New Brain Science Discoveries Reveal…

The #1 Secret to Creating a Life Filled With:

More Happiness, More Inner Peace, Greater Resiliency,
More Willpower, Better Health, Less Stress,
A Better Memory, and More Love

A Free Report by

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Hello and welcome.

My name is Bill Harris.

I am very glad you requested this free report.

The information in this report is powerful and has the potential to change your life for the better.

So please, **do read the whole thing**.

Before we begin, I want to talk about another powerful method for creating positive change in your life: meditation.

The benefits of meditation have been known for thousands of years. Long-term meditators have a certain je ne sais quoi, a presence, and an enviable way of carrying themselves.

When we see an experienced meditator, we often think, “I wish I could be like that!”

What’s more, in the last several decades scientists have confirmed the benefits of meditation with stacks of research studies, and have even identified the parts of the brain that are changed by meditation.

Apparently, though, many people are saying, “So what?”

Despite the research and the astounding positive changes meditation creates, even those who know they should be meditating have trouble sticking with it.

Let’s face it. Meditation is difficult to learn, it takes a long time to master, and it takes a long time to see real results.

There is a solution to this problem, though – in fact, a rather elegant one.

In addition to validating the benefits of meditation, modern research has also led to the creation of technological ways to create the brain states and benefits of traditional meditation.

And, to allow anyone to get the same result in a fraction of the time.

One such tool is the audio technology Holosync that I created in 1985. (Since then, Holosync has been used by over 2.2 million people in 193 countries and has been recommended by the top

meditation and personal growth teachers.)

Holosync allows one to skip the long learning curve and meditate deeply the first time and every time – and begin seeing results right away.

If you're ready to see these results for yourself, I highly recommend you try Holosync.

To experience the brain-changing effects of Holosync for yourself, just click here.

The link above gives you access to a free online experiential event–the 5-Day Holosync Challenge.

Once a day for 5 days you'll watch a short video, then you'll experience 14-minutes of world-famous brain-changing Holosync.

I promise that this will be a lot of fun…

...and give you a great demonstration of what Holosync can do for you (and your brain) – even in a short 5 days.

There is no cost to be a part of this unique event.

Take The Challenge

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MASTER THIS AND LIFE BECOMES EASY

In this chapter you'll learn…

- **The 4 areas of life where you could have a choice (but don't right now)...**
- **Why you don't have choice in these areas...**
- **What you need to do so you *can* have choice in these areas...**
- **And more...**

I'm guessing that you may have already been around the block a few times in terms of trying to make your life better. You may have read self help books. You may have been to personal growth or self-improvement seminars.

And, probably some of what you've done has helped. I know these things helped me when I did them years ago. I wondered, though (and perhaps you've also wondered), why they didn't work as well as they were supposed to work.

I believe I've found the answer to that question.

I realized that there's something more fundamental to a well-lived life than merely mastering the how-to. The how-to is, of course, important, but there's something more fundamental, something that underlies the how-to—and the "how-to-be". It allows you to take purposeful action once you have the how-to, but it also allows you to just plain feel good, to be more comfortable in your own skin....

...and to be a more loving and compassionate person.

So let me tell you about these fundamentals, because not having your head around them might just be the missing piece (as it was for me), and the reason why all the other steps you've taken haven't worked quite as well as you'd hoped (or perhaps haven't worked at all, in some cases).

As I explain these fundamentals, and how one leads to the next, until we finally get to the nuts and bolts I think you'll agree that this

makes more sense than any other explanation of the human condition you've heard.

What's more, it's extremely practical, and actually not that difficult to implement.

It took me quite a while to figure this out, but one of the key insights I've had—in fact, THE key insight, I think, is that...

...Life is all about increasing the
amount of *choice* you have.

Certainly that's true about your external life—the more you can choose where you live, what you do for a living, how much money you make, who you spend your life with, and so forth, obviously the more pleasant and fulfilling your life can be.

And though these external choices are important, I'm also talking about choice in another sense. To make it clear exactly what I mean, let's take a look at three categories:

1. Those things we *could* have a choice about...
2. Those we'll never have a choice about, and...
3. Those we can merely influence.

First of all, there are many things over which we have *absolutely no choice.*

For instance, everything in this world is impermanent, including you. Every person, situation, or thing eventually comes to an end, goes away, or falls apart. We have no choice about this, even though it causes a lot of human suffering. It's built into the universe.

We also have no choice about the weather, earthquakes, the sun, gravity, that we're sensitive and need a certain temperature range or we can't live, that we need food, water, shelter, love, and so forth.

