



PERSONAL SOCRATES

by Marc Champagne

Better Questions, Better Life

A Baronfig Original Book

Mental Fitness Guide

Setting Up Your Mental Fitness Routine

Own the Morning, Own the Day

Let's jump right in!

1. List 10 activities that will put a smile on your face no matter what is happening. Examples are a brisk walk, meditation, journaling, reading a book, setting intentions, being still etc.
2. Commit to the number of days and minutes you will invest for your mental fitness this week. What time of day will you train your mind? How many minutes will you dedicate to your mental fitness each day?
3. What are your sources of movement, learning, and reflection?

I don't say this lightly, mental fitness in the morning can change your life. Think of a time when you had an awesome workout, finished a spin class, or went for a great run. The "yesss I feel alive and ready to take on the world" feeling is also possible with your mind. I call these "power mornings" and they rock!

Treat the first minutes of your morning as olympic-level mental training. With consistent training, you can handle, process, and respond (not react) to anything that comes your way later in the day.

Having a great day and an optimal mindset comes down to the training. World class athletes rely on the hours of training

prior to their events to perform at their best. They/we can lean on our training to optimally perform in the moment. Do the work in your mental training, and reap the benefits when it counts.

When you train your mind each morning, you are given a unique skill: the ability to process situations and emotions in slow motion, avoiding snap decisions, judgements, and reactions. It's as if you are rising up to a birds-eye-view and looking down at the playbook for the day. Time slows, and you can see the best choice forward. Your morning power minutes will become the minutes you look forward to most each day. Go for it.

- How do I feel right now?
- Where do I feel that in my body?
- How do I want to feel today?
- What would make today great?
- How do I want to show up today?
- How do I want to leave others feeling today?
- What is amazing in my life?

The Science Behind Reflection: Neuroplasticity

How is it that one question, or only a few minutes of writing has the potential to completely shift our mood and mind? What is behind this process? What science supports such profound changes in our mental state?

These are all questions that I've been interested in answering. I've seen massive results play out for people over and over again through a journaling practice. I have reviewed a lot of science, gone through many articles, and there are a few simple and very clear neurochemical processes happening when we reflect.

The core pillars.

Once you have your reflective practices fired up, you will quickly start to see an increase in self-awareness (pillar 1), allowing you to start consciously organizing the mental chatter, thoughts, and emotions running through your mind (pillar 2). Once organized, you can work on clearing or releasing (pillar 3) the narratives holding you back or stimulating unwanted emotion while giving you a sense of control. Then gratitude (pillar 4) comes in. No matter how your practice is set up or what type of reflective practice you have implemented in your routine, finishing on gratitude is incredibly powerful.

Now, to the science.

When you express gratitude to yourself or others, as Linda Roszak Burton (Neuroscience of Gratitude), states, a “neurochemical cocktail” is delivered to us.¹ We get a hit of dopamine, which makes us feel good and leads to wanting more. Then we get a release of serotonin which enhances our mood, willpower and motivation.² With all of these gratitude circuits constantly firing, we literally start rewiring our mind, or otherwise known as neuroplasticity—our brains ability to change itself and form new connections.³

In John Assaraf’s book, *Innercise - The New Science to Unlock your Brain’s Hidden Power*, he cites three ways neuroplasticity can work for us in rewiring our mind:

More neurons

More connections

Better connections.

Through neurogenesis, we make more neurons and brain cells, leading to more gray matter in the hippocampus as we learn new things.

Next, Hebb's rule comes into play suggesting that as neurons repeatedly communicate with each other they become more efficient, creating more connections and forming stronger synaptic strength. Lastly, Assaraf describes how we can improve the overall connections with the addition of more myelin or "often called the white matter of the brain, and it's thought to improve the function of neurons."⁴

Alright, this is a lot of science for a non-science guy. There are so many other resources, studies, and books that you can reference to go even deeper. My intent is to demonstrate that there is serious activity taking place in our minds from a neurochemistry standpoint, supporting many mental fitness practises—all to help program a thriving state of mind.

Expanding Possibility

Moonshot Thinking

Moonshot thinking is about making the impossible possible. It's about selecting a massive challenge in scope, something that will take time and effort but has the opportunity to create change at a vast scale.

Think of all the apps, tools, and technology you use every single day. Think of the things that help run your day and that you cannot imagine your life without. They all started from one person, one mind asking powerful questions to solve an issue that at the time may have seemed impossible.

Naturally, your first set of questions and answers will rest on the surface of the issue. Keep peeling back the layers by asking yourself 'why'? And then ask it again, and again until you reach the root cause.

- What are the most significant global challenges right now?
- What is one challenge that genuinely speaks to you?
- What are the symptoms of this challenge?
- What is the root cause of this challenge?
- What can you do to make the impossible possible?
- What is your moonshot?
- What will it feel like when you succeed?
- What is one step you can take today toward your moonshot?

The Future You

Journaling is not only reserved for working through challenging emotions or situations. You can have a lot of fun letting your imagination run wild when visualizing the future. In this exercise, the detail is paramount. Describe what the future you is doing, seeing, and feeling.

Do not spare any detail when writing out your future environment. Narrow in on the elements and emotions linked to your experience making it feel real in your mind. When you drop into the feeling of the experience, your mind starts wiring the path to realizing the visualization.

- What does my life look and feel like right now?
- What is something that feels unimaginable to achieve in my life?
- What does my life look and feel like 1 year from now?
- What does my life look and feel like in 5 years?
- What does my life look and feel like in 10 years?
- What does my life look and feel like in 20 years?

Bonus: Sleep Guide

Sleep is a natural healing tool for our body, and essential to living a healthy and thriving life. There are very simple journaling rituals you can set up before going to sleep to help clear your mind.

Fall Asleep Faster

Our days can feel busy, with a lot of mental clutter, many decisions to make and tasks to complete. If you don't release the clutter it keeps piling up and circulating in our minds while we try to fall asleep.

Before going to bed, list out your top priorities for the next day. Research has shown with this simple act you can fall asleep just as fast as taking a pharmaceutical to help you sleep.⁵ Top this off with gratitude, and you have a winning formula.

- What are your top 3 priorities for tomorrow?
- What was amazing about today?

Play Out Your Movie

Would you like to head to Rome for the evening, explore the streets, stay in a stunning hotel, or live out an experience with no rules? You can do whatever you like! Just as an Olympic skier visualizes every detail of their run before they physically do it, you can mentally play out your life before it physically materializes.

Close your eyes and feel the experience— your mind will do the rest. You'll naturally fall asleep while living out a stunning visualization.

- What experience do you want to live out tonight?
- Where have you always wanted to go?
- What do you want to see?
- How do you want to feel?

Wake Up With Solutions

Many of the answers we seek are already within the knowledge we hold. Let your mind do the work and uncover the solutions while you sleep.

When we are sleeping, we have silence, and our mind is free to pull from our knowledge bank and start forming connections. This technique is often used by writers but can be leveraged by all.

Write out your question, go to sleep, and first thing upon waking, with a pen and piece of paper, start answering your question in detail—write everything that comes to mind.

What question do you want answered?

References

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PERSONAL SOCRATES

Questions That Will Upgrade Your Life
from Legends & World-Class Performers

MARC CHAMPAGNE

"Personal Socrates is where ancient wisdom meets modern day mental fitness." —Chip Conley

Exponential opportunities are possible,
but first, a clear mind and an intentionally designed life
are required to reach new heights.

Personal Socrates will serve as your guide in getting there.

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