

Which way do you open your banana

A guide to

**MOTIVATION
HAPPINESS
SUCCESS
&
RESILIENCE**

We have magnificent minds we just didn't get any instructions! A simple guide to how to make yours work for you

G A V I N A U B R E Y

WHICH WAY DO YOU EAT YOUR BANANA?

**A guide to motivation, happiness,
success and resilience**

Content

Introduction

Chapter 1

[It's all about the iceberg](#) Understanding behaviour

Chapter 2

[Beliefs + Values = Attitude](#) Why are some people more successful than others?

Chapter 3

[E+R=O Bears Sharks & Tigers](#) Who is really in charge of your mind?

Chapter 4

[Energise your iceberg](#) Activate your environment, Activate your body

Chapter 5

[Sparkling Moments The Magic Circle](#) Tapping into states of excellence

Chapter 6

[You lie down with dogs you get fleas!](#) Control the environment

Chapter 7

[Reality starts in the imagination](#) The Power of visualisation

Chapter 8

[Beliefs & Values = Rules](#) Set some new guidelines

Chapter 9

[The Lake of Resilience](#) Maintaining strong resilience

The Final Chapter

Reading List

Credits

Chapter 9 - With special thanks to Mike & Liz - founders of happy city www.happycity.org.uk

Introduction

Hello, my name is Gavin. You may know me if you have attended one of my courses, been coached by me or listened to my podcasts on iTunes. For those of you who haven't; nice to meet you.

I thought it might be an idea to give you a little background on why I feel comfortable publishing a book on Motivation, Happiness, Success and Resilience. I started the book here because this is where it all started.

My story is not a tale of rags to riches (although I did start a little on the ragged side). Financially, I'm doing very well for myself now; not a multi-millionaire but ok. So ragged to pretty ok! I have a fabulous wife, 3 ace boys, a fat cat called Bagel, an insane dog called Wilson (after the ball in Castaway) and two goldfish named Gfor (G for goldfish) & Ms Money Penny. Every morning when I feed them I get to say morning Gfor, hello Ms Money Penny, with my best Sean Connery impression.

When I was around 20, I was living in the hallway of a squat. The teenage love of my life had dumped me for the bright lights of London which had sent me into a spiral of self-destruction. Four years later, I was National Sales Manager of an insurance company managing around 70 staff and after that, my career went from strength to strength. So, what happened?

Well, I woke up one morning in the hallway of the squat and surveyed my worldly belongings. I had a blue racing bike, a camouflage jacket (my Dad's from his army days), a white Adidas sports bag with all my clothing in it and a book by Dr Schwartz called "The magic of thinking big".

I'd been given the book a few months before and had planned to read it, but getting dumped distracted me slightly. That day I had nothing better to do so, in I dived.

The next day I was hitching a lift to stay with my parents, bike sold for £20. I had made two decisions:

- To give life another crack and;
- To understand how my brain worked, because frankly up to now I had been pretty rubbish at using it.

Since then I have had a ferocious appetite for self-learning. I rose quickly in the corporate world, not because I was brighter or better looking than anyone else; I just knew more about motivation. Every team I managed achieved more than they had ever achieved before because I taught them how their brain worked!

Over the years I have held several senior leadership roles. In each role, I'm proud to say my staff either doubled their performance or reached levels they had never seen before. The more my approach worked, the more I learned and the more I was able to teach the people around me.

At 36, I decided I had done with climbing the corporate ladder, in truth I was a little bored. I needed a new challenge. So what better challenge than to go and start a new business with no clients and limited cash reserve!

My idea was to train and coach people all the things I had learned. At the beginning, I

quickly realised that persuading companies to pay me and let me loose on their staff was a little challenging, but I was determined to make it succeed.

Fourteen years later, I've been fortunate enough to work with over 10,000 people around the world in locations such as New York, Sydney, Hong Kong, Kazakhstan, Tobago, Delhi, Switzerland and France. From Chief Executives to newly appointed managers, national newspapers to nuclear power stations. I have loved it.

When you coach and train that many people in so many different industries, locations and cultures, you begin to get some clues as to the truth behind motivation, happiness, resilience and success. I get no better satisfaction than seeing someone develop and grow after we have spent time together.

This is what this guide is about. Everything I have learned in the last thirty years about Motivation, Happiness, Resilience & Success.

We have magnificent minds; we just didn't get any instructions! So, this is the set of instructions I have collected from everything I have read, observed and learned over the years. I hope you find them easy to absorb and apply. I have tried to keep them as simple and practical as possible.

I can't guarantee this book will make you hugely wealthy or gain you rapid promotion (although many of my clients have achieved those things). I am, however, 100% confident that this book will make a significant difference to your life.

