

THE ART OF LIVING

By Ross Brittleton

"How can anyone live without being instructed in the art of living and dying?"

Meister Eckhart

The Conditions of the Human Self

“The Commanding Self is the origin of the individual controlled by a composite consciousness, which is a mixture of hopes and fears, of training and imagination, of emotional, genetic, physiological and other factors, which make up the person in his or her ‘normal’ state, as one would ordinarily call it. It is the state of most of the people who have not undergone the clarification process.”

“The Accusing Self is the state of the Self when it is able to monitor its behaviour and perceive the secondary nature of so many things formerly imagined to be primary, the actual relativity of assumed absolutes, and so on. This part of the man or woman is both the check on imperfect action and also the area through which the legitimate reproach of others or of the environment gets through to the individual. This is the stage of ordinary conscience. Most people stop and mill around here.

When the depraved or commanding self and the reproaching or accusing selves have done their work, the organ of perception and action becomes susceptible to the entry of perceptions formerly blocked. For this reason it is termed the Inspired Self. In this stage come the first indications, albeit imperfect ones, of the existence and operation of a reliable higher element, force, power or communication system.

Attempts to cause the self to operate out of sequence; that is, to receive perceptions when the third stage has not been reached, or to provoke and benefit from mystical experience before the fifth stage, produces the sort of confusion – and sometimes worse – which is reflected in some current literature of experimenters who choose their own sequence of events, and may cause developments which they cannot handle.

It also makes people crazy or nearly so. Many of these imagine themselves to be spiritual teachers, and some convince others that they are too.”

“The Perfumed Scorpion” – Idries Shah

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“A man without awareness is like a carriage whose passengers are the desires, with the muscles for horses, while the carriage itself is the skeleton. Awareness is the sleeping coachman. As long as the coachman remains asleep the carriage will be dragged aimlessly here and there. Each passenger seeks a different destination and the horses pull different ways. But when the coachman is wide awake and holds the reins the horses will pull the carriage and bring every passenger to his proper destination”

Tibetan Parable

Introduction

“Any significant change demands deep, revolutionary modification in our attitude and response. It is possible to form individuals capable of coping with a changing world without such intense emotional upheavals that bring many to breakdowns.”

Moshe Feldenkrais

The bookshelves of any bookshop are filled with books on ‘self-help’. There are so many books to choose from it becomes a difficult task to decide which book to choose. When looking at a book it is often difficult to decide whether or not the book will or will not be of any interest or use to you. This book is based on my 40 years of experience gained from research and working in the fields of the arts, education, business and health. The main purpose of the book is to equip the reader with the knowledge and skills they need to be able to make the best of whatever life they may choose to lead. Will it give you all the answers you’re seeking? The answer to that question is definitely not. In order to answer all the questions you might have would mean a book or many books that go into much greater depth than this one. At the end of the book in the bibliography section you will find a list of many of the books I’ve read and researched in writing this book. One thing that I would ask you to bear in mind and that is not to go in ‘search of the self’ as I am reminded of a quote by Tomas Szasz:

‘People say this or that person has not yet found themselves. The self is not something one finds it is something one creates.’

To help you decide whether or not “*The Art of Living*” is a book that you may find useful you will find below a series of questions on various topics that are related to self-development. If you are able to answer all the questions then you will have no need of this book

If, on the other hand, you are unable to answer all of the questions then you may find the contents of “*The Art of Living*” of interest and of use in your personal and professional life.

Factors To Be Considered in Self-Development

“We cannot make the right kind of changes in ourselves and in our education, our medicine and our society, without knowing where we came from. And knowing what we came from and how we came to be the way we are. We need to know how human beings came to think, feel and believe, and know the way we do, and how so much of it is firmly based on routines that happened to be around.”

Robert Ornstein

Physiological

1. Genetics – What are the main elements of the 5 factor personality model?
2. What are the four main ‘Mental Operating Systems’ described by Robert Ornstein?
3. What is the Autonomic Nervous System? Can you name the parts of the autonomic nervous system and their functions?
4. What is the amygdala and what is its purpose?