We also can't do much about what other people do. Have you noticed that it's really hard to get other people to do what you want them to do? I certainly have. Other people have their own agenda, and that agenda often gets in the way of your ability to get what you want.

So, when you think about it, there are quite a few things in life over which you really have no control, no choice. That's just the way it is. My suggestion, then, is not to worry about these things...

...because you can't do anything about them anyway.

There are, of course, some things that although you can't control them, you can influence them. You can influence other people by becoming more persuasive, but this is limited by the fact that there are so many other people and you don't have access to most of them. And, many people will be resistant to your influence. After all, they have their own agenda.

And though you can't do anything about the fact that human bodies are sensitive and become injured or sick, you can exercise and eat right to create better health (though you'll still eventually get old and die).

You can't change the weather, but you can wear warm clothes when it's cold, or air-condition your home when it gets hot. There are many things in life you can influence, even though you can't ultimately control them.

Finally, there are some things that you can have a choice about, things over which you *can* exercise control.

So, focus on what you can control, influence those things you can influence, and then...

...don't worry about those things you
can't do anything about.

This may seem obvious when I say it, *but most people aren't doing it,* and you probably aren't either. I know I wasn't—until I got clear about how all of this works.

So let's ask the BIG question:

What CAN you have a choice about?

What are the criteria? What determines whether or not you could have a choice about something?

Interesting question, don't you think?

I've spent years pondering this question, and here's what I've come up with:

You have a choice—or, rather, could have a
choice—about what YOU create.

You don't create the weather, or gravity, or what the President of

the United States does, or that you need oxygen to stay alive, or the fact that everything in this universe eventually comes to an end—which is why you don't have a choice about those things.

I hope this makes sense to you. **You have a choice only about those things you actually create.** Okay, then, what do you create? More than you think, as we'll see in just a moment.

But first, there's a second criterion for having a choice: awareness.

You can only have a choice about something you're aware of.

In other words, *awareness* creates choice.

You're probably saying to yourself right now, "What in the world does he mean by that?" I'll explain in a moment, but first, let's answer an even more fundamental question:

What do I mean by "awareness"?

And this, my friends, is where *it really gets good,* so keep reading and we'll continue...

THE FOUR THINGS YOU *COULD* HAVE A CHOICE ABOUT

In this chapter you'll learn…

- **What awareness means (and why it's crucial to your life)...**
- **How additional awareness has already created (some) choice in your life...**
- **How your life would change if your feelings and other internal states *were* a choice…**
- **And more…**

The word "awareness" is often used in a fluffy and inexact way. When I use the word, though, I mean something quite specific.

Awareness is created in your brain, in a very specific way, and there's actually quite a bit of research about it.

Here's how I define awareness: Awareness is the ability to observe how you create something...as you do it... seeing the consequences, as they happen. In fact, in many cases awareness allows you to see the consequences before they happen...

...which can save you a lot of grief.

This ability is a function of several brain areas, but a great deal of it happens in the *prefrontal cortex,* the seat of what scientists call *executive control,* or *self-regulation*—the part of the brain responsible for:

- Planning
- Self-control and willpower
- Complex cognitive behaviors
- Personality expression
- Decision-making
- Regulating social behavior

Your prefrontal cortex allows you to differentiate between conflicting thoughts, predict outcomes, set expectations, and suppress urges that might lead to non-resourceful outcomes—like talking back to the cop who pulled you over, eating three more donuts, or putting off working on your goals.

Before I describe the things you *could* have a choice about, let's look at a few examples of how awareness has already created choice for you. This will allow you to see how basic awareness is to everything you do.

Once that light bulb goes on, you'll more easily see how additional awareness, directed toward how you create some extremely fundamental aspects of your life, could powerfully change things for you—and give you choices you've probably never dreamed could be possible.

I'm sure you've seen an infant lying on a bed or in a crib. She's looking around, but she's not intentionally looking at any particular thing. Because she has very little awareness, where she looks isn't yet a choice—instead, it happens automatically and unintentionally (as does everything *you* do outside your awareness).

The same is true of our infant's movements. She moves her arms and legs, but without intention. Her movements are random. Because she has no awareness of her movements...

...they aren't a choice.

Are you with me on this so far?

Wait a month or so, though, and the baby's brain develops to the point where she now has some awareness of how she directs her gaze. As a result, she can decide where she looks. She can choose to look at a mobile over her bed, or her mother's face.

She also has more awareness about her movements. She's learned that she can grab a rattle, put something in her mouth, kick something with her legs, or roll over. To do any of these things intentionally—to have a choice about where to look or how to move—she has to be aware of how she does these things.

With awareness comes choice.