Chapter 1

It's all about the iceberg

Understanding behaviour

Understanding behaviour

When did you realise that people were different to you?

I quite often ask this question at the beginning of a training session. The room always goes quiet, so I ask the question again and shut up (just in case they hadn't heard me).

The responses tend to fall into three camps:

1. "You are weird... what a strange way to start a training course."
2. "When I was young at school."
3. "Are they?"

I explain that I was a bit of a late developer. I only really realised that people were fundamentally different to me when I started my first management job.

As I mentioned in the introduction section, I had begun a journey of self-learning which had, based on my performance in sales and my ability to demonstrate at the interview that I knew all about motivation landed me my first management job. An expert is only one page ahead!

I was to be in charge of the South West of England and Wales sales team named Area 66. Nationally the company had 6 Area Teams; Area 66 were usually 5th or 6th in performance at the end of each year.

This is when I truly realised that people were so different. In my simplistic mind - in a sales job, if you hit your target, you get paid extra money. So all you need to do is work hard and hit your sales target, right? It never occurred to me that other people saw the world in quite a different way.

What I had learned about my personal motivation worked for me, but I quickly realised I needed to understand a bit more on what made others tick.

If my approach to working with Area 66 was "can you just work harder and sell more" I'm certain the results at the end of the sales year would have been the same as the previous years; 5th or 6th in the country.

I realised that people were a little more complicated than amoebas (a one celled organism). If you poke an amoeba with a stick, it moves away. If you put sugar in front of it, it moves towards. This is also known as the 'carrot and stick' style of management. Useful if you happen to be managing a group of amoebas, which I wasn't!

I changed my approach. Within a year, Area 66 went from 5th out of 6 Areas to number 1, with one of the team, Jane, achieving the number one individual spot.

So, what was it I had learned that made the difference?

The iceberg

To help understand your own and other people's behaviour, I want you to picture an iceberg.

Behaviour is like the tip of the iceberg; the bit you can see. If you just focus on the behaviour, you won't get very far in understanding yourself or others.

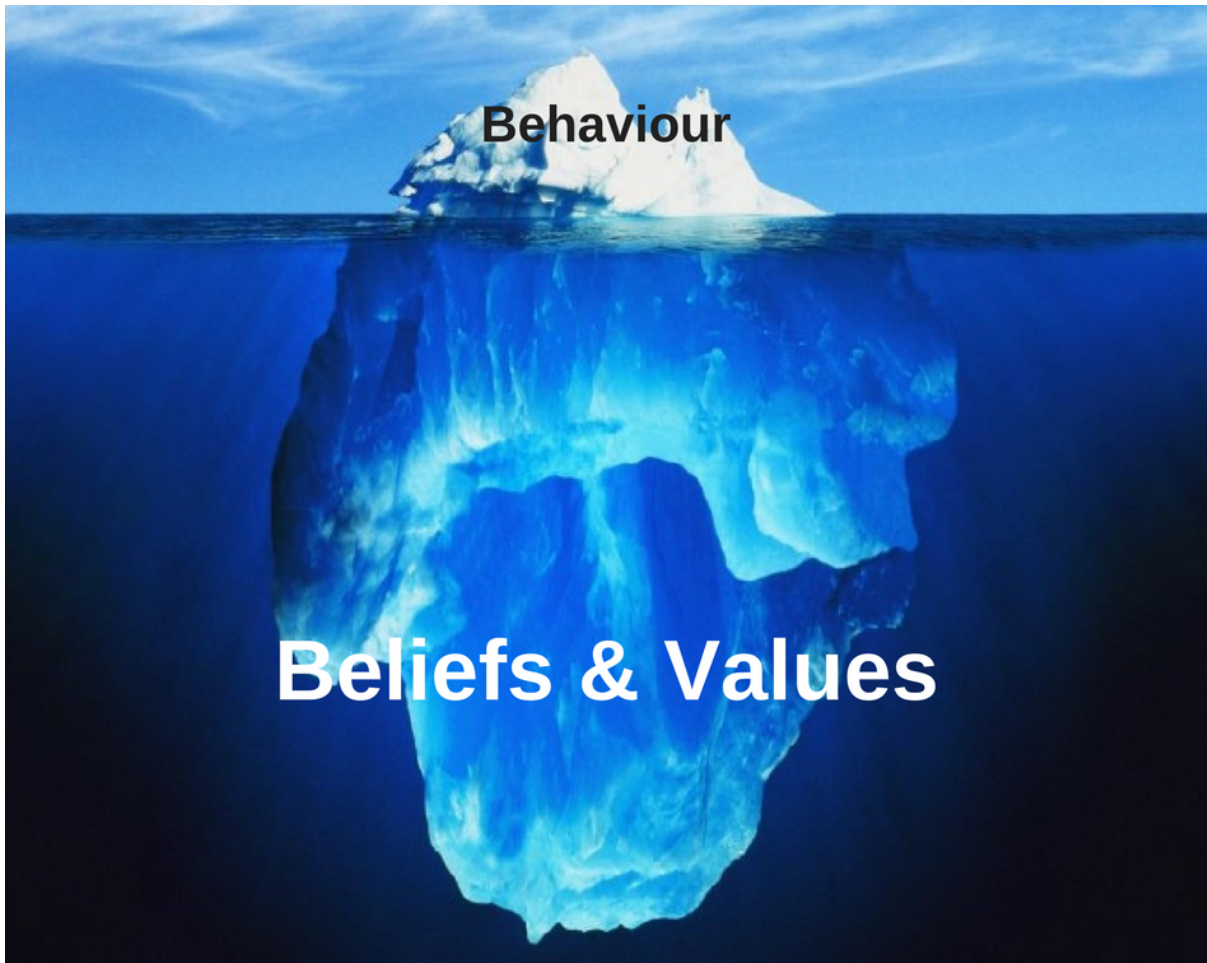
Drivers of behaviour lie beneath the visible waterline (the real essence and mass of the iceberg), which are your feelings, beliefs & values, combined with the influence of external factors (the environment).

