

Preface	xii
Nick's Introduction	xv
What's this book all about?	xvi
The Royal Society	xvii
The Study of Wonderful Lives	xviii
Who am I?	xx
And for whom did I write this book?	xxi
How do we know it will work?	xxii
Making the Most of This Book	xxiii
Some Guiding Principles	

* * *

*I've designed the following chapters
to be enjoyed in whatever order
you may choose to read them.*

* * *

PART ONE

Partnering-Up with Good People

- Companionship comes First** 5
Why our loving friends and soul-mates are so important. How to prioritise our partnerships. The essentials of finding and fostering a special relationship.
- Developing our Passions in Life** 23
Finding a profound sense of purpose in life. Following our heart and being stronger than the disapproval. Feeling happier with who we are and playing to our signature strengths. Age isn't important if we keep flexible in our thinking.
- A Special Sense of Rapport** 47
Respecting our instincts and subliminal signals. Making the most of our eye-contact and voice, our clothes and cooking, our dancing and sensuality. Taking it slowly. Paying heed to our intuitions and sixth sense.
- Helping Others** 63
How mentoring can make all the difference in working or personal life. How to use Socratic Questioning and gentle teaching to bring out the best in someone. The essentials of raising happy youngsters. The rich rewards of voluntary work.

PART TWO

Becoming an Expert in Our Favourite Pursuits

- Introduction to Part Two: Why Become an Expert?** 85
- Facts and Fiction about Becoming an Expert** 89
 We don't need special gifts nor star genes to become really good at something, but we do need lots of practice, heart-felt passion, loving support, and insider know-how. Here are some inspiring lives, past and present, to show us the way.
- The Surest Routes to Getting Really Good at Something** 107
 Focusing precisely on what we really want to learn. Enriching our training environment. The essential skills for rapid improvement. The importance of enjoying it. Being clear about our priorities in life.
- Performing Well while Under Pressure** 121
 Whether it's college exams or professional diplomas, business presentations or sporting performances, the same key principles apply. Likewise for coping well on social occasions and big dates, or with interviews and negotiations. Here's how to feel comfortable and in control. Perfection is the enemy not only of high performance but of happiness. Optimism and exuberance are far more helpful than fear. Learning self-hypnosis can be a powerful ally. Don't let success sink us.
- What can Slow our Progress?** 149
 Not realising how we, too, can get really good at something . . . and not turning off that flickering tv.

PART THREE

Helping Mind and Body to Thrive and Flourish

- Nourish and Nurture Beautiful Health** 165
The fundamental importance of sufficient sleep, broad daylight, physical activity, and smart nutrition. How to beat dieting and feel good inside our body. Finding out about the many ways to be beautiful.
- Self-Control and Self-Motivation** 191
Changing even our smallest routines can open up the routes to profound progress. How to break unhelpful habits and build rewarding ones. Harness our anger and frustration so they carry us forward. Defuse our rage and fear. How to use psychological time-travel to motivate ourselves.
- Recuperate and Rekindle** 213
Doing is far more enjoyable than owning. Have we got the right ratio between work and recuperation? Preventing exhaustion and burn-out by creating balance and variety. Making the most of time-off and time-out. Relaxation techniques and the restorative powers of singing, humour, and the natural environment.
- Powerful New Approaches to Common Health Problems** 235
How to take swift and effective action against physical and psychological troubles, including innovative ways to tackle depression, anxiety, phobia, shyness and emotional trauma, as well as migraines, digestive disorders and premenstrual syndrome. Let's consider alternative approaches, not least the remarkable capacity of Clinical Hypnosis to help a whole range of ills, from back-aches to skin complaints, from chronic fatigue to sleep disturbance, and from fertility problems to pregnancy pains.

PART FOUR

**Choosing and Changing
our Journeys and Life Directions****Making a Good Living**

371

Coping with the choices rather than being overwhelmed. Putting into practice our heart-felt values and top priorities. Considering university and new careers. Putting ourselves in the right size pond. What price might we have to pay for prioritising income? Applying the study of well-being wherever we work. Would we be happier living abroad?

