to “exercise” these newest evolutionary circuits of the brain through a unique combination of relaxation, mindfulness, and intuition. When you do, using the simple strategies in this book, something remarkable happens: negative feelings and thoughts are transformed into optimism, your motivation and creativity increases, your decision-making skills are enhanced, and your ability to empathize with others rapidly grows. Compassion increases, self-love soars, and a new “voice” can be heard, one that will guide you toward greater awareness and serenity.

We call this inner awareness NeuroWisdom. It is your inner teacher and spiritual compass, one that will help you achieve more goals, more passion, and more satisfaction in your relationships and work. Nurture this delicate circuit in your brain, using the following tips and strategies, and you will enlighten and enrich your life.

1. Relax

If you want to remain focused and productive throughout the work day, you should take three 10-second relaxation breaks each hour. The decision-making processes in your frontal lobe get exhausted after 10-20 minutes of concentration.

What are the three fastest ways to relax and refresh your busy brain?

Yawning, super-slow stretching, and gentle stroking of your hands and arms. Yawning slows down excess activity throughout your brain that causes neurological stress. Super-slow stretching of your neck, shoulders, arms, and torso allows your brain to send a relaxation signal to tense muscles, and it brings you into the present moment where better decisions are made. Very slow touching of your forearms and hands decreases negative emotions while stimulating the confidence centers in your brain.

Download a mindfulness clock onto your computer and cell phone, setting it to go off three times each hour. Search “mindfulness timer” to find some options you can download.

2. Use a Mindfulness Clock at Work

Want to lower stress and increase productivity in less than a minute? Want to make your daily routines more meaningful and valuable? Want to experience more pleasure, joy, and satisfaction, even when you are performing a difficult or boring task? Download a Mindfulness Clock onto your computer and/or phone and set the bell tone to ring 2-3 times each hour. When you hear it, take 10 seconds to slowly stretch, and yawn. At the top of each hour, take 60 seconds to do something pleasurable and reflect on a deep inner value. Meditate for a minute. Daydream. Run for 60 seconds. Do anything you find enjoyable. Then throw yourself back into work. My Executive MBA students at the business college at Loyola Marymount University found this to be one of the most important tools for reducing work stress and increasing productivity. You are literally bringing your meditation practice into the workplace, where you need it the most!

Remember: The National Institutes of Health and the World Health Organization state that stress is the #1 disease in the world, and it only takes a few seconds to yawn, stretch and refresh your brain for achieving peak performance for the next hour of work! Use a mindfulness clock along with any brain-training or therapy program (it's an integral part of NeuroWisdom 101, my audio training program in mindfulness and positivity), and each time you hear the bell, just pause for a few seconds to relax and bring yourself into the present moment. Your stress levels will instantly drop and your performance and productivity will soar.

Here are some popular downloads for your computer and cell phone:

Computer: Try using either of these programs:
<http://fungie.info/bell/#>
<http://www.mindfulnessdc.org/minfulclock.html>

Popular phone apps:
Try the app at InsightTimer.com – it's free and works for iPhones and Androids.

Go to Google Play or iTunes and search for "mindfulness bell" "mindfulness clock" or "mindfulness app"

3. Live Your Values

If you want to eliminate stress throughout the entire day and improve the quality of your work, ask yourself this question every morning:

“What is my deepest innermost value?”

At our College of Business, where I teach, 90% of our students – who run multi-million dollar corporations – report increased work satisfaction and a substantial decrease in stress. If you reflect on your personal, business, and relationship values several times throughout the day, you’ll feel happier and more capable of dealing with difficult issues and conflicts.

Repeating a positive value word (like peace, love, integrity, confidence, etc.) for 5-10 minutes will turn on as many as 1200 stress-reducing genes.

4. Daydream & Take Pleasure Breaks

Work burnout is one of the largest problems in business. Our neuroscientific research shows that if you take 60 seconds once each hour to do anything pleasurable (stretching, aerobics, washing your face, anything you enjoy), the dopamine that is released from your motivation center in your brain will allow you to work harder and more efficiently to achieve the goals you desire.

Pleasure actually increases consciousness and eliminates negative emotions like anger and fear. After you take a pleasure break, or whenever you feel stuck, lean back in your chair and let your mind wander and daydream for a couple of minutes. This allows your brain to creatively find solutions to any problem you are struggling with.