To understand motivation, happiness, resilience & success, you need to understand how the iceberg is made up and the influence the environment has on it.

The iceberg - Below the waterline

Beliefs & values

Deep below the surface of the iceberg are our beliefs and values



Definitions:

Beliefs - Something one accepts as true or real; a firmly held opinion.

Values - Principles or standards of behaviour; one's judgement of what is important in life.

Where do our beliefs & values come from? Are we born with them?

When I ask these questions to a group I'm training, they always answer in the following way:

1. No, we are not born with beliefs & values.
2. They come from our family, friends, school, anything we have been exposed to in the past.

Many of our core beliefs & values are hard-wired in before the age of eight, and then the teenage and adult years put in additional layers. Your beliefs and values steer your behaviour iceberg from deep down. In fact, quite often they are so deep in the iceberg you may not be consciously aware of them. So your behaviour today may be using beliefs & values from when you were 6 or 13! To use a computer analogy, you could be trying to operate in the modern world (Windows 10 at the time of print) using an operating system of Windows 95 (the only launch I remember - the Stones "Start me up").

Positive and negative beliefs

"Whether you believe you can or cannot, you are probably right" Henry Ford

We all have a range of positive and negative beliefs, to which we attach different scales of strength. In my experience of training & coaching so many people, I would estimate 80% of them have pretty run of the mill positive & negative beliefs. I come across 10% of people who seem to be in perfect shape and another 10% who are dealing with some very serious issues.

This book is intended to work with the 80%.

For the 10% who are in perfect shape, I would use the phrase "If it ain't broke, don't fix it", however, you may find many aspects of this book useful to keep an eye on your iceberg. To use one of my favourite lines "Whatever made you successful in the past probably won't in the future".

For the 10% who are dealing with some serious issues, I am confident this book will complement the other help you may be receiving. If you are not getting some external help, I would strongly suggest you explore options with your doctor.

Beliefs, I think, are a little weird, as we think they are part us, and we think they are real.

I'll tread carefully with this one and be a little cryptic in case we have some younger readers onboardwe all believed in the big fella with a red suit and beard carrying a sack on his back during the festive time! Didn't we?

"I believe tomorrow will be another day". Are you sure?

"I believe I can count the number of Fs in a sentence". We will test that soon.

Negative beliefs

I want to spend a little time exploring negative beliefs, as these seem to be the ones that cause us dis-ease.

I have coached thousands of people from many walks of life. I have only had a handful of people who don't have a few negative beliefs that come and haunt them now and again.

The most common Management Executive negative belief is, "One day I'm going to get found out". This is often referred to as "imposter syndrome": the fear of being exposed, that you don't deserve your success and you could get found out at any moment.

I've coached many people who suffer from this in varying degrees ranging from minor doubts to fully blown self-destruction.

By the way, if you do suffer from that one and you haven't been found out in the past, chances are you won't in the future as there is nothing to find out! It's usually suffered from by high achieving individuals. The fact you are high achieving means you won't get found out, you will make mistakes, but you won't get found out. When you get to the end of your days, I guarantee you will say "why didn't I just chill out , relax and get on with life?".

This is how powerful beliefs from the deep can be, if even the super successful can think they will be exposed as a fraud.