Intrapersonal

5. What is the ‘Commanding Self’ as defined by Idries Shah
6. What, according to Kohlberg, are the six stages of moral development?
7. What are the key human qualities to develop as advocated by the Masters of Living.
8. What, according to Deikman, are the differences between the ‘Object Mode’ and the ‘Receptive Mode’.
9. What are your primary and secondary needs?
10. What innate resources do you have available to you?
11. What is emotional intelligence?
12. What are your key skills and capabilities?
13. What are your personal core values?
14. What are your companies’ core values?
15. What are your most dominant beliefs?
16. Do you have clearly defined boundaries?
17. What are your roles in life?
18. How can the use of metaphor contribute to change?
19. What are the differences between optimistic and pessimistic thinking styles?
20. What is the wheel of change and can you name the various stages of change?
21. What is the difference between interpersonal and intrapersonal skills?
22. Can you give definitions for Mindfulness, Relaxation and Self-Observation?
23. What are the benefits of Mindfulness, Relaxation and Self-Observation?
24. Can you identify the best ways to develop relaxation, mindfulness or self-observation?
25. What are the differences between the ‘doing mode’ the ‘having mode’ and the ‘being mode’?

Interpersonal

26. What is the ‘circle of attention’?
27. What are the 3 levels of listening?
28. What are the four skills involved in the ‘Eye Factor’?
29. What are the key aspects of Social Intelligence according to Daniel Goleman?
30. What are the 7 habits of successful people?
31. What are the 7 principles of successful marriages as described by John Gottman?
32. What are the 7 emotional command systems?
33. What are the 7 factors described by Social Psychologist Cialdini which influence our social behavior?

Behavioural Skills

34. What are the key areas to focus on when goal setting?
35. How could you assess the various parts of your life?
36. What are S.M.A.R.T.E.R. goals?
37. Can you write down your goals?

If you've looked at the questions above and decided that this book has something to offer you then let me ask you question. *Do you believe that 'living effectively' is an art?* If your answer to that question is yes then it follows that you will also recognise that to live effectively knowledge will have to be gained, skills will need to be learned, practised and mastered and a considerable amount of effort will be required. The learning of any 'art' also needs humility, patience, persistence, concentration and self-discipline. This book is based on the assumption that living effectively is indeed an 'art' and attempts to give the reader the opportunity to raise awareness of the knowledge required and to give the opportunity to practise and develop the necessary skills that will help them to be more effective in all aspects of their life.

In order to live effectively and to make the most of your life and the opportunities you are presented with you would need to understand that your genetic inheritance, your innate talents and abilities, your mind and your physiology all exercise an influence on you. Clearly it would be very difficult to cover all these topics in one book and so the focus will be on developing awareness of self-management skills, interpersonal skills and behavioural skills.

Whether we like it or not, whether we want it to or not, life happens. Our bodies, our lives, our environment and the world we live in are in a constant process of change. We can blindly accept this process, deny it or learn how to manage our lives in an effective way.

In order to live more effectively, to manage problems that may occur and to take advantage of any opportunities that may present themselves knowledge and a wide range of skills are needed so that we are able to manage our lives and the changes that occur. This does not mean that we should accept all changes in our lives without question. Whenever considering any change it is wise to take time to consider the benefits and the costs of that change in personal, physical, social and environmental terms. Those who suggest changing aspects of our lives would, I suggest, benefit from taking the time to convince all concerned that any such change will eventually improve the quality of our lives and ultimately benefit all concerned.

Making the most of yourself and the opportunities that life presents is based on a combination of many factors. The most obvious is that you choose a career and pursue the necessary training so that you can earn a living. It is also important, and not so obvious, that you are interested in the work you do and are committed to your chosen 'path', have clear goals, develop the skills and abilities needed in life and work, develop self-confidence and eventually, when all of this is put together you will be in a position to bring out the best in yourself and others.