All you have to do is to watch how your thoughts and feelings flow in and out of consciousness as you remain deeply relaxed.



5. Trust Your Intuition

Your right prefrontal cortex is constantly generating worries about things that could go wrong as you work toward achieving your goals. It's the "pessimist" in your brain!

Simultaneously, your left prefrontal lobe is constantly generating solutions to any imaginable problem. This is the optimistic "voice" that keeps you going!

There's a continuous word-based dialog going on, and if you lean back in your chair and use your imagination to listen to this inner speech; you can then use your intuition to weigh and evaluate the best action to take. This is the voice of inner wisdom, a very real neurological process that takes place in the insula and anterior cingulate. It's not a word-based awareness, but it's the most trustworthy sense humans have, and you can "exercise" it through different forms of meditation and mindfulness-based strategies.

A silhouette of a person with their arms raised in a gesture of triumph or achievement, set against a warm, orange-toned background. The person is wearing a watch on their left wrist. The overall mood is one of success and accomplishment.

6. Keep a Daily List of Accomplishments

The brain registers small **goals** the same as large ones. If you fail at a big goal, you can easily trigger the release of stress chemicals, whereas every small accomplishment releases dopamine and motivates you to achieve more success.

But you have to deliberately become conscious of them!

At the end of the day, write down all your small accomplishments and then take 2-3 minutes to savor them. Research shows that if you do this for just one week your self-esteem will continue to grow over the next 3 months!



7. Keep a Gratitude Journal

Research shows that keeping a daily gratitude journal eliminates feelings of worry, fear, and irritability.

At the end of each day, write down 3 things you feel grateful for – people you appreciate, things you value about your life, etc. Then repeat the following phrase: “May I be happy, may I be filled with peace.”

When you feel angry toward someone, repeat “May you be happy, may you be filled with peace,” and continue to do so (no matter how much resistance you might feel) until your anger dissipates.

8. A Business Meditation

Most meditations are geared toward relaxation, inner values, and spiritual awareness. But you can use concentration and affirmation strategies to increase work performance.

First identify key words or values that you feel would help you overcome a problem or resolve a specific conflict (examples: peace, confidence, concentration, success, power, knowledge, patience, integrity, etc.). When you silently repeat one of these “power” words, your brain will pull up past memories associated with that quality.

Try this “recipe” at the beginning of a busy workday, or when you are feeling stressed out by a specific problem: Find a single word that captures the quality that will help you succeed. Use that word in this phrase: “I breathe in _____.”

As you breathe out, you can use another positive word, or you can think of a quality you want to eliminate. Examples: “I breathe in confidence; I breathe out stress.” Or “I breathe in power, I breathe out integrity.” Repeat this phrase for at least 60 seconds. You’ll immediately feel more capable of achieving any goal you desire. Why? Your ancient emotional brain responds to any thought you have – positive or negative, real or imaginary – as though it was an actual stimulus in the world.

9. Boost Your Positivity Ratio 5:1

Negative thoughts and feelings are easily encoded into long term memory, but positive thoughts barely leave a trace. Why? They aren't a threat to your survival.

Brain-scan research shows that even seeing the word "no" for less than a half second will release dozens of stress chemicals into your body and brain. Barbara Fredrickson's research found that you have to generate at least three positive thoughts for every negative thought and feeling you have if you want to be successful in relationships or business.

But when you push your positivity ratio to 5:1 or 7:1, your relationships become deeply satisfying (John Gottman's research) and your business productivity soars (Losada's research).

Spend a single hour writing down every positive and negative thought you have, and calculate what your positivity ratio is. If it is below 3:1, your relationships and your business are in trouble. But here's the good news: each time you catch yourself thinking or feeling something negative, just think about three positive things you like about yourself. You'll actually interrupt the formation of negative memories!

10. Don't Procrastinate About Procrastination

We all want our dreams to come true but many people hesitate before taking action. They procrastinate, uncertain of what to do. Most procrastination is based on an irrational fear that something may go wrong and it's usually driven by self-doubt or poor self-esteem. Other forms of procrastination are healthy: it's your brain saying "look before you leap." Even pigeons procrastinate, and the more complicated the task, the longer the birds delay taking action! But "night owls" – people who stay up late – tend to procrastinate more.