Do you see how this works? You've already gained choice over what you look at and how you move, and it was awareness that gave you that choice. These are simple things, and we take them for granted, but as you'll see, awareness about some other things

you create can really change your life.

But let's follow our baby a little further.

When she becomes a toddler, she learns how to speak. First, she has to become *aware* of the sounds made by the people around her. She also needs to be aware of how she can make similar sounds. Before this point she can make sounds, but they aren't intentional. They're random, in the same way she was originally moving her arms and legs.

Once she becomes aware of how to make certain sounds, though, she starts to talk. Again, awareness of how she makes sounds causes them to become a choice. And, of course, this awareness is a function of her early brain development.

With speaking comes thinking, but the toddler doesn't have enough awareness to observe her thoughts, so what she thinks about isn't a choice—yet. At a certain point, though, she gains enough awareness to notice that she's thinking, to notice that...

...she's talking to herself inside her head.

Guess what happens at that point? That's right. *Thinking becomes a choice.* Now, instead of automatically thinking, she can intentionally decide what to think about. Without awareness, thinking and behavior happen automatically. With awareness—or, rather, to the degree that we have awareness...

...thinking and acting become a choice.

Our baby has only rudimentary choice over her thoughts, though. As we'll see, there are degrees of awareness, and degrees of choice. With enough choice over your thinking—and over several other things...

...you can develop an incredible amount
of personal power and effectiveness.

There are other ways that awareness creates choice. An Olympic gymnast, for instance, can perform amazing movements with his body because he's practiced being aware of how to create those movements (and, of course, how to execute them) until they become a choice.

The same could be said of being a concert pianist, a persuasive public speaker, an effective author, or even driving a car (and, really, any skill).

Right now, you're creating other important parts of your experience of life, but you're creating them *outside your awareness.* Because of that, they seem to happen automatically. In other words...

...they aren't a choice.

Take feelings, for instance. It seems as if feelings just happen, either in response to something you experience or just out of the blue. There are, however, *certain things you do inside*—certain cognitive events that happen inside your mind—that generate your feelings (things like fear, anger, joy, happiness, anxiety, or whatever).

These same internal cognitive events also generate other internal states that aren't exactly feelings: motivation, confidence, ability to focus, persistence, peace of mind, courage, resilience, and so forth. So consider this:

If you could be aware of how you create these feelings and other internal states—if you could watch what you're doing inside to create them, as you do it—what would that awareness create?

That's right. Choice.

The idea of having choice about feelings and other internal states seems improbable to most people. That's because they don't have the awareness to clearly see how possible it really is.

Those who have this kind of awareness *do* choose their internal state, and you can, too.

What could you do if your feelings and
other internal states were a choice?

You could:

- Choose to drop bad habits
- Have fewer unpleasant feelings
- Be less reactive emotionally
- Take action when you want to or know you should
- Act less often in a way you later regret
- Feel happier and have more inner peace
- And, a lot more.

More choice would clearly change your life—in a fundamental way. And we've only covered one aspect of life you could potentially have a choice about—your feelings and other internal states.

Remember that awareness gives you the ability to see yourself do or create something, as you do it, while also seeing the consequences, as you create them.

But this is more than just seeing what happens externally, or recognizing your feelings once they happen. The awareness I'm talking about includes the ability to see how you create your feelings and behaviors, as you do it...

…beginning with what you do inside your head.

Awareness is much more than merely *knowing* what you're creating. Knowing and awareness are not the same. In fact, "knowing" is the boobie prize in personal growth.

So let's look at the four areas of life over which you could—with enough awareness—have a choice.

1. Feelings and other internal states
2. Behaviors
3. The people and situations you attract or become attracted to
4. The *meanings* you assign to what happens

Now if you stop and think about each of these, you'll see that they cover *a lot* of ground. They really do cover everything in life you *could* have a choice about. (And, if you had a choice in these four areas of life your life would be infinitely better!)

Why are these four things potentially a choice? First, because you create them! They come from something you do. And if, right now, it doesn't seem that you're creating them...

...it's because you're creating them
automatically, outside your awareness.

These four key areas of life are generated inside of you by an ongoing stream of internal cognitive processes that ordinarily happen *automatically* (more about this later). To have choice about them, you have to create them *with awareness.* That is, *learn to see yourself create them, as you do it.*

As long as you create them outside your awareness, it will seem as if they *just happen.*

Now that you know this, **you have a decision to make…**

Will you create your life on autopilot? Or, with awareness?

Keep reading and we'll take a look at this intriguing choice...

AUTOPILOT OR AWARENESS?