If you have a negative belief that concerns you, try this exercise

Draw a table top with no legs (see below) and write in your negative belief. If you can, do this with a trusted friend or colleague (they often see you in a more objective light).

My negative belief is.....I'm a poor public speaker

Now draw at least four legs underneath the table top.

Each leg is a supporting evidence for the belief. In each leg put in a separate piece of supporting evidence. e.g. if your belief is as above, "I'm a poor public speaker", then put evidence on each leg:

1. I have had direct feedback from my boss that I'm a poor public speaker
2. I gave a speech and people walked out booing while I was talking

and so on.

Continue to build the legs with real factual evidence. It has to be factual and not just a perception on your part. This is why it's good to do this exercise with a trusted friend or colleague as they can give you a fresh perspective.

Now stand back and look at your belief. Is it supported by at least four strong, robust legs? Rarely; in my coaching experience. In fact, more often than not it has no legs. Even if it has

three legs, the belief will wobble.

I remember once many years ago working with a great guy called Carlos, who was about to move with his job from South America to the UK (I was running a course in Tobago... tough gig, I know!). He was worried about the move as he believed his English colleagues might judge him poorly because of his grasp of the UK language (It was excellent by the way).

So we drew the table top "They will think less of me because of my command of the English language" and tried to put some legs under it. We couldn't find one bit of evidence. In fact, all we could find was evidence for a different table top "They are going to think I'm a great asset". The legs for that belief were easy, he was ridiculously clever, very engaging and warm, spoke four languages, etc. Just seeing the negative belief for what it was, blew it away. The relief on Carlos's face was evident, he had been carrying this burden for a while.

The point is, our beliefs are not a permanent part of us and if you want to, you can decide to let some of them go.

If you do the exercise usually three results come out:

1. The belief has no legs. In that case, use a new table top with a belief you would like (usually the opposite of the negative belief) and put supporting evidence under it.

2. The belief has less than four legs; there is some supporting evidence but the table wobbles. So if your belief was "I'm a poor public speaker" which used to have four solid imaginary legs and now has two real ones, your belief might become "public speaking is an area I need to work on". Ok, now you see it for what it is, rather than some hidden monster under the bed, do the same as in point 1. Build a new table top and put more legs on it than the previous negative belief. This may involve you having to do training or get some coaching, i.e., in the example above go on a presentation skills class. Most people I come across on reflection find it easier to build a positive table once they bring it to the surface and factually examine it.

3. The belief has four robust legs. If this is the case, I would suggest you ask yourself the following questions:

1. Is this causing me a problem right now?
2. Is it likely to cause me a problem in the future?
3. Do I need to take some action?

If the answer to all 3 is no, let it go. You are worrying about an imaginary monster under the bed.

If it is yes to 1 or 2 take some action to try and fix the situation. Knowing what the problem is, and having some control of the situation is ridiculously good for stress management.

The point is, our beliefs are not a permanent part of us and if you want to, you can decide to let some of them go.

Do you believe what you see, or see what you believe?

Many people think they believe what they see.

Have you ever been so right about something, and then realised you were wrong? Most people say yes. If you say no you might find people view you a little stubborn!

Have you ever tried to convince someone else they are so wrong about something, and no matter how much evidence you give them they won't shift their point of view? Everyone says yes!

In my experience, we all tend to see what we believe as our beliefs are so deeply layered in beneath the surface.

Try this...

Count the number of Fs in the sentence below. I will give you the answer on the next page, so you don't cheat!

FINISHED FILES ARE THE RESULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY COMBINED WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF YEARS

The number of Fs is 6. You have probably missed the one or more of the words 'of'. If you got 6 first time, well done, apparently you are a genius.

Most people *believe* they have it right and then later realise they are wrong.

95% of people I work with count 3, 4 or 5. At least 50% say 3 so if that's you, you're by no means alone.

The combination of your beliefs (what you think is true) and your values (your standards) equal the rules that run your iceberg (more of this in chapter 8 belief & values = rules).

Interestingly these beliefs and values are the culmination of everything in the past - good or bad. They are in general a messy mixture, some good, some bad, some distinctly average.... A right "mush".

In addition you never seem to access the same part of this iceberg on any single day. Some days we believe we can conquer the world, other days making a cup of tea seems impossible.

So you are driven by a "mush" which seems to vary second to second, hour to hour, day to day.

What part of the "mush" you access is the key. If you are not careful, your beliefs can own you.

The purpose of this book is to show you you can own your beliefs and other parts of the iceberg.