If you are facing a real problem, business psychologists have found that "active" procrastination makes you more successful. It gives you time to assess the situation and gather more information before making an important decision. But if you excessively worry about small decisions, it will interfere with your memory and sour your personality. There's also a powerful connection between perfectionism and procrastination. For the perfectionist, it's never good enough, and that form of thinking undermines confidence and self-esteem.

When you catch yourself procrastinating, take out a sheet of paper and write down, as briefly as possible, the inner dialog generated by the procrastination. List all the reasons for not taking action, and then mindfully gaze at your list as you stay deeply relaxed and nonjudgmental.

Then ask yourself "are any of these reasons valid?" Most won't be, but some may be true. For those that are true, write down three small strategies that would lead to the resolution of your hesitancy.

Writing interrupts the repetitive inner speech that causes our motivational centers to freeze. Some procrastination is just an anxiety based on past unrelated events (i.e., memories), but other forms of procrastination is simply your brain telling you that you need more information before making a wise decision.

Remember: you can never have enough information to guarantee future outcomes, so you must trust your intuition and make a leap of faith.

11. Perfectionism = Low Self-Esteem

Do you have a fear of failure? You just might be a perfectionist. Perfection, as an ideal, is a wonderful notion to strive for, but perfectionists are often people with low self-esteem and they are often more afraid of the embarrassment and shame that they may feel as a result of a failed goal or activity.

Many studies have shown that perfectionism is related to depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive behavior, poor listening skills, and micromanagement. It correlates with insomnia and eating disorders, and it is directly related to fear of failure.

We all have varying degrees of perfectionism, so try this experiment: Give your inner critical voice a name and interview it. Ask it why it's so important that you drive yourself to perfection. Often you'll hear how silly your inner-critic sounds, but sometimes you'll find sage advice. Make "suggestions" to your inner negativity, or ask it what you should do. Sometimes the feedback is useful; other times it will become clear that the inner critic is just a memory from the past.

Our research on inner speech shows that if you use your imagination, you can actually hear all sorts of "should" voices that have been stored into long-term memory. You'll also realize that most of those critical voices come from parents, teachers, and childhood encounters.

REMEMBER: When you finish a task, and you think it's not perfect, interrupt that thought by focusing on what you have done well. If, at the end of the day, you write down all of your tiny daily successes, you'll sleep more soundly and wake up with more energy, propelling you into another successful day.

12. Will Power is a Winning Fantasy

Many research studies have found that that the “harder” we work to change our life, the less likely we are to succeed! Often our desire to succeed is being propelled by a fear of failure, or a fear that we might not be good enough. These “I should” and “You must” voices create inner conflicts that interfere with work performance.

But a recent Stanford University research study discovered that people who have a deep-seated belief in UNLIMITED willpower are far more likely to succeed. They are more likely to overcome procrastination, change unwanted behaviors, and achieve the goals they desire. People who believe they have a limited source of willpower display a lower ability to exercise self-control. So no matter what the obstacle is – big or small – know that deep down inside, you have the power to persevere, no matter what! That’s the power of belief, and willpower is a state of mind!

NeuroTip: to increase willpower, first choose a goal you want to achieve today, this week, or this month. Write it down. Then create a personal brief affirmation telling yourself that you have all the power in the world to manifest your goal. Turn your “I shoulds” into “I wants,” but make sure it’s a genuine desire. Instead of saying “I must,” say “I will.” Try it right now. Think about a task you normally struggle with and visualize doing it as you repeat these sentences over and over: “I should do better...I must succeed...I have to work harder.” Notice how you feel.

Now repeat these sentences as you visualize doing the same task: “I will do this task with ease...I will fill myself with pleasure as I do this task...I like this task...I want to do this task...I will succeed.” It’s the same visualization, the same job, but notice how much better you feel! You’re on your way toward building unlimited willpower – just by changing the way you think!

13. Don't Make Happiness Your Goal

Research shows that people who strongly pursue happiness tend to be clinically depressed. Happiness is an abstract concept, and the brain cannot achieve goals without clear concrete images of what that desire might be. So don't focus on happiness. Instead visualize various activities that will make you feel happy.

Try this wealth-building exercise (I teach this to my MBA students and they love it!): Make a list of every activity you can think of that has made you happy in the past: in work situations, relationships, and recreational activities. Make sure you have 10-30 items on your list and then gaze at your list as you deeply relax. You'll soon discover patterns in your life that have brought you the most satisfaction. Make a commitment to do one activity a day that makes you feel happy.