(How To Drop What Isn't Working)

In this chapter you'll learn…

- **What *really* creates your feelings (99% of people don't know this)...**
- **How awareness creates choice about your feelings...**
- **An amazing tool that creates huge increases in awareness very quickly...**
- **And more…**

Here's a simple example of how things look when you create something on autopilot:

You have an experience: you see something, hear something, touch something, etc. Then you feel something or experience some other internal state. You say to yourself...

"X experience" made me have "feeling Y."

Isn't that how it seems? Something happens, then you feel a certain way. Your feelings are a response to whatever happens around you.

Let's say you have to give a talk in front of a group of people at work. When you find out that you have to give the talk you instantly feel a knot of fear in your stomach. Thinking about giving a speech caused you to feel afraid.

Here's how it really works, though:

You have an experience, and then *in response to that experience* you do certain things inside your head (you make what cognitive psychologists call *internal representations*—in this case, of making the speech), and *then* you experience an emotion or other internal state.

If the internal representations are of *what you want or the positive possibilities,* you'll feel some sort of positive feeling. In this case, though, your internal representations were of something you didn't

want (looking bad, screwing up, or making a fool of yourself), which inevitably creates some kind of bad feeling—in this case, fear.

It seemed like this:

1. You have to give a speech
2. You feel afraid

What *really* happened is this:

1. You have to give a speech
2. You make certain internal representations
3. You feel afraid

Though it doesn't seem like it, it's in that second step—where you make certain internal representations (in this case, of what you don't want)—that you create the bad feeling.

And, if those cognitive processes (the internal representations I mentioned above) are about the perceived penalties of speaking in front of an audience—being embarrassed, looking foolish, making a mistake—you'll create a bad feeling, such as fear.

On the other hand, if those internal representations are of the benefits of giving a speech—the fun, the recognition, the positive attention (or whatever)—you'll create good feelings such as confidence, positive anticipation, and motivation.

The second step is where your choice lies—but if it's happening *outside your awareness...*

...it isn't a choice!

As long as that second step happens outside your awareness (as is the case for 99% of people) it will happen on autopilot, and you'll create feelings based on the way your internal cognitive processes have been programmed by your past experiences.

And, it will *seem as if* the situation caused the feelings, when actually it's what you did *in response to the situation* that actually created the feelings. Seen with awareness, however, your response, and the resulting feelings, would become a choice.

And, once you have a choice (and this is a *key* point)...

...you'll always choose what serves you.

When you have enough awareness to observe how you create your

life, you'll see exactly how you create bad feelings and less-that-resourceful behaviors (including a failure to act when you know you should).

You'll also see—not *know,* but actually see—how you attract or become attracted to the wrong people, or to situations where you're not likely to get the outcome you want.

And if you have the awareness to see yourself, as you do it, assigning self-sabotaging meanings to the events of your life ("I'll never succeed", "Obviously, no one likes me", "I'm not smart enough to do this") those meanings will also become a choice, and...

...you'll drop them if they don't serve you.

You can only feel or do something that doesn't serve you if you do it *outside your awareness.* With enough awareness, though, you'll see what you're creating, as you create it—and, you'll instantly drop what doesn't serve you.

In fact, with enough awareness *you'll know just what to do,* and it will become increasingly difficult to feel or do something that sabotages you.

Now, we know that awareness creates choices, but actually *making* those choices and *following through* with them can be difficult.

Fortunately, there are strategies to ease this difficulty.

My favorite is a tool I created—Holosync audio technology—that creates huge increases in awareness very quickly. This awareness is comparable to that achieved by those rare people who've meditated many hours a day...

...for decades.

Holosync is based on research I stumbled on from the world-famous Menninger Clinic and Mt. Sinai Medical Center in New York.

When I started to use Holosync regularly…

...my awareness increased exponentially.

As yours will, too, when you try it.

Anyway, let's get back to the topic at hand. I want to share with you a few strategies for making choices with awareness and following through with those choices.

Let's dive in…

"BETCHA CAN'T EAT JUST ONE!"

Potato chips, marshmallows, willpower
...and your ability to "self-regulate"

In this chapter you'll learn…

- **The *two key predictors* of positive life outcomes…**
- **The surest way (according to studies) to create a better, happier, and more productive life...**
- **Which part of your brain compels you to act (often creating consequences you *don't* want)...**
- **And more…**

In 1961 Lay's Potato Chips introduced a television commercial challenging viewers with this now-legendary slogan: ***"Betcha can't eat just one!"***

This iconic slogan tapped into a key failing of most human beings:

A lack of willpower!

Willpower (the ability to self-regulate behavior and emotions) is one of the most studied topics in social science. When psychologists surveyed one million people regarding what they considered to be their greatest personal strengths, those topping the list were honesty, kindness, humor, creativity, and bravery.

