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## Introduction

You are a Hero.

If you are reading these lines, it means that you have evolved to interact with new technologies, adapt, and thrive. Out of millions of cells, you made it to the end, and successfully came to existence by connecting with another cell: Connection is at the root of our existence. When we connect, we thrive. Here are 5 exercises that aim to enhance that experience of connection, so you can live a better version of yourself!

### Habit One: Connect with your mind

We navigate the world from a window: our mind. Everything we experience passes under the filter of the mind. The mind is what the brain does, and the brain is a physical structure affected by genes and environment. This interaction between genes and environment creates the frames we use to navigate life. We cannot change our genes, but we can choose our environment. We are going to use a mental process, attention, to decide what aspects of our environment we want to change. We cannot change the environment outside, but we can decide what to pay attention to in that environment, and by changing what we pay attention to, we change who we are. Let's connect with our mind by changing what we pay attention to!

The 9 dots exercise: connect all 9 dots with four straight lines -without lifting the pencil from the page – and without retracing over any of the lines. (To solve it, you need to go beyond your cultural frameworks.)



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This first habit is an invitation to recognize that there are some frames that help us, others that do not. The answer is in your mind. To be able to listen to your mind you need to detach from the external noise, and pay attention to your inner self. Connecting with your mind will shed light on where to go. The **1<sup>st</sup> habit** is “***Peace of Mind***”: Be with you in silence. In a quiet space, find a comfortable posture, close your eyes if that feels ok, and just be with yourself. There is nowhere to go, no goal to reach, no destination, there is only you with yourself, and be comfortable being there, be curious, be kind, do not judge. Practice this every day for a 5, 10, 15, or 20 minutes, it is up to you. After practice, make sure you grab a journal and write your thoughts.

## **Habit Two: Connect with your body**

### **Move, move, move:**

Our body is a vehicle that helps us navigate life, let's move it. If we move, we are alive, and if we are alive, ***we can*** evolve. We just need to put ourselves in movement! This is the **2<sup>nd</sup> habit, move!** To spark movement, start by choosing a moment during the day to walk for 15 minutes. Yes, a 15 minutes' walk, alone, you, with yourself. No cellphone, no music, not going to do some chores. It will be a specific, intentional time to incorporate movement in your life. So, just put yourself in motion. This will help to ignite movement in your body, and once you are moving, everything can happen!

1. Set up a specific time during the day
2. Make sure you are free of all manageable distractions (Cellphone, music, chores)
3. Go out for a 15-minute walk. Focus on the experience of moving, of walking. Enjoy the ride.

## **Habit Three: Connect with your emotions**

Emotional avoidance is at the root of most psychological distress. At some extent, this happens because we do not know how to relate to our emotions. Emotions are not good

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neither bad, they are sources of information, let's listen to them, and use their energy in a way that is adaptive and help us thrive, let's be intelligent about our emotions! Emotional intelligence is understood as the capacity to understand, regulate, and use personal and other's emotions to navigate life. The first step in the process to increase your emotional management is to be aware of the emotions you are feeling, then be able to experience them (not avoid them), create some distance to finally decide a direction.

You can use this template to bring awareness and direction to your emotions. By doing this exercise, you will start increasing exposure to your automatic patterns and then be able to modify them according to your intentions and the environment, this is, being responsive instead of being reactive.

Once a day, choose a situation in which an emotional reaction was involved and chart it using the prompts below:

**Awareness:** What did I experience? Was I aware of the experience? I was thinking about the emotion? What I was doing? Who was with me?

**Be Bold:** Did I experience the motion? Did I suppress or avoid experiencing the emotion?

**Create distance:** Was I able to create some distance before reacting?

**Direct:** What did you do with your emotion? What was the direction? How did you use the emotional energy? Did it help you to live better? Was it adaptive? Did you get in trouble? Did you have a positive outcome?

Awareness	Be Bold	Create Distance	Direct

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Once you have done this for at least 2 weeks -reflecting on past experiences- try to do it “on the go”, so you do not need the chart anymore. **Connecting with your emotions is the third habit!**

## **Bonus: Developing a positive emotion: Gratitude**

To help you increase your gratitude, you will be engaging in 2 simple and powerful exercises.

### **Exercise 1: Gratitude Journal**

For two months, once a day, write down 3 things you are grateful for during that day, and the reason why you’re grateful for those things. Examples:

- I am grateful for today’s work because I was able to help a customer to solve a difficult issue he was having, I felt great!
- I am grateful for today’s walk after lunch because I was able to detach from a difficult morning at work and also enjoy the beauty of nature.
- I am grateful for today’s dinner because I have a plate of food on my table.