Growing Strong in the Face of Adversity

301

Coping well with setbacks and mistakes, the tough times and the crises. Asking for help is a smart move. We can learn from those who have overcome adversities. Let's reconsider our sadness and focus on what's helpful. Coping with death and bereavement. Squaring ourselves with our past, present and future. Our regrets can guide us.

Re-Inventing Ourselves and Re-Investing in Life

329

Re-defining our sense of self so we can live the life we wish for. Replacing our negative patterns to free-up our thinking. Investing in our real-life happiness and well-being rather than resorting to quick-fixes or fantasy worlds.

Nick's Special Topic

361

Psychosomatic illness and our sub-conscious mind. The remarkable role of Self-Hypnosis for health, happiness and sustainable high-performance. Working well with a coach or therapist. Treating the root causes of our troubles, and harnessing technology.

Another strong possibility is that our subconscious is creating these physical ills as a means of channeling a deeply felt emotion such as anger, fear, shame or despair, that we don't feel at liberty to consciously own up to, let alone express openly and directly. If this involuntary blocking of some taboo emotion sounds an unrealistic explanation, let's remember that if times required it 80 percent of us have the potential to block much of our sensation of physical pain simply by using self-hypnosis to control how much information reaches our conscious awareness. So it is that our sub-conscious may express its alarm or unhappiness in physical symptoms or unhelpful behaviour, because direct expression is too daunting. When we think that Albert Einstein taught us that energy can change form but it cannot be lost, is it so outlandish that the energy of emotional hurt becomes the energy of physical hurt?

Of course, in principle, it's very important to establish that there is no medical condition underlying a physical problem. But this is a tall order, not least because we, the patients, are rarely conscious of our own deeply buried psychological disquiet. Even if our GP *does* suspect the mind's initiating role in our physical symptoms, at least one third of us refuse to see a mental health professional because we think it's a slur on our sanity. But nothing could be further from the truth. Our body expressing our mind's concerns like this is in no sense malingering nor mental illness. On the contrary, it's our healthy brain using all the means at its disposal to signal to us, and to those who love us, that there are some un-aired feelings that need addressing. Mother Nature meant our body to care for our brain, and vice versa, and it's only an historical accident that has seen the healing professions of medicine and psychology artificially separated, and be less effective for it. The mind and body, science and arts, may stand apart in academic and professional training, but in our real life they walk hand in hand at all times. An appreciation of this relationship can help make our psychosomatic distress signals a rather less common occurrence.

Emotional pain . . . in the flesh

Here are two very personal accounts from remarkable individuals

whose physical and psychological health experiences well illustrate the central themes of this special topic:

Whilst on tour in Quebec, singer Celine Dion suffered severe inflammation of her vocal chords. She confesses that from that career-threatening trauma, she eventually learned a great deal that would change her whole approach to life and to herself. “The problem was fatigue, overwork, pressure, and constant stress. I was beginning to feel that I’d gone too far, too fast. I had to realize that somewhere inside of me, there was a tired and puzzled little girl I hadn’t been paying attention to or listening to for quite a while. Now she was making signs to me, reminding me of her needs. This little girl had no need for applause and ovations, no desire to give the biggest concert in the world. She just wanted a little peace and a little rest. So, I’d never let myself get overtired again. From then on, I’d make it my duty to sleep well and for a long time, to relax, to unwind as much as possible from all stress. I’d also eat well, not too much and only good things. I was also going to laugh a lot and be happy, because it’s well known that laughter and happiness are good for the health and are enemies of stress. You have to be in shape to find peace, beauty, strength, and rest in yourself.”

American comedian and talk-show host, Ellen Degeneres, testifies to very considerable emotional and physical benefits from coming to terms with a deep-seated fear in her life: how people would react when she told them she was gay. “I feel stronger. I feel more daring, more confident. I think that by facing all these fears and all these obstacles that were thrown at me by coming out, it forced me to grow in ways that I never would have grown. It’s taken me on a journey that I never would have gone on. I think anytime you face some type of fear, you’re going to grow in some way. You’re going to learn more about who you are in a tough spot. For me, this has been the most freeing experience because people can’t hurt me anymore. I don’t have to worry about somebody saying something about me. Literally as soon as I made this decision, I lost weight, and my skin has cleared up. I don’t have anything to be scared of.”