Self-control, though, was dead last.

When asked about their greatest personal failings, though, "a lack of self-control" was #1!

Ironically, psychologists consider the *two key predictors* of positive life outcomes to be:

1. Intelligence
2. Self-control

So far, scientists have found no way to permanently increase

intelligence.

They do, however, know how
to improve self-control!

According to many studies, improving self-control is the surest way to create a better life.

In the 1960s, researcher Walter Mischel conducted an unusual experiment. His unwitting subjects were preschool children at Stanford University's Bing Nursery School. After seating each young guinea pig at a bare table in a secluded room, each child was presented with an interesting dilemma:

Eat a tasty reward (such as a marshmallow) immediately...

...or wait (alone) for up to 20 minutes,
in order to get two marshmallows.

Some children gave in immediately. Without hesitating they gobbled up the single marshmallow. Others, though, were able to wait, earning the extra reward.

Though other treats were used, this experiment became known in the popular press as "The Marshmallow Test."

Here's where it gets interesting, though. As researchers followed these children over several decades and well into middle age, they discovered something quite remarkable.

Those who, as children, delayed gratification for a later (and bigger) reward enjoyed, throughout life, an impressive list of advantages:

- Better grades and higher SAT scores (with an average increase in SAT scores of 210 points)
- Higher income
- Lower BMI (i.e., less chance of being overweight)
- Better social function
- Better cognitive function and greater intelligence
- More self-control in frustrating situations
- A greater ability to resist temptation
- Less distractibility
- Greater self-reliance
- More willingness to trust their own judgment
- A lower likelihood of becoming rattled and disorganized

- Fewer instances of being sidelined by setbacks; greater resilience and adaptability
- A greater ability to pursue and reach long-term goals
- Less drug use and other addictive behaviors
- A greater ability to maintain close relationships

A remarkable list, to be sure. What's more, these results were consistent across all cultures and income levels.

When these marshmallow test subjects were well into midlife they were asked to undergo brain scans using *functional magnetic resonance imaging,* or fMRI.

fMRI detects changes in blood oxygenation and flow in response to brain activity. More active brain areas consume more oxygen, increasing blood flow to the active areas. This allows scientists to see which brain areas are active while subjects are using their brains in different ways.

What they found in the brains of these former marshmallow test subjects was quite interesting. Those who had demonstrated high delay-ability as preschoolers showed greatly enhanced activity in the prefrontal cortex.

The prefrontal cortex is the seat of a number of key abilities, including problem solving, creative thinking, impulse control, executive function, and self-regulation (among many others).

Those who'd been unable to delay gratification as preschoolers, though, did *not* show enhanced prefrontal cortex activity. Instead, they showed enhanced activity in the *limbic system* (and particularly the *amygdala)*, the more primitive parts of the brain linked to...

...desire, pleasure-seeking, and addictions.

Researchers described the high-delayers as having "better mental brakes". The low-delayers, they said, "were driven by a stronger engine."

Unfortunately, they were driven to a less desirable place! Without help from a strong prefrontal cortex, the low-delayers often allowed their immediate desires to overrule actions and ways of thinking that might lead to better outcomes and future rewards.

Which is probably why they didn't do as well on the long list of desirable life outcomes I listed above!

Psychologists have studied how much time people typically spend dealing with immediate desires. These findings are particularly interesting for those of us who want more awareness, more choice...

...and a greater ability to self-regulate.

Study subjects carried a beeper that randomly went off throughout the day. After each beep they were instructed to note their thoughts in the moments right before they were beeped. An astounding 75%, it was found, were in the process of *desiring something* when they were beeped.

Would you like to know what the most common desires were? Here they are:

The urge to eat was most common, followed by the desire for sleep, leisure, sex, checking email, social networking, surfing the web, listening to music, and watching television.

Here's the bottom line: Our limbic system has a powerful reward system. It inundates us with desires in any given moment and, for many people (especially if their prefrontal cortex is weak)...

...it compels them to act.

As Oscar Wilde once said, "I can resist anything, except temptation."

As we've seen, how we handle such temptations has a lot to do with our success in life, and certainly with our ability to successfully make the decisions that lead to the outcomes we would *choose...*

...if we stepped back and considered
our choices more rationally.

After all, as I said earlier, *it's all about having more choice!*

This "reward and temptation" system is involved whenever we're faced with a decision about whether or not to eat something we know is unhealthy, will make us fat, or is in some other way harmful to us (even though it might taste yummy).

It's also involved when we blow off exercising, lose our temper, break a New Year's resolution, procrastinate instead of working toward our goals, or put off working toward any desired long-term outcome...