However, there's another problem with happiness: the moment you feel it, it turns off the motivational center in the brain. So what's the neuroscientific secret to overcoming this problem? Promising yourself a big reward every time you accomplish an important goal. Your brain will anticipate the future pleasure and release dopamine; a neurochemical that makes you work harder!

Ultimately, the more you engage in meaningful work, especially activities that benefit others, the happier you'll become.

The latest Neuroeconomic research also shows that wealth predicts happiness. Here's an exercise we developed to help you achieve both inner and outer wealth. Ask yourself this question: what would you do if you were the wealthiest person in the world? Who would you help? What would you create to make this world more splendid? Immerse yourself the fantasy of being wealthy and notice how you feel. And the things you would do with all of that money? That's what will give your life true meaning and purpose.



14. Surround Yourself with Kindness & Forgiveness

When a friend or colleague excels, begin to repeat this affirmation to yourself: "May you be successful, may you be well, may you be filled with joy and peace."


The more respect and kindness you show to successful people, the more your brain will unconsciously emulate the best of what they are doing. Result: you'll pick up their good habits.

Tell them how thrilled you are and they will unconsciously reach out to help you become more successful. Research shows that the wealthier we become, the more we desire others to be successful.

On the other hand, feelings of resentment toward others will undermine your health, happiness, and financial success. Unforgiveness disrupts the motivation centers in your brain, but the latest neuroscientific research shows that forgiveness is one of the most important qualities to nurture, especially in the workplace.

Many brain-scan studies show that in order to forgive others, you first need to send kind thoughts to yourself by repeating, either out loud or in silence, any version of this phrase for approximately five minutes: "May I be happy, may I be well, may I be filled with love and peace."

Next, you visualize friends and family members, saying "May you be happy, may you be well, may you be filled with love and peace." Then you send this blessing to distant acquaintances, and then to people who have hurt and angered you. In the final step of this powerful exercise, you extend your love and kindness to everyone in the world – to all cultures, all colors, all religions, and all political groups. As you do this, you envision everyone getting along with each other and living together in peace.



Sending kind thoughts to difficult people who have caused you to suffer can be very hard to do, but it will change your brain in beneficial ways. Your brain is designed to deeply embed negative memories, and each time you recall the insult or offence, you strengthen the negative associations of that memory as your brain sends out a distress signal to the entire body. In order to disable that association, you have to create positive thoughts when you visualize the person and the specific event that upset you.

Eventually, the sensations of relaxation and kind thoughts will be consolidated into the old memory. But bad memories resist change, so you have to do this lovingkindness practice often – sometimes for months or even years – before you’ll experience calmness when you think about painful events from the past.

Ultimately, those feelings of love, kindness, and forgiveness for the individual will become embedded into your memory circuits, enhancing feelings of compassion for both the person, yourself, and for everyone else you interact with.



15. Use Fewer Words, Make More Sales

The human brain can only stay focused on about 10 words for 10 seconds. When you want to make a crucial point, make sure that you don't exceed this limit.

Then pause and listen to the response.

When you must speak for a longer period, it's essential to vary the length, tone, and speed of your voice. You'll need to be dramatic to keep people's short attention. Very fast speech will stimulate the listener's brain, but then, when you get to the punchline – the most important part of your message – turn it into a soundbite by speaking super slowly with very few words.

NeuroTip: Most people will still speak too many words, so try this little experiment. Count out your words on your fingers. When you run out of fingers, stop talking. In a matter of minutes, you'll learn how to speak briefly with greater clarity.

The Super-Slow Speaking Game

Counting your words on your fingers slows down your rate of speech. But some people, when playing the 10-10 game, will still talk rapidly. In our workshops, we have participants experience what it's like to put 2-second pauses between each word. Try it now: Say – whatever – you – want – for – the – next – minute – or – two. Then try it with a friend. This game will make you more aware of what words sound like in the silence between each word, you may at first hear your inner speech, then your mind goes silent. When you return to normal speaking, you'll automatically speak more clearly.