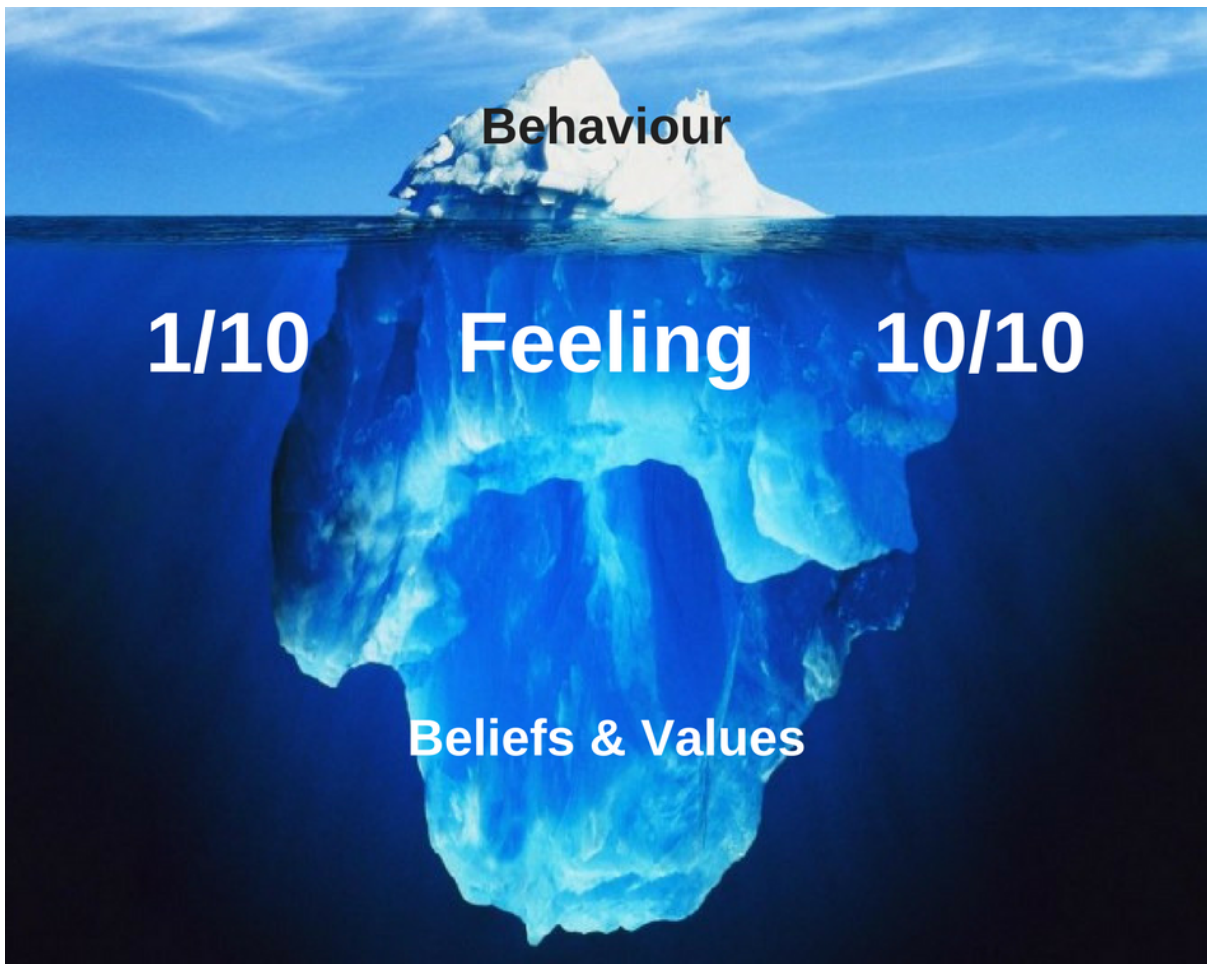
Don't be afraid to challenge some of your beliefs. If they are not useful, you can get rid of them.

"Whether you believe you can or cannot, you are probably right" Henry Ford

Feelings

So what makes you access certain parts of the “mush”?

Above beliefs & values on the iceberg come your feelings, or you could call them your mood.



Feelings

Have you ever had one of those awful days, where every goes to crap, you feel exhausted, totally lousy? This is a 1/10 day (as per diagram in iceberg).

When you feel this way what type of belief system do you access, good or bad? 100% of my course delegates will say bad.

What type of impact do you have? 100% of my delegates will say "not so good".

Have you ever had one of those glorious days where everything you touch turns to gold, you feel alive and motivated? A "Take me to the lottery shop because today I'm a winner" type of day?

What type of impact did you have? Again 100% of delegates would say "positive impact."

How we feel tends to determine which belief system we operate.