There are many 'factors' that influence our ability to manage our lives effectively. In order to overcome any 'barriers' the first thing needed is to know what the 'factors' are, how to identify them and how to overcome them so that you can make the most of the opportunities that life presents. Every day and every week people fail to get the best out of themselves and perform to the best of their abilities because they are unaware of the factors that are influencing the choices that they are making. So, in order to make more 'informed' choices one might reasonably ask several questions:

- What stops people living more effectively?
- Why don't people seek help or guidance?
- What approach or approaches will help most?
- Who will help most?

What stops people living more effectively? There are numerous theories as to why people experience difficulties in living their lives effectively and getting the best out of themselves. Many of these theories will, in one way or another focus on one or more of the factors described below. Some of the key factors affecting our ability to live effectively are:

Learned Patterns of Behaviour (Habits) – From the moment we are born and throughout our lives we learn, some would say we are conditioned, to do many things and this will include ways of talking, thinking, feeling, behaving, a value system and a belief system. Through constant repetition and reinforcement this learning passes into our unconscious and we develop *habitual* or *automatic* ways of doing things and thinking. Human beings are creatures of habit and have a tendency to do things in the same way day in day out. We develop these habits because they are essential to our survival and they are an effective way of dealing with the amount of information we're exposed to on a daily basis. Habits can be of value and they can help a person to live reasonably effectively but problems can occur when the habitual responses no longer serve a purpose or have undesired responses. This can most easily be seen in relationships. If certain habits of behaviour have been developed such as a strong need for reassurance this can, and often does, place a heavy burden on the relationship and lead to its end. If the person doesn't learn that constantly seeking re-assurance can be counter-productive they will carry this pattern of behaviour into all their relationships and it may well be a factor that creates problems in each relationship and lead to its end. Fixed habits of behaviour can lead to people encountering difficulties in living their personal and professional lives and causing distress for the individual and others around them.

The use or mis-use of our 'innate' resources We have, at our disposal, many 'resources' and these include our *awareness, imagination, a complex brain that allows us to think things through, the ability to communicate, establish rapport and develop empathy*. One of the most important tools we have is the '*observing self*'. However these 'resources' can work against us. Take for example our imagination. In a given situation we can imagine many outcomes but if we frequently imagine the worst-case scenario our imagination is working against our best interests and how we think can have a tremendous impact on how we approach and deal with the many challenges we meet throughout life.

Whether or not certain perceived 'needs' are being met. Maslow was one of the first to introduce the 'hierarchy of needs' and it is generally agreed that the meeting of these needs contributes to our adapting to the society in which we live, to our well-being and development as a person. Ideas on these 'needs' have developed over the years and 'needs' can essentially be split into two types: **Primary Needs** which include the need for *food, clothing, a roof over your head and the need for stimulation* and **Secondary Needs**, which are determined by social and cultural influences, and include *security, a need to give and receive attention, fun, purpose, a sense of autonomy, control, status, intimacy, connection and a sense of belonging*. If one, or more of these needs goes unmet for a long period of time then there is an increasing risk that this will affect a person's ability to live their life effectively. However I would like to introduce a word of caution here. Very often people can confuse 'wants' with 'needs'. A person may 'want' a new and expensive car but do they really 'need' it? Or a person may 'want' a bigger and better house but do they really 'need' it? So, it is therefore very important that a person is able to separate what they 'want' from what they 'need' to be a productive member of the community in which they live.

The 'emotional state' of a person. Our emotional state has an enormous impact on every aspect of our lives. The effects can be emotional, physical and psychological. When someone feels threatened, frightened or is in a highly emotional state they are highly likely to respond in one of three ways. **Fight, flight or freeze**. In the **fight** reaction they will probably be confrontational, aggressive or argumentative. In **flight** they will probably run away from a difficult or threatening situation and in the **freeze** you will probably find people who become very defensive, rigid, or be incapable of making a decision. It is generally agreed that it is

difficult, if not impossible, for a person in a highly emotional state to think logically and so handle a situation in a rational way and if they don't learn to manage their emotional state they will lose control and experience 'distress' in their lives and their health and their quality of life will suffer.