16. Want to Be Brilliant?

Generate Quantity Not Quality

Here's a little secret to success that is often overlooked. Brilliant people exhibit genius infrequently (and often in small bursts). Einstein, for example published 248 papers, but the most important ones were early in his career. Mozart, Bach, and Beethoven were prolific composers, but again, only a handful are considered pure genius. And most of Picasso's art is, well, crap!

The lesson here: keep generating new ideas and new work. And don't be a perfectionist, or a procrastinator; it will slow you down, causing you to miss those tiny windows of incredible creativity that is a natural but rare phenomenon of your brain. Keep writing. Keep experimenting, keep producing new products and services, and every so often brilliance will erupt. That is what you'll be remembered for and all your failures will be ignored!

Organizational psychologist and Wharton business professor Adam Grant concurs:

"People often believe that to do better work, they should do fewer things. Yet the evidence flies in the face of that assumption: Being prolific actually increases originality, because sheer volume improves your chances of finding novel solutions. In recent experiments by Northwestern University psychologists Brian Lucas and Loran Nordgren, the initial ideas people generated were the most conventional. Once they had thought of those, they were free to start dreaming up more-unusual possibilities. Their first 20 ideas were significantly less original than their next 15."

NeuroTip: Don't just dream big, dream MORE!

The background of the page features a soft, colorful gradient from light blue at the top to light pink at the bottom, resembling a sunset or sunrise. Overlaid on this background are the dark silhouettes of two people, likely a man and a woman, holding hands. The person on the left is shown from the side, with their arm extended towards the center. The person on the right is shown from the front, with their arm extended towards the center. Their hands are clasped together in the middle of the frame, creating a sense of connection and peace.

17. Sleep Better, Think Peace

Busy executives and entrepreneurs often wake up in the night and have trouble falling back to sleep. If this happens to you, try this: think of three words that make you feel deeply relaxed and secure. It could be peace, god, love...any word that has great meaning and value.

When you wake up in the night there are usually unconscious anxious thoughts wandering through your mind. Write them down on a sheet of paper so your mind knows that it can deal with the problems in the morning, when you feel refreshed.

Then begin to silently repeat your value word over and over. You should quickly fall back to sleep in 5-10 minutes.

Still having trouble? Try repeating the word “sleep...sleep...sleep.” It appears our brain is more than happy to comply with this simple request! And please, don't deprive yourself of sleep: it helps to restore and repair the brain. In this past, this concept has been controversial but last year, researchers found direct experimental evidence that the mouse brain cleans itself during sleep by expanding channels between neurons that allow an influx of cerebrospinal fluid. The fluid flushes out materials that accumulate as plaques and can contribute to diseases like Alzheimer's.

18. Write Your Way to Success

If you have a clear written strategy, the research shows that you will be 50% more likely to reach that goal, and if you share your goals and progress with a colleague, your chances of success increase to 75%.

But the goal must be realistic. Pick a simple goal that you would like to accomplish today. Write it down. Now write down 2-3 ways you could sabotage your goal. Finally write down counter-strategies for those sabotage behaviors.

Congratulations! You are on your way to success by applying some of the core principles of cognitive behavior therapy. And if you want to boost your self-esteem, write down the small goals you accomplished during the day. You see, the brain rewards itself with the pleasure neurochemical dopamine every time you savor even the smallest success, and that dopamine programs the brain to work harder and accomplish more goals.

But again, business success (and to a large extent, personal success) depends on the act of writing. Studies show that when you think about a problem or a desire, your language-based centers in your neocortex go too fast for the more ancient parts of your motivational brain to respond to. Writing slows down your thoughts, and brief phrases will stimulate your brain to take action.

What about typing? The newest research suggests that you should jot down important information with your pen because it's slower than using a keyboard. You'll learn more, remember more, and will have personalized knowledge in a way that makes it more useful for your goal-seeking brain!

19. How to Find Your True Passion in Life

Having a long-term vision of your passion and purpose builds life satisfaction...that's what the newest Positive Psychology research shows. The more you can identify a meaningful goal that will take years, even decades, to reach, the happier you'll be. But how do you find that deep passion, especially since the brain is built on the greedy selfish principle of immediate gratification?

Since the primary motivating drive in all mammals is to acquire as much of everything as possible (the seeking/desire emotion located in the lower regions of your brain), we can use this to identify what we are passionate about. Here, passion is defined as anything that interests, inspires, or intrigues you. The human brain loves anything new (knowledge, material objects, relationships) and you cannot and should not go against this biological imperative. But passions and desires change often throughout one's life, and many people struggle with identifying what they want to do next.