...for a perceived short-term pleasure.

So how does this reward system work? Why is it so darned tempting? And, how can we stop it from operating on autopilot, where we unconsciously make choices we later regret?

Let's look more closely at that little Temptation Devil on our shoulder. Whenever the brain notices something that could *potentially* provide a reward, it does something that makes it very difficult to resist that potential reward.

It releases a neurotransmitter called *dopamine*. Dopamine causes the brain to...

...pay attention!

Dopamine is the limbic system's secret weapon. It creates intense desire. It doesn't, though, actually provide a reward. It doesn't make you happy or satisfied. It does, though, create *tremendous arousal.* When under the spell of dopamine you feel highly alert and awake.

You feel aroused. You might even say *captivated.*

Dopamine makes us seek,
crave, want, and desire.

Dopamine is all about anticipating *potential* pleasure, but the immediate experience of dopamine isn't exactly pleasurable. Let's look at a common example. When we fall hopelessly in love, all we can think about is being with our beloved.

That delicious anticipation creates tremendous motivation, allowing you to think of all kinds of strategies to please and spend more time with your beloved. In some ways this feels good, but if you think about it you'll realize that there's also an underlying anxiety.

As a fool in love you experienced *anticipation,* not pleasure. When and if the actual pleasure came, it was created...

...in a completely different part of your brain.

Dopamine causes you to become fixated on getting whatever triggered the dopamine release, whether it was a sexy smile, a promise of saving money on something, a yummy food, or an online seminar that promises to make you rich.

Dopamine creates tremendous motivation to act. The real question, though, is whether or not dopamine motivates you to act in ways

that ultimately benefit you and make your life better. Does it motivate you to act in ways you'd act...

...when you were in a more rational state of mind?

Or, does it motivate you to eat foods that make you fat (or are bad for you in other ways), spend hours checking Facebook when you'd planned to work on your business, blow off your exercise goals in favor of something less productive, or spend money you don't have on something you don't really need?

Make no mistake about it. Dopamine is a powerful drug. It's hard to resist. Mice who learned to push a lever to get a squirt of dopamine in their brains were so motivated (driven?) by the dopamine that they were willing to cross an electrified grid (over and over) to get to the lever...

...until their little feet were burned to a crisp!

And of course the addictive nature of dopamine doesn't apply just to mice. Despite our best intentions, many temptations keep us running after yet another "hit" of dopamine, then another, and another, and another, until our long-term plans, our arteries, our lungs, our bank account, our relationships, or some other aspect of our life...

...is similarly burned to a crisp.

What can we do, then, to avoid being a puppet on a dopamine-driven string? In other words, how do "high delayers" delay immediate gratification for longer-term rewards?

That's what we'll look at in the next chapter. This is exciting information. Keep reading and I'll tell you all about it...

FOILING THE DOPAMINE DEVIL ON YOUR SHOULDER

Delayed gratification, “Hot vs. Cool”, Stress, and more...

In this chapter you’ll learn…

- **Simple strategies for resisting temptation...**
- **Your “hot system” (and how it’s causing many of your problems)...**
- **Your “cool system” (your defense against the stupid decisions of your “hot system”)...**
- **How stress destroys willpower**
- **An easy and powerful way to lower your stress level...**
- **And more...**

Can we learn something from preschool children about how to resist temptation and delay gratification for futures benefits?

Yes, we can. So let’s see what we can learn from the original preschool “Marshmallow Test” participants. Though you should probably use an “adult version” of these strategies, it’s always a great idea to model the success strategies of others—even if those we model are four years old!

Distraction strategies

These young but successful high-delayers used distraction to keep from immediately stuffing that yummy marshmallow into their little mouths. Some covered their eyes so they couldn’t see the tempting treat. Others looked the other way, or turned their chairs around.

Still others chose something else to focus on other than the treat. Both strategies—covering their eyes (or the treats) or focusing elsewhere— lowered temptation. By doing this the children...

...reduced the amount of temptation-inducing dopamine produced by their brains.

In fact, when researchers covered the treats and merely told the children they were there, the children waited nearly ten times longer than when they could see the actual treats.

The successful high delayers invented many fun and imaginative distractions. They sang songs. They made funny faces. They picked their nose or cleaned their ears (and in some cases ate what they found). They played games with their hands and feet. They tried to sleep.

(Now you see why I suggested that you might want to use an adult version of their strategies.)

Others talked to themselves, telling themselves to wait so they could get the extra reward. In other words, they did their best to...

...transfer the effects of temptation-creating
dopamine to a later but bigger reward.