Evolution – Charles Darwin is famous for his work on evolution. He demonstrated how species (including humans) adapted to life on earth and the coining of the phrase “survival of the fittest”. It is worthwhile considering that the main function of the mental system is not self-understanding, self-analysis, or reason, but adaptation to the world, to get nourishment and safety, to reproduce and so pass on descendants, our mental system works to get a quick fix on reality and guide action.

Our ancestors evolved a mental system in which many of the mind's standardised short-circuit reactions were organised to simplify choices, to improve adaptation to a stable world, a world where one's grandparents and grandchildren would be facing the same problems with the same tools. Enhancing one's attention and reaction to short-term changes was important in the world in which we were refined. The four most basic patterns we have are:

- A sensitivity to changes in our environment. So, if we hear an unusual sound, see something strange or smell something odd it immediately grabs our attention to the exclusion of other things.
- We have a short term interest in 'news' and events happening in 'our world'.
- We are constantly comparing ourselves with all that is going on around us externally and internally.
- We generalize and over-simplify what is going on in our world. We do this to make the amount of information we deal with simpler to handle. So we develop habits, beliefs and stereotypes as a quick and simple way of assessing situations or people.

Human beings have adapted amazingly to many different environments, to the Himalayas, to the desert, to the forest, to the seashore, to Sao Paulo, to Prague. This extraordinary diversity is why our mind is so disorganised, so full of conflict, so diverse. And so difficult to analyse simply.

If we think of the mind as adaptive, we realise that during infancy every baby 'picks up' with their mother's milk, the basics of life – language, accent, customs, food preferences, ideas of family and behaviour, and identification with sex and the tribe. The mind does so, without rational intervention, because it evolved to mesh the individual in a safe world.

Environmental - The world is different to different people because of the way their brains become organised. Why do different individuals have different kinds of minds? Variation in people results from the different situations throughout one's life

Individuals are adapted to their individual situation, not only to their local habitat. An individual's best strategy for survival may differ according to circumstance; it may depend on hundreds of different factors, including family size, position in the family, diet, height, sex, ability to attract parental attention and support. And many of these seem to have an effect on the person. Firstborns are more conservative, for instance, than those born later; tall people have a different path through life than those less gifted in the altitude department.

Skills and Capabilities. In order to be successful in the world in which you live, your personal or professional life or in any activity you decide to undertake you need to have the capacity and to reach a level of skill in a wide range of areas. This will enable you to develop relationships, earn a living, perform an activity to a desired level and have some success in their personal and professional lives.

People also need to be able to manage their emotions, manage relationships, communicate effectively and be properly trained to do the work they have chosen to do. If a person has not developed the relevant skills or abilities to meet the demands of their chosen career or life's challenges then it is highly likely they will experience difficulties which could be physical, emotional or psychological and their lives will suffer.

Physiological - Each nerve cell and the brain itself is like an internal pharmacy. It dispenses a stream of powerful drugs to influence and control moods, thoughts and bodily functions. The brain superintends the body through its continuous flow of chemical messages.

Neurons fire when something different happens and don't respond significantly when they are continuously stimulated. They adapt to constant sounds, weight, or pressure and respond to changes in the world. The mind built up higher levels of judgement on the basic routines that originally developed to handle sensory information.

Genetics – Everyone of us comes into this world with our own genetic code and inheritance. Our genes play a part in how we develop as a person and on our health and well-being. One way individuals differ is in temperament. It seems that some basic dimensions of personality differ among people and these differences are inherited. Some of us seem to do everything quickly and tackle several projects at a time, while others slowly, slowly labour, again and again, at each point. This difference in tempo makes some biologically destined to be accountants or stock traders, but not both.

People misjudge others greatly because they interpret temperamental differences – speed of action, cleanliness, messiness, as reflections of the conscious mind. But these characteristics seem rather to be components of the personality over which we have little or no control. If this is true, we will have to learn, in getting along with others, that there is much about our friends and spouses that we and they will never change.