Neuropsychology finds that money itself does not bring long-term satisfaction. Making it is clearly a strong biological driving force, but what we DO with it brings that deeper satisfaction. I have found that creating a Passion Board will help you connect to a deeper purpose. If you make a list of everything you have been passionate about in the past, you'll see that in each decade of your life you had different passions, different desires. But if you study your list closely, you'll discover certain patterns that repeat. For me, it's writing, teaching, and seeking ultimate truths. But when I turned 63, my new desire shifted, and I now focus on what I could give back to others (through writing, teaching, speaking, and creating audio/visual programs).

STEP 1: First establish what your core values are surrounding yourself, relationships, and work. It's best to ask yourself the question "What are my deepest values?" while in a relaxed meditative state, listening to your intuition rather than your cravings.

STEP 2: Make a list of 5 deep passions you've had in every decade of your life. For example, prior to the age of 10, what were your main interests? (on my list was ping-pong, bicycling with friends, inventing stuff in the backyard, and most important: immersing myself in imagination games, which I still do to this day). What were your passions between 11-20? 21-30? 31-40....and so on. Look at your list and circle those passions that feel the most meaningful and exciting today. These are your "skill-sets" for the next step of this exercise.

STEP 3: Imagine that you are the wealthiest person in the world. Immerse yourself in the fantasy and really feel it. Now consider this: What will you spend that money on? Who would you help? What would you change? Reflect again on your deepest values, and then let your imagination soar as you create a vision board of all the projects you would initiate. Often the images and answers will expose the primal roots of your current passion. Whatever passion or purpose you commit to must reflect your deepest values.

STEP 4: Write down 3 "big" passions, even making something up if you're not sure. Post this where you can meditate on it for a minute every day or two. Add and delete items to your Passion Board. After a few months, you'll begin to intuitively know what direction will bring you the greatest pleasure and satisfaction.

STEP 5: What can you do tomorrow to take a tiny step toward that ultimate purpose and goal? Keep a journal for the next ten days documenting your feelings and thoughts, and begin to build a Strategy Board outlining how to bring your passion into the world in a meaningful and profitable way.

One more NeuroTip: Angela Duckworth, at the positive psychology center at The University of Pennsylvania, found that "grit" and disciplined self-control predict more success in life than IQ or natural talent. She defines grit as "the tendency to sustain interest in very long-term goals." She found that a combination of grit and self-control, when pursued over months, years, and even decades, is one of the secrets to goal attainment and finding one's true passion in life.

20. Turn Worry Into Confidence

10 Things You Can Do Right Now

Worrying about the future? Procrastinating? Feeling depressed? These negative thoughts and behaviors can undermine your confidence in setting and achieving goals.... you can't give into them.

Even if you are broke, you can't "afford" to indulge in negative thinking. Here are the best evidence-based strategies to interrupt negative thoughts and feelings. I've posted them before, but they are worth memorizing and practicing...try one of them right now and watch how it changes your consciousness:

1. Find an anchor word or phrase: "I will succeed...I am confident... peace...focus", etc. Repeat this throughout the day when negativity arises.
2. Make a list of all your successes and accomplishments in the past year and then immerse yourself visually in those memories. You'll immediately feel better.
3. Each day, identify a core value word that gives you a sense of meaning and purpose. Write it down and reflect on it once every hour as you yawn and stretch (this keeps stress low and turns off the worry centers in your brain).
4. Stay focused on simple goals (write one down each hour to stay focused) and at the end of the day write down 3 things you did well. Also write down 3 things you feel grateful for. Do this for 7 days and the research shows that self-esteem increases for 3 months!