Could *you* use these strategies? Could you move your focus from a not-so-good-for-you temptation to a more desirable longer-term reward? Could you decide in advance to change your focus to something else when you sense a craving for something you know isn't good for you?

Of course you could. First, though, you'd have to want to avoid the temptation (not a given for many people). How about this, though: What if you made the whole process easier by...

...increasing your awareness!

As you know by now, awareness creates choice. With enough awareness you'll naturally choose what serves you and drop what doesn't serve you because you'll clearly see the consequences (and, that creating those consequences *is* a choice).

The bad choices of your limbic system tend to happen on autopilot, without awareness. Increased awareness takes non-resourceful choices off autopilot, foiling the Dopamine Devil on your shoulder.

More awareness means cultivating a more highly developed prefrontal cortex. Perhaps you should increase the power of your PFC by meditating...

...or, better yet, by using Holosync.

But let's get back to our children. These young marshmallow-

cravers also used what the researchers termed *abstraction strategies.*

For instance, when exposed to pictures of the treats (instead of the real thing) the children were able to wait twice as long—an average delay time of 18 minutes. One child, when asked why seeing a picture instead of the actual treat made it easier to wait, explained that "You can't eat a picture."

"Hot" vs "Cool"

The treats, the researchers realized, could be thought of in two ways. The children could think of the hot, arousing, motivating qualities (i.e., make internal representations of the most tempting aspects)...

...which triggered their limbic system
to make more dopamine.

Or, they could make internal representations of qualities that were cooler, less emotional, and more abstractly descriptive—a more cognitive way of thinking about the treats, with less "hot" sensory involvement.

The marshmallows, for instance, could be seen as sweet and chewy— making them more tempting. Or, they could be seen as white, round, small, soft, and puffy. This "cool" way of seeing the treats was more abstract, and...

...much less tempting.

When the children were prompted to focus on a treat's hot, arousing qualities they were able to wait only half as long as when they were asked to focus on the cool, non-emotional, and more abstract qualities.

The hotter the representation of the reward, the more the limbic system was involved and...

...the more difficult it was to delay gratification.

The hot system, by the way, is merely another way to describe the "fight or flight" response of the *sympathetic nervous system.* And, the cool system is another way of describing the relaxation response of the *parasympathetic nervous system.*

The researchers also found a similar relationship between happy and sad thoughts. Children asked to think about something sad

gave in to temptation as quickly as if they'd focused on the hot, desirable qualities.

Those who thought about fun things, though...

...waited three times as long.

It's more difficult to delay gratification when you're sad. At such times you're more likely to give in to temptation, eat junk food, say something you'll later regret, or behave in a way that creates an undesirable outcome. You're in at least a *mild* version of fight or flight when you're sad.

This is why the jilted woman in all those chick-flicks stays home and inhales an entire quart of Ben and Jerry's when her boyfriend falls for another woman. When we're sad our limbic system causes us to say, "What the hell."

The researchers also found a difference between a temptation viewed from an associated perspective versus the same temptation when viewed...

...from a dissociated point of view.

An associated point of view is one where we're seeing and feeling the situation from our own perspective, whereas in a dissociated perspective we're seeing or feeling the situation from someone else's point of view.

When the children were asked "What would an intelligent person do?" when faced with the same temptation—a dissociated point of view—the children said that an intelligent person would wait.

When asked what they were going to do, right now, with the treats in front of them, they said...

..."I want to eat the treat right now".

Seeing a decision as if it's happening to someone else creates distance, decreases the emotional component, and allows a cooler appraisal— helping to foil that Dopamine Devil on your shoulder.

All of these examples point to one general rule: The power isn't in the stimulus itself, but rather in...

...how we represent it.

Learning to intentionally change how you represent a stimulus to

yourself, then, *creates self-control.* Self-control, of course, is another name for *choice.* And, as you know, *awareness* creates choice.

We have two systems for evaluating temptations, then: a hot emotional system and a cool, more cognitive, more reflective system. The hot system is ruled by the limbic part of your brain; the cool system by the prefrontal cortex.

Let's look more closely at each of these systems.

Your Hot System

When you make hot, I-want-it-now decisions, the limbic system is in control. The limbic system is an evolutionarily older, more primitive part of your brain responsible for regulating the basic drives and emotions necessary for survival (fear, anger, hunger, sex, marshmallows, Facebook, etc), though it fulfills other roles unrelated to our current discussion.

The amygdala, a small almond-shaped organ, is an especially important part of the limbic system. It plays a key role in sexual and desire-driven behavior, mobilizing the body to act. However, it has...

...no ability whatsoever to reflect
on long term consequences.