Talents - Many people, especially those in the world of self-help, promote the belief that we are all equal and everyone is capable of achieving whatever they want to. Sayings such as “where's there's a will there's a way,” “You are responsible for all things that happen in your life.,” “If you are fair, you will be treated fairly.”

From advances in neuroscience and the ability to map the areas of the brain it is becoming clear that different people have different abilities. Some people are talented musically, others have great memories for faces, others have great interpersonal skills, others sporting abilities, some with language and some with mathematics. The list could go on. What is important to recognise here that individuals have different abilities and you are best served by identifying what your ‘talents’ are and then developing them. Some people have a gift for maths, some a gift for language, some a gift in a sport, some a gift in music, some in performing. The list could go on. If you want to get the best out of yourself and others then it's a good idea to find out what your natural ‘talents’ are.

Squadron of ‘Simpletons’ –

Most people would like to think of themselves as ‘complex’ human beings. Robert Ornstein in his book “The Evolution of Consciousness” offers a quite different view:

“The mind is a squadron of simpletons. It is not unified, it is not rational, it is not well designed – or designed at all. It just happened, an accumulation of innovations of the organisms that lived before us. The mind evolved, through countless animals and through countless worlds.....

Non-conscious routines of the mind lead us automatically, and thus unconsciously, along lines of thinking without our ever directing them. Our ordinary reactions were established by our ancestors and work in routines evolved to adapt us to the world. Loud noise – we run or become alert. Ripe fruit – like it. Sexy look – we are attracted. The different centres of the mind, which I call, only slightly jokingly, ‘simpletons,’ have “minds of their own,” evolved to handle specific and limited situations, and are all bunched together inside the mind. They seem to run themselves, without – or outside of – consciousness.”

It is probably difficult for most to accept that our thoughts, are, on the whole are a pack of fixed routines. The vast majority of our actions are driven by our ‘simpletons’. We have these ‘fixed routines’ because we need them. It is vital for all of us to find the right food at the right time, to mate well, to generate children, to avoid marauders and to respond to emergency quickly. As we go through life we don't have time to ‘think’ we need to ‘act’ and it is for this reason, amongst others, that the ‘simpletons’ exist.

If we are to develop as human beings we have to learn to become aware of and to identify our 'simpletons'. By doing this we can give ourselves more choice with regards to the actions we take in any given situation. Ornstein describes this process as 'Conscious Evolution'

Knowing the Individual Simpletons

We like to think that consciousness is a strong force within all of us but that is not the case. Consciousness is poorly developed in most of us and a relatively new addition to the tools at our disposal to help us through life. Once we understand that **consciousness is a normally weak force in the mental system**, we can see how it can be **strengthened by bringing the automated routines to consciousness, using self-observation**.

'If you know your 'selves' shift in and out, you don't automatically have to go along with 'your' thoughts. These thoughts have appeared because an emotional self has shifted into place, a result of the agitation caused by an incident or some other form of stimulus. If you are able to notice the shift you can then recognise that you don't need to think this way and be able to shift to another 'self' that is more appropriate for the situation you might find yourself in.

Another thing to consider is 'blindspots'. Everybody has blind spots, there's even a physical one in the eye. There are sounds we don't hear but our dog can, different people can remember faces as well, others names, some people remember evenings by what people wear, others by food. It is a good idea to remember that there is no colour in nature, no sound, no smell, only movements of waves and molecules. It is we who created the music in the mind, it is we who experience the shift in the composition of gases as perfume.

We are unaware of, not conscious of or overlook the mind's moves because the mind is constantly adjusting to events without our noticing it.

We misjudge our internal processes and are, for instance, attracted to people in exciting situations, we ignore how weather, postoperative pain, normal hunger and thirst affect their judgement.

Knowing and accepting that there are different 'selves' shifting in and out allows us to observe the automatic reactions of the mind. We can observe which factor – external, food, personal, social, environmental – is causing a given reaction. Under the stimulus of self-observation, the mind begins to change, and the links between action and reaction loosen.