When you feel lousy (heading toward 1/10), you open up your negative belief system. Can you achieve greatness? Probably not!

When you feel awesome (heading toward 10/10), you open up your positive belief system. Can you achieve greatness? Absolutely!

This, in turn, impacts on how you behave and how you come across to others. When you feel lousy your impact is low; it's difficult to fake it, your body language gives the game away.

When you are feeling awesome your impact is massive; success comes easy.

So how you feel determines how you believe. How you believe determines how you succeed. If you think you can or cannot, you are probably right!

Who controls the way you feel? 80% of my delegates say, "I do".

I say, "If that were true, why don't you feel great all the time? There is no downside to feeling 10/10. We are not talking happy clappy, a motivated idiot - we are talking about feeling strong powerful, confident and motivated."

They say, "Good point."

It is usually external factors that determine how we feel.

External factors are literally anything in the environment; the list is endless. Your boss, the weather, the news, your partner, a client, winning the lottery, losing the ticket...it's endless.

Also, it is completely chaotic and ever-changing. Take technology - it's forever driving the world to very new places. The iPhone when it came out changed the world, it now looks like a brick.

Is the environment going to calm down and be a little stable for a few years? I doubt it, it's like a frog in sock!

So think about this. If the way you feel is linked to the environment, which is chaotic, it's highly likely the way you feel will be in chaos.

In my experience, the people who have greater control and understanding of their iceberg, are happier, more motivated, resilient and successful. **The combination of beliefs, values and how you feel are your attitude.** These are all below the waterline activities. Everything external is above the waterline, which to keep it simple I will call the environment in this book.

The purpose of this guide is to show you how to take control of your own iceberg. If you don't there will be plenty of others (out there in the environment) willing to take control for you.

The chapters that follow are a step by step guide to help you; some chapters may be more relevant to you than others depending on the shape of your iceberg. Anytime you feel some turbulence below the waterline you can always come back and pick & mix to get your iceberg back in shape.

In my experience all of the chapters work. I have used them on myself and shown others. I can always see the dramatic change.

The river of poo

One last thing before we dive into the chapters. There is a river of poo formed from the environment that runs under everyone's iceberg. Shit happens, life is never going to be a completely easy ride. When we feel lousy we take a good bath in the river of poo, we moan about all the things we can't control. When we feel great we don't even notice the things we have no control over. The following chapters will help you get out of the river of poo... staying in there is smelly!!



Chapter 2

Beliefs + Values = Attitude

Why are some people more successful than others?

Successful people

What is it that makes the successful, successful? Is it education; good looks; who they know; luck?

Have a look around at the people you class as successful. Are they better looking, better connected or cleverer than you? Maybe. Maybe not.

Useful fact: The thing that is most likely to set them apart is their attitude (Beliefs + values + feelings = attitude, as per previous chapter).

Try this...

Think about the people you admire; the people you would say are successful. Note down all the attributes that you would associate with those people.

Now, review your list and circle all the words that relate to attitude, rather than knowledge or skill.

When I train groups of people and ask them to flipchart what they believe to be the key attributes for success, they generally find that 80% plus of the attributes they have listed relate to attitude, not knowledge or skill.

A typical group list looks like this:

Knowledge / Skills	Attitude
IQ Knowledge Skill Being an expert Good communicator	Drive Resilience Empathy Ambition Luck Having money, they also agreed this could make them unsuccessful Networked Positive personality Confidence Determined Ambitious Has goals Self aware

Now you could argue, there are not as many things you can populate the left side compared to the right. The group tends to have a healthy discussion and conclude the following:

1. Just having knowledge and skill will not get you far
2. In many ways just having attitude can get you very far, but is quite role dependant. i.e., an accountant needs a qualification, so some roles have an entry knowledge or skill requirement. Others do not require this entry level, and they agree that with the right attitude you can pick up the knowledge & skill on the way

I've even done this exercise in a nuclear power station 50 miles from where I live, and they tell me; "Yep Gavin. Attitude is more important than knowledge and skills". I'm thinking, "You must be kidding me. I live 50 miles from this place!"

Don't get me wrong, knowledge and skill are important and in some jobs, an essential requirement. If you want to be a nuclear scientist, you will need a qualification but if you want to run the power station, what you'll really need to display is confidence, drive, determination and resilience.

I always ask a group I'm training "How much of your time do you spend developing knowledge & skill compared to attitude, bearing in mind you have just told me attitude is the biggest difference?"

They answer 80% knowledge & skill and 20 % attitude. They get the point!!

The fact you are reading this book indicates you are developing the key attribute to success - attitude.