5. When you notice a negative thought, suppress it. Contrary to what psychologists used to say, the research on thought suppression is robust. So when you find yourself ruminating on a worry, fear, or doubt, “just say no.” Tell that inner voice to shut up!
6. If suppression doesn’t work, use cognitive reframing: are you exaggerating? Is your worry real? Remember: worrying about a problem doesn’t help you solve it, but looking for solutions, and remaining positive, stimulates the “success” circuits in your frontal lobe.
7. If reframing fails, practice mindfulness: sit back and observe – without judgment – all the thoughts and feelings that flow in and out of consciousness. Mindfulness teaches your mind and your brain to disconnect from the emotional impact of negativity, and it stimulates both the “success” and “self-love” circuits in your brain. When you mindfully watch your thoughts, sudden bursts of insight often occur.
8. Still can’t free yourself of those negative thoughts? Accept them! A meta-analytic review study of mindfulness and acceptance-based therapies showed that the “oh well” approach is one of the most effective ways for dealing with most emotional problems.
9. After acceptance, begin to practice lovingkindness and forgiveness meditations. We all need to send love to ourselves on a daily basis, consciously reflecting on the small accomplishments we achieve every day and the people in our lives who care for us.
10. Still stuck? Have a NeuroCoaching session with me. I’ll personally show you, in just a couple of sessions, how to identify and undermine and resolve unconscious problems and blocks that are keeping you from realizing your fullest potential and deepest work/relationship/life desires. NeuroCoaching incorporates the latest brain-based and evidence-based strategies for resolving personal, relationship, and work-related problems. Ask for a brochure: markwaldman@sbcglobal.net

21. When You Awake Don't Jump Out of Bed

The moment you wake up, the most ancient parts of your brain will begin to drive you toward specific goals that will bring pleasure, nurturance, and security. But we usually are unaware of this instinctual motivational process. Instead, we jump right into our hurried habits as we prepare ourselves for work, not realizing that we are missing an important opportunity to increase our workday productivity. If, however, you remain in bed for a few extra seconds to become aware of your body and your mental state, your brain will function much better for the rest of the day. You'll accomplish more goals with less stress.

Nearly every mammal and bird will do two things when they awake: they slowly stretch their bodies as they yawn. The stretching eliminates any physical tension and the yawning helps their brain become more focused and alert.

We recommend that you do a similar ritual every morning. Instead of jumping out of bed the moment you open your eyes, take a few seconds to feel the sheets as you take a mental and physical inventory of your body: Do you feel calm or anxious? Do you feel tired or refreshed? Do you feel any aches or pains? Pay particular attention to the pleasurable sensations in your body because this stimulates the motivation centers in your brain. The more pleasure you can generate, the more your brain will want to take action in the world. Next, visualize what you want to accomplish that day and imagine yourself overcoming the obstacles that stand in your way. This simple technique has been proven to increase your physical and mental energy in ways that help you reach those goals with efficiency and ease. When you take a few moments to fully visualize your intentions and the possibility of success, your brain becomes more adept at turning your intentions into reality.

Now you are ready to get out bed, but do it in super-slow motion. This simple mindfulness strategy will stimulate the "NeuroWisdom" circuits in your brain, and with this greater awareness, you'll generate greater self-love and compassion for others, you'll be more productive at work, you'll experience less stress, and you'll build greater emotional resilience that will carry over into every part of your life.

The Power of...

NeuroWisdom

The New Brain Science of Money, Happiness & Success

ADAPTED FROM THEIR GROUNDBREAKING NeuroLeadership course at Loyola Marymount University, this book will guide you through a series of original brain-training exercises that will improve all parts of life, at work and at home.

You'll learn how to master the 4 Pillars of Wealth: motivation, decision-making, creativity, and awareness — to achieve greater happiness, success, and satisfaction. The “worry” centers of the brain are turned off and the optimism circuits are turned on. Work becomes more pleasurable and you'll solve problems more efficiently.

[Get the Details](#)



NeuroWisdom 101

An 8-Week Training in Mindfulness, Positivity & Stress Reduction

In our NeuroLeadership class—part of the Executive MBA program at Loyola Marymount University—our students are personally guided through some of the core exercises described in this book, and then they are given an audio training program, NeuroWisdom 101, to deepen their mindfulness practice throughout the school year. Our students, and the thousands of other people who have purchased NeuroWisdom 101, have found this to be one of the most valuable programs for lowering anxiety, building confidence, and maintaining peak performance at work.

Being guided through an audio exercise is easier than guiding yourself through a written exercise, which is why we highly recommend that you augment this book with NeuroWisdom 101, which includes 58 experiential exercises designed to reduce stress, build positivity, and deepen self-reflective and social skills.

Listen to one track each day, and then, with the help of a mindfulness clock (described in chapter 2), take 60-second breaks throughout the day to practice or reflect on the morning's exercise.

[Get the Details](#)