Many of our reactions still are recruits from the basic characteristics of the senses. **Vivid events cause us to attend, slow continual changes escape our notice.**

Personal Construct

We are all unique. When we look at the world we see different things. When we listen we hear different things. We all construct our own individual view of the world which helps us to make sense of 'our' own world and navigate our way through the events that happen to us throughout our lives. Every experience we have is unique to the individual because we all filter the information that is made available to us, we delete much of it, distort what enters our brains and then we generalise the experiences we have. We do this because we only need enough information to help us to survive in our 'own world'. Our senses are constantly being bombarded with information. Some of it we are able to perceive but most of it we can't because it's not relevant to our immediate survival. Our eyes are capable of only being aware of *1 trillionth* of the information available to us. We can't see ultra violet or infra-red light. We can't hear many of the sounds that other animals are capable of hearing. Our sense of smell varies from person to person and we can't smell many of the things that others animals smell. We can't smell carbon monoxide and we're not aware of the particulates in the environment produced from diesel. We can't do many of these things because they are not necessary for our immediate survival and we are physically, mentally and emotionally incapable of coping with the volume of information. We are ultimately designed to live in the short term, immediate environment and so only aware of what effects us in the short-term and immediate future. As a result of this every person will see and

experience the world differently from those around them.

Socio-Economic Factors

On top of these factors it is worth remembering that we live in a fast-moving, ever changing society and culture in which people are facing increasing demands and temptations and for many this becomes too much to cope with and their performance inevitably suffers. Each society is governed by its own political and social views and these too will have an enormous impact on who you are and how you relate to others.

Why don't people seek help or guidance? At times it may be necessary to accept we can't do it all on our own and it may be necessary to seek help from family, a friend, a mentor or a professional. Many people do seek help but many others don't and perhaps it's worthwhile considering why so many people are reluctant to seek help or advice. There are several reasons people don't seek help and these are:

- It is not easy to receive help
- It is difficult to commit one's self to change
- It is difficult to submit to the influence of someone else: help can be seen as a threat to esteem, integrity, and independence.
- It is not easy to trust others or a stranger and be open with them.
- It is not easy to see one's problems clearly at first.
- It's difficult to admit to having a problem
- Sometimes problems seem too large, too overwhelming, or too unique to share easily.
- Cost – people may be unable or unwilling to pay the physical, psychological or financial 'price' for help

All of these are reasons used for not seeking help but the long-term consequences of not seeking help are a life that can be filled with anxiety, distress, depression and many physical problems that are related to stress. Many of these problems are, in many cases, avoidable if a person seeks 'skilled help' or takes steps towards prevention sooner, rather than later.

What approach or approaches will help most? There are hundreds of theories and approaches about motivation and the best way to help people. All of these approaches have a common core and that is '*problem management and opportunity development*'. In short there are two ends on the scale and these are 'non-directive' and 'directive'. The non-directive approach involves someone who will mainly listen whilst you talk and the idea is that through talking you will eventually gain 'insight' into your problems and resolve them. On the other end of the scale is the 'directive' approach. The 'directive' approach is very goal focused and means you will be given lots of advice and suggestions. When considering the best approach for you it is a good idea to have some awareness of the kind of approaches mentioned above and what you will respond to best.

Who will help most? Research has consistently shown that one of the most important factors in the effectiveness of any form of 'helping, coaching, training or counselling' is the relationship between the 'helper' and the 'helpee.' So, if you are seeking help for yourself or others it is very important that you as the 'helpee' feel comfortable with the person helping you. The next thing you need to look at is the approach used by the 'helper'. I would offer the view that the 'skilled helper' will adopt an 'eclectic' approach and design their approach around what will suit the individual best. Essentially they will look at the five areas mentioned above and address '**habits**', the use or mis-use of '**innate resources**', assess whether '**needs**' are being met and also identify which '**skills**' are needed to help manage the '**emotional condition**' more

effectively. People may need help with one or more of these and, in my opinion, the 'skilled helper' will be able to help with all of these areas.

Can I help myself? There are, in my view, many things people can do to help themselves and the purpose of this book to share some of techniques that can be used.