Back in that job with Area 66, I quickly got promoted to National Sales Manager, I was very young, and knew very little about being a Manager, I had only had a year with Area 66. My knowledge and skill were limited, but I had bags of attitude. It was the attitude that drove me to learn and apply the knowledge & skills I was busily acquiring.

This promotion meant I had a 4 hour commute in the car from Bath to Exeter at least three days a week. When I look back at that two-year period of 1,152 hours of driving (if my maths is right), apart from a getting a slightly dodgy back, I learned more than ever before. Audio training cassettes (showing my age) became available, Tony Robbins (see my reading list) was new to the country. I filled my boots with attitude.

In summary, you need knowledge and skills to play the game and some games need more knowledge and skill (like nuclear scientists' stuff) than others. But it's your attitude that helps you succeed in the game.

So, what if you don't feel particularly confident, driven or resilient? Can you train yourself to behave in a confident, driven or resilient manner?

Of course new attitudes can be developed; otherwise, we would have a fixed state of mind for all of our lives.

Think about your life so far, are you carrying the same beliefs, values & attitudes as ten years ago? Highly unlikely. There will be behavioural shadows from the past that lurk deep beneath your iceberg, but as time goes on we put in new beliefs, and our iceberg alters shape. We grow, we develop; life is a bit of a rollercoaster, we have ups and downs, if your beliefs and values are based on experience, the more experience you have, the more they will change.

Don't get me wrong there are some people I meet who seemed to have frozen their iceberg in time and are stuck in their attitude. More often than not these will be the people who blame everyone else for their life.

Try this...

Close your eyes and imagine a lemon in your left hand.

Relax and take your time to notice the texture and contour of the lemon's skin. Lift the lemon to your nose and smell it.

Now also imagine you're holding a sharp knife in your right hand. Be very careful - it's sharp!

When you are ready, imagine cutting the lemon in half. See the juices running through your fingers and take in the fresh citrus smell. Bring a segment of the lemon to your mouth and take a bite.

What happened? Could you feel the saliva in the back of your throat? Did you pull a funny face? Could you taste the sour lemon as you bit into the flesh?

If you can fool your brain into thinking it is eating an imaginary lemon, you can imagine that you're a confident, go-getting superstar because it's basically the exact same process.

Your mind is a magnificent creation. Unfortunately, we were given limited instructions on how to use it, and therefore we usually live out our lives based on what has happened before rather than what could happen in the future.

Brain training

There is a huge amount of research happening around brain development and something called brain plasticity.

For many years, neuro-scientists thought the brain was pretty fixed and died out as you got older. More recent research has suggested that the brain grows where it is focused.

London taxi cab drivers who spend years driving around and learning "the knowledge" (London street layout) have a larger hippocampus (the part of the brain that deals with visual spatial memory) than anyone else in the UK because they exercise it every day.

It's possible then, that if you focus on negative things, the brain develops that way.

Happily, the same goes for positive thoughts (more on this under "Sparkling Moments"). So, if you were born grumpy, the good news is you can rewire your brain to be happy.

Science is now proving something I started to realise thirty years ago. You can develop new attitudes, regardless of what has gone before.

Chapter 3

E+R=O

Bears Sharks & Tigers

Who is really in charge of your mind?

Einstein is famous for his equation $E=MC^2$. I guess this has been reasonably important to scientists trying to work out how the universe works.

An equation less famous, and in the global universe not so important, but for your life, happiness and success, vitally important is:

E (event) + **R** (reaction) = **O** (outcome).

If you have two people experiencing the same event, it's virtually impossible for them to react in the same way.

However the way they react will determine the outcome, therefore the outcome will always be different.

Example

Two people experience a rejection on a first date.

Person 1 takes this in a negative way. "Why does this always happen to me. I'm so ugly. I'm going to alone for the rest of my life" etc. This sets them on a spiral of doom and gloom.

Person 2 tries to see the positive, "Not such a good result. What can I learn from this?". This sets them on a path to discovery.

This is the challenge. The way we feel is usually determined by the environment (remember the iceberg chapter).

If the environment gives us bad news we tend to move toward the dark side (1 out of 10 on the iceberg).

The environment is the (**E**)vent, our (**R**)eaction tends to be unconscious and therefore the (**O**)utcome is predetermined by our unconscious reaction.

Good news if your unconscious reaction is positive... not such good news if, like most of us, it's a little negative!

Unconscious and Conscious

If you drive a car you have almost definitely experienced the feeling of driving somewhere without really remembering how you got there.

There you are in charge of a 1-tonne killing machine driving at 70 mph and suddenly, you're at your destination.