### **Exercise 2: Gratitude Visit**

1. Think about someone who has done something great for you and you feel you have not expressed your gratitude enough.
2. Reflect on the benefits you received from that person and write down a letter expressing your gratitude.
3. Set up a visit to read out loud and hand out the letter personally. If you cannot do it in person, try to use different means. Spent some time with the person talking about the experience.

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## Habit Four: Connect with your actions

### Creating Agency:

Think about an artist, all of them have agents. What does the agent do for the artist? They organize the environment so the artist can perform and shine! The agent will take care of all the details, everything that is required for a successful performance. That is one of the key elements on why we look after artists as successful people, they do have agents that facilitate their success. The great news is that you can have an agent! Yes, yourself. You must be your personal agent. An agent is someone who organizes internal and external resources in order to achieve something. You are your personal agent, therefore, organizing your internal and external resources will pave the way toward achievement. I have adapted the IVAR framework from the extensive work on self-efficacy and human agency from Albert Bandura. Enjoy it.

**Intention:** Where do you want to be? What is the goal you want to achieve? Where do you intend to go?

**Vision:** What does that goal look like? Create a vision as detailed as possible of the outcome. Draw it, add color. This will serve as a motivator, as a bridge that will push you toward the realization of your intention. As Bandura explains, Behavior is governed by visualized goals and anticipated outcomes, therefore visualizing the outcome is a key element in realizing it.

**Action:** If we move, we are alive, and if we are alive, we can evolve. Moving is an essential element in life, actions help us move. Set up specific actions you will engage in. Those actions must be aligned with your vision and intention. The actions are steps toward your intention. Intention and Vision are only achieved through actions. So, act the best you can. The bigger the goal, the greater the effort.

**Reflection:** Are you moving closer to the realization of your intention? Are you close to reaching your goal? Is your visualization helping you to overcome obstacles and keep you motivated? What do you need to change or modify in your actions in order to keep moving toward your goal?

### 1 Year Projection exercise

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Think about a goal that is meaningful for you within one year, and grounded in your intention, visualize the outcome, start acting upon the specific actions, and reflect on how close you are getting to your challenge!

Intention	What do you want to achieve in 12 months? Specific Goal.
Vision	How do you see yourself in a year? Write down or draw your vision as clear and detailed as possible.
Action	What are specific steps you can take toward your vision: Today: This month: Next month: etc.
Reflection	This is an ongoing process during the 12-month period. Reflect on your actions, strategies. What is helping? What is hindering? Make adjustments as needed.

You are the only one responsible for your achievements until you are not responsible anymore. You are your personal agent, what do you want to help yourself to achieve? You are your excuses or your achievements. Are you up for the challenge? it is up to you!

## **Habit Five: Connect with others**

### **Positive Relations:**

We are interdependent beings. We are not self-sufficient beings, we need from the outside world in order to live: air, food, water, sun, etc. We are the most dependent creatures. As mammals, we need about 8 years to achieve full autonomy, this is the longest time for any animal. Maybe evolution has favored that need to connect with others. Is in that connection where a key to a happier more productive life resides.

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Intentionally connect with others. There are 3 exercises suggested here that will help you to connect:

1. **Random act of kindness:** Do something good for someone that is not expected. This simple act will help you feel good, our brain is wired to connect with others and will reward you when you do so. (Giving someone the spot on a line; buying 2 stamps and giving one to the last person in the line; etc.)
2. **Hug:** Hug someone for 5 seconds; an intentional hug to express someone the positive affect you feel for that person.
3. **Who do you take to a desert island?** Try to answer this question. Write down the reasons why you would take that person to the island. Then, organize a meeting with that person and let the person know the reasons why you would take him/her to a desert island. Express your gratitude at the end of the meeting for the positive relationship you both have. If you do not have someone to take to a desert island, it will be worth starting cultivating deep positive relationships.

## Conclusion

I have suggested a few exercises that will move you accomplish something: to reconnect with yourself, so you can live a happier, more productive life. This reconnection with your mind, your body, your feelings, your actions, and with others will spark joy and a sense of fulfillment. It is my hope that you can lead the life you want. The tools presented here are intended to help you do that: Lead the life you want. May you be healthy, may you be happy, may you live a life with purpose.