You may be reading this book because you've decided that you're not quite happy with the way your life is and you'd like to make some changes. Or perhaps you do want to or maybe you have to make some changes but you're not quite sure how to go about it. Or, you've tried to make some changes and they've not turned out exactly as you'd expected and you find yourself back at square one and you're not sure whether it's worth the effort to try again.

Whatever your reasons for reading this book the aim is to give you the knowledge and tools you need to help you find a way live your life more effectively. Whether you want to develop self-confidence, deal with emotional difficulties, break destructive habits, improve your self-esteem, communicate more effectively or develop your emotional or social intelligence this book contains materials that will help you.

Perhaps, like many others, you think that changing part or all of your life is too difficult for you or that you don't need to change. If you have any doubts about the need to manage change effectively then consider what a life frozen in time would be like...

A life frozen in time

If you wanted to keep your life exactly the same as it is now, how would you do it? What would you do to stay in the same frame of mind? Work at the same job, keep the same relationships, do the same everything? How would you avoid meeting influential new people – become a recluse? How would you stop learning new information – stop reading the papers and watching the news? How would you keep yourself from trying new things? The things you want to do or have are most likely possible, but not if you continue to do the same things in the same ways.

When you come to accept a little more easily that life is always changing, and that new situations are always

approaching, you can shift from doing what is familiar but doesn't work very well to doing new things that may feel unfamiliar but are more likely to succeed.

Yapko

As mentioned earlier this book contains ideas and methods based on over 25 years of experience and research in the arts, education, business and health. A complete list of authors I have drawn upon can be found in the bibliography but I will mention here some of the most important ones. They include, *Seligman,¹ Goleman,² Cutter,³ Ornstein,⁴ Beck,⁵ Schumacher,⁶ Semler,⁷ Dalai Lama,⁸ Argyle,⁹ Feldenkrais,¹⁰ Berry,¹¹ Stanislawski,¹² Egan,¹³ Yapko,¹⁴ and Shah,¹⁵ Nettle¹⁶, Covey¹⁷ and Cialdini.¹⁸*

The methods explained in this book are based on a wide variety of approaches from many different sources including writers in psychology, education, philosophy, the arts and sociology. Many people believe that personal development always works best when coming from a *real* understanding of what it is to be a human being. This approach draws its power from observation, research, experience, the biological and psychological sciences and our heritage of wisdom gathered down the ages. For change and development to be effective we have to be aware, not only of the requirement for physical and emotional security, but of the 'tools' that we have available and others that we have acquired during our lives that we use for understanding and impacting on our environment. When used well, they can provide purpose, achievement and good emotional and mental well-being; when not developed or used wrongly, they cause

misery and difficulties.

*Yapko*¹⁹ suggests that there are three key areas that people need skills in to live effectively and manage whatever changes they experience. The first of these areas relates to yourself, your thought processes, your values, your emotional management, your belief systems and the ability to use the ‘tools/resources’ at your disposal. In short your **‘intrapersonal skills’** or, if you prefer, how well you know yourself or **‘self-awareness’**.

The second area is your ability to relate to others in the world around you and the skills you need to communicate effectively and develop relationships with others. Your **‘interpersonal’** or ‘people skills’.

Finally there is your **‘behaviour’** or what you do. For this reason the book is divided into three sections dealing with developing ‘self-awareness’, your inner processes and ‘tools/resources’ first and then your communication or ‘people skills’. Finally we look at the ‘goal setting’ process and putting the ‘theory’ into practise.

By working with the ideas given in this book living, managing change and development is more effective because it takes into account *many different* aspects of what we know about what a human being actually is. Fortunately none of us starts with a blank canvas or an ‘empty toolbox’. Our genetic inheritance, our education, the skills we have learned throughout our lives, the society in which we live, our family, friends, work colleagues and environment provide us with a wealth of information and ‘tools’ that we can use to navigate through our personal and professional lives.

If you’ve decided to make any changes in your life then you can see from the above that you already have a great number of ‘tools’ at your disposal and many of the ‘needs’ that you want to get met have been identified and are common to us all.