If you have been driving a while, you drove unconsciously. With our unconscious mind we can deal with millions of bits of information per second, we can drive a car, regulate our body temperature, notice something in the distance, play eye-spy, day-dream about a holiday in two weeks etc.

The same goes for playing a sport. If you put enough practice into playing tennis, your best shot happens when you don't think about how to play the shot (unconscious), you just do it. If you watch a striker with too much time to think about their shot (conscious) they invariably

fluff their lines. Whereas when they have no time, the unconscious 1000s of hours of practice kick in and ...GOOOOOAAAAALLLLLLL!

10,000 hours of deliberate stretching and purposeful practice can make you a world expert in anything (see reading list - Bounce).

When we learn new things we use our conscious mind. Our conscious mind can deal with limited bits of information. The reason we break our phone number down into two parts is because we struggle with remembering more than seven pieces of information.

Try this...

Note down 15 car brands (or washing powder brands if you're a car enthusiast).

I bet you started to struggle around 7.

Remember when you first learned to drive? What was it like when you first sat behind the wheel?

So, when we first tried to drive a car we found it incredibly difficult because there are way more than 7 things to concentrate on.

Two feet; three pedals. Look forward, out the side and back, gear stick, steering wheel, indicator, windscreen wiper, can of coke, cigarette....way more than 7 things! (It's okay – I was joking about the coke and cigarette).

Once you practice it becomes unconscious. With our unconscious mind, we can literally deal with millions of bits of information per second. We can drive a car without remembering how we got there; we can hit the tennis or golf shot of our life in the blink of an eye, as well as regulating our breathing, temperature, keeping an eye out for bears. The list goes on and on.

Psychologists estimate that we spend around 90% of the day unconscious, we are running on auto-pilot!

Think about your day yesterday. How much of your day was done on auto-pilot? Maybe yesterday was mundane. What about the day before? You see. Auto-pilot!

Because we run on auto-pilot, when something happens in our environment it's usually our unconscious that reacts, leaving our potential outcome in the depth of our unconscious iceberg... good or bad!

As humans we are wired up to be a little defensive. Spending time with carnivores in the early evolution of man/women has wired the limbic brain system to be on the lookout for bears sharks and tigers.

Your limbic brain system is on all the time. It's the emotional centre of the brain, controls your body language and protects you from predators. Our rational brain developed much later.

Most of the time we are on auto-pilot, however if we perceive a threat, the limbic brain

system steps in just in case we are about to be attacked by a bear.

The rational brain comes in later once the threat is gone. Unfortunately, the brain deals with a social threat in pretty much the same way as being attacked by a bear. Social threats are anything related to things like our autonomy, status, stability of life, ego, fairness, new people etc etc.

Think about yesterday again. Did you have any social threat during the day?

If you did, was your reaction rational and calm or limbic "being attacked by a tiger".

Road rage is a classic example of an overactive limbic brain reaction. Rationally, we know that getting insanely agitated doesn't help. We won't get there any quicker.

The unfortunate downside about this type of limbic brain reaction to perceived threat is your body chemically reacts.

In an emergency (attacked by a bear) this is excellent. Blood is redirected towards required limbs, parts of the brain are shut down, bowels empty to reduce load.

This is all good short term, however if you are doing this all day long because someone got a promotion over you or you felt insulted, biologically your body is in a constant state of stress.

This then leads to dis-ease, which then leads to disease. The mind and body are connected. You stress the mind; you stress the body and vice versa.

The last time I looked, most workplaces were not running amok with bears, sharks and tigers. However, the bodies of the people occupying the workplaces probably think they are.

This is what I do when I feel my limbic brain taking over.

1. I give my limbic brain a name ...Dave.

2. I have a chat with Dave (inside my head, otherwise people find me a bit weird). "Dave, I'm just going to look around to see if there are any bears, sharks or tigers in the room. Or any other form of physical danger. It seems clear, Dave. You can calm down. It's just someone with a huge ego trying to be alpha male. Have a sleep while I deal with it".

The fact I am checking the room for bears, sharks and tigers makes me smile. The limbic brain will calm down when you smile. There is no threat with a real smile.

Understanding the cause of the reaction, more often than not, is the cure.

If something bad happens in your environment, it is natural for the limbic brain to react. This is where you can consciously change your reaction. "Calm down Dave. No sharks. What can we learn from this?"

Wake up and become more conscious!

You can control how you react. Instead of reacting instantly, take a breath and think about

how you would like to react. This will allow your rational mind to take part in the conversation.

E+R=O there are no bears, sharks or tigers in the room!

I hope you enjoyed the taster, the remaining 7 chapters are available as an ebook on Amazon kindle at the following link.

<http://bit.ly/GavinAubrey>