It does, however, have an important and positive role to play:

- It allows us to make quick responses to strong, emotion-arousing stimuli.
- It gives life an emotional juice and zest. Impulsive, consumptive actions can be fun and often give us a feeling of being alive.

Focusing on the hot features of a stimulus easily triggers the amygdala's "go get it now" behavior, powered by dopamine.

This is great when "go get it now" applies to something that will make your life better—saving for the future, practicing a skill you need, sticking with your exercise resolutions, eating a healthy diet, and so forth. Of course, most of us don't associate "hot" internal representations with these things (though we could).

And, obviously, the unadulterated urge to get it now, without any consideration for the long-term consequences (provided by your

prefrontal cortex) can create problems when your decision has...

...potentially negative consequences.

Another important finding: stress activates the hot system and makes the cool system more difficult to access. The more stressed you are, the more you activate your limbic ("fight or flight") system, and the more likely you are to give in to short-term desires and blow off long term consequences. Obviously whatever we can do to lower stress and become more resilient...

...is a terrific idea.

And guess what? Meditation is one of the greatest stress-reducers ever discovered (and, in my opinion, Holosync is the greatest *way* to meditate).

Your hot system is great for survival situations, but it's not good at all for managing and attaining the long range outcomes you want. It's no good for planning, rational thinking, delaying gratification, or staying cool and calm in a challenging situation.

Your Cool System

Your cool system is more complex. It's rational, cognitive, reflective, and slower to activate. It's also controlled by the most recently-evolved part of the brain, the prefrontal cortex...

...the seat of self-regulation and willpower.

The cool system is great for future-oriented decisions and self-control. High stress, though, dampens the cool system—which is why whatever we can do to relieve stress…

...increases the cool system's ability
to operate effectively.

The cool system allows us to better regulate our thoughts, actions, and emotions. When activated, it can evaluate and overrule the hot system's "get it now" impulses, inhibiting actions that would interfere with our goals.

The cool system is also the source of creativity and imagination. It allows you to redirect your attention so as to flexibly change strategies, as needed, to help you get what you want. It's the source of...

...rational, reflective, strategic behaviors.

The cool system and the prefrontal cortex don't fully mature until your early-to-mid 20s. No wonder you did so many dumb, risky things when you were young!

These hot and cool systems are polar opposites: As one becomes more active the other becomes less active. Obviously, for your own sake, you want to learn how to enhance your cool system so it can more effectively supervise the hot system.

Luckily, this isn't difficult. Meditation not only enhances the prefrontal cortex, it also creates more neural connections between the limbic system and the prefrontal cortex...

...allowing that supervision to work better.

Long-term stress is particularly damaging to the prefrontal cortex. This, of course, makes planning, delaying gratification, or long-term decision-making more difficult.

A weakened prefrontal cortex also makes it more likely that you'll become emotionally reactive when frustrated (i.e, allow your limbic system to call the shots), which makes it more difficult...

...to find creative solutions to life's problems.

It's no surprise that the effects of stress on the prefrontal cortex make it more difficult to hold a job, get a high school or college degree, sustain a marriage or other relationships, achieve long-term goals, or avoid those stupid decisions that "feel" right at the time...

...but end up having negative consequences.

Meditation, and especially Holosync meditation, rewires the brain and enhances the prefrontal cortex. Chronic stress also rewires the brain, but in a negative way. For instance, chronic stress causes the prefrontal cortex, and a part of the brain called the *hippocampus* (important for memory), to atrophy...

...while the amygdala increases in size!

Obviously, we want to limit stress and increase awareness. Luckily, meditation does both.

Well, that's all the time we have for today.

But before you go, I want to remind you that you are invited to try my audio technology Holosync free for 5 days.

With Holosync you can…

- Skip the long learning curve for meditation…
- Meditate as deeply (actually more deeply) than an experienced Zen monk, literally at the touch of a button…
- Virtually eliminate stress from your life…
- Naturally and safely stimulate the production of brain chemicals that dramatically slow aging and increase longevity…
- Boost your mental powers to unheard of levels…
- Eliminate most so-called "dysfunctional" feelings and behaviors and the problems they create in your life…
- And attain a level of happiness and inner peace you may have not thought possible.

To experience the brain-changing effects of Holosync for yourself, just click here.

The link above gives you access to a free online experiential event–the 5-Day Holosync Challenge.

Once a day for 5 days you'll watch a short video, then you'll experience 14-minutes of world-famous brain-changing Holosync.

I promise that this will be a lot of fun…

...and give you a great demonstration of what Holosync can do for you (and your brain) – even in a short 5 days.

There is no cost to be a part of this unique event.

Take The Challenge